

Senate Democratic Policy Committee Hearing

Thursday, October 12, 2006

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Everett M. Dirksen United States Courthouse, Room 2525
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois**

An Oversight Hearing on the Planning and Conduct of the War in Iraq: When Will Iraqi Security Forces Be Able to "Stand Up," So American Troops Can Begin to "Stand Down"?

TRANSCRIPT

0:00

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND):

We're going to call this hearing to order. This is a hearing of the Dem. Policy Committee of the United States Senate. I'm Senator Byron Dorgan, chairman on the policy committee, I'm joined by three of my colleagues in the United States Senate, Senator Reid, Senator Durbin, Senator Harkin. We will make some brief opening statements and then we have three witnesses here today, and I want to begin, four witnesses, I'm sorry. I want to begin by describing the purpose of these hearings. While this is the Democratic Policy committee, the United States Senate has two policy committees, the Democratic Policy Committee and the Republican Policy Committee. We have always invited Republicans to join us, it has happened on occasion that they have joined us in our policy committee hearings. The reason we have decided to hold oversight hearings in our policy committee is that the regular committees in congress have not been holding oversight hearings and we are in desperate need of holding oversight hearings to find out what is happening, what needs to be done, what's wrong, how to fix it, what works, what doesn't. That's especially true with respect to the issue of Iraq. We've held ten hearings now on the subject of contracting in Iraq and we've begun a series of hearings dealing with the issue of the war in Iraq.

1:13 Today we're going to be holding a hearing on the subject of security because the administration has always said, I think most of us have understood, when Iraqi security has stood up American soldiers can stand down and we can begin withdrawing American troops. It is the case that the country of Iraq belongs to the Iraqis, it is their country, not ours. And we have always felt, and the President has said, that when Iraq can provide for its own security, we can withdraw our soldiers from Iraq. The question is, what has happened with respect to security training in Iraq, the training of the police forces in Iraq, the training of the military, particularly the training of the police forces that provide the security on the streets and in the neighborhood of Iraq. We know that General Batiste, who testified at our most recent hearing, said that Secretary Rumsfeld had indicated, and in fact said, that the next person that comes into him talking about post-war planning is going to get fired. We know there wasn't much interest in post-war planning. We do know,

however, that there were some plans that were put together that said there needed to be 6,000 people sent to Iraq to begin training Iraq security and Iraq police.

2:30

We know as well that the Justice Department that said you need 6,000 people to do that, we know that that was trimmed down and down and down, and finally, it was trimmed down to 500 people. And we have now seen the result of inadequate planning, inadequate staffing, and the question is, what has that meant to security in Iraq. Last month we are told by the news today, that 1,450 people in Iraq have been killed as a result of the violence in Iraq. Linking that to our population, Iraq is about 25 million, ours is 300 million, that would mean 12,000 people a month in a population the size of the United States. Clearly there are serious problems with respect to security in Iraq. Things appear to be getting worse, not better. Our interest is not in pointing fingers, our interest is in finding out what's happening, in getting the straight truth, evaluating what does that mean and what can be done about it.

3:30

So that is the purpose of holding hearings of this type. We appreciate very much those who have agreed to come and be witnesses. We have had people sitting at our witness tables, who are conservatives and liberals, Democrats and Republicans, patriotic Americans all, soldiers and others who have served their country in so many ways. We invite them all and we're very appreciative of the four who've traveled to be with us today to talk about this very important issue of security. Let me call on my colleague, Senator Reid, the minority leader in the senate.

4:02

SEN. REID (D-NV):

Chairman Dorgan, your leadership has been exemplary. As a result of your hearings, we now know that the fraud, waste, and abuse of taxpayers' dollars in Iraq is hard to comprehend there, and thank you very much for the second in this series of hearings dealing with the war. These are bipartisan hearings, as I explained earlier today, the last hearing we had, the first in the series, we had a very brave Republican congressman, Norwood, North Carolina, appear before the American people, Walter Jones, I said Norwood, I'm sorry, Walter Jones who appeared and did a remarkably good job in giving a statement and asking questions.

4:49

Our goal of this hearing is the same goal we had in the first hearing; to find out what has gone wrong in planning and conducting the war in Iraq, so we can finally begin setting it right. To help us achieve this goal, we once again assembled a panel of outstanding witnesses. Four courageous Americans, who've volunteered to serve their nation in Iraq in

different capacities, who've agreed to testify so that the mission they've started can be completed with dignity and with honor. To all of you, thank you for your service, your sacrifice, your attendance at today's hearing. Like thousands of others, you've served the nation with enormous skill, bravery, and determination. Your presence is a tribute to your patriotism and your continued dedication to your fellow troops and the American people.

5:45

Chairman Dorgan, throughout our nation's history, congressional oversight of war has played an important role in keeping our nation safe. From Lincoln in the Civil War to Roosevelt in World War II, administrations have been called before the legislative branch and the American people to account for their actions and the use of taxpayer money. Unfortunately for the war in Iraq and so many other pressing matters of national security, the 109th Congress has sat on the sidelines, refusing to question this administration's course or chart a new course that could make America safer. The fact is, Americans are learning more about missteps in Iraq from Bob Woodward's new book than they have from the actions of Congress or the candor of the President. Both have repeatedly put their political interests ahead of the security of this great nation. There's no better example of that than what's happening in Chicago today. While we've come here to focus on finding solutions in Iraq, the president and the Republicans, have chosen to ignore this hearing so they can raise money and prop up Dennis Hastert instead. They're focused on November, when they should focus on making America more safe and finding a way forward.

Today this committee will hear testimony concerning the training of Iraq's security forces, among other things. We will find from commanders that have been on the ground, why President Bush's stand up and stand down, has not come true. We will gain insight into recent news reports that thousands of Iraqi police have died in just the past few months alone, while others have been actively engaged in or supported the activities of sectarian militias. And we will use this information to demand a new direction in Iraq which allows our troops to complete their mission with dignity, restores some degree of security and order for the Iraqi people, and make America more secure.

8:00

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Senator Durbin, we meet in Senator Durbin's home state. We appreciate you being here.

SEN. DURBIN (D-IL): Senator Dorgan, welcome to you, Senator Reid, Senator Harkin, and to our witnesses, especially, for making this trip to Chicago. This is an important hearing in part of a series. I want to thank the Federal court house for making this wonderful room available to us as well. Monday night, three days ago, I just returned from Iraq and Afghanistan. I spent last week with Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island visiting with troops in both of those countries. I saw once again, the best military in the world. These brave soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen are a source of pride for everyone in the United States. But let me tell you this, our soldiers deserve a lot better from their government in Washington. I won't forget the moment that a soldier pulled me aside in a

private moment outside of the hearing of other soldiers, and said, Senator, staying the course isn't going to win this war. I really think he hit the nail on the head. We sent them into battle without the numbers, the equipment, the planning that they deserve. And today, they confront a civil war in Iraq. As of this morning, we've lost 2,755 of our brave men and women, in service to our country in Iraq, 106 of them from my home state of Illinois. That's a high price to pay for strategic miscalculations and poor decisions.

9:33

Today as well, Iraq stands at the brink of civil war. Civil war is up to the Iraqi's to avoid, if they can, and to settle if they cannot. This is not an American challenge, and yet it is the American soldier who finds themselves at the crossfire of this civil war today. This hearing focuses on the training of the Iraqi security forces, especially of the police. The administration proclaimed that 2006 was to be the year of police in Iraq. But today general Abizaid tells us that about 1/3 of the Iraqi police units are infiltrated by the militia. Let me tell you what I found, Sunday morning, sitting down on the ground with those who were working with police. I was told the story of a police station with no electricity, where in fact two police men had been killed and a bomb had been detonated and no one had showed up to work the desk. This police station was responsible for 200,000 people in Baghdad, and it meant that for several days there was no police protection for 200,000 people. The same person who has been reviewing this police department said: "You ought to know something else as well; Sunni policemen don't arrest Sunni suspects, Shia policemen don't arrest Shia suspects." And this same person told me that when he was in search of a courthouse, and he was lost with his military driver in Baghdad, he suggested that they stop and ask a policeman for directions. The military man said there's no way we're going to do that. The last time we asked a policeman for directions he headed us into an ambush. The year of the police? Does this sound like the Iraqi police are ready to stand up so the American soldiers can come home? I think it's important that the American people and Congress hear the real story and get real answers to this.

When Secretary Rumsfeld was confronted with the looting that was occurring in April 2003 he said: "stuff happens." What was happening was the dissolution of order. We destroyed one government but we didn't move rapidly enough to replace it. These questions are critical, not just for placing the blame, and there is some blame to be placed, but to look forward. How soon can we bring these soldiers home? In the week that I traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan, we lost twenty-seven American soldiers, twenty-seven. Twenty-seven lives lost and families with their hearts broken. We have a responsibility to ask these questions, questions that should have been asked in the halls of Congress over the last several years. I'm glad our witnesses had the courage to step forward today. I welcome their testimony and thank you for your service.

12:15

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Senator Durbin, thank you very much, we're joined by our colleague from Iowa, Senator Harkin.

12:20

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA):

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for convening this important hearing and for doing it here in the heartland. It is refreshing to be in the state of Illinois, rather than like President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld, in the state of denial. It is critically important to have this committee provide this kind of tough-minded oversight that is totally lacking in Congress. The fact is in the wake of the National Intelligence Estimate released last month the state of denial is becoming increasingly untenable. Senator John Warner of Virginia, the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services committee, returned from Iraq like you did last week Senator Durbin, and here's what he said: "In two or three months, if this level of violence is not under control and this government able to function, I think it's the responsibility of our government internally to determine, is there a change of course that we should take? Well I appreciate Senator Warner's candor

USA Today just reported that the death squad killings are up precipitously. There were 1450 death squad killings in Baghdad in September, up from 450 in February. In the first 10 days of this month, death squads killed 770 Iraqis. Lieutenant Colonel Garver, the military spokesman, said that violence in Baghdad is at an all time high. President Bush has said repeatedly, as the Iraqi security forces stand up our forces will stand up. But increasingly, the Iraqi security forces, as Senator Durbin just so eloquently said, are not the solution, they're the problem. By and large their poorly trained, led and motivated, and worst of all they've been infiltrated by sectarian militias, death squads, and criminal gangs. It is painfully clear that rogue elements in security forces have become a greater threat to Iraq and its overall security than the insurgency. Only the Iraqis can clean up their own house.

