

MEETING OF THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES

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(RETIRED); CHAIRMAN, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON THE SECURITY
FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES

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COUNCIL

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THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT.

HENRY CATTO (chairman emeritus, The Atlantic Council): I'm Henry Catto, the chairman
emeritus of the Atlantic Council. I would like to welcome you all to this second session of our
Global Leadership Series.

Our mission here at the Atlantic Council is to energize the Atlantic community for the
global challenges of the 21st century, and the purpose of this speakers series is to bring key
leaders in the Atlantic community to the council to discuss these challenges and how best we can
deal with them. And the biggest one, perhaps, facing us currently is Iraq.

Before we get to the topic of the evening, I would like to acknowledge the support of my
fellow board member, David Aufhauser, who, in his role as UBS general counsel, has made
possible UBS's generous support of this Global Leadership Series.

Today it's a particular pleasure for me to introduce General Jim Jones, who is not only an
extraordinary leader but is my successor of the chairman of The Atlantic Council. He now heads
the Institute for 21st Century Energy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, after serving as

Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and as 32nd Commandant of the United States Marine Corps.

For the last couple of months, General Jones has served as chair of the Independent Commission on Security Forces of Iraq and presented his report this week to -- last week, it was -- to Congress. He's here today to share with us his conclusions and what they mean for the way ahead in Iraq.

Here to make sure that the general answers the tough questions that you all are likely to throw at him is The Atlantic Council president, Fred Kempe, who was a veteran journalist and editor for 25 years with The Wall Street Journal -- will moderate the discussion after General Jones's introductory remarks.

General Jones?

GEN. JONES: Thank you. (Applause.) Thank you, Henry.

And when I asked Fred what the -- how the program would be shaped, he said, "Well, 10 minutes of remarks and 45 to 50 minutes of questions," and I said, "I'd much prefer the other way around." (Laughter.)

I'd like to acknowledge a couple of people that are here. One, the former Defense minister of Spain, Mr. Martino --

Q (Off mike.)

GEN. JONES: -- of Italy -- pardon me, excuse me -- Italy --

Q (Laughs.)

GEN. JONES: -- yeah, all right, time goes by; you -- (inaudible) -- apologize -- who is a very great supporter of the alliance and a great friend to the United States. And we're grateful for your presence, Minister. Thank you.

And the recently retired vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Ed Giambastiani. Ed, it's good to see you tonight.

You know, to start things off on a light note, some of you know who know me know that I particularly like inter-service humor. So I wanted to share a story that may be a true story, about an Air Force captain who narrowly escaped serious injury recently -- this is from a newspaper clip that I found this morning -- when he decided to try horseback riding, even though he had never had any lessons or any prior experience.

So he mounted the horse unassisted, and the horse immediately sprang into action. As it galloped along at a steady and rhythmic pace, the captain began to slip from the saddle. In

terror, he grabbed for the horse's mane, but he couldn't get a firm grip. He tried to throw his arms around the horse's neck, but he began to slide down the side of the horse anyway.

The horse galloped along, seemingly impervious to its slipping rider. Finally losing his frail grip, the captain attempted to leap away from the horse and throw himself to safety, but unfortunately his foot became entangled in the stirrup. He was now at the mercy of the horse's pounding hoofs as his head struck the ground over and over and over.

As his head was being battered against the ground and he was near -- moments away from unconsciousness, to his great fortune a Marine sergeant who was shopping at Wal-Mart saw him and quickly unplugged the horse. (Laughter.)

Q Thank you! (Laughter continues.)

GEN. JONES: It's in honor of General Scowcroft. (Laughter, applause.)

(Chuckles.)

I'm not sure Iraq is really what you all really want to talk about after having gone through the marathons that you've witnessed and no doubt listened to and the myriad of articles that you've read. So I'm certainly not going to go through a long dissertation here about the commission. Hopefully some of you may have read it, some of you may have heard something about it, but I'll just give you a very, very brief overview, and we will get to Q's and A's as quickly as possible.

On the 6th of September, this commission did report to the Congress, and I want to just go over the four or five main points of the enacting legislation because it's important as you consider what the commission did and what it didn't do.

The first part of the enacting legislation was that the commission was asked to evaluate the capability of Iraqi security forces with regard to the territorial integrity of the country. In other words, can they -- could they protect the country. And our finding there was generally no, with some -- with a distinction, and the distinction being that Iraqi security forces, which comprise the police forces and the emerging armed forces, have made some progress in being able to respond to the internal threats of the country. But the traditional defense of the nation, the defense of the borders, is something that is still a ways away, and that distinction is important to keep in mind. So the answer to the question is no, but that doesn't necessarily mean that that's unsatisfactory, it just means it hasn't arrived yet.

The second one was to deny international terrorists a safe haven, evaluate their capability with regard to that. And that's more along the lines of the internal threat that I was just talking about. And we found that on that score the developing Iraqi security forces, notably the Iraqi army, was more able to take on that mission.

The third question was whether the emerging Iraqi security forces would be able to bring greater security over the next 12 to 18 months to Iraq. And we found that basically, based on the current trend lines and assuming that they continue, that there were indications to believe that that answer could be a positive one as well.

