Iraq in 2009
How to Give Peace a Chance

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Summary

The next president of the United States will inherit 130,000 to 150,000 troops in Iraq amidst a fractured state of Iraqi politics that includes nascent stability in some provinces, militias armed to the gills, and little or no consensus on major national issues that are fundamental to a viable Iraqi state.[1] A precipitous troop withdrawal could unleash an internal conflagration that could increase the threat of transnational terrorism, send oil prices soaring further, and add to the number and anguish of 4.7 million Iraqi refugees and internally displaced people. Yet keeping U.S. troops in Iraq is an unsustainable stopgap in the absence of a political agreement among Iraq's warring factions.

The next U.S. president should seek the help of the United Nations to broker a political settlement in Iraq that breaks through this Gordian knot. Military interventions can help shape the conditions for a political settlement, but without a consensus on peace, military force alone is unsustainable. That has been the case in Bosnia, Kosovo, Haiti, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Sudan, and Liberia, and it will be the case in Iraq. If Iraqis cannot get over their differences to negotiate a political settlement, then U.S. troops cannot resolve their differences for them and should be withdrawn.

A peace initiative must go beyond platitudes about commitments to diplomacy. A central UN role would provide an umbrella to engage Iraq's neighbors and to garner international support from Europe, China, India, and Japan, all of which depend on Middle East energy. The next U.S. president must make it clear that the United States

will coordinate military action to support the diplomatic process. A political settlement, if reached, will require international troops, including troops from the United States, to implement it.

The chances for brokering a political settlement are not high. Iraqi factions may still think they can fight and win. Provincial and parliamentary elections are scheduled, respectively, for the fall of 2008 and in 2009. Whether elections will exacerbate political competition among rival factions or inject public accountability remains to be seen. Still, a political settlement is worth pursuing to garner a truce around core issues that divide Iraqis so that a base for sustainable peace is created. The gains from success are huge; the fallout from failure is limited. The process of reviving an international diplomatic process on Iraq could help our friends and allies come to appreciate that they, too, have a stake in ending this war.

Context

In congressional hearings in early April 2008, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, the top U.S. military and civilian officials in Iraq, presented an impressive array of statistics illustrating reduced violence. “Civilian deaths have decreased . . . to a level not seen since the February 2006 Samarra Mosque bombing,” reported Petraeus. The number of deaths due to ethno-sectarian violence has fallen since last September. The U.S. military found more arms caches in 2008 than in all of 2006. “Half of Iraq’s 18 provinces are under provincial Iraqi control. Many of these—not just the successful provinces in the Kurdish Regional Government area— . . . have done well.”[2] Improved security and rising government expenditures may support 7 percent growth in GDP.[3]

Is Recent Security Progress Sustainable?

The question is whether this progress is sustainable. Four factors suggest no—not without a political consensus among Iraq’s warring factions. First, cooperation with and among Sunnis depends completely on perceptions of Sunni self-interest. The Sunni insurgency made Iraq ungovernable from 2004 to 2006. By November 2006, before

the start of the U.S. military surge, Sunni tribes in al-Anbar Province and other parts of Iraq decided that they hated al Qaeda in Iraq more than they did the United States and started cooperating with U.S. forces against al Qaeda. Around 85,000–100,000 "Sons of Iraq" now participate in this "Awakening."4 They are paid by the U.S. military. That puts food on the table. It also provides cash to rearm. For the most part, these Sunni activists have not accepted the authority of a Shi'a-dominated Iraqi government. It is convenient now to coexist, but newly armed and energized, they have not indicated an interest in subjugating themselves to Shi'a majority control.

Second, rivalries among Shi'a militias can erupt at any point and engulf Coalition forces. In August 2007 Moqtada al-Sadr reined in his militia, the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM), declaring a cease-fire against U.S. troops. However, this permitted increased intra-Shi'a fighting in Basra, an area void of Coalition troops, to control Iraq's wealthiest region. The cease-fire came apart in March 2008 when Iraqi security forces launched a campaign against "outlaws" in Basra. Some called the campaign an Iraqi government attempt to subdue Moqtada al-Sadr's forces and take sides with the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), reputed to have strong ties to Iran. The Sadrists associated the United States with the Iraqi campaign since the U.S. supports the Iraqi government. One immediate result was Sadrist retaliation against the U.S. compound in the Green Zone. As of June 2008 the tide has again turned. A sense of hope for greater liberty and reconstruction has emerged in both Basra and Sadr City.5 Shi'a factions have not settled their differences, none have disarmed, but they have agreed to disengage. As with the Sunnis, progress among the Shi'a is driven by self-interest, but those interests are both diverse and volatile among rival militias.

