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Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Chairman Biden, Senator Lugar, distinguished Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, thank you for inviting me to talk with you about prospects for both Iraq and the U.S. military after the surge. I am honored to be part of the larger national discussion you are seeking to stimulate on how the United States should balance risk across the many national security challenges we face, now and in the future.

I would like to touch on three critical and interrelated issues: where things stand in Iraq today, the impacts of sustained high tempos of operations on the U.S. military, particularly our nation's ground forces, and where we should go from here.

Where We Are in Iraq Today

In February, I had a chance to visit 10 of Iraq's 18 provinces over a two-week period. After walking neighborhoods with U.S. soldiers, conferring with State Department and USAID personnel, and meeting with dozens of Iraqis, I came away with both a greater sense of hope and a deeper sense of concern.

Even a skeptic of the war in Iraq could not visit places like Adhamiyah, Doura and Iskandariyah without being struck by how much security has improved. Markets were open, shoppers thronged the streets, and children were back in school in areas that were deadly urban battlegrounds only months ago.

At the time of my visit, security in many parts of the country had improved markedly due to a host of factors: the Sunni "Awakening," Muktada al Sadr's ceasefire, the shift in U.S. strategy to protecting the Iraqi population, the surge of U.S. forces in Baghdad, increasingly effective operations against Al Qaeda, and greater professionalism among some (though not all) Iraqi military units. Having lived through the sectarian violence of 2006 and early 2007, many Iraqis now feel that Iraq has been given a second chance.

Today, the situation in Iraq remains dynamic and uncertain. The renewed fighting in Basra and Shia neighborhoods of Baghdad, as well as the possible ceasefire, are a reminder that the security gains made over the past year are both fragile and incomplete. They are fragile because they have not been underwritten by fundamental political accommodation between and within Iraq's Shia, Sunni and Kurdish communities. Security gains cannot be consolidated absent political accommodation on multiple fronts.

The security gains are incomplete because southern Iraq has been left largely in the control of competing Shia militias since the British transferred responsibility to Iraqi security forces in December 2007. The full story behind the Iraqi government's latest offensive has yet to be told,

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but it appears to have been an attempt to reassert its control over Basra, which is home to both critical oil reserves and the nation's primary port, and to defeat Sadrist elements who have continued to launch attacks despite Sadr's previously proclaimed ceasefire. Some speculate that it may also have been a calculated political move by Prime Minister Maliki and his political allies to weaken Sadr's movement prior to the provincial elections slated for this fall. Although Sadr and the Iraqi government appear to have negotiated the terms of a new ceasefire, the situation remains highly uncertain. It will take time before both the impetus and outcomes of this latest chapter in Iraq's history are fully known. But there is substantial risk when U.S. forces are drawn into the middle of intra-Shia battles.

In areas where security has improved, public expectations have risen rapidly -- for essential services like electricity, for political reconciliation and open, free and fair elections, for equitable distribution of Iraq's vast oil wealth, and for jobs. These expectations must be met to consolidate recent security gains.

We are now in what U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine calls the "build" phase -- certainly the hardest phase -- in which the primary objective is enhancing the legitimacy of the host nation government in the eyes of the population. The problem is that, to date, improved security has increased our legitimacy, not that of the Iraqi government.

And herein lies the cause for my deep concern. The Maliki government appears largely unwilling or unable to take advantage of the space created by improved security to move towards political accommodation, provide for the basic needs of the Iraqi people and lay the foundation for stability -- and its own legitimacy. And the Bush administration appears to lack a strategy for getting them to do so.

From Sunni tribal and business leaders in Baghdad and the west to Shia mayors and governors in the center and south, mounting frustration with the incompetence, dysfunction, and corruption of the central government was palpable and universal.

While there has been some de facto revenue sharing by the central government, and the Iraqi parliament recently passed de-Baathification reform, an amnesty law and a budget, the Iraqis I spoke to were deeply frustrated by the lack of political and economic progress overall. Unless this situation changes, recent security gains are likely to be difficult to consolidate and may be quite perishable, no matter how many brigades the United States keeps in Iraq.

The Bush administration must use its remaining time in office to push the Iraqi government toward real power and resource sharing arrangements. This is a tall order, as it requires something that U.S. efforts in Iraq have lacked from the beginning: a clear and compelling political strategy.

