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Lt. General David H. Petraeus, President Bush's choice to become the top U.S. military commander in Iraq, is respected by Members of Congress from both parties, military experts, and those who have served with him. He has served two tours of duty in Iraq -- he won acclaim for, among other things, his command of Mosul and northern Iraq following major combat operations -- and is one of the Army's top intellectuals, holding a Ph.D. from Princeton.

Earlier this week, General Petraeus testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee, which gave him its unanimous approval. Attached is a document that provides excerpts of General Petraeus's prepared testimony, as well as his colloquies with senators from both parties. I thought it may interest you.

Excerpts from the Opening Statement of General David Petraeus to the Senate Armed Services Committee (emphases added)

In response to the deterioration of the situation in Iraq, a new way ahead was developed and announced earlier this month. With implementation of this approach, the mission of Multinational Force Iraq will be modified, making security of the population, particularly in Baghdad, and in partnership with Iraqi forces, the focus of the military effort. ...

The primacy of population security in the capital will mean a greater focus on that task, particularly in the most threatened neighborhoods. This will, of course, require that our unit commanders and their Iraqi counterparts develop a detailed appreciation of the areas in which they will operate, recognizing that they may face a combination of Sunni insurgents, international terrorists, sectarian militias and violent criminals.

Together with Iraqi forces, a persistent presence in these neighborhoods will be essential. ...

Whatever the approach, though, the objective will be to achieve sufficient security to provide the space and time for the Iraqi government to come to grips with the tough decisions its members must make to enable Iraq to move forward. In short, it is not just that there will be additional forces in Baghdad, it is what they will do and how they will do it that is important.

Some of the members of this committee have observed that there is no military solution to the problems of Iraq. They are correct... It is, however, exceedingly difficult for the Iraqi government to come to grips with the toughest issues it must resolve while survival is the primary concern of so many in Iraq's capital. For this reason, military action to improve security, while not wholly sufficient to solve Iraq's problems, is certainly necessary. And that is why additional U.S. and Iraqi forces are moving to Baghdad. The way ahead is designed to be a comprehensive approach.

Having described the general approach, I would like to offer a word on expectations. It will take time for the additional forces to flow to Iraq, time for them to gain an understanding of

the areas in which they will operate, time to plan with and get to know their Iraqi partners, time to set conditions for the successful conduct of security operations, and of course time to conduct those operations and they to build on what they achieve.

None of this will be rapid. In fact, the way ahead will be neither quick nor easy, and there undoubtedly will be tough days. We face a determined, adaptable, barbaric enemy. He will try to wait us out. In fact, any such endeavor is a test of wills, and there are no guarantees.

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... if we are to carry out the Multinational Force Iraq mission in accordance with the new strategy, the additional forces that have been directed to move to Iraq will be essential, as will, again, greatly increased support by our government's other agencies, additional resources for reconstruction and economic initiatives, and a number of other actions critical to what must be a broad, comprehensive, multifaceted approach to the challenges in Iraq.

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I am willing to take on the position for which I have been nominated because I believe in serving one's nation when asked; I -- because I regard it as a distinct honor to be able to soldier again with those who are part of the brotherhood of the close fight; and because I feel an obligation to help the shab el-Iraqi, the people of Iraq, the vast majority of whom have the same desires of people the world over: security for themselves and their loved ones, satisfaction of their basic needs and an opportunity to better their life....

There are no easy choices. The way ahead will be very hard. Progress will require determination and difficult U.S. and Iraqi actions, especially the latter, as ultimately the outcome will be determined by the Iraqis. But hard is not hopeless.

**Excerpts from the Testimony of General Petraeus
Before the Senate Armed Services Committee**

On Whether He Believes There is a Realistic Opportunity to Succeed in Iraq: "That is correct, sir."

SEN. SESSIONS: [I]f you believe it can't be successful, you will tell us so we can take a new action.

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, I firmly believe that I have an obligation to the great young men and women of our country who are putting themselves in harm's way and certainly to all Americans to tell my boss if I believe that the strategy cannot succeed at some point.

