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**CG Notes- Meeting with CODEL Hagel
US Embassy
15 Apr 2007**

Key Participants: Senator Chuck Hagel, Representative Joe Sestak, CG, AMB Crocker, PM

Introductory Comments

CG covered combined threats, contributors to lack of progress, sectarian infiltration, murders, and Kurdish issues.

Ambassador Crocker mentioned that a "National unity government is hardly national, not unified and barely a government." Some ministries are totally sectarian. He related the view that fear drives both Shia (afraid of the past), the Sunni (afraid of the future), and the Kurds (afraid of both.)

In their session with him, the PM told Hagel and Crocker that de-baathification law "is just an exercise - not meaningful." The PM does NOT share US priority on de-baathification. PM said that those affected are 1) In job now or 2) Not coming back.

CG told the CODEL that he and AMB Crocker would have a view as to whether this will work or not by the end of August or Early September

Benefit of Surge Forces

Rep. Sestak asked whether the surge really aids the political process.

CG responded that yes, decrease in violence allows for more discussion and negotiations.

Sen. Hagel asked if the surge flooded the zone, where did the bad guys go?

CG told him that we captured some, some fled to Baghdad belts and beyond.

Iraqi Police

AMB Crocker told the members that the Iraqis really fear the National Police. CG responded that we are trying to clean them up and improve their image.

AMB Crocker mentioned that foreign military sales (FMS) is a peacetime mechanism and not really suited for wartime speed.

Iraq Timeline Slower than US Timeline

Rep Sestak wondered if there was any leverage over [1.4b] What is it that will move along the political process?

AMB said that engagement with [1.4b] is vital and if a deal could be brokered over the nuclear issue, then there would be multiple lanes open for substantive talks on Iraq. He noted that the Iraqi timeline is much slower than the US timeline and that there are few GOI leaders with a national perspective. AMB indicated that Barham Salih was the closest to such a leader. He reiterated that

[1.4b, 1.4d]

Tradeoff with US Presence Focused on Iraq?

Rep Sestak: Can we afford the OIF effort in terms of what we are **not** doing?

AMB responded that the talk of a timeline has the tendency of driving many Iraqi leaders back toward their sect rather than toward national unity.

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Both the CG and AMB Crocker said that there was no "Plan B" and that they could not think of a plan different than what they are doing.

Continuing the Surge

1.4a, 1.4g

CG answered that, at the end of the day, "my mission is clear," unless, at some point, if SECDEF/POTUS said that the *risk* somewhere is greater than the risk of failure in Iraq.

1.4a, 1.4g

Impact of Refugees

Sen Hagel inquired whether displaced persons were a problem.

AMB responded that the sectarian line sharpens and that Sunnis are departing heavily, which has resulted in a "brain drain." The refugee community is a breeding ground for more insurgents, but he insisted that Iraq is not a humanitarian crisis.

Note: The two members were very thoughtful and the discussion was substantive, though the impression given from both CG and AMB Crocker on the political questions facing Iraq were not very optimistic.

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