General George Casey, our commander in Iraq, told the Senate last September "Increased Coalition presence feeds the notion of occupation, contributes to the dependency of Iraqi security forces on the Coalition, and extends the amount of time that it will take for Iraqi security forces to become self reliant." Well I couldn't agree more with General Casey. We need a new course in Iraq. President Bush has given the Iraqi government a blank check payable in the lives of American soldiers and marines. It's time to tear up that check. It's time to chart a new course that will serve American interests as well as the interests of the Iraqi people. So Mr. Chairman I thank you again, and I want to join in thanking our witnesses for having the courage to be here and to speak out this afternoon.

15:14

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Senator Harkin, thank you very much. First we will hear today from Nathaniel Fick, the former infantry officer from the United States Marine Corps. I'm going to describe him just a bit more. Nathaniel Fick was commissioned as second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps after graduating with high honors from Dartmouth College in 1999. He led his infantry platoon in Afghanistan and in Pakistan

only weeks after the 9/11 attacks, later led a Marine Reconnaissance platoon during the earliest months of the war in Iraq.

He left the Marines as a captain in 2004, earned a master's degree in International Security Policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He is a member of the Board of Visitors at the Rockefeller Center for Public Policy at Dartmouth, and served as a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Strategic & International Studies in Washington. And finally, in addition, he is now an MBA candidate at the Harvard and author of the *New York Times* bestseller, *One Bullet Away*.

Mr. Fick, thank you very much for serving our country and thanking you for coming here today.

16:24

NATHANIAL FICK: Thank you Mr. Chairman, distinguished members. I'd like to dedicate my testimony to the memory of a Marine Captain named Rob Secher, a friend of mine who was killed in al Anbar province on Monday.

I'm here today as neither a Democrat nor a Republican, but as a citizen and a veteran. My message is urgency. Urgency because 776 Americans were wounded, and 72 were killed in Iraq in September, following record high Iraqi casualties earlier this summer. Urgency because the consequences of losing in Iraq are staggering, and our finite window of opportunity to make progress is slamming shut. Urgency because the American people have not been engaged in this war, and we cannot succeed if the burden is borne by our military alone. The most shocking part of serving in Iraq is coming home and realizing that most of the nation hardly knew we were gone.

17:10

There are thousands of soldiers and marines whose experience in Iraq is more extensive and more recent than mine. I can't speak for all of them, but I hope today to convey a few lessons I've learned, lessons that have been echoed by nearly all of my comrades. We are not strategists. We fought these wars in the dirt, where "winning" sometimes meant living to see the next sunrise. I don't presume to recommend courses of action to you, but rather to highlight three ideas — from a grunt's perspective — on which good decisions might be based.

17:40

The American people have been given a false choice in Iraq, and we should recast the debate in more honest and accurate terms. The options aren't simplistic soundbites: "stay the course," versus "cut and run." Our real choices now involve how many troops to keep in Iraq, and what they should do while they're there. My own experience sheds light on these questions.

18:00

In the Spring of 2003, my battalion fought exactly the people we expected to fight: Ba'ath Party hardliners, foreign jihadists, and criminals. The battalion returned to Iraq a year later to find that the enemy had changed: there was then a broad-based insurgency made up of average people. Instead of Saddam loyalists or foreigners, many were pragmatic Iraqis who felt the U.S. had not lived up to its promises. A year later, on the battalion's third tour, the nature of the fight had changed again: American forces were on the sidelines — and occasionally in the middle — as vicious ethnic battles unfolded between groups of Iraqis. This latest iteration is particularly ironic: the American presence is a provocation that stokes much of the civil strife, and yet it's also the only thing keeping a lid on all-out civil war. These observations suggest that any large-scale withdrawal of American forces from Iraq today would end in genocidal bloodletting and the prospect of a failed state in the heart of the Middle East.

18:57

On the other hand, my old platoon of Marines has done four combat deployments since 9/11, and is about to embark on its fifth. These men are volunteers. Most of them are married, and many have children. They, and the other members of our ground forces, are already operating at full capacity. The Marine Corps recognizes this, and recently announced a recall of 2,500 Marines from the Individual Ready Reserve. I might be one of them. These Marines will do their duty when called, but this is clearly a sign of desperation, and suggests that we cannot increase the U.S. footprint in Iraq without taking dire steps.

The conclusion I reach is that we must make better use of the forces we have. This isn't empty rhetoric. History points to two major lessons in waging war successfully against insurgents.

19:45

We must emphasize building over killing, and we must tie our welfare to that of the Iraqis. The defining phrases in Iraq today are our strategy of "Clear, Hold, Build," and the plan to "stand down as the Iraqis stand up." Both are fundamentally sound. The problem is that we're not implementing them, and never have.

"Clear, Hold, Build" is a valid framework. U.S. forces have the firepower and skill to clear any area in Iraq, but we don't have the manpower to hold with Americans alone, and we haven't been given the resources to build. The consequences of these shortages were painfully apparent to those of us on the ground as early as April 2003, when my platoon was routinely tasked to patrol sixty or eighty square kilometers of Baghdad. Our mission was to "show American presence, disarm the populace, distribute fresh water, provide medical care, map critical infrastructure, locate unexploded ordnance" and on and on. There were twenty-three of us. We always had plenty of ammunition, but frequently had no translator, and we never had enough reconstruction money or aid supplies. I didn't see

many ideologues in Iraq. I saw normal people who wanted the same things for their families that we want — electricity twenty-fours a day, basic healthcare, access to clean water, and safe neighborhoods. They were willing to side with whoever appeared most able to provide these basic goods, and we have consistently failed to prove that we are that side.

21:11

Our stated goal of “standing down as the Iraqis stand up” makes perfect sense. In the long term, Americans *will* leave, and Iraqis will have to solve Iraqi problems. In the short and medium term, this requires making the advisory mission in Iraq our main effort. The heart of this plan has been the creation of Military Transition Teams and Police Transition Teams, small groups of soldiers and marines who live, eat, sleep, train, and fight with the Iraqi army and police battalions they advise. These teams embody all that is good about U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in Iraq: they emphasize intelligence, de-emphasize the use of force, and rely on civilian institutions to protect the population and build infrastructure. Unfortunately, they’re our main effort in word only. In fact, only 1 in 30 Americans deployed to Iraq serves as an embedded advisor. They, not the Americans sequestered in fantasy-land Forward Operating Bases and the Green Zone, are our best hope, and we must train, fund, and prioritize them commensurately.

The burden of this war is being borne by the less than one percent of our population that has served in Iraq, and by their families. This is morally corrupt, and strategically foolish. Iraq may or may not have been part of the Global War on Terrorism in 2003, but it is now, if for no other reason than we made it so. After September 11, our government advised its citizens to go shopping, telling us that any disruption to our way of life would hand a victory to our enemies. As a consequence, we have utterly failed to mobilize our population for what may be a long war.

22:44

In fact, it often seems as if there is a concerted effort to keep the war and its sacrifices out of the daily lives of our citizens. My fellow Marines are confused when images of our friends’ flag-draped caskets are kept off the evening news in a purported “show of respect” for the dead and their families. What is disrespectful about a military honor guard? Those images should be in every American living room, every night of this war. The purpose isn’t to stoke patriotic fervor, and it isn’t to bolster anti-war sentiment. We must do everything possible to narrow the gulf between those fighting this war and their counterparts at home.

23:18

I am no fan of a draft. But I cannot help noticing that college campuses, once hotbeds of activism, are now islands of apathy. This war simply doesn’t touch most Americans. We can slap a yellow sticker on our SUVs, and never acknowledge the relationship between energy consumption and national security. We can declare that military service isn’t for

“our kind of people,” and then wonder why our leaders seem to have so little experience in military matters.

23:43

The greatest danger of civic disengagement is that it threatens to undermine the very values we claim to fight for. I joined the Marines in 1998 because I believe that the United States stands for peace, liberty, and prosperity in the world, and that our ideals can serve as an example and a force for positive change. Whenever I took Marines into harm’s way, I had to know two things: first, that what I was asking them to do was morally right, not in a political or strategic sense, but in our little slice of the war; and second, that, if anyone were killed, I would be able to stand in a living room months later and explain to a mother and father why their son had died working for me, and why I had thought that sacrifice was worthwhile. That sets the bar exceedingly high, and yet we cleared it every day. We cleared it because we knew what we stood for. Torture and indefinite imprisonment without trial are not about our enemies. They are about us. As a junior officer, I don’t see how they can possibly pass the litmus test I’ve described, and I don’t believe they’re in keeping with the values of the United States and our military.

We will not, however, hear an outcry about any of this from the men and women in uniform. They are professional volunteers who swore an oath to obey the lawful orders of a democratically elected government. 140,000 of them are valiantly doing that in Iraq today. Leading them is a sacred trust, partly because they cannot publicly advocate for themselves. We simply can’t afford to kick this can down the road past November, or past 2008. Too many people are dying, too much money is being squandered, and too much damage is being done to the United States’ standing in the world. Our soldiers and marines are trained to have a bias for action. Indecision is a decision, and inaction has consequences all its own. You on this committee are in a position to act. I implore you to do so, and do it urgently. Thank you.

25:33

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Mr. Fick, thank you for a very powerful statement and again, thank you for your service.

We’ll next hear from Mr. Gerald Burke, former national security advisor to the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior. In May 2003, Gerald Burke was one of six law enforcement specialists selected by the Department of Justice to conduct an on-the-ground assessment of the Iraqi criminal justice system. That assignment led to his selection as senior police advisor to the Baghdad Police Chief, a position he held through June 2004. In February 2005, the Department of State asked Mr. Burke to return to Iraq as a National Security Advisor to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior. He has returned from Iraq in February of 2006.

