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Statement of
J.T. Mickey McDermott
Special Deputy Inspector General for Southwest Asia
Department of Defense Office of Inspector General

before the

Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense and
Foreign Operations, House Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform

on

The Transition from a Military to a Civilian-Led Mission in Iraq

Chairman Chaffetz, Ranking Member Tierney, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense and Foreign Operations, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today to discuss past and ongoing Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Inspector General (DoD IG) oversight regarding the transition from a military to a civilian-led mission in Iraq.

A major national security goal of the U.S. is the establishment of a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq that contributes to the peace and security of the region and with which the U.S. can forge a long-term strategic partnership. Supporting the development of a professional Iraq Security Forces capable of providing for its internal and external defense is essential to achieving these U.S. objectives.

Fundamental to establishing and nurturing this long-term security partnership is the role of the Office of Security Cooperation – Iraq (OSC-I), which was initially established in June 2011, further expanded in October 2011, and subsequently transitioned to Chief of Mission and Department of State authority in December 2011. The OSC-I, operating under Chief of Mission authority but administered by DoD personnel, is charged with performing vital bilateral security cooperation¹ and security assistance² functions. Comprised of DoD military, civilian, and contractor personnel, the OSC-I represents a cornerstone capability for building an enduring foundation for a long-term security relationship with the Government of Iraq.

On December 15, 2011, the United States military ended Operation New Dawn by completing the responsible drawdown of all remaining combat troops from Iraq. Millions of pieces of equipment were withdrawn bases were either closed or handed over to the Iraq Security Forces, and the number of contractors reduced.

¹ **Security Cooperation** — All Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.

² **Security Assistance** — Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the U.S. provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives. Security assistance is an element of security cooperation funded and authorized by Department of State to be administered by Department of Defense/Defense Security Cooperation Agency.

To facilitate continued support for developing the Iraq Security Forces, DoD transitioned most remaining essential training, equipping, and mentoring activities from United States Forces-Iraq to the OSC-I. Robust security cooperation and assistance programs, including developing very significant Foreign Military Sales of U.S. defense technology, are being developed. The sale of F-16s to Iraq may be seen as an early indicator of the potential for building a strong, enduring U.S.-Iraq strategic partnership over the longer-term.

DoD IG oversight of the OSC-I focused on its planning and establishment prior to the December 2011 transition of authority in Iraq from DoD to the Department of State. Since that change in authority, DoD operations in Iraq have assumed a supporting role for the current Department of State-led effort to assist in the further development of Iraq's security capability to maintain its sovereignty and independence.

Recently Completed DoD IG Oversight

In 2010, DoD IG initiated an assessment³ of the United States Government's planning effort for transitioning the security assistance mission in Iraq from DoD to the Department of State. Among other assessment activities, we conducted site visits in Iraq from June 2, 2010, to June 20, 2010.

At the time of our assessment, we determined that the United States Government had sufficiently developed detailed goals, objectives, plans, and guidance to accomplish a successful transition of the security assistance mission from DoD to Department of State authority. Although planning for establishing an OSC-I had a lower priority than planning for the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces, OSC-I planning nonetheless progressed, with a significant contribution made by an ad-hoc cadre of strategic planners operating from within United States Forces-Iraq.

Nonetheless, our assessment identified several planning shortcomings in joint doctrine as it pertained to transition planning. To remedy these shortcomings, we recommended U.S. Central Command issue updated interim theater level campaign, security cooperation, and Iraq-specific country planning details. We also recommended that it assess the sufficiency of internal procedures and resources for Iraq-specific security cooperation related planning and guidance as well as capture lessons learned regarding the experience of organizing the OSC-I.

³ "Assessment of Planning for Transitioning the Security Assistance Mission in Iraq from Department of Defense to Department of State Authority," released August 25, 2011 (Report No. SPO-2011-008).

We additionally recommended U.S. Central Command sponsor a formal doctrine development proposal that supported expanding the then existing joint doctrine to facilitate transitioning a complex contingency from stability operations to robust security cooperation activities in a non-permissive security environment. We further recommended the Joint Staff assess the sufficiency of joint doctrine with respect to its consistency with DoD policy regarding the effective conduct of stability operations that transition to robust security cooperation activities.

In 2011, DoD IG initiated a second assessment⁴ regarding the establishment of the OSC-I. This assessment reviewed United States Government efforts then underway to establish a fully functional OSC-I, to transition the security cooperation and assistance mission to the U.S. Mission-Iraq, and to provide for the sustained, effective operation of the OSC-I mission in Iraq post-2011.