And the last one was to evaluate the potential of bringing to -- an end to sectarian violence by the Iraqi security forces to achieve national reconciliation. After our study, we really -- we really came to the conclusion that that question should have been turned on its head and the question should have been can the government of Iraq bring about political reconciliation in order to end sectarian violence. It's a little bit of a chicken-and-egg question. But the idea that the armed forces of Iraq are going to -- by themselves or the coalition -- to bring an end to sectarian violence is not really the recipe that we think is the most -- the easiest one to tackle. As a matter of fact, it's a little backwards. The real overall conclusion is that the government of Iraq is the one that had to find a way to achieve political reconciliation in order to enable a reduction in sectarian violence.

So those were the -- well, the other thing we were asked to do was to evaluate the Iraqi security forces' capabilities in such areas as training, equipment, command and control, intelligence, logistics, those kinds of enablers. And so we did that as we went along everywhere, and we found that generally speaking, that while the Iraqi army, in particular, was able to take on more responsibilities in terms of the day-to-day combat operations against the internal threats of the country, that they were still lacking in critical enablers along those lines. And so, much more needs to be done before the army can move in to what is termed an "independent ability to act on its own."

So we had 20 commissioners. We spent the equivalent of about three weeks in the country and we visited all these sites that you see on these boards displayed in front of you, this one in Baghdad and this one country-wide. We had 15 commissioners that were prior military, with prior military experience, all retirees, and five very distinguished chiefs of police under the leadership of Chief Ramsey, the former head of the District of Columbia's police department.

And I think that the contribution that the police section of our commission made to clear understanding of the overall security situation was one of the main -- one of good contributions of the entire work that the commission did. And I'm very grateful to them for their hard work and the quality of their report.

I'd like to talk about -- just to make sure that in this audience, at any rate, the difference between internal and external threats is clearly understood, because we think that the evolution of the Iraqi security forces, and in particular -- the end state of those -- of that evolution is roughly what we think in terms of how police are used and how armies are used. The police, ultimately, the police organizations of Iraq, should be able to function in such a way as to achieve internal security in the country. And that's clear. And the end state for the army is to be able to defend the country against its external threats.

Now, because of the relative different pace at which both organizations are progressing, it takes -- it takes the Iraqi security forces, police and army, to do the first mission, to do the internal security mission now. They're doing better. They can't do it completely, but they're doing better and they're showing progress. Ultimately, the Iraqi army will migrate over towards the external security threat, but this is one where we judge that more attention needs to be made.

And this gets us to the final chapter that we wrote in the report that deviated a little bit from our charter, tried to put some context and some interpretive context, if you will, to what it all means. And some of those things I'd like to just go over with you very briefly.

The first conclusion that we had to address the surge -- and we think the surge -- we consider the surge to be a tactic, not a strategy, but an important tactic to support a strategy -- it was an influx of troops, and there's two aspects to the surge. One is Iraqi that started in January of 2007, and the other one was the coalition, which came to full operational capability in May -- May-June of this year. But together they have made a statistical difference in the amount of attacks in the region in which they were focused, and you would expect that with that kind of military effort you're going to get that kind of reaction. So we think that that was important because it signaled the willingness and the ability and the capability of some of the Iraqi army and some Iraq police forces who actually get in there and mix it up and be successful.

Second -- the second trend that happened almost simultaneously is the surge, although I think it was somewhat unrelated with the rather surprising turnaround in the fortunes of al Qaeda in Al Anbar province. As a result of their brutality and their savagery against locals in the region over the years, not just recently, the population of Al Anbar province, which is a province about one-third the entire size of the country, turned -- has turned against al Qaeda and sees al Qaeda as a true occupier of Iraq and have turned with coalition to achieve some rather spectacular successes.

We can only hope that this success migrates over to other areas of Iraq. My guess is, if it does, it would be to the rural areas where there's ethnic homogeneity, and -- but it's an encouraging event. It's statistically very impressive, and it goes to show that some folks were clearly thinking along those lines. And they're working together now; the police forces and the army and the coalition in Anbar province is yielding on a daily basis good results.

The third element was, as I previously mentioned, was just the improvement of the Iraqi army itself, and that was something that was pleasant to note. And we think that the basic underpinnings that you want to see in a developing army -- the training, the recruits, the schools, the NCO academies, a center for counterinsurgency operations, young officers being trained. Particularly we visited the NATO contribution at Ar Rustamiyah. Those are quality organizations, quality institutions that are producing the next generation of Iraqi army officers. And we can be confident that that's a good product.

So while those three things combined don't necessarily indicate a strategic trend, it does give the basis for some optimism. And so we come back at the end of our report to the major conclusion that it's the government of Iraq that must commit to reconciliation if it wants to

decrease sectarian violence, which is the main root of all violence in the country. The number of fatalities caused by al Qaeda is around 15 percent, to give you a sense of the proportion.

In the last chapter, we -- as I said, we tried to interpret some trends. And we believe a couple of things: that we must continue to put more responsibility wherever possible on the Iraqi government and increasingly wherever possible and with the right pace of things, and that's an operational decision, to turn over the internal -- the responsibility for combating internal violence in Iraq to Iraqis. The ISF, the Iraqi security forces, is more capable than it was, significantly more capable than it was last year. And we think that this could be a gradual shift that would allow us to move into areas that are currently unattended to a certain extent but need to be looked at.

