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**House Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Subcommittee on International
Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight.**

Congressman Delahunt and the distinguished ladies and gentlemen of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight.

Good morning,

It is with pleasure that I come here in response to your invitation to talk to you about issues related to the termination of the mandates of the UN Chapter VII pertaining to Iraq, and about the future of the US-Iraq bilateral relations. I sincerely hope that these discussions would lead to a clear understanding by US policymakers of the challenges that face us in the near and long term in Iraq in particular and the greater Middle East in General where we are striving to achieve stability, peace and prosperity.

Today, the issue at hand is not whether the removal of Saddam and the war on Iraq was a war of choice or necessity, but the manner of your exit and the state in which Iraq is left in.

It is evident that mistakes were made by the previous administration but we are not here to re-hash them. We are here to move forward and my objective is to inform your internal discussions, in the hope that your deliberations would lead to policies and positions that, in my view, would address many of the mistakes of the past and lead to a friendly and strategic alliance between the United States and Iraq. While you contemplate the options ahead, I remind you of what Ambassador Crocker stated recently in a retrospective article about his long and distinguished career which saw the strengthening of terrorist movements in the Middle East: "History is made of things that did not happen as well as those that did".

The goals of Iraqis and the United States are coincident at this juncture of history. The United States wants to exit Iraq, but not to leave it in turmoil, and Iraqis want to place Iraq on the path to prosperity, independence and

sovereignty, where individual and minority rights are respected.

To achieve these goals, we must continue to build on our democratic foundation if we are to defeat violence, terrorism and extremism. For democracy to flourish in the fertile soils of Mesopotamia, we have to create the right conditions in Iraq and the region.

On the regional issues:

When I was Prime Minister of Iraq, I convened a meeting, hosted by the government of Egypt in Sharm Al Shaikh, under the auspices of the United Nations, Arab League, Gulf Cooperation Council and Islamic Conference Organization, which brought together regional countries with Iraq. The meeting focused on ways and means to stabilize Iraq and the region. We all agreed on a set of guidelines and initiatives that, in my opinion, could have lead to dialogue and stability. However, subsequent governments did not follow these initiatives through. Once again, history was made of the things that did not

happen as well as those that did. Therefore, in order to achieve regional stability, I suggest the following steps:

- 1- Following the January 2010 elections, one of the first actions that should be taken is to convene a regional conference to bring together, once more, the regional countries to discuss our mutual aspirations and ways in which we can benefit each other, while respecting each other's sovereignty. The conference should be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, the Arab League, the GCC, and Islamic Conference Organization, and must include Iran and Syria as they have major concerns vis-à-vis a future democratic Iraq that is friendly with, maybe even a strategic partner of, the United States.
- 2- Act promptly to resolve all outstanding issues with Kuwait remaining from the 1990 invasion and consequential UN resolutions regarding reparations. Iraq and Kuwait must hold talks together to address and resolve all disputes in a friendly and diplomatic

manner, aided by the United States. This should allow for the transaction of enforcement of pertinent UN resolutions to Chapter VI.

On Iraqi issues:

As I specified earlier, the future of Iraq must be based on democratic foundations which need the following major elements to be sustained.

- 1- Security must be robust and the army and security forces should be professional, strong and mindful of human and individual rights. I inform you with great sorrow, that the current Iraqi security forces are anything but professional, and should be restructured to a force whose loyalty is to the Iraqi state and its constitutions.
- 2- Transparent, fair and accountable elections in which all participants and their supporters can advocate for their positions without fear of reprisal and where ballot stuffing and intimidation at the box cannot occur. Iraq needs a voting system

that is totally independent of the state with stringent policies so that any violations will be severely punished as to act a deterrent to any misconduct. The slightest violation may result in disqualification of candidates and incur heavy penalties. Without transparent and fair elections, the sectarian forces and extremists will continue prevail, compromising Iraq's stability. I would like to note that our complaints in the last elections went unheeded and that our list, the Iraqia, was the main list to have campaign workers assassinated and its candidates attacked.

3- The implementation of the Political Reform Act, as passed by Parliament is a must. The act includes, amongst others, amending the constitution, instituting an inclusive political process, and implementing political reconciliation. All these steps are necessary for the stabilization of Iraq.

4- Robust economy. The Iraqi government is still as "socialist" as it was in 2003 with the state being the largest employer and competitor to private

enterprise. Without a strong institutional framework, and a clear set of laws, investment is not going to flow into Iraq and the government will continue to uphold its monopoly on the economy, insuring continuous corruption and increasing unemployment.

It is in the strategic interest of the United States to help Iraq fulfill the above. The points above are as valid today as they were in 2003. Once Iraq is set on the right path to resolving these issues, Iraq can be released from binding UN mandate.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I would be happy to discuss the issues above in details with you.