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House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight
“Possible Extension of the UN Mandate for Iraq: Options”

Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2172
Wednesday, July 23rd 2008 2pm

The Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight invited **Steven Kull, Michael J. Matheson, and Danielle Pletka** to testify before Congress on options for a possible extension of the U.N. mandate for Iraq. Steven Kull, Ph.D. is director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes. Michael J. Matheson is a Visiting Research Professor of Law at George Washington University Law School. Danielle Pletka is Vice President of Foreign and Defense Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute. The Honorable **Ayad Allawi** of the Iraqi Council of Representatives and Former Prime Minister of Iraq was invited to brief the subcommittee on the current status of Iraq.

Rep. Delahunt began the hearing by noting that the Iraqi Constitution’s requires that any extension be submitted to the Iraqi Parliament for approval and expressing disappointment that both the U.S. and Iraqi leadership have failed to fulfill that requirement. Delahunt maintained that the **U.S. should accept a timetable for a reasonable withdrawal of U.S. troops** out of respect to the Iraqi people, while insisting on legal protection for U.S. troops, and advocated for an extension of the U.N. mandate under Chapter 6 in full recognition of Iraqi sovereignty.

Rep. Rohrabacher agreed that the **process of creating a Status of Forces Agreement should be transparent** in order to gain broad-based support from the American and Iraqi people. Any SOFA agreement should include provisions requiring Iraq to contribute to the financial costs.

Danielle Pletka emphasized the need to secure U.S. interests by **looking to field commanders to determine when to withdrawal U.S. troops**. “This is not always politically attractive, but it is the responsible course.” Pletka warned against relegating decision-making authority to the U.N. by extending the U.N. mandate instead of creating a bilateral agreement between the nations.

Steven Kull reviewed Iraqi public opinion on U.S. troop withdrawal, and argued that there are growing signs of impatience. Kull noted that while **Iraqis want the U.S. to leave Iraq in the near future, they do have an interest in maintaining some sort of continuing relationship** with America.

Earlier this year, 74% wanted the U.S. to leave within 6 months, 84% within 1 year. 73% oppose the presence of U.S. forces, and 61% believe they make security worse. Yet, despite these results, about 75% of Iraqis see a future U.S. role in training Iraqi forces and 68% favor U.S. efforts to help build community organizations. Kull explained this seeming contradiction as evidence that Iraqis want the U.S. to lighten its military footprint, and to ensure that Iraq is

treated like a sovereign. Therefore, Kull argued that agreeing to a timetable for withdrawal will strengthen the Iraqi government in the eyes of its people.

Michael Matheson reviewed the legal obligations if the U.N. mandate were extended under either **Chapter 6 or 7**. Chapter 6 carries less obligatory force and rests on the Iraqi consent. Chapter 7 would automatically continue the current resolution and would confirm the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force. Unlike other speakers, Matteson argued that a Chapter 7 mandate could be applied without derogation of Iraqi sovereignty. **Other options include bilateral agreements or by exchanging notes**, both of which could raise questions about further required legislative action.

Ayad Allawi noted the current deadlock in negotiations over a SOFA agreement, and suggested that extension of the U.N. mandate under Chapter 6 needs to be looked into, although he was concerned about ceding power to the U.N. Allawi recommended that **any timeframe for withdrawal of U.S. troops be linked to measures of progress** and conditions on the ground including the strengthening of nonsectarian national institutions.

Allawi reviewed the current situation in Iraq. He warned that unemployment, a weak economy, and neighboring countries continue to threaten Iraq. “We need international helpers. The U.N. and other organizations should be asked to help protect our borders” and re-stabilize the country.

Rep. Carnahan asked whether agreeing to a timetable would reduce attacks on U.S. forces. Kull stated that although there won't be a change overnight, **there will be less attacks on U.S. troops as discourse moves toward seeing the Iraqi government as sovereign**. Pletka disagreed, stating that **public opinion is not always close to the reality on the ground**.

Rep. Rohrabacher asked about using bilateral agreements to extend U.S. troop presence. Matteson stated such agreements pose the practical problem of ratification **within the short time frame remaining before the U.N. mandate expires**. He expressed concern for using public opinion to make policy.

Rep. Woosley asked the speakers for recommendations for moving forward in Iraq. Kull recommended interacting with Iraqi government in a **visible dialogue**, and for the U.S. and Iraq to **participate in a joint decision-making process**.