The government of Iraq has got to be made to feel the international concern and the pressure. We would think that a Dayton-like conference with international authorities, governments and the like would be something that would be very beneficial to underscore the absolute criticality of that particular event, the reconciliation, to take place.

The third thing that we concluded was that a strategic shift of mission and a realignment of the coalition forces over time, as we said, starting in early 2008, can be contemplated. And as a matter of fact, we were pleased to see that in some areas, it's already being done, notably in Nasiriyah province, where the Australians have shown a shift to a strategic overwatch concept that is working extraordinarily well in cooperation with the Iraqi police and the Iraqi army in that region.

And lastly -- well, two more things. The fourth conclusion is that much more focus needs to be placed on the border in the defense of the critical infrastructures of the country. We have to do more to train the Iraqi border police, to equipping them, to use the technologies and also, where needed, to use coalition forces to make things more difficult for two countries in particular, Syria and Iran.

One of the main conclusions of our report was that the rise of Iranian involvement inside the country -- the destabilizing effect, the numbers of weapons coming across the border, the resources that are being committed are going to increasingly have a negative effect on the recovery of Iraq unless it is addressed, and I think that we made that point rather relatively forcefully. Eventually, this will be a role for the Iraqi army, but the capability is not there yet. Ultimately, it will be, but it's not going to be 12 to 18 months; it's going to be some years before they can do that. But the army is growing at a reasonably good rate. They're going to expand by three more divisions in 2008, so that will give them about 13 divisions. And these are divisions that are generally able to actually get out there and do things internally in the country.

The last point I would make is that there is a(n) issue of perception versus reality in Iraq. The way I would characterize that, for those of you who've been there -- I've been privileged to go there several times a year since 2003 -- but some things don't change. And what doesn't change is when you land at Baghdad International Airport and you get hustled off in a -- into your flak jacket and your helmet and you duck into your up-armored Humvees and you get your

safety brief by the patrol leader and you race down Route Irish and you make it to the end zone, you have the feeling that you've just survived a narrow escape with your Maker. And then you get out and you get hustled into the briefing room, and the first briefing tells you how good everything's going in Iraq. (Laughter.) So -- and I don't mean that, you know, in a -- I just mean that more in a humorous way, but there is some truth to that. The perceptions and the realities are sometimes at odds with each other.

And the Green Zone itself is a statement in and of itself. The fact that there has to be one is something that creates a perception that is troublesome. The perception of the coalition, Americans in particular, being occupiers has certainly been one of our major problems. It hasn't been helped by the fact that we occupied Saddam Hussein's palaces after he was toppled in 2003. One might consider as you look at your footprint and you look at the mass -- the sheer mass of equipment and personnel that we have, as to whether that is really the size of the force that we need. Whether it's a superstructure of the force or the engine room of the force, to use a naval term, doesn't matter, but I think we have to do whatever we can to give the impression that we are an expeditionary force and we are not an occupying force. And that message has to go out obviously to Iraqis, but obviously to people in other capitals as well to make sure that we get that message loud and clear.

Provincial Iraqi control transfer. We transferred seven provinces to Iraq. Frankly, as we said in our testimony, the methodology for that system is very hard to understand. The commission recommended that all 18 provinces be immediately transferred to sovereign Iraqi control. It doesn't -- it will not change our workload one iota, and it certainly avoids the work that we're trying to do to form a template that we apply to each province to say: Before we transfer to Iraqi control you must be able to meet these criteria.

The difference between Basra and northern Iraq is so different that there is no template for that. These are 18 provinces, they're all different; they all have their different degree of difficulties, and we see no logic that would argue for any delay. As a matter of fact, we think the Iraqis -- the system whereby we transfer the provinces back to Iraqi control actually delays the recovery of the state.

We suggested transition headquarters to visibly show that we are in fact interested in transition, and we're tracking it in the broad sense. It's not just about the security force. It's about economic recovery, legal reform and the whole broad nature of transition. We believe it ought to be a physical place. We called it a headquarters, but it could be a commission of some sort. But it ought to be where people can go to be briefed as to where we are today on transition, what the plan is for the future and how well we're doing in meeting those standards.

We also emphasized the fact that standards and metrics are important, and we just as a cautionary note suggested that our standard for certification and for turning something over ought not to be a U.S. standard. We're not going to recreate the 82nd Airborne Division out of one of the Iraqi divisions, and that ought not to be the standard. We ought to make sure that what we do is good enough for what Iraq needs or the defense of its country, for handling its internal security. We ought to have the right set of weapons and the right capabilities, and not

try to superimpose something on them, like a very complex logistics system, for example, that they will not probably use and don't have the capacity to use for many years.

So I think I'll stop there, Fred, and look forward to taking any questions that might have come up.

We enjoyed our work. It was extremely motivating to see the high quality of all troops, all coalition troops, and the energy and -- that they bring to their jobs, their very dangerous jobs. And it also was very good to see some signs of progress along the lines that I described to you.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. KEMPE: It's when you -- that's what happens when you try to be too polite and stand for the general when we start -- General Jones, thank you so much for that presentation. I think what you've done is not only deal and -- explain further the commission report, which was excellent, well-received, but you also focused a little bit more on the final chapter of the report, which didn't get a lot of notice in the press or in commentary.