Despite a range of challenges, we found that the establishment of the OSC-I was on track and on schedule to meet its full operating capability target date of October 1, 2011, and to operate independently as an element of the U.S. Mission-Iraq by January 1, 2012. In many cases, complications then affecting the establishment and transition of the OSC-I were beyond U. S. Forces-Iraq and, in some cases, DoD's ability to control or significantly influence, including such factors as: uncertainty over a potential post-2011 U.S. military presence; and, the lack of formal, bilateral approval of the OSC-I.

We did identify, however, specific areas requiring DoD management attention. We determined, for example, that the U.S. Forces – Iraq Deputy Commanding General for Advising and Training, one of the most senior DoD officials in Iraq charged directly with the OSC-I standup and responsible for setting the conditions for effective security assistance mission transition to State Department authority, was managing crucial security cooperation activities with incomplete theater and Iraq-specific higher echelon plans, and without the necessary planning capability at his level. In addition, his command had not clearly communicated information about the OSC-I's enduring role regarding U.S. security cooperation and assistance programs to key Iraqi Ministry of Defense and Iraqi Ministry of Interior officials. Further, the command had not fully engaged and shared essential transition details with key U.S. personnel at outlying OSC-I sites under development; and, the command had not established detailed internal standard operating procedures for the OSC-I essential to adequately manage its

⁴ "Assessment of the DoD Establishment of the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq," released March 16, 2012 (Report No. DODIG-2012-063).

major operating functions within the framework of the U.S. Mission-Iraq.

As a consequence, we recommended that the Commander, U.S. Central Command, expedite issuance of a completed Iraq Country Plan for security cooperation and assistance. We also recommended that the Chief, OSC-I improve the flow of transition-related information to essential site personnel in order to: provide clarity and improve unity of effort in standing up the sites and facilitate transition activities; communicate sufficient details about the OSC-I role and its operating processes with key Iraqi defense and interior ministry officials to enable their understanding of and confidence in the future of the program; and, develop standard operating procedures for OSC-I administrative and operational processes and procedures that included the conduct of interagency operations within the overall framework of U.S. Mission-Iraq authority and responsibility.

Since the issuance of our reports we have noted that OSC-I has made improvements in the flow of information to its personnel and with key senior Iraqi officials. U.S. Central Command also responded by issuing a completed Iraq Country Plan with necessary security cooperation and assistance details.

In 2011, DoD IG initiated a third OSC-I related project⁵ to determine whether DoD adequately administered and managed private security contractors in Iraq, including private security contractors guarding OSC-I locations. The report was issued April 16, 2012 and is classified SECRET.

Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq

The OSC-I, one of the United States Government's largest security assistance / security cooperation offices, consists of over 200 United States Government personnel, of whom 46 are assigned to security assistance positions with the remainder assigned to security cooperation positions. They are joined by approximately 750 Security Assistance Team personnel and 3,500 – 4,000 security and support contractors. This sizeable Office of Security Cooperation was established to manage and support a long-term security relationship with Iraq that remains a significant U.S. strategic goal.

The OSC-I administers Foreign Military Sales programs, Foreign Military

⁵ "DoD Oversight of Private Security Contractors in Iraq Was Sufficient, but contractors May not Deter Attacks on Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq Enduring Sites," released April 16, 2012 (Report No. DODIG-2012-075). This report is classified SECRET.

Financing funding, the International Military Education and Training program, and other security cooperation programs. The scope of the security assistance program is near \$10 billion in Foreign Military Sales, making it one of the largest in the world. The program includes jet aircraft, tanks, air defense radar and artillery, patrol craft, among other defense technology made and supplied by U.S. companies that will require parts and technical assistance for years to come.

To support the OSC-I's security assistance and cooperation programs, OSC-I personnel and Security Assistance Teams are deployed to 10 locations across Iraq. They assist in the continuing development of the Iraqi Ministries of Defense and Interior, and the Iraqi Army and Police, Air Force and Navy.

As originally envisioned, a robust OSC-I capability was central to facilitating Iraqi government efforts to address a number of important security related gaps that still existed in their defense capabilities at the end of 2011. The National Security Council approved plan for the OSC-I covered assisting in the development of Iraq Security Forces logistical, sustainment, external defense and other capabilities through a variety of security assistance, security cooperation, and advising and training efforts.