Mr. Burke was an active law enforcement officer for twenty-five years, a veteran of the United States Army, served in active duty from 1968 to 1970. Mr. Burke holds a Bachelor Degree in Secondary Education from Boston State College and a Master Degree in

Criminal Justice from Anna Maria College. He is also a graduate of the New England Institute of Law Enforcement Management's Command Training Program, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Academy, and the U.S. Secret Service's Dignitary Protection School. This is a man of very significant experience, and Mr. Burke we very much appreciate your traveling here from Boston to be with us here today. Thank you very much.

26:54

GERALD BURKE: Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. Again, my name is Gerald Burke, and I've provided a full C.V. to your staff for your review. In May 2003, I was a member of a six-person team of police executives sent to Baghdad, Iraq, by the U.S. Department of Justice, in particular the ICITAP office and the Department of State's INL office. The police team was part of a larger criminal justice team including corrections and legal experts. My assignment in Iraq would last until June 2004. Initially, our team conducted a Needs Assessment of the Iraqi Police Service and then my role evolved into becoming the daily senior advisor to the Baghdad Police Chief.

27:16

The police team was part of a larger criminal justice team including corrections and legal executives. My assignment in Iraq would last until June 2004. Initially, our team conducted a needs assessment of the Iraqi Police Service for DoJ and the State Department. I returned about a year later and did another year working a little bit higher in the organizational chart with the national level of the Deputy Minister for Police Affairs. My total time in Baghdad was about 25 months.

During my time in Baghdad I worked very closely with the United States and British military, particularly the military police. I worked with the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, the Coalition Provisional Authority, and the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office. I overlapped all three of those organizations. More importantly though, I worked very closely, virtually everyday, with the Iraqi Police Service (IPS).

28:13

I could spend hours, perhaps days, talking about my experience with the American military, American civilians, Iraqi Police, Iraqi civilians, working and running the streets of Baghdad, of the violence and of the bombings across Baghdad. I could talk about the life inside and outside of the Green Zone. I prefer to talk about some of the observations and conclusions I have made after two years in Baghdad.

First, and foremost, I have nothing but praise for the American military. Their war-making capabilities are simply awesome. In particular though, I want to compliment the 18th Military Police Brigade, its commanding officer Teddy Spain in particular. The 18th MP Brigade was the quickest to recognize the transition from war-fighters to stability and reconstruction operations. I will talk more about the military later.

Second, and perhaps most obvious and undisputed, is the complete failure and embarrassment of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). By almost all accounts, military, civilian, the media, and even our Coalition partners, CPA was a disaster. CPA was never able to get ahead of the curve of events. Its mistakes have been well documented, from the broad de-Ba'athification process to the disbandment of the Iraqi Army. The most serious mistake, however, I believe was the process by which the current government has been elected. The government was not elected upon a federal system where representation is elected locally based upon percentages of the population. The CPA system allowed political parties to run on national slates, giving much more influence to some of the more radical organizations.

29:57

The next, I would like to say, is the U.S. Government's failure to recognize the importance of security in the immediate post conflict environment, in particular, our failure to support the civilian rule of law early on after the fall of Saddam.

Our original team developed a recommendation for 6,000 international civilian police trainers and advisors. While this recommendation was quickly reduced to 1,500 by powers-that-be that are above my pay grade, it still took six months before the first 24 civilian trainers and advisors arrived from the U.S. Even a year after the report was written, when I was leaving in June of 2004, we still had less than 100 civilian trainers and advisors in country. The funding for these civilian police trainers and advisors was not available until October of 2003, that's 8 months after the start of the war. In fact funding was even scarce for our advance team: I worked under five or six different contracts during my first tour of duty as funds were transferred around to allow us to stay in country. As the insurgent activity increased in the fall of 2003 with attacks on various embassies, the United Nations, the Red Cross, some of the Baghdad Police Stations, even the Baghdad hotel where I was staying was attacked, there was widespread recognition that the recruiting, training, and deployment of Iraqi police was failing. The failure to deploy civilian police trainers and advisors delayed the recruitment, training, and deployment of these Iraqi police.

31:40

The U.S. Military was directed to help with the process. By sheer number of personnel, the U.S. Military began to dominate the process and to accomplish the task. In December 2003, the first class of recruits was sent to the Jordanian International Police Training Center. The first IPS, Iraqi Police Service, recruit class entered the Baghdad Academy in January 2004, again about 8 months after the war started... almost ten months after the war started.

By March 2004, the U.S. Government recognized that only the U.S. Military had the personnel, logistical, and transportation assets to accelerate the process of recruiting the new Iraqi Police Service. The Civilian Police Assistance Training Team, known as

CPATT, under the command of a two star Major General, was created to recruit, train, equip and sustain the new Iraqi Police Department. This is well documented in a report, Special Report number 137 of the United States Institute for Peace.

Across Iraq, American soldiers and marines were pressed into service to be police trainers and advisors. These soldiers and marines occasionally came from military police units but more often than not they were artillerymen, transportation corps, quartermasters or any other available units in that part of the country.

One unfortunate side effect of the militarization of the police training mission was that the soldiers and marines trained best at what they knew best: military skills and military tactics. Issues such as the rule of law, human rights and treatment of suspects and prisoners, the concept of probable cause under Iraqi Law and policing in a democracy, they received less emphasis.

In 2004, partly due to the inability of the Iraqi Police Service to respond to insurgent activity, the Iraq Ministry of Interior and the U.S. Military organized what they called “third force” or paramilitary Public Order Battalions, such as the Special Police Commandos. These Battalions have now grown to Division-level strength and have been recruited en masse, some from former Republican Guard units and some from the fundamentalist Badr Brigade.

34:02

These Special Police have recently been renamed the National Police — sometimes I think that’s to protect the guilty — have received training only from the U.S. Military and not from civilian police trainers and advisors. There have been numerous allegations from Iraqis and also from non-government organizations that these Special (National) Police are functioning as death squads committing human rights abuses such as murder, torture and kidnapping. Some American military and police advisors sarcastically refer to these Special Police as our “*Salvadorian Option*.” Some refer to them simply as death squads.

I also want to make clear the distinction at this point between the Iraqi Police Service and these *ad hoc* Special Police units. Iraqi Police Service pre-dates Saddam and was actually created in 1920 by the British and was modeled on the British constabulary system. Saddam, when he came to power, did not particularly trust the Iraqi Police Service and, over the years, he created a number of secret police and *muhabarats* intelligence organizations that usurped much of the authority of the Iraqi Police Service.

Candidates for the IPS Officer Corps were generally well-educated and not necessarily well-connected to the regime. Many families sought to get their sons into the police as a way to avoid getting them drafted into the army. This was particularly true during the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s and the Gulf War. Individual officers prided themselves on their higher education. Many of the commanders of the IPS had attended college outside of Iraq, particularly before the sanctions, and particularly in the United Kingdom is where they went to school.

35:56

While the curriculum at the Officers College included Ba'ath Party indoctrination, it also included translated copies of old issues of the FBI's monthly *Law Enforcement Bulletin*, translated into Arabic.

Corruption in the IPS, particularly during the last years of regime, was widespread across all of government service and the IPS was no exception. Much of the corruption in the IPS was in the form of embezzlement of government funds and property, payroll fraud such as nepotism, cronyism, and ghost employees, and the acceptance of bribes and gratuities.

Public employees were generally so underpaid that bribes and gratuities were common and expected. A teacher or policeman might be paid \$20 a month under Saddam but would need \$100 a month to support their families. This was understood by the society. A teacher might accept a 'tip' to provide special attention to your child. A policeman might accept a tip to handle your complaint more expeditiously.

It appeared to be a matter of personal honor, though, for officers not to be too aggressive in pursuing bribes and gratuities. Stealing from the regime was more acceptable if it was done discretely. In many ways, there was a code of honor while trying to survive under Saddam.

It appeared that most of the human rights abuses such as mass murders and ethnic cleansing were conducted by secret police and *muhabarat* organizations. In the last years of the regime the IPS worked in fear of crossing these other organizations. The IPS developed what we called a firehouse mentality where they would not leave their police stations for proactive patrols but instead would wait for a call from a regime official or an investigative judge.

37:55

All of this notwithstanding, it is my opinion that we could easily have worked with returning IPC commanders; it is my opinion that the United States missed a brief window of opportunity in the late spring and early summer of 2003 to provide for a more secure environment for the reconstruction effort.

If I may be so bold and presumptuous, and my colleague was a little hesitant, but at my age I think that I can make some recommendations based on my observations:

An insurgency by any definition, and perhaps most especially the insurgency in Iraq, is unconventional warfare. Conventional combat arms leaders in the U.S. Military have demonstrated an inability to understand and adapt to the unconventional methods of the insurgency. It is my suggestion that the command of the military response to the insurgency in Iraq should be transferred to counterinsurgency experts in the American military rather than conventional soldiers, rather than conventional combat arms personnel.

This would include transferring command of police training from the military to the police professional trainers that already exist in ICITAP, the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program at Justice, and also the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement at the Department of State.

Our Army is too small and fully committed in Iraq and elsewhere for this war on terror and other missions. We have a 10-Division Army (excluding Reserves and the National Guard) and we need at least a 12-, if not a 14-, Division Army. Peacekeeping, post-conflict and failed-state environments will be constants in the future. We've been doing it for 20 years and we'll probably be doing it for the next 20 years. Additionally, at least one of these Divisions, these new divisions that I'm suggesting, should be specifically designed as a "Peacekeeping Division." That is a Division that would be heavy in civil affairs people, judge advocate, medical, transportation, logistics, engineers, and military police units.