And so I think in my first couple questions, before I turn it over to the audience, I want to drill down on a couple of those more strategic issues, rather than tactical issues. The -- you talked about giving more responsibility to the Iraqi government. I wonder if you can be a little bit more precise on that, and that is how -- what -- this has come up so often in the debate lately, but how does one encourage the Iraqi government to be more effective and responsible, rather than international pressure? Can you be more precise on that?

And more to the point, in the event it doesn't make progress at the legislation we're looking at on national reconciliation by next summer, what's our Plan B? What's the shift in policy?

GEN. JONES: Well, I think that there are some pressure points here that have to be exerted, because as long as we stay in the ethnic fight, we're losing young members of the coalition, Americans but also other nationalities as well, to what's an ethnic contest. It's -- whether you call it a civil war or whatever, and that fundamentally doesn't sit well with a lot of people. And that's understandable.

So I think that what our commission was trying to suggest was that there are ways in which we can show our commitment to making sure that Iraq survives as a nation, but increasingly make sure that Iraq and Iraqi capabilities handle the day-to-day ethnic fight.

And that can start relatively quickly, in my view. I think General Petraeus alluded to that in his report. Now, how he does that, and what the numbers are, are way beyond our purview as a commission. But by adopting a more expeditionary force, you are -- you would be doing some things that you're going to have to do anyway when the day comes when you do leave. And if, for some reason, that day is accelerated for political reasons, your task is a lot easier at the end of the day.

So when you look around at the huge size of our footprint, the number of bases, you look at the -- at just the sheer mass of the presence, you can pretty quickly come to the conclusion that there are some things that you can do that would make an eventual departure a lot easier, and yet still achieve your -- still stay true to your mission, which is to make sure that Iraqis have a chance to develop a government and a stable nation that will not be overwhelmed one way or the other by their neighbors, by two in particular.

MR. KEMPE: And the other issue I thought that was very interesting, and again, I don't think has been touched upon and given the credit and the analysis it deserves, is the idea of a Dayton negotiation of some sort regarding Iraq. Again, I wonder if you could flesh that out a little bit. Who would participate? What would be your aim? When one speaks of Dayton, one does seem to look at separate Kurdish, Sunni, Shi'a areas, and perhaps them being a change in the constitution, perhaps even a more federal structure or at least going very much in that direction. Is that what you're talking about in Dayton, both in terms of who would be there and how it would be organized, but also what desired outcome one would have?

GEN. JONES: Well, I really haven't gone into those -- into that level of detail, but it strikes me that absent something like that, which we did for Bosnia, we've done for other great problems in the world, that this is something that would at least be helpful, and would at least rally the international community around a very serious problem. I mean, Iraq is not just a U.S. problem or a U.S. and the partners that are engaged in it -- it's a -- how it comes out is going to affect, certainly, the region and the Middle East; it's going to affect the economies; it's going to affect the flow of energy.

It's -- I mean, there are a lot of -- going to affect how we fight terrorism in the future, depending on how -- there are a lot of strategic issues here that call, at least in my opinion, for a more international focus, whether it's a Dayton-like accord or conference. You know, I'll leave that up to heads of state and diplomats to figure that out.

But it seems to me that that would be a good thing to do, if only to accentuate to the young Iraqi government the absolute requirement that this has to be done. Because this is -- there's no magic key here, but this is as close to one as you could possibly find. Because only good things can flow from a political reconciliation and the subsequent standing down of the militias and reducing the violence. Because if that's done, then Iraq goes from the sense that many people have, that it's unmanageable, I think, to a manageable problem relatively quickly.

MR. KEMPE: How much do our international friends want to help us in this? Do you see that changing? We are the Atlantic Council. There are NATO missions, training and otherwise, in Iraq. Do you see, through Dayton or other means, a greater internationalization of the issue involving our allies?

GEN. JONES: (Audio break) -- you know, I think so. You know, NATO has three missions in Iraq and has been there faithfully for a few years now. But NATO contributes to the training of Iraqi officers. It contributes to the equipping of the Iraqi army and it invites Iraqis to

train on foreign soil, as well, in their schools and whatever that -- I just gave a speech at the NATO Defense College, and they were -- (audio break) -- Iraqi officers. They were graduating from the NATO Defense College in Rome. So that kind of thing is certainly very helpful.

But I just -- as a comment, I just think that there's an absence of international focus on the seriousness of how this comes out. And when you look at the Iranian question, which receives an awful lot of press, both in Europe and around the world and in the United States, there are some things going on now that General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker pointed out that are absolutely spot-on, and they have to be confronted. And it doesn't mean that it has to be confronted militarily, although you can do so by repositioning some troops. I'm not suggesting military strikes or any kind of combat against Iran. But the international community has to gather around this point, in my view, in order to halt the success that Iran is having, particularly in the South, southeastern part of the country, which is worrisome.

MR. KEMPE: The -- well, let's -- let me ask one more question, and then we'll go to the audience. And please identify yourselves as you ask your question.

The -- if you're talking about -- we were talking earlier, and you talked about September as a critical month. Because there's so much debate, because of your report, because of the Petraeus testimony, because of the Crocker testimony, because of a debate that's going on in town, that it's a critical month, and that perhaps the United States and citizens of the United States don't really get what's at stake here. This is a situation where this has become a domestic political debate. A lot of it does take place in the context of a presidential campaign.

What is it Americans don't get? What is it you want them to get? What change of thinking do you want to happen in September?