SEN. SESSIONS: And *you wouldn't be going if you didn't think there was a realistic opportunity to succeed, is that correct?*

GEN. PETRAEUS: *That is correct, sir.*

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SEN. NELSON: Let me tell you about a conversation I had with our Ambassador Khalilzad and General Casey. And they both said – this was back before Christmas – that they would not support a surge unless there's a specific plan for success. And the ambassador even said – and I quote – that he didn't want more American kids wasting their lives unless he had a high degree of confidence in the plan. End of quote. Do you have a high degree of confidence in this plan?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, *I believe this plan can succeed if, in fact, all of those enablers and all the rest of the assistance is in fact provided.* And as I've mentioned several times here today, I am determined to make sure that people know that. And again, in my periodic updates to this body, I will be happy to report whether that has been forthcoming or not.

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Consequences Of Withdrawal: "A Number Of ... Potential Outcomes, None Of Which Are Positive ..."

SEN. MCCAIN: General Petraeus, in your view, since you have been intimately involved in Iraq from the beginning, suppose we announced tomorrow that we would withdraw within four to six months. What are the results there in Iraq and in the region?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Well, sir, *I think that sectarian groups would obviously begin to stake out their turf, try to expand their turf. They would do that by greatly increased ethnic cleansing.*

There is the very real possibility of involvement of countries from elsewhere in the region, around Iraq, entering Iraq to take sides with one or the other groups. *There is the possibility, certainly, of an international terrorist organization truly getting a grip on some substantial piece of Iraq. There is the possibility of problems in the global economy, should in fact this cause a disruption to the flow of oil – and a number of other potential outcomes, none of which are positive.* ...

SEN. MCCAIN: [H]ow effective do you think threats of withdrawal of U.S. troops are in achieving real progress in Iraq?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, there are certain elements in the government that might actually welcome withdrawal. There are others, certainly, that would fear it greatly. It certainly depends which side of these various divides you're on. I don't think that the responsible members of that government right now certainly want us to withdraw, and if it is levers that we're after, again, withdrawing support from a specific organization or perhaps institution in my experience was more effective in trying to get a desired outcome.

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SEN. GRAHAM: Do you believe that Iraq is – affects the overall war on terror or not?

GEN. PETRAEUS: I do, sir. Clearly there are elements of the greater al Qaeda network of international extremists that want something very different than the Iraq that most Iraqis want, and want something very different in that region and in the world than most of the world wants.

SEN. GRAHAM: Who bombed the Golden Mosque?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, I believe that it was from this extremist group. It may, again, have been insurgent elements, but certainly those who obviously did not want the new Iraq to succeed and wanted to ignite sectarian violence.

And if I could add, I think that there is some of that going on right now. I think they see the increases in forces. I think they see perhaps the Iraqi government showing some toughness, and I think that they want to derail that before it gets any momentum.

SEN. GRAHAM: That was part of Zarqawi's hope, before he was killed, to create a sectarian war. Is that correct?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, that is correct.

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SEN. GRAHAM: Who's the biggest winner – name some winners of a failed state in Iraq.

GEN. PETRAEUS: Well, certainly al Qaeda, the greater al Qaeda network, those who want states that embrace extremist ideologies; those states who wish the United States and perhaps the Western world ill.

SEN. GRAHAM: Would Iran be a big winner if you had a failed state in Iraq?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, it certainly could. There are some who say that Iran would – you know, I think perhaps they're torn, actually, because it could actually cause some real consequences for their own population.

SEN. GRAHAM: Does Iran want a democracy in Iraq?

GEN. PETRAEUS: They – I do not believe they do. And certainly, if I could add to the previous one, I don't mean to imply that Iran has not been meddling in Iraq nor that it has not been providing training, sophisticated improvised explosives and other devices that have created casualties and huge problems in Iraq.

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SEN. THUNE: What I'd like to have you do, if you could, is expand a little bit on that answer in terms of what it would mean to the United States and to our security interests [if the U.S. began withdrawing from Iraq]...

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, there's a number of broad categories, if you will, that I think deserve mention. One of those, certainly, is the potential -- and all of these are potential, because as I said in the opening statement, no one does really know the consequences of a failed Iraqi state. But certainly, regional instability could be a result of that if surrounding countries felt that they had to enter Iraq for some reason or other to safeguard one ethnic group or another.