40:12

The State Department also needs to develop plans for large-scale, multidiscipline, rapid responses to failed state and post-conflict environments. Among the disciplines that would be needed at the State would again be justice experts, public utility experts, public health experts, primary and secondary education, labor relations experts, public transportation infrastructure experts and political systems experts. The State Department's response to the situation in Iraq has been as bad as CPA, it's been abysmal. The State Department needs to have its own personnel, logistics and transportation assets outside of the U.S. Military. Some of these experts may come from other agencies; some of them may have to be developed within the State Department itself. By the way, the situation in Iraq is extremely fragile, and it is a civil war. Make no mistake about that. It is a civil war. But thousands of patriotic Iraqis have voluntarily come forward to work with Americans toward a better Iraq. Many of these Iraqis risk their lives every day to continue to work with Americans. Many of these Iraqis, including several friends of mine, have been assassinated while working for the Americans. While it is very unlikely that we will ever have to evacuate the Embassy and the Green Zone, if we do ever have to do that I hope we do not leave these Iraqis banging on the gates of our Embassy — again. Thank you.

41:46

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Mr. Burke thank you very much for your testimony, we appreciate very much your thoughts. We'll have some questions. Next we'll hear from Stephen Pierson. Steven is an army veteran. He served as a non-commissioned military police officer during Operation Iraqi Freedom from March of 2003 to August 2004 with the responsibility for training Iraqi police recruits. He has an extensive background in his police career working as a uniformed officer, investigator, instructor, supervisor, and as executive officer of a police training academy. He's also taught at numerous police academies including supervisor schools. Mr. Pierson, thank you very much for joining us, you may proceed.

42:31

STEPHEN PIERSON: Thank you Senator. My military experience prior to Iraq was five years of active duty and one year in the New York National Guard. I left the army in 1988 to pursue my civilian police career. Early in 2003 as war with Iraq appeared to be certain I contacted a recruiter with the Army Reserves and enlisted. I had been out of the Army for fifteen years, but with my extensive civilian police experience I felt I had a set of skills that the Reserves would need. I agreed to sign up for one year with two conditions: that I be assigned to a Military Police Combat Support unit and that that unit was, in fact, going to Iraq.

By June of 2003 my unit was in the Iraqi city of Al-Hillah, a large city, south of Baghdad. The unit's mission was to provide law and order in the city and to train Iraqi police officers.

I was tasked with writing the curriculum for the academy. I met with the company commander, first sergeant, the NCOIC, and others for the specifics. It quickly became apparent that there was no template or command guidance on what should be taught, but rather the amount of time that we would teach was the only hard and fast rule. I was told that each class would run for a week and that there would be up to 200 students per class.

My initial reaction was less than enthusiastic. I protested that 40 hours was not nearly enough time to teach someone the basics of law enforcement, especially with a class size of up to 200. I was then informed that the training would not be 40 hours, but rather 20 hours because it was too hot in the afternoon to teach (the academy was being conducted in an open air soccer stadium). My frustration was increased when I learned that the fifth day of the academy would be a graduation ceremony, so therefore there would be no instruction. This in effect left 16 hours of class time to teach up to 200 students, using an interpreter. Many of the students had been police officers under Saddam, many had no experience at all. I was told that the limits of the academy had been established by higher headquarters.

45:08

With only 16 hours of class time, I decided to concentrate on just the basics of police work. I spoke to members of another unit that had been running an academy and solicited their input. I also drew from my limited (at that time) experience from having worked with the Iraqi Police. Weapons safety was the critical course of instruction. The standard weapon for an Iraqi Policeman at the time was the AK-47. The IPs, as they were and are called, had an almost universal habit of walking around with their finger on the trigger of their weapons and then an equally unnerving habit of pointing it at you when you started to talk to them.

In addition to weapons safety, we gave abbreviated courses in the use of force, searching and handcuffing prisoners, searching a vehicle for contraband and explosives, building-clearing, note-taking and I also added some basics of community policing. After teaching

at the academy, I would return to our base, get a few hours of sleep and then go out on patrol for the night. I did see some improvement with the IPs performance, specifically in the area of weapons safety.

After a couple of months of working with the IPs, we were starting to make some progress with them as far as their response to calls and how they treated the public and prisoners.

We were then told to “stand down” our responses with the IPs. Orders had come down telling us to let the IPs handle calls; we were supposed to observe their actions. This effectively ended our joint patrols with the IPs and stopped any continued progress we could have made. Patrols were actually reprimanded for getting involved in police situations and not letting the IPs handle situations. Of course the reason the MP patrols had gotten involved was that the IPs were not doing an adequate job. They lacked the training, the resources and the will to be effective. In short they needed our help in post-Saddam Iraq to become effective police officers.

47:25

I offer this testimony not to point blame or to have it used in partisan politics. Victory is our only choice in Iraq. Anything less dishonors the men and women of this country’s armed forces, places the people of Iraq in danger of living under a new regime of terror, and will further destabilize the Middle East. We need to ramp up our commitment to training by dedicating the resources needed to train and equip the Iraqi police, army and security forces. We need to do now what we didn’t do in 2003 when it would have been easier.

If we and the Iraqi government want well-trained forces in Iraq, then they need to be given the best training, the best equipment and the best pay. We need to reach out to other moderate Arab countries in the area have them assist in our training efforts of the Iraqi security forces. We should also consider bringing small Iraqi units to the United States for training. I do not have the big picture perspective of a command level officer. I do however, have the perspective of someone who was there, saw what worked and what did not. I am proud of my service, the military and my country. Thank you.

48:56

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Mr. Pierson thank you very much for being with us. And finally we will hear from a Mr. Phillip Carter, former military police and civil affairs officer in Iraq. Phillip Carter served in the Army for nine years as a military police and civil affairs officer. He was on active duty in Iraq from October of 2005 to last month I believe, September of 2006 when he returned from that service. He was an adviser to the Iraqi police with the Army's 101st Airborne Division. As the Operations Officer for Task Force Blue, Mr. Carter was responsible for advising the Iraqi police in a province of Iraq.

He is currently an attorney and writer as well in Los Angeles, where he practices a range of issues; government contracts, national security, and international law with McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP. Let me thank Phillip Carter for traveling to Chicago today to join us.

49:56

PHILLIP CARTER: Good morning Senator Dorgan and members of the panel thank you for having me here. Salaam Alakum, Shukan.

Until recently, I served as the S3 for the Task Force Blue, which was the police advisory task force in the Diyala. I guess you could say that I still have sand in my boots, I only came home last month. Diyala is a province comprising 1.4 million citizens. It stretches from Baghdad the outskirts east to the Iranian border, and north to Kurdistan. We frequently called Diyala “little Iraq,” because its diverse geography and demographics made it a microcosm of the country, with 50% Sunni, 40% Shia, and 10% Kurds and other nationalities and religions. My responsibility as S3 was to plan, coordinate, manage, and lead operations for our task force. In addition to that role, I also served as the primary advisor for the Iraqi legal system in our area, working closely with the judiciary and the jails.

To be effective as advisors, we lived and worked outside the wire. We lived at the provincial governance center in downtown Baqubah, a small compound of approximately 200 by 200 meters just down the street from the police station and where the state capitol was.

Despite the violence which swirled around our compound daily, and the trend toward consolidation of U.S. units onto massive super-bases in the desert, my team stayed in downtown because that’s where we could be effective. Our experience living there helped us understand our Iraqi counterparts. When their power grid failed or water supply stopped working, we felt their pain because it was stopped working for us as well. Likewise, when explosions or firefights erupted in the city, we heard and felt them, and could so judge their severity with our own senses. We learned that counterinsurgency cannot be conducted from afar.

During my year in Iraq, I observed tangible progress by the Iraqi police towards their goal of being an independent, competent, and self-sustaining police force. We actually saw progress in a forward direction over the course of our year. We oversaw the training of thousands of Iraqi police, both through the police academy that Mr. Burke mentioned and also through local programs which we stood up and ran with our civilian police advisors and civilian correction trainers who were attached to my team. We facilitated the transfer of hundreds of vehicles, rifles, radios, and other pieces of equipment to the police so that they could do their job. We ran local courses on street survival and investigative skills and we advised, coached, and mentored the station leadership and police leadership of the province. Objectively, by all measures, the police force in Diyala got better during our time.

We also enjoyed success in our efforts to promote the rule of law. We learned that the jails, not the courts and not the police, but the jails were the “center of gravity” for the system, because it was the jails where you could see the effects of the police work and the effects of the judges and the entire system working together. Iraq’s jails also represented a major point of contact between the citizens and the judicial system. It was where they encountered the police and where they encountered the judiciary. In March 2006, the Diyala jail population spiked to 475; we launched a major initiative to engage all the parts of the system reduce this, try to get the system working. And through months and months of focused engagements, and visits to the jail, and prisoner transformations, we were able to reduce this population down to 250. One asked to explain one time the difference between 475 and 250, I say it allowed them to lie down on their backs as opposed to lying on their sides, the jail was that crowded. And you can imagine how this undermines the rule of law, when the people file through this jail weekly and see their loved ones like that. Only time will tell whether we made a lasting impact on the system, but when I left Iraq I felt that we had at least made a difference for the hundreds of detainees who we were able to see released.

We also worked closely with the judges and there’s one anecdote I like to tell about the chief judge for the Diyali province, Judge Toodoo, who I became very close friends with. Guidance came down from headquarters that they wanted the judges to teach the police about Iraqi law. We went to chief judge Toodoo and asked him to teach the class, and at first there was a great deal of reluctance because the judge didn’t respect the police nor did he like them that much. And so he didn’t want to stoop below a level with which he thought a judge should do. But eventually, through our personal relationship we were able to convince him that this is a worthy thing for a judge to do. And then he asked us what we would like him to teach and I responded he would like us to teach a class on Iraq’s new constitution the one that had been ratified in December 2005.

54:30

The Judge Toodoo then looked at me and smiled and said to my interpreter, “Oh, you mean your constitution. And I said, Judge smiling to myself. No sir, I mean your constitution. And he responded back, well this really wasn’t his constitution since it was written by Americans and passed with our army on the streets and so he really saw it as our constitution. That is the American Constitution.