GEN. JONES: I'm not sure that Americans don't get it, but I think that -- I think that much of the discussion that we have on Iraq -- and, you know, you can see that by some of the questions that were directed at us and also at Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus -- all focus on the tactics of the moment, with a very short-term view in terms of a result. And there are strategic questions here that go out, you know, a much longer period of time that ought to be addressed.

And so I pay attention to -- I pay attention to the moment, obviously; but looking beyond an election and looking beyond the immediacy of the moment and the latest car bomb, if you will, what are the strategic issues that are at stake here? What does it mean for us nationally to fail or to be perceived to have failed or to succeed or be perceived to have succeeded? What does it mean for the region, which is very important to the rest of the world, and what does it mean globally? And I think there are some really very important long-term questions there that have to be addressed.

MR. KEMPE: Give us one or two. In short, what are the most important two things that need -- is it Iran and the rise of Iran? Is it --

GEN. JONES: I think at the strategic level, the biggest problems are the challenges that Iran places and faces. I mean, Iran is clearly trying to subvert the recovery of Iraq, and they're doing it by committing many resources, a lot of training, a lot of equipment, and high-tech weapons that are built to defeat our -- defeat our armor and defeat our forces. They are engaged in trying to dominate the southern part of the country, and as a result of that, you are seeing a fractured Shi'a community with more Shi'a-on-Shi'a fighting now than before, and a growing influence over the Jaish al-Mahdi and the militant portion of that particular militant group.

So, what are the strategic imperatives of that happening? What is it that happens if Iraq fails as a state and devolves into chaos? What does that mean for the region, what does it mean for the globe, what are the economic repercussions? And nationally, what does it mean for the United States? I mean, what is it that we're going to be perceived to be 10 or 15 years from now?

Where I think most Americans want to be a nation of great influence and want to have a dominant voice in the affairs of the globe, having a failure in Iraq -- or Afghanistan, by the way - - and let me quickly add that I think Afghanistan deserves to be mentioned in the same breath every time we mention Iraq because of the strategic consequences there -- but at the very least you're going to have, if we're perceived to have failed, you're going to have a massive increase in the number of jihadists around the world, and it's going to spread.

I'm not saying it comes automatically to our shores or whatever, but it is a common problem that we all will face, and you can just see that on a daily basis by reading the newspapers and how widespread these networks are, how well resourced they are and what they are. And this is -- these are two places right now, in Iraq and Afghanistan, where the rest of the world can take a position, and if we're successful collectively that would be good. If we are not, it will certainly be a bad thing for our children and maybe even our grandchildren.

MR. KEMPE: Let me give the former Defense minister of Italy the first question.

Q Yes, General Jones. I'd like to ask you a question and then explain why I asked the question.

Is it more difficult to train soldiers than to train policemen? Because as you know, we sent 3,000 military to Nasiriyah; 2,700 were from the army mostly, but also navy and air force; and only 300 from the Carabinieri. Yet the Carabinieri trained 11,000 policemen, and the army only trained 2,000 soldiers. Is it more difficult to train soldiers than to train policemen?

GEN. JONES: Mr. Minister, I think it depends on the -- what capacity you're meeting up against. In Iraq, the situation is that the Ministry of Defense and its ability to administer the armed forces is vastly ahead of the Ministry of the Interior and its ability to administer to the police networks of the nation. And the differences between the two are like night and day.

I suspect that -- at least one of the things we observed in the Ministry of the Interior, aside from the fact that it's overtly sectarian, that it is -- that there's allegations of corruption and

bureaucratic inefficiency, where even if they have equipment like fuel and ammunition and weapons and vehicles, that the system is so -- works so poorly that it doesn't get down to the units. That's a national problem. But you know, comparing apples to apples, if you have the right number of trainers, it should be -- even though it's different, I think what you want in the police force is a police force that understands that, above all, you shouldn't do anything that's bad for the people.

And so there might be some more difficult challenges to get that process identified, at least in the culture of the police forces, particularly given their experiences under Saddam Hussein. So that may be a little bit harder to do.

But in the main, if all systems are equal, we should be able to do both. But I think the flaw in the system is the -- just the ineffectiveness of the governmental chain.

Thank you for that question.

Q A very quick follow-up. General Keane at American Enterprise Institute last week said in a counterinsurgency, this is the last thing that gets fixed, the police. But as you look at that, you have called to take it apart, restart. You stand by that in the commission report. Is that the way to go?

GEN. JONES: Well, the police network in Iraq is much broader than just the national police. And I know that people who didn't take the time to read the report keyed on that as saying we recommended disbanding the entire national police, meaning all of them -- not true. The national police is a 25,000-man police that is -- exists at the national level. They generally report to the minister of the Interior and therefore pretty directly to the prime minister.

Unfortunately, this national police is very sectarian. They're about 85 percent Shi'a in their makeup. They are universally distrusted and disliked. They are associated with some fairly bad things with regard to human rights and abuses of human rights. And our chiefs felt very strongly that that unit ought to be re-missioned and brought down to something that is more useful to what they need -- response teams, emergency response teams, SWAT teams and the like, but not any kind of representation of a -- I'll -- these are my words -- that -- a type of republican guard that some of us are worried about as being formed.