Third, national Iraqi politics are in shambles. Reduced violence has facilitated incremental progress: an improved 2008 budget, an amnesty law that (unsurprisingly) militia leaders support, some reversal of the de-Baathification laws, legislation to authorize provincial elections in October 2008, and signs of improved governance in some provinces. Yet there is still no understanding on core issues dividing Iraqi society: federal-regional relations, long-term revenue allocation, disarmament and demobilization of militias, the inclusion of former Baathists in senior positions, and

protection of minority rights. Turkey has already taken military action in the Kurdish areas. There is no question that Iran can be disruptive when it wants to be. Iraqi security forces have improved, but by and large they cannot carry out operations effectively without Coalition support. The Iraqi police cannot enforce the rule of law.

Fourth, with some security advances, progress in provincial governance has been driven by increased revenues because of rising oil prices. The CIA estimates that GDP has grown from about $38 billion in 2003 to $80 billion to $90 billion in 2007. With triple the revenues to go around, it has been easier for the government to increase resources to provinces without significant compromises among the Sunnis, Shi'a, and Kurds. There is no doubt that provinces are demanding more of their central government. Whether central government factions are willing to compromise to give more to the provinces is another factor.

The overall picture is one of sectarian-based progress built upon a fragile political base. If U.S. forces are taken away from this equation, an upsurge in violence is likely, possibly at even greater levels than seen in the past, given the regrouping and rearming of Sunni militias that have still not accepted a Shi'a-dominated national government. Yet to leave U.S. forces in the midst of this quagmire is also irresponsible if efforts are not made to address the fundamental political issues that drive the Iraqis to war.

A New Multilateral Strategy

All of these factors make peace in Iraq a long shot. Nevertheless that should not stop serious attempts at brokering a political settlement among Iraqis. Our efforts, however, must match the complexity of the task.

If the path to stability is uncertain, what should be clear is that the current U.S. strategy for reconciliation—setting benchmarks and demanding that a failed Iraqi state achieve them—will not succeed. As of mid-2008, more than one-quarter of Iraq's cabinet seats are vacant or are just nominally filled. The state cannot perform most basic functions, such as maintaining law and order. It is also unrealistic to expect Iraq

to fix itself through a sequential process of passing laws and holding elections and referendums. Issues such as oil revenues, federal-regional relations, and the question of de-Baathification are interrelated. We should not expect warring parties to resolve pieces of this equation without understanding the outcomes of related issues. Economic and political progress in some provinces where security has improved is indeed important, but at some point that needs to translate into a willingness to support a national government, which certainly has not yet emerged among Sunni militias.

Diplomatic efforts have not had the strategic focus to advance prospects for a settlement, nor is it likely that they could without massive advance work. Regional meetings in Istanbul, Baghdad, and Sharm el Sheikh, held in the spirit of supporting reconciliation, had neither the necessary preparatory work nor the follow-up to generate momentum. The International Compact with Iraq (ICI) is a framework for assistance conditioned on policy actions by Iraq, similar in spirit to the conditionality packages developed for the former Soviet states in the 1990s. For the short term, the ICI is a self-defining mechanism for stalemate as Iraq cannot realistically meet the conditions. Visits by Secretaries Rice and Gates to encourage the Gulf states to support Iraq have produced little concrete action as long as “support” is perceived as entrenching Shi’a dominance. Moreover, simply convening regional actors without a strategic agenda could complicate negotiations, as each regional player may seek to advance its parochial interests. To advance a realistic agenda for peace in Iraq, regional gatherings would need a clear focus around a defined agenda, which to date is nonexistent.