In the near term, the focus must be on building the political coalitions and negotiating the compromises necessary to achieve a handful of critical priorities: a renewed ceasefire with Sadr; a provincial powers law; free and fair provincial elections; an equitable oil law; and

concrete steps toward political accommodation, such as progress on Article 140 issues, the integration of more Sunnis into the Iraqi security forces and more employment opportunities in former insurgent strongholds.

This will require actually using what leverage we have to pressure key Iraqi players to take specific actions, particularly as we negotiate a new bilateral agreement. Iraq is seeking significant U.S. commitments of political support, security assistance, and economic engagement. These plus U.S. force levels offer leverage for pushing the central government to prove its legitimacy and its worthiness of continued American support. Right now, we are negotiating as if we want this agreement more than they do.

In sum, this administration has a vanishing window of opportunity to consolidate recent security gains with political and economic progress. But this will require the civilian side of the U.S. government in Washington and Baghdad to act with greater urgency and focus, to use the leverage we have to the greatest effect possible, and to do more of what we in Washington are supposed to know how to do – figure out how to broker political compromises and build political coalitions to get forward movement on tough issues.

Unless the Bush administration succeeds in pushing the Iraqi government to embrace political accommodation and invest in its own country in the coming months, it risks not only losing hard-fought security gains but also bequeathing to the next President an Iraq in danger of sliding back into civil war.

Impact on the U.S. Military

Years of conducting two major wars in Afghanistan and Iraq simultaneously have put great strains on the U.S. military, particularly our ground forces and special operations forces. More than six years of repeated combat tours with little time at home in between have placed a heavy burden on our soldiers, marines and their families. The operational demands of these wars have consumed the nation's supply of ready ground forces, leaving the United States without an adequate pool of Army units ready for other possible contingencies and increasing the level of strategic risk.

At a time when the United States faces an unusually daunting set of national security challenges –from a deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, instability in Pakistan, and a truculent Iran bent on acquiring nuclear weapons, to a rising China, a nuclear-armed North Korea and a host of weak and failing states beset by a revitalized global network of violent Islamist extremists – we must give high priority to restoring the readiness of the U.S. military for the full spectrum of possible missions. As a global power with global interests, the United States needs its armed forces to be ready to respond whenever and wherever our strategic interests are threatened.

Stresses on Personnel

Multiple, back-to-back deployments with shorter “dwell” times at home and longer times away, have put unprecedented strain on U.S. military personnel. Due to the high demand for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, Army and Marine Corps personnel have been spending more time deployed than either they or their respective services planned. Judging from conversations with dozens of U.S. soldiers in Iraq, the Army’s 15-month tours with only 12 months at home in between have been particularly hard on soldiers and their families.

According to Admiral Michael Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the nation cannot sustain today’s operational tempos at current force levels.¹ Getting back to a one-to-one ratio between time deployed and time at home in the short term, and a one-to-two ratio in the mid to long-term, would require either a substantial increase in troop supply or decrease in troop demand, or some combination of both. As the “surge” in Iraq comes to an end, the Army will have a total of 17 Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. In order to get back to a cycle of 12 months deployed and 12 months at home, the United States total commitment would need to be reduced to 15 BCTs.² Over time, growing the size of the Army and the Marine Corps will help to reduce the strain, but not in the near term, as it will take time to recruit, train and field the additional personnel.

Meanwhile, there are signs that the stress of repeated deployments is taking a human toll, especially on the Army. Studies show that repeated tours in Iraq increase a soldier’s likelihood of developing post-traumatic stress disorder, and indeed, cases of PTSD have risen dramatically.³ The rates of suicide, alcohol abuse, divorce, desertion, and AWOLs among Army personnel are all increasing.

While all four services have met or exceeded their active duty recruiting targets in recent years, they have had to take some rather extraordinary measures to do so. Each service has relied increasingly on enlistment bonuses to attract the shrinking portion of young Americans (only 3 in 10) who meet the educational, medical and moral standards for military service.