Were some portion of Iraq to become truly a terrorist training camp -- and the potential certainly exists for that in places like Anbar province and other areas that are under more of the insurgent control; obviously, that is a much shorter trip to friends in that region, to other Western countries and to the United States than from other possible camps, say, in the Afghan-Pakistan border regions or something like that.

I think you do have to consider U.S. standing in the world, if you will. I think that's an important factor. I think -- as you mentioned, the international economy. One does not know if the oil flow would be disrupted, but certainly were that to happen, were there again to be regional instability that erupted, again, there is the potential that that could erupt -- that could degrade the availability of the energy resources in that area, the oil and natural gas.

Again, no one, though, really knows what these consequences truly would be. They are all potential, but they all are certainly worrisome.

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On Whether a Congressional Resolution Opposing Sending Troop Reinforcements Would Give The Enemy Encouragement: "That's correct, sir."

SEN. MCCAIN: Suppose we send you over to your new job, General, only we tell you that we can't have -- you can't have any additional troops. Can you get your job done?

GEN. PETRAEUS: No, sir.

SEN. MCCAIN: Suppose that we send you -- you additional troops, and we tell those troops that, we support you, but we are convinced that you cannot accomplish your mission, and we do not support the mission we are sending you on. What effect does that have on the morale of your troops?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Well, it would not be a beneficial effect, sir. Obviously, a commander would like to go forward with as much flexibility as he can achieve. I was assured yesterday by the secretary of Defense, by the way, that if we need additional assets, my job is to ask for them. If they're not provided in some case, my job is to tell my boss the risk involved in accomplishing the mission without the assets that are required.

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SEN. LIEBERMAN: [W]hat effect would Senate passage of a resolution of disapproval of this new way ahead that you embrace – what effect would it have on our enemies in Iraq?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, as I stated in the opening statement, this is a test of wills, at the end of the day. And in that regard, speaking purely as a military commander, if confirmed – albeit one who, frankly, does understand enormously and treasures the value of free and open debate, free speech, who has put himself in harm's way to protect those great features of our democracy – nonetheless, having said that, a commander in such an endeavor would obviously like the enemy to feel that there's no hope.

SEN. LIEBERMAN: And a resolution – *a Senate-passed resolution of disapproval for this new strategy in Iraq would give the enemy some encouragement, some feeling that – well, some clear expression that the American people were divided.*

GEN. PETRAEUS: *That's correct, sir.*

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New Way Forward: "A Way Of Helping The Iraqi Government Get The Time And Space That It Needs ..."

SEN. LEVIN: General Casey says that the longer that U.S. forces continue to bear the main burden of Iraq's security, it lengthens the time that the government of Iraq has to take the hard decisions about reconciliation and dealing with the militias. General Abizaid said recently, "I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from taking more responsibility for their own future." Do you agree with those two generals?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, my mission will be different than the mission that they had, if confirmed. In fact, I talked to General Abizaid and General Casey both in the past week, and they both support the increase in U.S. forces as a way of helping the Iraqi government get the time and space that it needs to be able to come to grips with the difficult decisions that they, in fact, identified.

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SEN. KENNEDY: Some have said, well, if you have 140,000 troops over there not able to gain the security, why do you believe an additional 22,000 are likely to gain it?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, to some degree it has to do with how they are used. Again, if you – if the mission is, as it is now under the new approach, to focus on the security of the population, then forces must locate with and live with that population – certainly, again, linked arms with Iraqi forces, in this particular case coordinating with all the others that might be in an area as well.

SEN. KENNEDY: The idea of tens of thousands of American troops in combat in downtown Baghdad, what's your reaction to whether that really helps win the heart and minds of the people or whether it's perceived as increasing hostility by American soldiers? How do you measure that?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, obviously it depends literally on how those forces conduct themselves, how they carry out their missions, if they are both respectful and firm. As required, certainly, there will be a need to kill or capture those bad elements that I talked about. On the other hand, what we want to do, of course, is to clear areas as quickly as possible, to

provide security for them of a persistent nature and then to enable the holding and the building piece that is the real key to achieving the support of the population.