A new approach is needed. It should be led by the United Nations. The UN has the flexibility to talk to all parties within Iraq and in the surrounding region. All of Iraq’s neighbors are members. Even if the UN’s image is tarnished in the United States, a UN role will help European, Russian, and Chinese politicians convince their constituents that they should contribute to a political solution and reconstruction in Iraq. Remember that in 2004 when the United States could not get an agreement on a transition government in Iraq, UN special representative Lakhdar Brahimi succeeded, in part

because of his direct contacts with all the relevant parties.

For the UN to even consider such a role, the United States must request and welcome UN involvement, and it must coordinate military action to support the diplomatic process. All Iraqi parties that are not associated with al Qaeda in Iraq should be given a voice in the process. To succeed, regional actors would have to endorse a political settlement or agree at a minimum not to undermine it. As seen after virtually every postconflict situation over the last quarter century, international troops would still be required to provide assurances to all the parties that they will have a stable environment in which to implement it.[6] Political agreements to end civil wars require massive preparation and negotiation. They do not spontaneously generate.

To be effective, the UN must recognize its shortcomings, and member states must take seriously that they constitute the UN. Security Council members must place international imperatives over the desire to see the United States mired in this quagmire. Recognizing that, China and Russia could play a constructive role if they could act on their interests in stability in the Middle East and international energy markets to advocate a responsible UN role to seek a viable peace in Iraq. All member states have to put behind them the controversies of the Oil-for-Food Programme, drawing lessons on corruption and transparency from past management mistakes.

UN Security Council Resolution 1770, passed on August 10, 2007, provides the necessary mandate to seek political reconciliation in Iraq. Implementing this mandate will require unequivocal political backing, careful calibration of expectations, and skilled diplomacy. To undertake this task, the UN needs a special team and a flexible mandate. It cannot be business as usual. The lead negotiator should report to the secretary general and must be empowered to engage regional and international actors directly. The team should include individuals who know Iraq and who can liaise effectively and credibly with key external constituencies such as the United States, the European Union, the five permanent members of the Security Council (the P5), and the Gulf states.

Tactics and Substance Matter

Running a viable political negotiation is as much art as it is science. We have learned from experience, particularly in Bosnia and Afghanistan, that it will require engaging all key actors in Iraq, the neighboring states, and major external actors (the United States, the EU, the P5, major donors, and potential troop contributors). We have also learned that about half of all political settlements unravel within five years. Strong support for their implementation is just as critical as their negotiation. Following are some key considerations.

Core Elements. Any agreement will likely revolve around a "five plus one" agenda: federal-regional relations; sharing oil revenues; political inclusion (redressing the de-Baathification issue); disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of militias; and minority rights. Even under a minimalist federal government arrangement, Sunnis will need assurance of a role in an equitable allocation of oil revenues. Minority rights are key to protecting those who do not succumb to sectarian pressures to move. Demobilization of militias will be needed for the state to regain control over the use of force. The Kurds will insist on retaining regional autonomy. The "plus one" is the timing of a referendum on Kirkuk, which is guaranteed by the constitution but could trigger pressures for Kurdish independence and draw Turkey and Iran into the conflict. Because these issues are so interconnected, they should be negotiated as a package rather than sequentially to maximize options for viable compromises.

Five-Year Truce. The focus should be on agreement to a five-year truce—specifically, provisions that can create sufficient confidence to stop the violence—with the option to extend the time frame annually. At this point animosities are too sharp to expect the parties to permanently resolve their grievances. Elections in fall 2008 and in 2009 could also sharpen political competition among competing factions, especially if the Iranian-backed Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq sees itself as losing seats to Sunnis who boycotted previous local elections. Seeking an interim solution could buy time to produce better options than can be developed in just a few months of negotiations.

Iraqi Positions. As a condition for participating in the negotiation process, Iraqi political parties and militia leaders will need to condemn the role of al Qaeda in Iraq and agree to cooperate against al Qaeda. The UN negotiator must have leeway on whom to consult. As seen in the current U.S. military experience, this consultation may entail talking with militias that once attacked U.S. forces.[7] The UN representative will likely need to meet separately with each Iraqi actor, mapping out their positions against the "five plus one" agenda to determine if there are potential deals to be made that also respect core substantive objectives. In turn, that may lead to small group meetings among parties to test potential alliances.