¹ *Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Fiscal Year 2009 Defense Authorization Request, Future Years Defense Program, and Fiscal Year 2009 Request for Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, testimony of the Honorable Robert S. Gates, Secretary of Defense and Admiral Michael V. Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, February 6, 2008*

² *At the same time, however, some senior military leaders are also concerned about the “nobody home” phenomenon that can occur during our own political transitions, from election day in early November to inauguration day in late January, and even later as senior administration appointees await confirmation. This concern may cause them to err on the side of recommending that President Bush keep more forces in Iraq after the pause to maintain stability until a new President and his or her team are in place.*

³ *Ann Scott Tyson, “Troops’ Mental Distress Tracked” The Washington Post, November 14, 2007; see also Associated Press, “Army Suicides up 20 percent in 2007, Report Says.” 31 January, 2008. <http://www.cnn.com/2008/HEALTH/01/31/army.suicides.ap>*

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Of all the services, the Army has faced the greatest recruiting challenges. Since missing its 2005 recruiting target by a margin of 8%, the Army has taken a number of steps to bolster its accessions and meet its annual targets. These have included: raising the maximum age for enlistment from 35 to 42, offering a shorter-than-usual 15-month enlistment option, giving a \$2,500 bonus to personnel who transfer into the Army from another service, and providing a new accession bonus to those who enter Officer Candidate School.⁴ Most notably, the Army has accepted more recruits without a high school diploma (only 82% had a diploma in FY2008 to date vice the goal of 90%)⁵ and has increased the number of waivers granted for enlistment.⁶ In 2007, for example, more than 20% of new recruits required a waiver: 57% for conduct, 36% for medical reasons, and 7% for drug or alcohol use.⁷ An Army study assessing the quality and performance of waiver soldiers compared to their overall cohort found that while the waiver population had higher loss rates in six of nine adverse loss categories, they also had slightly higher valorous award and promotion rates in some communities.⁸ This mixed record highlights the importance of continuing to monitor the performance of waiver soldiers over time.

The Army is also facing some new retention challenges as it sustains an unusually high operational tempo while simultaneously converting to modularity and growing its force. Remarkably, loss rates for company grade officers (second lieutenant, first lieutenant, and captain) have remained fairly stable in recent years, despite the demands of multiple tours in quick succession. Nevertheless, there is cause for concern. A number of the young captains I met in Iraq were seriously contemplating leaving the Army. While they were proud of their service and most loved the Army, after two, three, or in some cases four combat tours in a handful of years, they needed a break – to resume their education, start a family, or spend time with the young family they had left at home.

In addition, as the Army expands, it will need to retain a higher percentage of its experienced officers to lead the force. For example, the number of officers the Army needs grew by 8,000 between 2002 and 2006, with 58% of this growth in the ranks of captain and major.⁹ A particular gap is at the level of majors, where the services estimates approximately 17% of spots are empty.¹⁰ To decrease the historical loss rate of company grade officers, the Army is offering unprecedented incentives to those captains who agree to extend for three years, including choice of one's post or branch or functional area, the opportunity to transfer or change

⁴ *Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee on Personnel Overview, testimony of the Honorable David S.C. Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, February 27, 2008*

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ *The total number of waivers granted by the Army rose from 11.5% in 2004 to 16.9% in 2006. Congressional Budget Office, "The All-Volunteer Military: Issues and Performance." July, 2007*

⁷ *Department of the Army. Of the more than 10,000 conduct waivers granted, 68% percent were for minor misdemeanors, 18% were for serious misdemeanors, and 14% were for felonies.*

⁸ *Department of the Army, G1 Cohort FY03-FY06 study, 2007.*

⁹ *"U.S. Army Officer Retention Fact Sheet." Army G1, May 25, 2007.*

¹⁰ *Charles A. Henning, "Army Office Shortages: Background and Issues for Congress." Congressional Research Service, July 5, 2006.*

jobs, assignment at their post of choice, professional military or language training, fully funded graduate education, or receipt of up to \$35,000 critical skills retention bonus.¹¹

Given the criticality of retaining experienced field grade officers as it grows, and given the uncharted waters we are in as an All-Volunteer Force sends young officers to their third and fourth combat rotations with little time at home, the Army is rightly paying serious attention to retaining its field-grade officers.¹²

Compressed and Narrowed Training

To remain fully ready, the U.S. military must prepare not only for current operations but also for a broad range of future contingencies, from sustained, small-unit irregular warfare missions to military training and advising missions, to high-end warfare against regional powers armed with weapons of mass destruction and other asymmetric means. Yet compressed training time between deployments means that many of our enlisted personnel and officers have the time to train only for the missions immediately before them— primarily counterinsurgency missions in Iraq and Afghanistan—and not for the full spectrum of missions that may be over the horizon.¹³ These just-in-time training conditions have created a degree of strategic risk.¹⁴

With a 12-month dwell time that is compounded by personnel turnover, institutional education requirements, and equipment either returning from or deploying to theater, Army units have found themselves racing to get certified for their next deployment. While home-station training and exercises at the major training centers are evolving, the ability of units to train for the full spectrum of operations has been severely limited by time. This same compressed timeline has contributed to the overall stresses on the force.