MR. KEMPE: I see, I see. Well, actually, now a lot of questions, but I saw three, so I'll go to the first three. One, two and, you, three. Please. Yes.

Q I am Doug Brooks with the International Peace Operations Association. My question is -- you know, even if we stay, it's no guarantee of success; if we depart, it's no guarantee of failure, but if things do go south, what is your perspective on the asylum issue? We have a lot of Iraqis who have worked with our military now, with our contractors -- I mean, we're talking about thousands and thousands of people. You know, what is your take on --

GEN. JONES: Yeah, well, a little bit outside the commission's lane, but my personal response is we have to pay -- we would have to pay very serious attention to that and not duplicate some of the -- or replicate some of the tragedies of the past. I mean, you have to -- I'm reasonably sure that people have thought about that already. And this is -- this goes part and parcel as to why I think we can adjust our forces at our -- based on our timeline, in ways that should we have to make a -- should a political decision be made at some point that it is time to leave -- maybe it's because of a good thing or a bad thing -- that we can do so fairly efficiently. And that's certainly a key part of it.

Q General, thank you. Jeff Steinberg from Executive Intelligence Review.

Based on your travels around the country, to what extent do you see the situation as already to a very large extent ethnically cleansed? And do you see, looking down the road, the dangers of an emerging Sunni versus Shi'ite conflict as the consequence of some of these faultlines developing in Iraq?

GEN. JONES: Well, I grew up kind of in the junior ranks of the general officers in Bosnia so I had a first -- front row seat on the subject of ethnic cleansing. And I wouldn't sit here and tell you that there hasn't been any of that in Iraq. There clearly has -- some of it obviously forcible, but some of it simply because families said, we can't live here and we're leaving.

So that's unfortunately a fact of life in ethnic conflicts. You would wish that it wouldn't be, but it is what it is. With regard to ethnic clash between Sunnis and Shi'as, this is obviously the crux of the problem.

It's interesting to note that in the Iraqi army, we went over there with the idea that ethnicity was going to be a problem in the armed forces. And if you look at the construct of the 10 divisions that they have right now and the balance between Kurds and Shi'as and Sunnis and who commands the divisions and the makeup of the divisions, compared to the ministry of the interior and the police forces, ethnicity is not as big a problem in the army. And that was -- that's a good thing. But it has to do, I think, with the quality of training they're getting at the entry level.

We were very pleasantly surprised to see thousands -- thousands -- of young Iraqis waiting each day to try to be selected to join the army and, by the way, the police forces as well. They are being paid. The army is being paid at a more consistent rate than the police forces are, which speaks a little bit to the either sectarianism or the dysfunction of the Ministry of the Interior.

But this is something that young Iraqis are lining up to do, and talking to a number of a trainers and talking to the advisers that are embedded with Iraqi units, who see these -- see them firsthand and observe them firsthand, the results are -- at least on the army side, are pretty good.

The Iraqi special forces are judged by our trainers, by U.S. standards, to be the equal of any special forces in the Persian Gulf region today. So that's kind of a compliment.

But I did want to make distinction that ethnicity in the Iraqi armed forces seems to be not as a big a problem as it is in the police network.

MR. KEMPE: Mr. Coe. Please.

Q (Without microphone.) Do you have any idea --

MR. KEMPE: No -- here we go. Sorry.

Q (With microphone.) Do you have any idea how much overlap there is between today's Iraqi army and Saddam's army?

GEN. JONES: I think it's -- following the decisions of the CPA to essentially dismember the army after the military defeat, and then the reversal of that to rebuild it, but also vet the more senior officers that came in, that there's -- there are quite a few people who in the course of our interviews with them said, "I used to be, I used to serve, I was," and associated their previous experience -- the minister of Defense was a young general in Saddam Hussein's army, if I recall correctly. And -- but he's doing just fine at what he's doing. He seems -- he's got a strategic vision. He wants to do more. He's running a ministry, I think, that is representative of the armed forces that he's trying to create. They can't do everything, but they're doing better.

Q Thank you. I am Bob Pearson, General. I was ambassador in Turkey, 2000 to 2003.

GEN. JONES: I remember you, Mr. Ambassador.

Q And I thank you for your support in a challenging time.

GEN. JONES: Thank you.

Q I wanted to tie together three things you said: the expeditionary force, the standards and metrics, and the Dayton accords, and just pose the question of what success means, because if the end result is that we have a stable Iraq capable of standing up to its neighbors, the democratic composition inside the country may not be the kind of perfect picture --

GEN. JONES: Right.

Q -- that many people may be assuming. And so I think that I would simply suggest that maybe part of our dialogue tried to begin to focus on what we mean by success because we will have to explain that to the American people when we do eventually come out.

Thank you, sir.

GEN. JONES: I think that your statement stands for itself. I completely agree with it.

Q Define success. What does it look like?

GEN. JONES: Well, I -- you know, I think that you have various levels you get to, and the most critical thing that has to happen in Iraq right now is stop the inter-ethnic violence, and when you do that, that's a measure of success. Now it's not the end state, but it is -- at least will get us into the -- where the -- I like the analogy of when you get into these conflicts the first part of the conflict always has a big m for military and a little p for political. And over time as you're doing things right it goes the other way, and that's what happened in Bosnia. You want that big political -- big p for political and then gradually reduce the military, but there are some interim steps of success that you have to achieve before you get to that situation.