Regional Players. Similarly, the neighboring states should be surveyed on their positions on the core agenda. Again, these meetings should start separately to mitigate the inevitable posturing and gamesmanship that occurs when competing actors are in the same room. From these meetings the UN representative will need to determine which outside actors have useful leverage and with whom and which issues require potential spoilers to be isolated or neutralized.

Support Team. Iraqi and regional consultations will need a dedicated expert support team to provide guidance on issues ranging from the commercial viability of revenue-sharing arrangements on oil to international experience on legal and constitutional arrangements. The UN will need to organize experts to be available in real time to support the negotiation process. It will also need to develop public information strategies, using local and regional television and radio, to explain the UN role and mitigate attempts at disinformation from al Qaeda and other potential spoilers.

Brokering an Agreement. Eventually a judgment will need to be made on whether to try for a major meeting to broker an agreement—like the Bonn Agreement for Afghanistan or the Dayton Agreement for Bosnia. Running such a meeting must be a carefully orchestrated process of negotiating among an inner circle of key Iraqis, while engaging in a more limited way a wider contact group of the neighboring states that is separated from the Iraqis. The United States will need to sustain constant bilateral diplomacy throughout this process, coordinating every step of the way with the UN

representative. The Bonn Agreement exemplified such coordination, with the UN special representative (Lakhdar Brahimi) running the core meetings and the U.S. special envoys (Jim Dobbins and Zalmay Khalilzad) engaging with all the external actors.

Policy as Opposed to Politics

The desire for a political agreement should not result in the acceptance of any settlement. The UN representative, the negotiating team, and key partners in the negotiations will need to determine if the commitments are genuine, adequate, and sufficiently encompassing of the key players to be viable. The initial peace agreement for Darfur in April 2006, for example, was stillborn because it did not involve all the key rebel factions. In 1999 the Rambouillet negotiations on Kosovo were called off because the Serbs would not consider viable compromises on Kosovar autonomy.

Strong coordination is critical between diplomacy and military action to control potential spoilers. During this period U.S. forces must continue to prevent or respond to insurgent attacks. The Iraqi government must say publicly and unequivocally that it supports the peace process. Similar support must be gained from the Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurds for the process, even if they cannot precommit to the outcomes. Every step must be taken to make it as hard as possible for insurgents to find shelter among Iraqis.

For Republicans, the hardest point to accept in this strategy is that given the chance to broker a political settlement, Iraqis could reject it, and that eclipses the rationale to keep U.S. troops in Iraq. U.S. forces cannot fix Iraq for Iraqis. We would need to tell Iraqis clearly that if they do not take this opportunity, we will withdraw and reposition U.S. forces to control the spillover from Iraq.

For Democrats the point of discomfort comes with success. If a settlement can be reached, then Iraqis will need sustained international support to implement it. A UN-brokered settlement increases the prospects to diversify the international military presence, but the core military effort would still have to be borne by the United States.

If attempts at a settlement fail, this diplomatic initiative is still worth the effort. As argued earlier, Europe, China, Japan, Russia, and India all have an incentive to invest in stability in the Middle East and the Gulf. A focused diplomatic effort, led by the UN, could begin the process of reengaging these countries and seeking their support to control the spillover of war into the region and address the plight of refugees. Without such an initiative that can change the diplomatic dynamics around Iraq, the military costs of containment will fall on the United States as well as on the people in the surrounding countries who would suffer the spillover effects of intensified conflict.

Peace Building in Iraq

A political agreement to end the war is not an end point, but a milestone on a course to sustainable peace. From there, the complexity of implementing the agreement takes hold. It will be a long-term proposition. International forces stayed in Bosnia for over a decade, they are still in Kosovo, and even in resource-rich countries such as Russia and Ukraine that went through massive transitions without wars, it took almost a decade to halt their economic declines after the collapse of communism. We must recognize that it will take a decade of sustained peace for Iraq to become stable and prosperous.