55:00

I conceded this point and instead asked him to give a class on the Iraqi legal tradition. What his expectations were in a police force. The class turned out very well. It taught me a lesson that I’ll never forget. That I carry forward with me as an advisor. We were successful. We were most successful when we have had Iraqi solutions to Iraqi problems. And when we were humble about our role as advisors and we helped them simply to find the best way forward

55:30

However, Despite our successes in developing the police and the rule of law we still saw the security situation deteriorate and as all the public reports make quite clear Sir, all attack trends continue to move in an upward direction and they have done so of since the Golden Mosque bombing in February, with the greatest violence directed at the Iraqi security forces, followed by the Iraqi population, followed by U.S forces. This then is the great paradox of the Iraq war in 2006. How can we be successful in developing the Iraqi police, while the Iraqi insurgency continues to become stronger, broader, deeper, and more lethal?

56:00

I struggle with this question daily particularly as I see my friends still over there engaged in armed contact with the enemy. I have come to believe standing up the Iraqi security forces is a blueprint for withdrawal. Not a victory strategy. At best it will let us substitute Iraqi soldiers and policemen for American troops. But this will not lead to ultimate victory.

56:30

We know what it takes to win a counterinsurgency. The academic literature written by men such as T.E. Lawrence and David Gallula makes it clear that the objective of a counterinsurgency is the people. And instead of a military operation, I frequently liken this to a political campaign. An election campaign, if you will. Something you gentlemen know very well. Elections are won by spending resources to communicate a message and by delivering public goods to the people. At least, we say that theoretically, they are often quite messy in practice. We know what they are about. Its about convincing people that your side is the one they want to join.

57:00

Victory is accomplished by offering a better choice to people and getting them to take that choice. Likewise in counter insurgency, we will only win if we can convince the Iraqis to choose our side over that of the insurgents. T.E. Lawrence wrote in his memoirs that it takes the support, the tacit support, of just two in one hundred of a population to sustain and support an insurgency. Mind you Lawrence's insurgency was very successful. In Iraq a recent surveys showed that 60% of the population has the tacit support for the insurgency.

57:30

It is clear we have a daunting challenge ahead. In my experience the US military has done an exceptional job at doing what it knows how to do, that is building the Iraqi military. But we have neglected the other aspects of the operation with telling the results: senior

military leaders, as Senator Durbin said, call 2006 the year of the police. But when the time came to allocate resources to the fight, the police were second best at best.

58:00

In Diyala, we continually stretched our resources to get the job done. I had two military police platoons to cover a province thousands of square kilometers covering 50 police stations. What this meant in practical terms was, we could visit each police station two to three times a month, but we could never quite partner with them and develop a close advisory relationship, the kind of relationship that would enable us to move forward in a meaningful way.

58:30

Contrast that with that with the military's practice of imbedding advisory teams. In each battalion of the Iraqi army, there are many, many more advisor teams with the army than with the police. And it's clear with this allocation of resources where the priorities are. The army and the police have gotten the good end of the stick compared to the rest of the Iraqi government. There are no judicial transition teams. There are no provincial counsel transition teams. There are no marketplace transition teams. There are no sewage transition teams. Yet these are the things that make a civil society work. This is unfortunate. Our idea in developing a police force and these other aspects of government are more important in counterinsurgency than developing the army.

59:00

In the few successful counterinsurgency campaigns of the 20th century, such as Malaya, the police played the central role in dismantling the enemy through investigations, intelligence connections with the community and dogged pursuit of those who create disorder. An army can provide security, but it does so at the cost of civil society and if the US is to plant democracy in Iraq, a tall order be sure. It must do so by providing a viable police force capable of providing both security and the rule of law.

59:30

I remain optimistic about Iraq. I believe that the US soldiers continue to do well in Iraq and that their presence continues to help the Iraqi people build a better society. But I am unsure that we can achieve our stated goals in Iraq with the resources we have committed to the effort. At this point, given the political realities of 2006, and all that has transpired until now I believe only an unconventional strategy can work.

1:00:00

— That is, emphasizing adviser teams like mine, engaged with the Iraqi security forces and people, and not emphasizing conventional combat units, and not having a large presence in Iraq. I believe that is the only way ahead. To be successful though, we must link the hard

work of these brave men and women to a larger counterinsurgency strategy. One which wins the support of the Iraqi people by making good our nation's promises to them. Thank you, sir.

1:00:26

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Mr. Carter, thank you very much. I am going to turn to my colleges for questions first. But I want to tell you; that, I think it is true that this is the only gathering, committee in congress that has heard testimony like this. And that's very disappointing. You can't fix a problem unless you know what the problem is. And it is the case I expect with all four of you who care about our country, that you worry and perhaps everybody does. If you speak out and tell it as you see it, some will say you are not supportive of this country's efforts. Again nothing could be further from the truth. The only way we can solve these problems if we understand these problems is to understand what is happening, really understand what is happening, and all of you contributed to that understanding today. And Mr. Burke I am going to defer my questions and ask them last. You were the former National Security Advisor to the Iraq Minister of Interior and that is the lynch pin of Iraq security. The Minister of Interior and all that happens in that country. I would ask you... You came back after serving 2 terms in Iraq, the last term as the National Security advisor for the Iraq Minister of Interior, a highly skilled person in law enforcement. Has any one from any other committee in Congress asked for your evaluation, your judgment, your testimony about your experience in Iraq?

1:02:00

GERALD BURKE: No one from any branch of government has contacted me in any form of an exit interview on either tour of duty.

1:02:10

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): That is so disappointing and it is why we have undertaken to hold some of these oversight hearings, not because we want to, but because we believe we have to try to understand what is happening. Again, the four of you have presented very compelling testimony, and I will have some questions for you, but let me turn to my colleagues. First let me turn to Senator Reid.

1:02:38

SEN. REID (D-NV): Captain Carter your observations about counter insurgency are extremely compelling. What kind of things could we do, using your words, to convince the Iraqis to choose our side over the insurgents'?

1:03:00

PHILIP CARTER: Sir, that's a very difficult question. I think we have started to take some steps in the right direction, with the formation of provincial reconstruction teams. Unfortunately, I think that we're not committing enough resources, or the right

organizational structure to these teams. Um, our provincial reconstruction teams are currently approximately a 50 person organization. It's a civil affairs company with some support from the State Department, the Justice Department and other agencies. They're typically headed by a senior diplomat from the State Department. I believe that senior diplomat should actually have command and control of the province, not the military. So that a person with political savvy and the knowledge of the workings of a government and civil society, can be making the decisions with respect to the use of force, and the use of military tools in the province. The Army's new counterinsurgency manual makes this very clear; that the use of force is often times counterproductive in a counterinsurgency. And I think it's important to have a political expert, a diplomat, making those kinds of decisions. I also believe we need to commit more resources to that effort; 50 people for a province of 1.4 million citizens like the Diyalah is not enough. As my colleague said, the State Dept. needs an expeditionary nation-building capability. It needs the ability to put hundreds of people on the ground, Aid workers, relief workers, rule of law experts, sanitation experts, and so forth who can displace the military with its tremendous manpower and resources and approach these provinces from a different perspective. One that is more geared towards winning the support of the people, rather than fighting the insurgency and continuing to stoke the fires.

1:04:40

SEN. REID (D-NV): Chairmen Dorgan's absolutely right. Um, not only has there not been a fact gathering operation to find out what you learned in Iraq, but it's taken so long to get to where we are today. This should have taken place years ago, not months ago, years ago, this hearing that we're doing here today. Each of you remind me how many of you have been on Iraq tours more than once, just raise your hands. More than once? (Mr. Burke) More than once? Now, would both of you explain to the Committee how things changed from your first tour to your second tour of duty? Just in your observations of the people of Iraq.

1:05:40

NATHANIEL FICK: I did only one tour in Iraq, Senator. I did one in Afghanistan, and then one in Iraq.

1:05:42

SEN. REID (D-NV): Ok. You did two in Iraq?

1:05:49

GERALD BURKE: We went in early May of 2003 and we had a lot of opportunities to move around the city by ourselves. I drove an unarmored SUV that's you know, not a HUMVEE, just a standard four-wheel drive vehicle. We did get uh AK-47s and pistols for our protection. We wore vests. But we just drove the city, got stuck in traffic jams, went to the Police Academy, went to every police station in the city of Baghdad frequently, uh

went to the homes of many of the Iraqi generals, went to dozens, probably two to three dozen different restaurants in the city sometimes in the company of the military police, sometimes with the, uh, Iraqi commanders, sometimes with people from the Green Zone who would come out to see what was going on. We had a lot of opportunity to move around the city, meet with people, than the second tour of duty. The second tour, everybody was living inside the Green Zone. The first tour we were living outside in the city. Second tour we were all hunkered down within the Green Zone, the opportunity to meet with Iraqis was very limited. They'd either have to come into the Green Zone, which meant if they were a police commander they essentially lost the day: it took an hour to get through security to get into the Green Zone, conduct their meeting, and by the time they finished the meeting, getting out of the Green Zone, they wouldn't go back to work. The opportunity to meet Iraqi civilians during the second tour of duty was limited to those who worked for the American government, either as interpreters or staff people. Unlike the first tour where we met people in restaurants and in homes. So, it changed a lot between the first and second tours.

1:07:21

SEN. REID (D-NV): Captain Fick. Even though you had one tour of duty, people in your unit had several tours of duty. I think you just said there were several who were headed back for their fifth tour. Is that right?

1:07:32

NATHANIEL FICK: That's right.

1:07:32

SEN. REID (D-NV): Have they explained anything to you how things changed in each tour?

1:07: 37

NATHANIEL FICK: Absolutely. Uh, uh, the clearest and most unfortunate indicator is the just the casualties they've taken. The unit has taken greater casualties on every subsequent tour. Um, they also have found it harder and harder to work with the Iraqi people. In the beginning, Spring & Summer of 2003, we could move around Iraq with a fair degree of fluidity. When we had a day off in May of '03 from our patrolling schedule, we actually went on a field trip to hike around the ruins of the ancient city of Babylon. There's not a chance I could do that in Iraq today, so looking at that, the three year interval makes the change quite clear. The, they're having a harder time finding Iraqis to work with them. Even when I was there we had to pick our translators up blocks away from their neighborhoods, they would wear ski masks, uh, because they were afraid to be seen working with us. Um, too many Iraqis working with the Americans have been targeted and killed, so it's been increasingly difficult, I think, for the units on the ground to recruit local

Iraqis who have the local knowledge; not only Arabic language capability, but real neighborhood knowledge, uh, to work with.