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GEN. PETRAEUS (in response to Sen. Inhofe): I can assure the committee that I also intend to encourage the Iraqi government to use the substantial resources that it has. I have, in fact, also been in communication with the minister of finance, who is a former colleague there, through an interpreter, to encourage them very, very strongly to spend the oil revenues that they have. There are reports of as much as \$10 billion to \$12 billion that is available on the Iraqi side. And I think it's very important that they use that, and that they use it on the behalf of all Iraqis and not just in one area or another.

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SEN. COLLINS: I worry that the strategy that we're about to pursue in this country relieves pressure on the Iraqis to do what must be done, to do – and that we're making the mistake that you caution against.

There's a big question here of what comes first. Do you need to provide the additional troops and the security in order to give Maliki and other Iraqi leaders the space to do the political moves that need to be undertaken? Or in fact are you lessening the possibility they're going to do that?...If Iraqi leaders had more fully integrated the Sunni minority into the government, if they had passed an oil distribution law that distributed the revenues more equitably, if they had mended the constitution, if they had had provincial elections, would we be where we are today?

GEN. PETRAEUS: We would not, Senator, and what you described really has been truly an intellectual tension, frankly, about the mission in Iraq all along. You do have in the back of your mind always the wisdom of Lawrence of Arabia about not trying to do too much with your own hands.

And we used to say what we want to do is we want to help the Iraqis get up on their feet, we want to sort of be near them, we want to back up. But there are times when they start to wobble, and the question is, when do you move back in and provide assistance. And in the wake of the bombing of the Samarra mosque and the violence that escalated throughout the latter part of 2006, I think we have arrived at a point where, in fact, we do need to help them a bit more in providing security, in particular, with arm's length, with them in forward – in front wherever we can for the Baghdad population, in particular.

And again, this, of course, is the fourth government in three- and-a-half years, and I think at times we probably have had expectations that were greater than they might have been given the challenges. But I remember living through each of these transitions, and you'd get a new government in and it seemed as if they were already facing an election for the next government or the next constitutional referendum or what have you. And it has been very, very difficult for them.

They do now have the permanent government, the elected government. It has only been in office for eight months. It's been a very violent eight months in period of enormous pressure on the leadership of Iraq. They do now have – according to Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih, the oil law is nearing completion. There has been progress, incremental progress to be sure.

So again, I think you've very accurately captured, truthfully, the intellectual tension between the fear that our presence retards progress, holds it back, or that our presence can help. And I do believe at this point that our presence can help and is needed.

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SEN. NELSON: We had a surge earlier this past summer. And I am quoting from a *Washington Post* story, July the 27th. Army Staff Sergeant Jose Sixtos said, quote, "Think of what you hate most about your job. Then think of doing what you hate most for five straight hours, every single day, sometimes twice a day, in 120-degree heat. Then ask how morale is." And another member of that team, Specialist Tim Ivey, as quoted in the *Washington Post*, says, "Honestly, it just feels like we're driving around waiting to get blown up. That's the most honest answer that I could give you," said the Specialist.

GEN. PETRAEUS: I'd like to respond to that.

First of all, there is nothing easy about wearing body armor and Kevlar in harm's way in 125-degree temperatures. It is hard physically. It's hard mentally. It's a grind, and it becomes a Groundhog Day existence. In fact, there were some units that had groundhog coins that they handed out as unit coins to commemorate that type of existence.

On the other hand, the reenlistment rates, particularly in the theater, continue to remain so far above the requirements that clearly, there is some sense among those soldiers that serving their country is something that they want to continue to do. They want to continue to serve in units with the individuals on their right and left that they have soldiered with. And so again, nothing easy about it.

And by the way, the "driving around waiting to get blown up" is something that – certainly, there's driving around in a population protection strategy. There has to be. But there needs to be a purpose to the presence of those soldiers in those neighborhoods, and it is to secure those neighborhoods. And that should be the objective, as opposed to perhaps living outside the neighborhood and entering it a couple of times a day with a vehicular patrol, in which case a soldier could feel that he is doing what that soldier told the reporter.

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SEN. PRYOR: You've mentioned in some of your comments and just what you've said in the past several days is that your perception is basically there's now a changed mission in Iraq. Is that fair?