That time frame alone underscores why any single nation, even the United States, cannot unilaterally support and sustain Iraq on its path to prosperity. The demands on personnel and resources are too great to be sustained credibly by one international actor. The extent of this commitment also suggests that if the international community does not have a role in brokering the peace, there will be less incentive to contribute seriously to the expensive and time-consuming process of building a viable state.

The next attempt at peace building in Iraq will be more difficult than the first failed U.S. efforts in 2003. Iraqis are disillusioned and lack trust. Life for Iraqis is worse in most ways than it was before the war: less security, less electricity, less water, less access to health care, more unemployment, and extreme risks from just sending

children to school.[8] Even with a peace agreement, it will take time to build confidence that the agreement will hold.

The provisions of a political settlement must shape the details of a peace-building strategy. There are, however, lessons from Iraq and other international missions that should inform both the process and the substance of a peace-building strategy.

Common Strategy, Shared Expectations. A reconstruction framework for Iraq must make expectations and commitments clear on the part of Iraqis and the international community. The International Compact for Iraq is a starting point, but it should be restructured in light of a peace agreement and the guidelines suggested below. Both donors and Iraqis should refrain from overpromising, yet at the same time, to build credibility, an agreement has to focus on short-term results on security and jobs. Most postconflict situations result in an initial euphoria and then lead to disappointment and resignation when expectations are not met.

Local Ownership, International Oversight. Iraqis must believe in a unified Iraq, even if it takes a federal shape, for the state to be viable. A peace settlement will provide guidelines for compromise, but one has to expect that every aspect of any agreement will be tested. A key function for the UN will be to provide neutral oversight and perhaps a venue to work out disputes, so that Iraqis can begin to rebuild trust and to give practical meaning to "local ownership" from a national and not a sectarian perspective. The mechanism for UN oversight should be informed by the dynamics of the political negotiations, which will likely suggest a combination of actors who can retain local trust. At a minimum, a regular review mechanism should be created to drive implementation.

Security. Most recent peace agreements in the wake of civil wars have required international peacekeepers to secure time and space for implementation. The goal should be to mobilize a UN-led force focused particularly on border security, with the United States continuing a significant but reduced military presence in Iraq. If one took troop ratios from Bosnia or Kosovo as a guide, the force presence would be as large as

250,000 in the non-Kurdish parts of Iraq.[9] A more realistic target for Iraq would be on the order of 150,000 total U.S. and UN troops in the first year, reducing this level to 100,000 if the agreement holds. Against the international requirement of 150,000 troops, the United States should propose to provide 100,000 in the first year and then scale down to 50,000 in the second year, while supporting the UN in recruiting the balance of forces. In principle, it would be attractive to have one force under UN leadership, but it is unrealistic to contemplate that the United States would place troops under UN command. The United States should seek a supplemental appropriation to fund a major share of these costs, while seeking contributions from the neighboring states. Burden sharing would be the most effective way to support the orderly reduction of U.S. forces in Iraq.

Rule of Law. Restoring Iraqi confidence will require systematically administering the rule of law without regard to religion or ethnicity. This will require an overhaul of the police, the Ministry of the Interior, the courts, and the penitentiary system. In the short term, a combination of peacekeepers and international police will need to share basic law and order functions with Iraqis to stress that there is a new era in enforcing the rule of law. Ideally this would entail 20,000–30,000 international police as part of the international mission, but experience has shown that these numbers are not available. Out of necessity, designated units of the peacekeeping mission must take on this function. The cost of reconstituting the Ministry of the Interior and the police will be large, perhaps on the scale of $5 billion, and donors will resist getting involved. Yet if there has been a glaring lesson from Iraq and Afghanistan, it has been that failure to take a comprehensive approach to the full system of law and order has undermined progress in every other area of reconstruction.

Oil Revenues. Disputes over revenue sharing were one factor driving the Sunni insurgency, and if the provisions of the political settlement in this area are not fully met and completely transparent, they will be the first factor to cause a political settlement to unravel. One should expect attempts to distort accounts and cut special deals. Given the trends in other resource-rich conflict states, corruption in the energy sector will be endemic. Even a perceived diversion of natural resource wealth to

particular groups or individuals can reignite civil wars. This is a difficult area for the UN because of the legacy of the Oil-for-Food Programme during Sad-dam Hussein's period. That said, there is no alternative to an international oversight mechanism, monitored by an independent international firm, on oil revenues and the implementation of the natural resource provisions of the political agreement. The foundations for this mechanism exist, but it may be necessary to transition the current oversight framework for oil revenues to a new international mechanism with extensive publicity on measures taken to ensure transparency.