1:08:55

SEN. REID (D-NV): Mr. Burke, Mr. Pierson, this is my last question. You were both involved in training up the police. First you, Mr. Pierson, if you had had more than 16 hours to train a police officers, and some of these recruits you had indicated had no experience as a police officers. And training these police officers would be as difficult as training a police officer in say Chicago, or the city of Las Vegas. It would be hard to get them to be very good, training them in 16 hours, wouldn't it?

1:09:24

PIERSON: Well, absolutely Senator, and I have trained police officers here, and I would equate that training a police officer in Chicago is much easier than training an Iraqi police officer in Iraq.

1:09:41

SEN. REID (D-NV): Plus the 16 hours, you've indicated, was interrupted because of the necessity of translating what you said back and forth.

1:09:46

PIERSON: I would have to present my lesson in very fragmented, uh, just try to get one major point out. I would then turn to the interpreter and say, "Ok, what I just said." He would then say it in Arabic, and then God-forbid somebody would actually have a question or not understand what I said. They would ask the question of the interpreter and the interpreter would then turn to me. Now working with these interpreters, I must say, I uh, became very fond of my interpreter. And they do, as the Captain indicated, they do put themselves at risk to work with us, and not for a lot of pay. But the interpreter became almost an expert in police work because he had parroted this lesson plan so many times that quite often I caught him answering questions without actually giving me the courtesy of pretending to interpret. And I'd say, "Ok, Hussein, you have to at least tell me how things are at school these days so the cops think it's coming from me." Uh, so he uh got quite adept at, uh, he would have made a fine police officer. But it, it is extremely difficult. Not that it can't be done, but you've got to, you know, I think that everybody who heard that recognizes that you cannot have somebody that is even, would be even remotely considered qualified to be any kind of police officer in 16 hours. We spend hundreds of hundreds of hundreds of hours training a baseline city patrolman. And then we continue that education with annual in-services, and additional training. You know, we don't let somebody become a detective until they've attended and completed additional training, we don't let somebody become a sergeant or a lieutenant or a captain until...you know there's a progression of training. And I think that's what I'm most disappointed at. When I protested 16 hours isn't enough, I was told, "You're right, but there's going to be more

follow-on training coming” and I think Mr. Burke addressed that, because while I was there in May and June I had heard of these 6000 civilian police trainers that were coming. Of course, now I know, now I hear the other side of how they never got there.

1:12:11

SEN. REID (D-NV): Mr. Pierson, that was uh, what I wanted to rely, uh, direct to Mr. Burke. I read before coming into this courthouse, your testimony. And then I heard you say it. And it’s even hard for me to comprehend what I’ve read, and what you’ve said. And that is, the team developed a recommendation for 6000 police officers, trainers and advisors, and you got fewer than 100?

1:12:37

GERALD BURKE: It eventually grew. When I returned in February of ’05, we had just under 300 trainers, and just under 500 advisors out in the field around Iraq visiting police stations.

1:12:48

SEN. REID (D-NV): For a country of 25 million people, you were to train the police officers?

1:12:51

GERALD BURKE: In a country that’s very difficult to get around in. It’s, the highways are very limited getting out of some of the provinces. You can’t move easily around that country.

1:12:59

SEN. REID (D-NV): Thank you Mr. Chairman.

1:13:01

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Sen. Reid, thank you very much. Sen. Durbin?

1:13:05

SEN. DURBIN (D-IL): Captain Fick. Um, as I mentioned earlier, I just returned from Iraq. Most of us here, have visited with wounded veterans in Walter Reed, and met with them in our home states, attended funerals, talked to their families. But I have to say that that personal visit; sitting down to break bread, lunch and dinner, with soldiers and marines, creates a different feeling about this war. Uh, for me personally. I recall being shown some of the IEDs by General Corelli in Baghdad. And then he said, “We lost two soldiers here yesterday to these.” And I said, “Where?” And he said, “About 8 blocks from here.” And

all of the faces that you see in uniform, those brave Americans, you start thinking, “Was it one of them? One of the people that I met from Illinois, or some other place.” You dedicated your testimony to...please repeat his name...Captain?

1:14:08

NATHANIEL FICK: Rob Secher

1:14:09

SEN DURBIN (D-IL): Secher. in Al’Anbar.

1:14:11

NATHANIEL FICK: Yes sir.

1:14:12

SEN. DURBIN (D-IL): And I was there last Saturday, and I was at a Marine base in that province, and it means something more. The point that you tried to make is that America needs to be part of this war, emotionally. To understand that we’re losing our best and bravest over there. They’re giving America everything we’ve ever asked of anybody, and we just think about getting ready for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Not this war as we face it. One thing they told us in Al’Anbar is that they were facing an economy of force. Well, it took me awhile as a civilian to figure out what that was all about. It meant they weren’t receiving all the troops they needed. The economy of force meant they had to transfer soldiers and marines from Al’Anbar to Baghdad. The reason, as they explained to us, is Baghdad’s the ballgame. We lose Baghdad, it’s all over. So, with all the violence we’re reading about in Baghdad, we’re moving more and more forces away from these provinces where they’re still needed; to train Iraqi army and police, into Baghdad because the situation is just deteriorating so rapidly. We read about it every day. I mentioned earlier that I met a person who has been emailing me who is an advisor in Baghdad to what’s known as a Provincial Reconstruction Team. This is a big team that’s been put together by the United States to deal with everything we’ve been talking about: sewers and water and electricity and police. Do it all. Create a government, local government in Baghdad. And I’d like to get a reaction from you Captain Fick, and maybe others too, about one thing he wrote to me. Because I think something has changed since the early days. What has changed is a civil war. It is no longer the Baathist, no longer Al Qaeda elements, no longer insurgents imported from other countries, it is Iraqi vs. Iraqi, Sunni vs. Shiite. It has become pervasive and deadly. And I’d like to read to the panel what he wrote to me. And he said, “In the rule of law area,” which is his responsibility, “each police station has its own Sunni or Shiite makeup that determines who gets arrested and who gets released. Even judges are conscious of a defendant’s background, and tend to craft their judgments accordingly.” How can you have a rule of law in the midst of a civil war, if the people who are on the police force are really not enforcing the law objectively, but according to

their own religious or political belief? Doesn't this make this job, even beyond the basic training a virtual impossibility? I open it to the panel for response.

1:17:04

NATHANIEL FICK: I would suggest it makes it a virtual impossibility, but not an impossibility. And the way I see it, the stakes of failure are so staggeringly high, that we have to exhaust every alternative. To pursue whatever sliver of possibility remains. I think it requires that we accept a very risk acceptant strategy that the natural impetus for a military commander in that kind of situation, where you're caught in the middle of this, that you're caught in this ethnic crossfire, and it's hard to see how a 20-year old, English speaking, American soldier or marine can do anything effective in that environment, and so our natural inclination is to pull back, and put force protection above all else. And to retreat to our forward operating bases, to stay behind our armor, and our ballistic sunglasses, and I would argue that that's completely rational, and also completely wrong. And the only strategy that allows us to have that sliver of possibility is the strategy these gentlemen have talked about. That is getting out among the people, and getting right in the middle of that mix, no matter how dangerous it is. If force protection is the mission then we should be in the barracks playing basketball.

1:18:17

SEN. DURBIN (D-IL): Any others who want to respond to that?

1:18:18

GERALD BURKE: The ultimate solution is going to be a political solution amongst the Iraqis, and I don't believe that the current unity, I don't believe in the sincerity of the current unity government. Uh, there's plenty of evidence that many members of the government, including some of the Ministers, are actually sanctioning some of the violence across Iraq.

1:18:42

SEN. DURBIN (D-IL): And I can tell you, the Ministry of Health is under the control of Mr. Sadr. He's a Shi'a, and they don't provide health resources to Sunnis.

1:18:47

GERALD BURKE: Well, we at the Ministry of Interior with Dr. Jabbar who was a member of the Badr Brigade, the leadership of the Badr Brigade, and he spent years in Iraq, where he didn't learn much about policing and democracy, yet he's in charge of the Iraqi police service.

1:19:03

SEN. DURBIN (D-IL): Any other comments? From others? Yes, Mr. Carter?

1:19:07

PHILIP CARTER: Sir, I've heard two things. One is that it's more complex than simply having a Shiite police force or a Sunni dominated army, or vice versa. In Diala, we actually strove for a police force that reflected the community at the lowest level. So, for Sunni enclaves that meant a Sunni police force and the same was true for Shiite neighborhoods. We found that those tribal and community links were what made the police more effective, and more survivable. And we accepted the risk that that police force may be sectarian in nature, but it would serve that community, and with proper leadership and oversight to make sure they didn't exploit themselves or conduct extracurricular activities. We felt that was an acceptable risk. Uh, the second point I would make is that it's increasingly a home grown insurgency. The Associated Press reported three weeks ago a set of numbers that I'd heard while I was in country that of the 13000 or so detainees in U.S. custody right now, just shy of 400 are foreign fighters. And now, the detainee population doesn't exactly mirror the guys on the other side, of course foreign fighters may be more likely to blow themselves up or be killed in action than Iraqis, but it gives us a pretty good sense of that the insurgency is really homegrown. And that any solution is going to need to be an Iraqi solution.

1:20:22

SEN. DURBIN (D-IL): You know I am commonly asked by people, by reporters and people I represent, um now what would you do different, how can we make a big difference over there, how long are we going to be there, and when can our troops come home? Now, these are basic questions that's that you might expect here. And I'm just wondering as I listen to some of you talk about the frustration you had with our government providing resources, and now the frustration we have with the existing Iraqi government, whether there is some need for an ultimatum to the Iraqis about change. They happen to have billions of dollars in their treasury from oil revenues that they're not spending in their own country...