GEN. PETRAEUS: It certainly is a change in mission, where the focus will be on – security of the population is the foremost objective and transition is not foremost. And really throughout much of 2006, transition has of course been – and, frankly, I thought for a very long time myself that that was the right approach to take as well. It was in the wake of the violence, of course, of the fall of this year and the winter that that has proven to be undermined as the way ahead.

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SEN. PRYOR: [I]n your counterinsurgency manual, you give an equation there that says there should be one counterinsurgent per -- for every 50 inhabitants. And I'm wondering about the numbers in Baghdad... Will we be there with the surge?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Senator, we will -- if you lump together all of the existing U.S. forces and forces to deploy, existing Iraqi forces and forces to deploy, you get to about 85,000. Certainly not all those are equal. Some are much better than others.

You then should add in tens of thousands of additional forces that are over there; that provide, of all things, contract security for our embassy. I myself -- I was secured by contract security in my last tour there. And that frees up uniformed forces to perform other missions. And those have to be factored in as well -- the same with the ministerial security forces -- acknowledging certainly that some of those ministerial forces are part of the problem instead of part of the solution.

But they do in fact secure, again, facilities and infrastructure that would otherwise have to be secured by U.S. or Iraqi forces.

SEN. PRYOR: Just for the sake of clarity, when you talk about a counterinsurgent, are you talking about anybody that's on our side? I mean, it could be the Iraqi police, obviously, the Iraqi army, obviously, other Iraqi security forces.

GEN. PETRAEUS: That's correct. Yes, sir.

SEN. PRYOR: But it could also be contractors?

GEN. PETRAEUS: If they're performing security functions, yes, sir.

SEN. PRYOR: Okay. So it's whoever it may be, just as long as they're performing security functions.

GEN. PETRAEUS: Yes, sir. And again, if you will, that's sort of a modern evolution of counterinsurgency strategy, if you will, because certainly in Malaya and other places, there were not contract security elements in those days, though -- although they certainly counted their governmental security elements, like the ministerial security forces.

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SEN. WARNER: [M]y concern is why do we need to put such a heavy emphasis of U.S. forces into Baghdad when we've trained 188,000 Iraqi military?...

GEN. PETRAEUS: Yes, sir. Sir, first of all, I think that the effort in Iraq will be predominantly -- or in Baghdad will be predominantly Iraqi. I think that as we total up numbers of forces and various contributions, that they will far outnumber U.S. forces in the Baghdad security plan.

They are in fact moving forces from other places in the country, where the troops-to-task allow it -- allow that to happen. They are training an additional -- I happened to meet last night with the Iraqi chief of Defense staff, their chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Babakir Zebari is a long-time comrade, starting up in northern Iraq, where he commanded the *peshmerga* that helped us liberate northern Iraq. He then eventually was elevated to be his country's senior military officer. He stated that they are training additional forces -- I believe it was in the order of 25,000 or 30,000 additional military forces -- that will also be used to augment the elements that are going to Baghdad. And again, he also echoed what I mentioned earlier: that the initial battalions are actually in Baghdad, according to General Odierno, as well, as they're starting to get set again to contribute to that operation.

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SEN. BAYH: [Y]ou spoke generally about, well, if things aren't going so well, we'll have to look at what we can do for them and what we might withhold from them. That's a pretty general statement. Can you be more specific than that, because I'm afraid without more specifics --

GEN. PETRAEUS: Certainly. Yes, sir.

I can give examples of, in fact, what I did in the past. As the Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq commander, the train and equip program commander, there was a case toward the end of my time in command where leaders of the major crimes unit in Baghdad were found mistreating detainees. And so I went to the minister of Defense with the evidence of this, and announced that we were withdrawing all financial, logistical, adviser, and equipment support for that element until he arrested and tried those individuals. And he did do that.

And we then over time resumed the assistance that we were providing to them. That's an example of that.

There are positive reinforcements, if you will. The Iraqi Special Operations Force Brigade is arguably the best special operations unit in the entire region. They are among the most experienced. They are the ones, in many cases, who have been conducting the operations in recent weeks and months to go after some of the senior leaders of the Jaish al-Mahdi, Muqtada al-Sadr's militia. And they have done so well that we continually reinforce that with increasingly better, more capable equipment, better facilities, better quality of life, a special operations bonus and so forth. So again, there are two ways of going at that, and those are examples of those.