Militias and Jobs. Few states have managed the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of militias well. The first two components can be straightforward. The process generally unravels with reintegration. If former militia members are reintegrated into communities with 30 to 40 percent unemployment, the likelihood is that 30 to 40 percent of those reintegrated will be unemployed and disgruntled within a year. Hence, the strongest DDR program is one that is teamed with a massive, community-based job creation program throughout the country. Again, the most effective path to such job creation is local—through municipal works programs and, more important, through microcredit programs that can help jump-start local business development.[10]

Reconciliation, Governance, and Politics. A common mistake after most peace agreements is to drive too quickly to elections. Elections in such an environment can reinforce sectarian competition. A track record of governance has to be established that allows the provisions of a political settlement to be implemented. The objective is not to discourage democratic progress but to make a democratic process credible with maximum participation from all groups in an environment that supports the process of reconciliation rather than reignites past tensions. Provincial elections are already scheduled for October 2008, and parliamentary elections follow in 2009. Should a political settlement modify or delay that schedule, the international community should be prepared to accept the change and not automatically dismiss it as undemocratic.

The failed attempts at reconstruction in Iraq and the serious struggles in Afghanistan

in a mission that includes the UN, NATO, massive U.S. support, the EU, and other international donors should underscore the difficulty of helping a nation reestablish the functions of governance, the rule of law, security, and an environment to stimulate investment. A successful peace-building mission in Iraq will take a decade and massive resources. To be sure, Iraqi oil revenues should eventually finance most of the requirement, but an early international injection of funds will be needed to support job creation. The temptation on the part of most states will be to assume that a UN peace-building mission in Iraq can be done cheaply and quickly and thus to shortchange the process. The United States already made that mistake, and it should not be repeated.

Concluding Observations

Realities on the ground in Iraq and in U.S. and international politics will shift rapidly and affect the nature of what can be done in Iraq. U.S. policy has failed so far to deal with the complex nature of security and the political and economic challenges in Iraq, thereby creating new threats: risks of a wider sectarian conflict in the region between Sunni and Shi'a, an emboldened Iran, a network of al Qaeda franchises operating throughout the Middle East and North Africa, ungoverned spaces in Iraq that can become bases from which to export transnational terrorism, and instability and lack of resiliency in international oil markets.

These threats are regional and global. They call for multilateral engagement and a role for the UN to provide the political cover most nations need to reengage in Iraq. Yet there should be no illusions about simple success.

To maximize chances to advance a political settlement in Iraq, the next president will need to act quickly, when troop levels will be near their peak. While presidential candidates McCain and Obama differ on whether and how long to keep U.S. forces in Iraq, neither contemplates increasing U.S. forces. It should be made clear to Iraqis and the international community that if the Iraqis will not take advantage of a credible multilateral process to reach a political compromise, then U.S. troops will be withdrawn because they cannot make a sustainable difference in Iraq. What should not be

forgotten is that diplomatic and military strategies must reinforce each other as part of a coherent policy.

The limits of unilateralism also apply to containing the spillover from war in Iraq if it is not possible to broker a political compact among the parties. The United States should encourage a UN role in diplomacy to get commitments from Iraq's neighbors to not fuel the Iraq civil war with money and weapons and by implication exacerbate the foundations for international terrorism. Perhaps other nations, not from the Middle East, could contribute troops or observers to control the spillover. An even broader lesson is that the disruption of diplomatic ties with perceived enemies only hampers our capacity when we have no choice but to find common ground. At present the very question of a dialogue with Iran has become an issue, when the real focus should be on the substance of such a dialogue.