1:21:00

SEN. DURBIN (D-IL): ...Is there, do you think there's any value to if not a private, but some type of ultimatum to them for change, when it comes to basic services to the people providing the resources for some type of army, or police force, or disbanding the militias. Should there be some sort of law for disbanding those? So we can start to take control of the situation.

1:21:22

GERALD BURKE: There's, there's so many issues involved that just an ultimatum to the government alone isn't going to work, because the militias, if you disband them, they need work. The militias have been infiltrated into the government service, there's sort of a job

program of some measures. If the 60% unemployment in the country, and 20% under employment where we have doctors coming to work for us as interpreters; doctors and lawyers and dentists. University professors. So it's more than just a simple giving of an ultimatum. We have to put a plan together. Whether it's a Marshall Plan or not, we have to actually put some comprehensive thought into what we're going to do over there.

1:22:02

SEN. DURBIN (D-IL): And, it's, I'll just close by saying as Sen. Dorgan opened the hearing reminding us the Sec. of Defense admonished people not to be talking about plans anymore. He'd heard enough plans. Well, we clearly need one because we don't have a plan to bring the troops home. Thank you.

1:22:16

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Sen. Durbin thank you very much. Sen. Harkin?

1:22:18

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): Again, I just want to thank you all four very much, not only for your testimony today, but for what you've done before. Um, listening to you and then having, being as well-read as I can on the situation in Iraq, it just seems like so many mistakes have been made, and, well, we're kinda between a rock and a hard place right now to tell you the truth. And I don't know that anyone can really figure out what to do. They say we need better police, more police, but this was the year of police training. As I pointed out USA. Today said that the death squads that killed 1450 that they know of in September, up from 450 in February. First 10 days of October, 770 killed by death squads. It's clearly the police forces are not working. The question I've got is I've got a couple times from my constituents is, "Wait a minute. Isn't there an Iraqi government? Don't they have a Prime Minister? Didn't the people elect them to office? Why aren't they constructing a police force to protect the people? Why aren't they doing that? If they want to exist as a government?" I can't answer that question. And I ask you, is there...that's just a simple question from a constituent to me, if there's an Iraqi government, why aren't they doing something about training a police force that will protect people rather than steal from them, torture them, murder them and engage in human rights abuses? I don't know who I asked that to, Mr. Burke maybe?

1:24:10

GERALD BURKE: Well, I, I think the question is an assumption of the question that the Iraqis want a democratic, unified country. I'm not so sure that the government over there does want a democratic, or even a unified nation.

1:24:25

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): Sorry for that one, doesn't the government want to protect their people? Don't they want to protect them from death squads and...

1:24:29

GERALD BURKE: I don't have faith in the current government, no.

1:24:33

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): Mr. Pierson?

1:24:36

STEPHEN PIERSON: Well Senator, I think that question is well above my pay grade...and um, probably astronomically above my intellect (*chuckles*), but I would offer just that from somebody who has been there and has had some thoughts on the idea, that uh, I don't care what kind of police force you're talking about; whether it's an Iraqi police force, or one in an African nation, or an European nation, or, you don't have to look too far into our recent past. Any police force 1) has to be representative of the people. But one of the issues, and we've seen that in our own country, and some of us are old enough to remember the 60s and 50s where, uh, not complete corruption, but graft was an accepted form in police work. Where, because we didn't pay cops enough, when they were walking their beat you had to give them a free meal, you had to give them 1/2 price on maybe some groceries or something. If you want an effective police force, and again I, I offer this only as someone who has limited intellect on the matter, ya have to pay 'em, and you have to train'em, and you have to equip them, and they have to be your superstars in that country if you want them to be effective. Some little Iraqi kid right now today should be looking at the police as the example of what to be. And that is absolutely not the case now. But if you want the best, you've got to pay for the best, you've got to train the best, and you've got to equip the best. And I don't know that that even would work, but we certainly haven't tried it. I don't think we've set them up to succeed. And the question about whether the Iraqi government wants to be an actual Iraqi government, I wouldn't even attempt to try to give you something that passed for a rational answer on that. I, I don't know. I know their police force has to be really ramped up, and they, because they aren't going to work otherwise. Loosing your job as a police officer has to be such a catastrophe that you would never think of going out and being part of a death squad. Because being a police officer is too good a gig.

1:27:03

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): And again, the safety issue, who said 4000 had been killed? Did I read that recently? Something about 4000 police being killed recently?

1:27:10

SEN. REID (D-NV): Sen. Harkin, if you'd yield, Johns Hopkins has come out with a study the last couple days. They have said that 600,000 Iraqis have been killed since the war.

1:27:22

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): 600,000 Iraqis?

1:27:23

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Let me ask you to yield, Major General Joseph Peterson said last Friday that 4000, about 4000 Iraqi policemen had been killed since September of 2004, and over 8000 Iraqi policemen had been wounded in that period of time.

1:27:38

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): So you have that many killings of policemen, and you don't pay 'em enough. I mean, I don't see where we're headed on this thing. If you've got to pay 'em, pay 'em. If we've got pay them any more or protect them any better. Who was it that said about a police station?

1:27:56

SEN. REID (D-NV): Back there, that said nobody was there?

1:27:58

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): Yeah. No one was there, and, and the windows are out. Well, anyway, I, I just...I just...

1:28:06

GERALD BURKE: In 2005 we were putting together a budget for the Iraqi police service for 2006. We budgeted for 10 Iraqi policemen killed in action every day, and 15 wounded in action every day to the point of they'd need to be retired. So, that's the expectation. Last year, we had casualties amongst the Iraqi police service. For Iraqi civilian casualties, you mentioned the British journal *Lancet* that's coming out saying 600,000. That is much higher than the United States government has been saying. I think it's still maybe low. There's a lot of social, cultural, and religious reasons why the Iraqis will not report deaths of their relatives to the government. First of all, they suspect in many places it's the national police, these death squads, that are going around killing people, so you wouldn't report the death of a relative to the person you suspect of doing the killing. Under Islam, they want to get the body into the ground as soon as possible. Prepare the body, and bury it the same day if possible, so anything that slows that down...especially if it's a futile gesture to report the death. They know police are overworked. Even if the police were sincere, the investigation would go nowhere. They would much rather bury the person and seek revenge, or an honor killing on their own, rather than report it to the government.

1:29:33

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): I, uh. I've heard that members of death squads when they're caught, they're retrained and reassigned to new units. There've been reports of that in *Time Magazine* and other places. I don't know if that's so, or not, but it's widespread. I guess, I just, I don't mean to belabor this, but it seems like we're in a situation now where we're in a whirl pool: we're down so far that I don't, I don't know there's much we can do unless we do it massively. Some massive kind of intervention. And yet, I don't find the will among the American people to do that because of all that's gone before. And if we just continue on the way we are, we're just going to continue lose more and more ground. It's almost like...As the question would have it, to avert a total disaster, we'd have to act I think in a big way, very quickly. Do you think that also? Just to throw that out...to avoid a complete disaster. Mr. Fick?

1:30:40

NATHANIEL FICK: I certainly think we have to act quickly Senator, but I don't know...

1:30:42

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): But do we have act in a big way? I know act quickly, but to do what?

1:30:47

NATHANIEL FICK: I don't see, the...don't see the will just in my circle of citizens and constituents to make a massive commitment on the ground. I think we can leverage a lot of material support through a good advisory effort. An advisor is a combat multiplier. One advisor, in my view, in fighting an insurgency is worth 10 or 20 or 50 conventional troops. So, we can do this with money and political support through advisory teams, and I think leverage the effect more than we can with conventional troops. If I can return to your original question very quickly, the question of why the Iraqi government isn't taking control.

1:31:30

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): Yeah.

1:31:31

NATHANIEL FICK: I think we've been lucky in Iraq in one respect, and that is no charismatic leader has emerged that the insurgent groups have rallied around, and the flip side of that is that no charismatic leader, capable leader has emerged that our Iraqi counterparts have rallied around. I'm not convinced there's anybody who can speak for the people of Iraq. Uh, and so I do share your sense that the dialogue is one sided. We're talking, and nobody is talking back.

1:31:59

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): Yeah. That's what I said.

1:32:02

NATHANIEL FICK: What to do about it? Its far above my head...

1:32:04

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): Any last thoughts...

1:32:06

PHILIP CARTER: The bonds that make the social contract work have yet to form in Iraq. The people don't know yet how to make their government work for them. How to influence the process politically, and how to live in a democracy. They're in many ways still suffering the hangover of Saddam even three years after the fact. We have run missions handing out cards telling them that there's a 911 tip line, a 123 tip line, that they could call if they had a reason to call the police or the fire department because to them calling the police was a foreign concept. Likewise we had to coach members of the provincial council to get out there to the people and talk to them, and almost teach them how to get votes because that too was a foreign concept. I think as you said, it's going to take time before the people can influence the process and force the government to take control of its own destiny.

1:32:57

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I...

1:33:00

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Sen. Harkin thank you very much. I was searching for something I read this morning in some material...the Ministry of Interior is really critical it seems to me when it comes to security inside Iraq, and the person I believe, either a general or one of the top people in security in Iraq who has been formally accused of murder, but has never been tried, and who remains still in a position of a, of a authority in the system. And the...yes, it's General Ghwari. He uh...enough evidence has gathered to implicate him in a massacre. On November 28th last year, an Iraqi judge issued a warrant for his arrest on murder charges, and the warrant was never executed. That general continued to lead the brigade until earlier this year, but he remains employed by the Ministry of Interior. This is a guy who has been, a warrant has been issued for him for murder...

1:34:09

GERALD BURKE: Now the terminology, if he was the commander of a brigade, he came from the Special Police or the National Police which did not get any police training. They're recruited, as I mentioned earlier, from either the Republican Guard or from one of the militias. Recruited in mass, and provided no training except military training. No vetting, no uh standards for recruitment in that unit at all.