OSC-I efforts were specifically designed to address these shortfalls in support of the overarching U.S. goal of enabling an Iraq that is sovereign, stable, and self-reliant. In accordance with that goal, OSC-I functions and activities remain relevant to the continued support of U.S. objectives - outlined by the President in his 2009 public remarks - to promote an Iraqi government that is just, representative, and accountable; provides neither support nor safe-haven to terrorists; builds new ties of trade and commerce with the world; and, forges a U.S.-Iraq strategic partnership that contributes to the peace and security of the region⁶.

Post-Transition Realities

While the OSC-I successfully transitioned from DoD to Department of State authority by the end of 2011, the U.S. and Iraq governments did not conclude

⁶ Remarks of President Barack Obama (as prepared for delivery), "Responsibly Ending the War in Iraq," February 27, 2009. Downloaded from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-barack-obama-ndash-responsibly-ending-war-iraq>, on July 14, 2010. President's speech at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, outlined the strategy and phased approach for the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq and development of an enduring strategic partnership with Iraq.

certain agreements that were envisioned by the command as necessary to enable OSC-I ability to become fully functional within Iraq's dynamic post-2011 operating environment.

Responding to our latest report, which occurred in early 2012 shortly after the transition from DoD to Department of State authority, senior OSC-I officials indicated that the absence of a post-2011 Security Agreement or Status of Forces Agreement was affecting aspects of its operations. Key areas cited by these officials as being impacted included: land use agreements, force protection, passport/visa requirements, air and ground movement, and FMS site stand-up. The precise impact of these command concerns with respect to achieving short and long-term OSC-I goals is unclear. However, having a formal, follow-on Security and Status of Forces agreements was perceived to have value potentially in clarifying and stabilizing Iraqi government support for day-to-day OSC-I operations, and would benefit longer-term relationship building.

Ongoing DoD IG Efforts and Future Assessments

In order to evaluate the progress made and challenges that still exist regarding the effective current and future operation of the OSC-I, the DoD IG plans to return to Iraq for another assessment early in the next fiscal year. We are coordinating with the Department of State's Office of Inspector General in preparation for this mission.

Also in Fiscal Year 2013, DoD IG plans to assess DoD planning for establishing an Office of Security Cooperation-Afghanistan, applying our and Joint Staff oversight lessons learned from Iraq.

Conclusion

The DoD IG remains committed to providing oversight concerning the OSC-I and DoD development of our short to long-term defense cooperation relationship objectives relationship with Iraq, which remains central to building a lasting strategic partnership between our two countries.

I thank you again for this opportunity to speak to you today.

Biographies



Joseph T. McDermott Special Deputy Inspector General for Southwest Asia



Mr. Joseph T. (Mickey) McDermott assumed duty as the Special Deputy Inspector General for Southwest Asia (SWA) in October 2009. This senior executive leadership position was established to improve communications between the SWA theater leadership and the oversight community and to improve coordination within the oversight community. In November 2009, Mr. McDermott established the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Inspector General (OIG) Headquarters (forward) in Kuwait.

Mr. McDermott has working experience in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Pakistan, and many other locations in the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) Area of Responsibility. Prior to returning to DoD OIG, Mr. McDermott was the Assistant Inspector General for Audit in the Office of Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction and spent most of his time on the ground in Iraq. Mr. McDermott started his career with the DoD in 1975 and retired from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) in 2005. During his career, he managed and led audit work in a variety of areas resulting in improvements to government operations, acquisition and contracting processes and outcomes, and management controls. Mr. McDermott has also worked with several congressional committees on reviewing many aspects of national security, international affairs, and development programs.

His degrees include a BA in Accounting with a minor in Criminal Justice and a Masters in Public Administration. He is certified as a programmer, information systems auditor, and a fraud examiner. He has served as the DoD audit representative on various committees of the President's Council for Integrity and Efficiency and as a visiting instructor at the National Defense University, the Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute, and the GAO International Fellows Program. Mr. McDermott has worked with auditors around the globe improving performance auditing and program evaluation techniques. As a recognized expert in performance auditing, he was the principal U.S. representative on the International Committee that developed the International Guidelines for Performance Auditing.

Mr. McDermott is a disabled veteran, and retired from the United States Marine Corps in 1969. Mr. McDermott also served as the Chairman of the Pentagon Federal Credit Union Audit Committee from 1987-1996. When at home, he volunteers with the Bryn Mawr, PA, volunteer fire company.

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