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SEN. BAYH: [M]y just last question to you is, you said that -- I think the words that you used were that the responsible elements among the Iraqis did not want us to leave.

GEN. PETRAEUS: There are thousands -- actually tens of thousands of Iraqis who have died actually defending their country, far more than our soldiers, each of which is a tragedy for that family...

Their challenge right now, Senator, I believe is that they are in a capital city that is insecure, in which citizens make life-or-death decisions on a daily basis just trying to get to work, get their kids to school, get some food. You cannot come to grips with the tough decisions that a government has to resolve in a situation like that. Their security forces have not been able to deal with the rise in violence in the wake of the bombing of the mosque in Samarra, which unleashed a tremendous amount of tit-for-tat and back- and-forth violence. And the objective is to get a grip on that, to provide improved security to give the Iraqi government the space and the time to come to grips with these political decisions that will ultimately carry them forward.

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Sectarian Violence: "Iraq Itself Does Have A History Of Actual Substantial Inter-marriage."

SEN. LIEBERMAN: I hear this all the time, the Shi'a and Sunni Muslims have been fighting each other for more than a millennium. Why do we think we can possibly end this fighting? Why would we send more of our troops now according to this new way forward, into the middle of that kind of violence, which is now called sectarian violence?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Well, first of all, there are countries in that region where there are one or the other majority. Iraq itself does have a history of actual substantial intermarriage, not just getting along well together.

Unfortunately, some of the violence, some of the developments, again in particular in the wake of the bombing of the Askari mosque in February of this past year, in a sense magnified the sectarian divides that in some cases were nowhere near as large. And that does give me hope that in fact Sunni and Shi'a and Kurd and Yezidi and Shabak and Turkomen and Christian, and all of the other elements of Iraq can, in fact, get along together. It will not be easy. But if we could get them to where they are shouting instead of shooting, that would be a very substantial improvement.

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SEN. INHOFE: I can remember being up in Tuzla [Bosnia] when they said that, in terms of the ethnic violence, it would never be resolved...but if it was resolved there, do you think it can ultimately be resolved in Iraq?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, that is certainly my hope. I must tell you that in my first year – really throughout the first two-and-a-half years in Iraq – my sense was that this was a country in which the divides were actually less than those in Bosnia. Real ethnic hatred is what you find when you read Ivo Andric's book, "The Bridge Over the Drina," and some of the unspeakable acts that were inflicted upon each other in the centuries of ethnic violence in the fault lines in the Balkans. There is great intermarriage in Iraq, particularly in Baghdad. Unfortunately, in the wake of the Samarra mosque bombing, the ethnic divides have grown. And I think it is very important – again, that's one reason to secure the population, so that we can stop that kind of violence before it spirals farther, and so that we don't have to do what happened in Bosnia, which is wait for the civil war to take place, and then to come in.

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Benchmarks For Success: "We Would Have Indicators At The Least During The Late Summer"

SEN. MCCAIN: In your judgment, what is a reasonable estimate of the time needed to demonstrate whether such efforts – these efforts are having success?

GEN. PETRAEUS: Sir, under the current plan, as I understand it, the final brigade would be operational in Iraq at the end of May, giving them time to get established, to understand the situation on the ground; other forces will have already certainly been moving into their areas of operation. I would think that we would have indicators at the least during the late summer of the ability to clear and hold and then build in the Baghdad area and to secure that population.

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SEN. KENNEDY: At this point, therefore, we should assume that they'll remain over there till we hear further from you.

GEN. PETRAEUS: And as they're needed for that particular mission, yes, sir.

And Senator, if I could, I think it is important to remember that this particular government, the Prime Minister Maliki government, has only been in office eight months. They are the fourth Iraqi government in three-and-a-half years, and given the situation in Baghdad, I think it is not wholly surprising that they've had a tough time getting their feet on the ground. In fact, there are some signs, certainly, literally in recent days and weeks that there is a stiffer approach.