But I think the ambassador is correct, that ultimately -- whenever that day is, ultimately Iraqis will probably decide for themselves what kind of government they want to have, and we'll make that change. And all we can hope is that we've done a good job and set good models, good role models and tried to influence them in the right way so it comes out okay.

Q (Name inaudible) -- U.S. correspondent of -- (affiliation inaudible).

GEN. JONES: Yes.

Q I would like to follow up on the political implication of all those reports. They might differ in the degree of success or failure, but there are two tendencies in all the reports. The success is on the military side; the failure is on the political side. And if you don't name sides, but persons, and the success is with the Americans, the failure with the Iraqis, which is politically a little bit dangerous because it leads to the implication maybe they don't deserve all the sacrifices -- well, in human beings and in dollars.

So is this an appropriate description of the situation? Is it maybe fair, but political not correct? And would you agree or is it dangerous? What are your thoughts on that? Is that a fair description or is it a little bit dangerous description?

GEN. JONES: Well, if I understand your question correctly, I mean, I guess my reaction would be that we're really comparing apples and oranges here. We're -- what I think we're trying to do is stimulate a political -- at least in the short term, a political settlement, a way in which we can get very different factions who don't like each other very much to come to the table and understand that, you know, for the good of the nation, you have to come together. You can't go on like this.

And obviously it's very hard. Ambassador Crocker, General Petraeus work on this every single day, and it's difficult work. It was difficult work in Bosnia, as well. But at the end of the day, there was a solution and -- but it took some time. And anyone who gets into this kind of business thinking less than generational in terms of total change is miscalculating. The evidence is clear and the historical evidence is -- supports that thesis.

So I don't think it's a question of whether we're right politically and the government is wrong. There are many fine people in that government. I've known President Talabani for a long time. He is an Iraqi and he's Kurdish but he's an Iraqi. I've had others who've gone out of their way in the last -- during our visits to say -- to reaffirm the fact that they are Iraqis first. The minister of defense goes way out of his way to say that, and frankly I think he can back it up.

And so if you get that kind of mentality in the government, then it's not a we/they type issue. But if they don't do it, then it's fair to ask yourself ultimately whether your sacrifice is worth it. And I think injecting -- you know, generally speaking, trying to fight in somebody else's civil war is a tough proposition. Because generally they all turn on you first and then they turn on themselves.

That's not always the case, but that's one of the reasons we added a constable, assistant chief constable from Northern Ireland, to our police delegation. And his wisdom as a result of years and years in Northern Ireland was very, very illuminating. I mean, he said things that we never would have thought of, because we haven't gone through that, that he was thinking of, and equating it and drawing parallels to where the Iraqis were in their life cycle development.

So I don't think it's a we/they thing. I think it's all of us, and I think we have to help this government find its way to do the right thing. And when I say we, I don't mean the United States. I say we, the world community, because we all have stakes in making sure this comes out the right way.

MR. KEMPE: We have time just for a couple of more questions. Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't see. Here and then here, please. And let's take both of these questions and then come back.

Q General, Bill Jones from EIR News Service. There was discussed in the Baker-Hamilton proposal the possibility of having a regional conference in which you could bring the countries of the region together to bring it to bear on the situation in Iraq. And obviously, there have been problems especially with Iran but also with Syria. But it seems to me that that also should play something of a role, and I was wondering, how do you view the feasibility and possibility of getting these countries together and placing an emphasis on that.

And secondly, this would also involve a greater international involvement. Even the U.N., I think, has indicated that they want to get involved in Iraq. And if the international community played a greater role, would this be a possibility of bringing down the American footprint, and maybe even the thought of, if necessary, some kind of a multilateral force under -- peacekeeping force under U.N. supervision, where European nations would be more willing to work than they would under present conditions?

MR. KEMPE: Let me take one or two more questions and then come back to --

GEN. JONES: Let me deal with this one real quick.

MR. KEMPE: Do you want to deal with that?

GEN. JONES: Let's do that. Thank you.

I think that anything that could be done politically would be a plus, whether it's regional, whether it's global, whether the U.N. plays in it. I mean, we've got to do -- we've got to do anything we can to accelerate towards getting to the time where we replace that little "p" with a big "P" in the solution set.

With regard to U.N. peacekeeping forces -- I'll say this most respectfully, having been in a number of of these things -- that if you can guarantee a Chapter VI environment, then I would say fine, but if it's Chapter VII, I would not do it until you get down to Chapter VI, because the odds of success are not good with regard to U.N. peacekeeping forces.

Q The difference between peacekeeping and peacemaking.

GEN. JONES: Exactly, yeah. There's a big difference.

(Arnaud ?).

Q General, with your reference to Iran, they have a common border, I believe, of about 900 miles.

GEN. JONES: (To staff) Sara (sp), could I have that chart on Iran, please? Go ahead, (Arnaud ?).

Q I'm not quite sure I understand what the incentive to Iran would be to reach some kind of a modus vivendi with the United States. They have four of the world's eight nuclear powers in their region. They have 50,000 allegedly hostile troops on their right flank and about 150,000 or 160,000 on their left flank, and they have the U.S. fleet at their rear. Surely it would be to our advantage to sit down and try to work out a geopolitical deal with Iran; otherwise, I don't quite see what the interest would be for Iran to make our life more comfortable.