America's image around the world has reached an all-time low. The Pew Global Attitudes Project survey report from June 2006 showed that the United States military presence in Iraq is seen by most nations as a greater threat to world peace and security than is Iran.[11] Pew's 2007 survey report showed that in nearly all countries surveyed more people view China's influence positively than they view U.S. influence.[12] A third worldwide survey, *World Public Opinion 2007,* shows that "In 10 out of 15 countries, the most common view is that the United States cannot be trusted to 'act responsibly in the world.'"[13]

The next president may well find that engaging the UN seriously in Iraq, working under a UN umbrella to restore international cooperation, respecting and abiding by international law, and resorting to unilateral action only under imminent threats could restore respect for U.S. leadership and serve our national security interests. In Iraq, U.S. advocacy for UN political and humanitarian leadership may not only help the United States, it may begin to give credence to a reawakening of American diplomacy and international engagement.

About the Authors and the Project

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Carlos Pascual is a Brookings vice president and director of the Foreign Policy Studies Program. Pascual most recently served as Secretary Rice's lead adviser to create a new U.S. government capacity to manage stabilization and reconstruction in failed and conflict-ridden areas of the globe. A former Ambassador to Ukraine and Senior Director on the National Security Council staff during the Clinton Administration, his areas of expertise include post-conflict stabilization, international security policy, nonproliferation, economic development, and regions such as Europe, Russia and Ukraine.

Opportunity 08 aims to help 2008 presidential candidates and the public focus on critical issues facing the nation, presenting policy ideas on a wide array of domestic and foreign policy questions. The project is committed to providing both independent policy solutions and background material on issues of concern to voters.

Endnotes

1 General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker have urged caution in withdrawing troops before security has been consolidated, and the Bush administration has used their advice to buy time on further withdrawals. For an example of this dynamic between field recommendations and Washington responses see Stephen Lee Meyers and Thom Shanker, "Bush Given Iraq War Plan with a Steady Troop Level," *New York Times,* March 25, 2008 (www.nytimes.com/2008/03/25/washington/25policy. html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin).

2 David Petraeus, "Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq," 110 Cong. 2 sess., April 8–9, 2008, pp. 2–4. Text from *Federal Document Clearing House Congressional Testimony* (www.defenselink.mil/pdf/General_Petraeus_Testimony_to_ Congress.pdf).

3 Ryan Crocker, "Testimony of Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee," 110 Cong. 2 sess., April 8, 2008, p. 8. Text from *Federal Document Clearing House Congressional Testimony* (www.defenselink.mil/pdf/ Ambassador_Crocker_SFRC_Testimony.pdf).

4 General Petraeus cites their numbers at more than 91,000 in his April 2008 report to Congress, p. 3.

5 See Sudarsan Raghavan, "Basra's Wary Rebirth," *Washington Post,* June 1, 2008, p. A1 (www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/31/AR20080 53100971.html).

6 Carlos Pascual and Kenneth M. Pollack, "The Critical Battles: Political Reconciliation and Reconstruction in Iraq," *Washington Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 7–19.

7 Thomas E. Ricks, "Deals in Iraq Make Friends of Enemies," *Washington Post,* July 20, 2007, p. A1 (www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/19/ AR2007071902432.html?nav=emailpage).

8 For statistics on all these measures, see Michael E. O'Hanlon and Jason H. Campbell, *Iraq Index: Tracking*

Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq (Brookings, October 1, 2007) (www3.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf).

9 Pascual and Pollack, "The Critical Battles," p. 9.

10 The experience of ProCredit Bank throughout the Balkans, a bank network funded through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), has demonstrated that microcredit and small credit is viable and sustainable in places such as Bosnia and Kosovo. For more information on the ProCredit Bank, see (www.procreditbank.com.mk/).

11 *America's Image Slips, but Allies Share U.S. Concerns over Iran, Hamas* (Washington: Pew Global Attitudes Project, June 13, 2006), p. 3 (http://pewglobal.org/ reports/pdf/252.pdf).

12 *Global Unease with Major World Powers* (Washington: Pew Global Attitudes Project, June 27, 2007), p. 44 (http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/256.pdf).

13 *World Public Opinion 2007* (Chicago Council on Global Affairs and World PublicOpinion.org, June 25, 2007), p. 30 (www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/ jun07/CCGA+_FullReport_rpt.pdf).