1:34:31

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): And they were, that unit was accused of a massacre, and had death squads. The head of the unit remains employed by the Iraqi Ministry.

1:34:40

GERALD BURKE: Many of their units, the Wolf Brigade, the Commandos, the Scorpions, they're all notorious amongst Iraqis for allegedly conducting death squad activities.

1:34:48

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): And the question is, doesn't that send a devastating signal to the Iraqi people that the government in Iraq, the current government, with the Iraqi Interior Ministry, uh, apparently not pushing seriously to bring to justice the head of a brigade who has been formally accused of murder. I mean that...it seems to me that the only way you effectively develop an internal security system in Iraq is to have a structure that people can trust, and people who abuse their power are brought to justice and so on. From what I read it appears to me to be almost completely dysfunctional internally. Would you agree or disagree with that?

1:35:32

GERALD BURKE: I would agree. I don't believe the current government is sincere in its efforts to run any of its Ministries, except for their own personal and collective benefit.

1:35:42

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): I want to just show you three charts and I'll ask that my colleagues can see the charts as well. These are charts that, uh, Sept. 28th Washington Post, they have uh, headlined...it says, heralded, "Iraq Police Academy a Disaster." It's talking about the Baghdad Police College "so poorly constructed that feces and urine rain from the ceilings of student barracks, floors teemed inches above the ground and cracked apart, water dripping so profusely in one room it was dubbed a rain forest. The same story: "this is the most essential civil security project in the country, and it's a failure." That is the Special Inspector General, the U.S. Special Inspector General for Iraq reconstruction, and I'll show you a picture of one of the rooms. This was the Baghdad Police Academy that we contracted to have completed and it is a mess. And now I want to show you another chart

that describes the closing of an apparently a very successful Academy in Jordan where a very substantial number of Iraqi police have been trained, trained successfully. An announcement just uh days ago that that will be closed down. And at the same time we know from further reports that for example the police academy in Mosul suffers from some of the same problems that the Baghdad academy suffers from. So, you've got contractors appearing to not have done any decent work there, and the shutting down of, uh, a successful academy in Jordan that has been used to train Iraq security. A Baghdad project that was supposed to be a shining example has become apparently a failure according to the Inspector General. Uh, I mean that's what we're hearing, that's what we read, what we see, uh, and yet the only thing we will hear in a hearing in Washington DC from the top generals, who are the only ones called to testify. They'll say, "Well, you know we have some rough spots in the road but things are going pretty well." What's your assessment of all this? I mean, will we begin, can we expect with the current Iraqi government, and the current situation I've just described, will we see the development of an Iraqi security in any short or intermediate term that is effective.

1:38:07

STEPHEN PIERSON: Well, hmmm... The uh, Senator I'll start. I'm familiar with this Academy. We've pushed a couple hundred recruits to it every month. The plan all along has been to close the Jordan academy and reduce the training of police forces to the three left in Iraq—that is Baghdad, Mosul, and al Sulaminiyah. Unfortunately I think, your comments bring to light a real problem which is that those Academies can neither handle the throughput nor produce the quality necessary to train Iraqi police. And I'll contrast that with what a civilian police officer here in the United States receives: at least 6 months of Academy training, followed by a 1 year probationary period. We're giving these Iraqi police 10 weeks and then putting them on the street, and not giving them very much of an in service or professional development after that. The problem which you highlight though is more significant. That is we're moving forward with our transitioning plan. We're moving very, very aggressively towards transition in all aspects of Iraqi life, but the Iraqi government is not moving at the same pace. So there's going to be a disconnect, a lag if you will, where we transition back, and we fall back and the Iraqi government is not yet ready to take over the reins of its system. And this is a very clear point where their police academy is not mature enough yet to produce Iraqi police, and yet we're closing the Jordan academy down because it was planned to close, and the money was scheduled to close off at the end of the year. And I think that's a point, Senator, where with more aggressive appropriations we can say, "Hey look, this is a successful operation, and we need to reinforce success, and not move ahead so quickly with our transition plan."

1:39:42

SEN. REID (D-NV): Chairman Dorgan?

1:39:43

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Yes?

1:39:44

SEN. REID (D-NV): In a conversation that um, meeting that I had with the King of Jordan early on in this war, he was complaining because he felt he was there in Jordan producing people who could function in Iraq and until the Iraq police academies got up to snuff we should be concentrating our efforts there, until we felt we'd be able to do things in Iraq. He was, I think I can say, fairly dejected as a result of us not supporting this program, which was good for his country. It produced jobs. And they are one of the allies we have in the Middle East. And this was years ago. This war, guys, has been going on for longer than it took to defeat the Nazis. This is a long time. So, this was years ago the King of Jordan spoke out in this regard. I, uh, you know I could just, I'm interrupting, I apologize for doing that, but I feel like Sen. Harkin and I so appreciate your leveling with us, but we come to this hearing with hope. You know we're spending up to \$3 billion a week now in Iraq? \$3 billion a week. A week, in Iraq. I come to this hearing hoping that that 2700+ Americans who have died there, plus the 22000 who have been wounded that it's going to amount to something. I am so...disappointed that I don't leave this hearing with a lot of hope and confidence that the direction we're going is the right way.

1:41:38

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): En...I know all four of you have come here today not intending to speak to Democrats or Republicans, but to speak to the Congress, and to speak to our country about what is happening. And honestly, our country, none of us; Congress, the President, the American people, our country cannot find our way through this, and find our way to be successful unless we stare truth in the eye and understand what's happening, evaluate what's happening, and try to determine how do we, how do we fix it? What kinds of remedies exist to fix it? One of you said, "It is a false choice between 'Stay the Course' and 'Cut and Run.'" I couldn't agree more. It is a false choice. Stay the Course? What course? Not this course; this course isn't working. Cut and Run? No one's suggesting we cut and run. So the question then is, "What is the strategy?" What approach do we use to give us a chance to be successful? But especially it seems to me what approach do we use to turn the country of Iraq back to the people who own that country? That's the Iraqi people. This is theirs, not ours. They need to exhibit the will, the backbone, and the capability to provide for their own security. Yes that requires our help, and the sooner the better. But that help must be effective. We can't be building bad buildings, and saying it takes 6000 people, and by the way we'll send 400-500, that's not the way to solve this problem. I just want to say that all of you got up early, traveled long distances to come here. Probably didn't have it at the top of your agenda as the most interesting thing to do in your lives, but I know you're patriots and you feel strongly about the ability you have to speak out, and the need for you to speak out about your feelings, and what you've seen about these issues. And I want to tell you I really do appreciate your willingness to do that. I want to see if any of my colleagues have anything finally to say as well.

1:43:39

SEN. REID (D-NV): Sen. Dorgan, I want to say briefly that we had General officers testify at the last hearing. Tremendously impressive. We have now people who went to Iraq as not General officers, or military, but for different reasons. I am so impressed with each one of you. For what you've done, trying to help our country and the people of Iraq. I, I am so grateful to you, and I hope, I hope through this hearing the American people understand better what's going on in Iraq, and feel part of it. As you have said, Mr. Fick. That they're part of what's going on.

1:44:23

SEN. DURBIN (D-IL): Thanks again to you all for being here, and we've got some hard choices ahead here. We've got men and women over there, 140,000+ who risk their lives as we meet in the safety of this courthouse. Their families are praying for them to come home safely. They're doing everything we could possibly ask of them. And we have to make the hard choice as a nation where to go next. I completely agree with Sen. Dorgan: nobody's talking about removing America tomorrow, as tempting as it may be. We know it could be a disastrous consequence. But it means coming up with a new approach, a new direction, a new strategy that has some chance to achieve the goal we want: a stable and secure Iraq that won't fall back into the hands of a dictator, or become a training ground for terrorists. This conversation is supposed to take place where we go to work, in Washington, DC, in the United States Capital. That's supposed to be where the American people have a chance to debate these things and come up with the best consensus they can on an approach, and sadly that has been missing for years now. We have been trying through these hearings to ask some questions which just won't be asked otherwise. I thank you for uh giving us your insight in this and for challenging us to keep pushing forward and uh, I hope that we can do what's right for our country, and certainly for those men and women whose lives are at risk today as we meet. Thank you all for being here.

1:45:49

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): Sen. Harkin?

1:45:50

SEN. HARKIN (D-IA): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you Leader Reid for helping to pull this hearing together, Sen. Durbin for having us here in Illinois. To our four witnesses, I join in thanking you for being here, as I said earlier, I thank you for what you've done before. I don't know any of you personally; don't know that we've met before. I read your resumes and what you've done, and uh, and what you did before as I read before, you did because you love this country, and because you want this country to stand for the best of our American ideals and values. To try to help a people who have been repressed for so long in Iraq, to build a better society, to have a better way of life, to have some of the freedoms and opportunities that we enjoy. As I read through your resumes, that's why you did it. I don't see any one of you that did it for fame and fortune, but in simple obedience I think to our American system and our American values. And that's what's kind of sad about the situation we find ourselves in: so many good people, especially those that have

lost their lives, young troops, those who are disabled, some who will never be whole again. And to those many good people like you who went over to try and do something; to try and make something good out of this. It's so sad that we've come to this point. Uh, we have to confront reality. That's what we have to do. We have to confront reality. Quit the deception. The longer we deceive ourselves that all is well, that we're making progress, that the Iraqi government is taking charge...the longer that we continue that deception, the more of our Treasury will spill out, the more young people will lose their lives, the Americans will be caught in the crossfire. We've got to confront the reality. Once we confront the reality, then we can chart a course, and make a plan. You cannot chart a course nor make a plan based upon deception. We have to confront reality. I believe that is what you've done today; is to lay out some of the reality and I thank you for it.

1:48:14

SEN. DORGAN (D-ND): I thank my colleagues: Sen. Durbin for coming across the street here in Chicago—his office is just across the street from this building—and my colleagues Sen. Reid and Sen. Harkin have traveled some distance as well. We appreciate very much the witnesses being here. This hearing is adjourned.