Equipment Shortages and Wear-Out

Near-continuous equipment use in-theater has meant that aircraft, vehicles, and even communications gear have stayed in the fight instead of returning home with their units. For example, 26% of the Marine Corps' equipment is engaged overseas and most does not rotate out of theater with units.¹⁵ Roughly 43% of the National Guard's equipment remains overseas

¹¹ *Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee on Personnel Overview, testimony of the Honorable David S.C. Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, February 27, 2008*

¹² *Bryan Bender and Renee Dudley, "Army Rushes to Promote its Officers." Boston Globe, March 13, 2007*

¹³ *See, for example, General James T. Conway, Commandant, United States Marine Corps, Statement on Marine Corps Posture before the House Armed Services Committee, March 1, 2007.*

¹⁴ *Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Fiscal Year 2009 Defense Authorization Request, Future Years Defense Program, and Fiscal Year 2009 Request for Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, testimony of the Honorable Robert S. Gates, Secretary of Defense and Admiral Michael V. Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, February 6, 2008*

¹⁵ *Statement of General James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Posture of the United States Marine Corps, February 28, 2008*

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or has worn out.¹⁶ Given the high tempo of operations and the harsh operating environments, equipment has been worn out, lost in battle, or damaged almost more quickly than the services can repair or replace it. And near continuous use without depot-level maintenance has substantially decreased the projected lifespan of this equipment and substantially increased expected replacement costs.

The resulting equipment scarcity has led to the widespread practice of cross-leveling: taking equipment (and personnel) from returning units to fill out those about to deploy. The Marines and the Army have also drawn increasingly from pre-positioned stocks around the world. So far, these measures have met readiness needs in theater, but they have also decreased the readiness of non-deployed units and impeded their ability to train on individual and collective tasks. Even those deployed are at increasing risk as the equipment they have becomes unusable: Army equipment in Iraq and Afghanistan is wearing out at almost nine times the normal rate.¹⁷

Meanwhile, the Army has told the Government Accountability Office that it will need between \$12 and \$13 billion per year to replace lost, damaged and worn equipment for the duration of the war in Iraq and at least two years beyond.¹⁸ The Marine Corps estimates it will need \$15.6 billion for reset.¹⁹ Bringing the National Guard's equipment stock up to even 75% of authorized levels will take \$22 billion over the next five years.²⁰ In the current budgetary environment, the military services are struggling to balance resources between reconstituting current stocks and modernizing for the future.

The Reserve Component: Unique Challenges

The Reserves comprise 37% of the Total Force and their battle rhythm has accelerated enormously since operations in Afghanistan began in 2001. Each of the National Guard's 34 combat brigades has been deployed to Operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom, and 600,000 selected reservists have been activated.²¹

Cross-leveling is especially acute for reserve units, which do not possess equipment at authorized levels. The Army National Guard lacks 43.5% of its authorized equipment, while the Army Reserve does not have 33.5% of its authorized levels. The Commission on the National

¹⁶ Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, "Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st Century Operational Force: Final Report to the Congress and the Secretary of Defense." January 31, 2008, pg. 84

¹⁷ Ann Scott Tyson, "U.S. Army Battling to Save Equipment." *Washington Post*, December 5, 2006

¹⁸ Government Accountability Office, Statement of Sharon L. Pickup, "Military Readiness: Impact of Current Operations and Actions Needed to Rebuild Readiness of U.S. Ground Forces." Testimony before the Armed Services Committee, House of Representatives, February 14, 2008.

¹⁹ General James T. Conway, Commandant, United States Marine Corps, Statement on Marine Corps Posture before the House Armed Services Committee, March 1, 2007.

²⁰ Peter Spiegel, "Guard Equipment Levels Lowest Since 9/11," *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 2007; see also James Halpin, "Equipment Levels Worst Ever, Guard Chief Says." *Associated Press*, June 6, 2007

²¹ Final Report of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, "Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st-Century Operational Force." January 31, 2008.

Guard and Reserves found that spending on the Reserve Component “has not kept pace with the large increases in operational commitments,”²² making it unlikely that it will be able to eliminate its equipment shortfalls any time soon. Additionally, a dramatic shortage of personnel—including 10,000 company-grade officers—has forced the Reserve Component to borrow people from other units along with equipment.