GEN. JONES: I would certainly not be comfortable sitting here and even suggesting that I am an expert on Iranian mindsets. My only reason for mentioning it is because I am convinced that on their current path, they are delaying the recovery of Iraq, and so that's what I'm addressing. But certainly, beyond that, your question is very valid. I'm just not qualified to enter into that analysis. But I am absolutely convinced that where Iraq is concerned, what Iran is doing is not helpful, and to the contrary, it's very hurtful.

MR. KEMPE: We have one last question from General Scowcroft. I have to apologize. I know people have been raising their hands, and we've just run out of time, and I'm really sorry we didn't get around to everyone, which just shows how many questions are burning on these issues.

Q Okay. Thank you, Fred. General, there have been some comments that in some of the things we're doing, we're building in future problems. And one of those most frequently raised is the issue of Anbar province and the aid we're giving to Sunni tribes and so on and so forth, and that that goes directly contrary to what Maliki is trying to do, and that we are building in divisions rather than bringing them together.

GEN. JONES: Was that a statement? (Laughs, laughter.) There's no question that when you deal with a complex situation like an insurgency, certainly one that's multifaceted, that to be successful, sometimes you have to make compromises and you have to make on-the-field adjustments to achieve successes where you can get a success and hope that leads to yet another success.

I think that we've done the right thing in Anbar province. I think it's incumbent on the government to increasingly show that it's a government for all Iraqis and not just the majority that happens to be in power. I realize that there's a lot of historical baggage with that concept in Iraq, but this is clearly what has to be done.

And one other thing that impressed us wherever we went -- north, south, east and west -- was the fact that young Iraqis have this -- seem to have this idea of one Iraq as a nation, and they want to see it become a nation. And we've only been at this four and five years -- and I know for some, that's too long already -- but I come back onto the point that if you're trying to change a society, if you're trying to change culture, if you're trying to change years and years of frustrated, bottled-up tensions, it's not going to happen overnight. And I think the best thing that this new government can do is to try to show the people that it is a government for all Iraqis, that the assets and the help are being distributed fairly and equitably, that people who are in law enforcement or in the military or in the service of the government are being paid, that corruption is being battled and that they are reaching out to all sectors.

My feeling is that at the senior levels, regardless of whether they're Shi'a, Sunni or Kurds, they know this. And so the question is, how do you get the tribes to work together?

And you know, there are a lot of parallels. I mean, I go back to my own experience in Bosnia. I mean, it was, you know, we were there during the worst of times, of Sniper Alley, which was -- probably more risky to drive down Sniper Alley in Sarajevo than going from Baghdad International to the Green Zone. And it did -- but it did come to an end, and they did find the way -- they did find the path. And we can only hope that the Iraqis, with our help, our collective help -- I mean the help of all nations and international organizations -- will do the same thing.

Fred, thank you.

MR. KEMPE: Thank you very much. It seems, to sum up -- and tell me if this reads you wrong -- but you're telling us that we have to stay engaged because the costs are too great not to, but we have to get smarter; that in a way, you are saying the public debate has to shift here from tactics to strategy. And one of the things you really seem to be pushing is for that to go in that

direction. And even as one does that, one's talking perhaps a little bit less of withdrawal and surges, and a little bit more about strategically repositioning what we've got there for that end. Is that --

GEN. JONES: Yeah, I think so. I think we have a lot -- there is a lot of leverage there, obviously, but it doesn't always have to be deadlines. You can just act, and by your act, you can signal what your intent is.

MR. KEMPE: Yeah.

GEN. JONES: So I hope that the current progress that we've seen continues. I hope that it goes over into the other ministry that we've been very hard on. And I really have some good people in that ministry that are working hard, but you've got to call it straight. It's a dysfunctional ministry, and it's affecting the internal stability and security of the country. And the external threats, I think, have to be addressed. And there's a way, I think, over time, where the coalition can disengage from the inter-ethnic violence and reposition itself in different forces structures and all of that that goes with it, coupled with a lighter footprint that can make it much more effective and much more efficient and much more acceptable to our publics, because it is a huge cost in terms of human lives and resources. And they have a right to say -- and we want to see -- we want them -- we want success here. We want to see that it's working.

I do think we have a good team over there. I think General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker are two of the very best representatives that we could have, and I think their -- the people that they have working for them are also highly professional and dedicated, and if we can't succeed with this team, we're not going to succeed with any other one, I'm sure.

MR. KEMPE: Thank you very much.

GEN. JONES: Thank you.

MR. KEMPE: Before we give you your well-deserved round of applause, let me just thank, first of all, our board member David Aufhauser, general counsel of UBS, for making this whole series possible. And it's been a terrific series with Nick Burns and Jan Eliasson, the special ambassador to Darfur at the U.N. And we've had a great series of speakers -- Bob Kimmitt, the number two at the Treasury. And we're focusing on global issues. This is clearly a global issue Atlantic Council has to focus on.

Thanks to Ambassador Catto, chairman emeritus, who has been a hero here at the Atlantic Council for the last eight years, for introducing the session. General Scowcroft, our international advisory board member, and it's great to have you onboard as chairman of the Atlantic Council. Thank you so much for not only touching on your report but really going beyond it and putting together the tactical and the strategic in a way that I hope our leaders and regional leaders will do as well. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

End of Transcript