While the Reserve Component is intended for use in overseas operations and homeland defense, it is not fully manned, trained, or equipped to perform these missions. The gap in reserve readiness creates a significant and little-noticed vulnerability in both domestic disaster response and readiness for operations abroad.

In sum, the readiness of U.S. ground forces is just barely keeping pace with current operations. As Army Chief of Staff George Casey has said, “We are consumed with meeting the demands of the current fight and are unable to provide ready forces as rapidly as necessary for other potential contingencies.”²³ Indeed, the United States lacks a sizeable ready reserve of ground forces to respond to future crises. In addition, the fight to recruit and keep personnel combined with the need to repair and modernize equipment means that building and regaining readiness is becoming increasingly costly.

Where Do We Go From Here?

As you hear testimony from General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker and others in the coming weeks, I would encourage you to place their recommendations in a larger strategic context that considers not only the way forward in Iraq but also how best to balance risk across the range of national security challenges we face as a nation.

In my view, any change in U.S. strategy on Iraq must be based on three fundamental premises:

First, we are where we are. Whether one was for or against the war, we can’t turn back the clock. We must start from where we find ourselves today and move forward.

Second, like it or not, Iraq affects U.S. vital interests in the region and globally. Today, the United States’ most fundamental interests in Iraq can be summed up as:

- Preventing safe havens for international terrorism;
- Preventing a regional war; and
- Preventing of a large-scale humanitarian catastrophe.²⁴

²² *Ibid*, pg. 74

²³ General George Casey, Chief of Staff of the Army, before the House Armed Services Committee, September 2007.

²⁴ See James Miller and Shawn Brimley, *Phased Transition: A Responsible Way Forward and Out of Iraq* (Washington DC: Center for a New American Security, 2007): 5.

These interests are a far cry from the maximalist, long-term goals articulated by the Bush administration.²⁵ Rather, they are the bottom line of what we must seek to achieve.

In addition to being more pragmatic and realistic, these three preventative American interests in Iraq fit within several broader regional and global goals that are closely related to the outcome of the war:

- Maintaining stability in the Persian Gulf and broader Middle East;
- Stabilizing Afghanistan;
- Contesting violent Islamic extremism;
- Restoring American credibility and moral leadership; and
- Restoring America's military capacity to meet global contingencies.

Any new Iraq strategy must start by placing American interests in Iraq within this broader regional and global context. Failure to do so would only continue the strategic myopia that has plagued this administration's policies on Iraq and risk the continued erosion of America's strategic position in the Middle East and around the world.

Third, how we eventually transition out of Iraq matters. The next U.S. President will have three options on Iraq: unconditional engagement, unconditional disengagement, or conditional engagement.

Unconditional engagement would be a continuation of the Bush administration's policy of giving the Iraqi government an open-ended commitment of support for as long as it takes, whether they make progress toward stated goals or not. This "all-in" approach is all carrots and no sticks, and provides little incentive for Iraqis to make the hard choices that are essential to their future. It is also unsustainable for the U.S. military, the U.S. treasury and the American people.

Unconditional disengagement argues for a rapid withdrawal of all U.S. combat forces from Iraq on a fixed timetable, without regard to conditions on the ground, the behavior of various parties in Iraq, or the consequences a rapid withdrawal might have for stability in Iraq and the broader region. This "all-out" approach is, by contrast, all sticks and no carrots. And it would increase the risk of a renewed civil war -- and even a regional war -- that would do even greater damage to America's vital interests in the region.

The best way forward for the United States is a strategy of "conditional engagement," in which we use what leverage we have – military, political and economic – to encourage political

²⁵ *The Administration has stated its goals in Iraq as: "An Iraq that has defeated the terrorists and neutralized the insurgency; an Iraq that is peaceful, united, stable, democratic, and secure, where Iraqis have the institutions and resources they need to govern themselves justly and provide security for their country; [and] an Iraq that is a partner in the global war on terror and the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, integrated into the international community, an engine for regional economic growth, and proving the fruits of democratic governance to the region."* See George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* (November 2005): 3.

accommodation in Iraq in the near term and establish sustainable stability over the medium to term.²⁶ Under this strategy, the more progress made on key issues like integrating Sunnis into the Iraqi security forces, holding free and fair elections, and equitably distributing Iraq's vast oil wealth, the more support the Iraqi government could expect from the United States, and presumably the international community, to help build Iraqi capacity for governance and security.

Under this approach, if the Iraq central government made reasonable political progress, U.S. forces would gradually shift to an "overwatch" role as currently envisioned by in the current military campaign plan, on a timetable determined by the extent of political accommodation and conditions on the ground. More specifically, it envisions a gradual transition of U.S. forces from protecting the Iraqi population to advising, training, and assisting Iraqi Security Forces in doing so. Building the capacity of the Iraqi Army to act as a capable, non-sectarian military will be a long pole in the tent of any future U.S. strategy for Iraq. In addition, U.S. forces would continue to assist Iraqi forces in conducting counterterrorism operations and would provide force protection and quick reaction forces for U.S. civilians and military advisors in country.

This transition to a more sustainable military posture to support stability in Iraq would be conducted over a period of a few years, as long as the Iraqis were doing their part to make serious progress on political accommodation. If, however, they did not make reasonable progress, the United States would selectively reduce its support in terms of economic, political, and/or military aid in ways designed to put additional pressure on the Iraqis to make the necessary political compromises while still protecting vital American interests.

This strategy aims to make clear to the central government and other players that our support is conditional, not open-ended. It offers the missing link in U.S. policy towards Iraq over the past five years: a political strategy for achieving U.S. objectives. It also aims to enable the United States to protect its vital interests in Iraq and the region at substantially reduced and more sustainable force levels.

Conclusion

When I was in Iraq, the question I was most often asked by Iraqis was, "Is the United States staying?" Whether they were Sunni "Sons of Iraq" who had begun working with U.S. forces to drive al Qaeda out of their town, or Shia judicial investigators who were working to bring the rule of law to Iraq, or teachers who wanted newly opened schools to stay open for a generation of Iraqi children that have already seen too many years of war, they all looked forward to the day when their country was no longer occupied by foreign forces. But they also wanted U.S. forces to stay awhile longer to enable Iraqis to take the risks necessary for political accommodation to occur.

²⁶ For more on a strategy of conditional engagements, see Colin Kahl, "Stay on Success: A Policy of Conditional Engagement," unpublished CNAS Iraq Workshop paper, 18 March 2008. This paper will also serve as a basis for the forthcoming CNAS report on Iraq which will be published later this year.

The only way to broaden and deepen recent security gains in Iraq is to use our remaining military, economic and political leverage to push various Iraqi actors toward political accommodation. The Bush administration's success or failure in so doing over the coming months will determine which options remain available to the next President.

When the next Commander in Chief takes office, he or she will inherit a number of tough but absolutely critical choices:

- How to put our Iraq policy on a new course that protects our vital interests there but also rebalances risk across our larger regional and global goals;
- How to reduce the corrosive and unsustainable strains on our soldiers, marines and their families;
- How to free up more forces and resources for other immediate priorities like Afghanistan;
- How to restore the readiness and rebalance the capabilities of our military for the full range of possible future contingencies; and
- How to restore America's moral standing and influence in the process.

He or she will also need strong partners in Congress to make these tough choices and to chart a new way forward for Iraq and U.S. national security more broadly.



Michèle Flournoy was appointed President of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) in January 2007. Prior to co-founding CNAS, she was a Senior Adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where she worked on a broad range of defense policy and international security issues. Previously, she was a distinguished research professor at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University (NDU), where she founded and led the university's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) working group, which was chartered by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop intellectual capital in preparation for the Department of Defense's 2001 QDR. Prior to joining NDU, she was dual-hatted as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Threat Reduction and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy. In that capacity, she oversaw three policy offices in the Office of the Secretary of Defense: Strategy; Requirements, Plans, and Counterproliferation; and Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasian Affairs. Ms. Flournoy was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service in 1996, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service in 1998, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Joint Distinguished Civilian Service Award in 2000. She is a member of the Aspen Strategy Group, the Council on Foreign Relations, the International Institute of Strategic Studies, and the Executive Board of Women in International Security. She is a former member of the Defense Policy Board and the Defense Science Board Task Force on Transformation. In addition to several edited volumes and reports, she has authored dozens of articles on international security issues. Ms. Flournoy holds a B.A. in social studies from Harvard University and an M.Litt. in international relations from Balliol College, Oxford University, where she was a Newton-Tatum scholar.