

George W. Bush Presidential Library

Mandatory Review 2016-0190-M

Collection: National Security Council – Legal Adviser

Series: Scudder Jr., Michael (Mike) - Subject Files

Folder Title: Miscellaneous Documents

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- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
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PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

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QUESTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED WITH
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, MILITARY COMMANDERS, AND UNITED STATES
AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ

Casualties

- Do we assess that the rise in casualties is due to increased exposure because of changes in our operational posture? Or is it the result of a concerted effort by the enemy -- or by Iran or other players?
- What specific adjustments might we make to bring casualties down? What would be the implications of these changes for our strategy?

Baghdad Security Plan

- Are we succeeding? If not, why not?
- What adjustments are we making in light of the present levels of violence?
- How much improvement can be achieved through additional forces and how much requires more reconciliation?
- Are Iraqi forces up to the task of securing Baghdad? What should we make of the reports of non-shows or refusals to deploy?
- Is the return to violence in certain cleared sectors of Baghdad occurring after security is being handed over to ISF or while MNF-I is still in charge?
- How can we best help Maliki withstand political pressures, in particular how can we help him gain support from the COR for necessary action in Baghdad?
- Given the changing nature of the conflict in Iraq generally, are our present force levels sufficient to complete the mission and respond to contingencies? What do we have in reserve, if necessary? ✓
- Are we adequately positioned to help the Anbar tribal movement? ✓

Benchmarks

- What are the benefits and drawbacks of laying out a timeline for Iraqi assumption of responsibility?
- Does this approach further focus us on transition rather than on security and stabilizing the country?
- Is the announcement of these benchmarks vital to Maliki's strategy to renew the MNF-I mandate at the United Nations, or can we get him to de-couple the two issues?

Adjustments

- What adjustments to our tactics in pursuing our strategy have been most significant?

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Mandatory Review 2016-0190-M

Collection: National Security Council – Records and Access Management

Series: Memcons and Telcons

Folder Title: Telcon with Prime Minister Maliki of Iraq, 10/16/2006

RESTRICTION CODES

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6019

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with the Prime Minister of Iraq ~~(S)~~

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Maliki

Notetakers: Derek Westfall, Derk W. Lion,
and Diana Schmidt

Interpreter: Gamal Helal

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: October 16, 2006, 7:46 - 8:06 a.m. EDT
Oval Office

The President: Good day, Mr. Prime Minister. (U)

Prime Minister Maliki: How are you Mr. President? Good morning. I hope everything is okay with you. (U)

The President: Everything is fine, thanks. How are you doing? (U)

Prime Minister Maliki: Things are good here, Mr. President. Today it was my intention to travel to Turkey, but because of a sandstorm the trip had to be delayed. ~~(S)~~

The President: I grew up in West Texas in the late fifties, so I understand how bad those storms can be. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Maliki: Thank you, Mr. President. (U)

The President: First thing I want to say is don't pay attention to the political rhetoric in the United States, and know I am with you and believe you are the right man to lead your country. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Maliki: Mr. President, I am confident of your support. There is no doubt that I have full trust in your noble position by standing with me. However, such political rhetoric

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Classified by: V. Phillip Lago
Reason: 1.4(d)
Declassify on: 10/16/16

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By NH NARA, Date 12/11/19

and sentiment reflects badly in Iraq and causes me a great deal of political harm. Some of those who were actively engaged in the reconciliation process are becoming more hesitant right now because of the rumor that the government will collapse in two months. It also gives the insurgents increased confidence hearing these rumors, and they are increasing attacks. ~~(S)~~

The President: Yeah. (U)

Prime Minister Maliki: Mr. President, there are also additional harmful statements, some of them coming from administration offices, others from unknown people, but all fall into the category of casting doubt on the Government of Iraq, as well as suspicion of dividing Iraq or the partition of Iraq. It is not clear to the public about the difference between administrative officials and others, casting doubts over the government of Iraq and the partition of Iraq. All of this is creating confusion. I hope very much you will make a statement about what the two months mean. There has been much talk about the two months period. I wish very much you would say you do support the Iraqi government, continue to support the Iraqi Government, and have no intentions of dividing Iraq. ~~(S)~~

The President: Yes. (U)

Prime Minister Maliki: Mr. President, also in cooperation with both General Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad, we have formed a joint committee focused on reforming the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior and all other law enforcement organizations. This committee is working in order to end the phenomenon of militias. They have heard the one message loud and clear that we will not ease pressure on militias, and we will finish off the militias and terrorists. The purpose is to build both the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior and to prepare all security and law enforcement to confront both the militias as well as the terrorists. ~~(S)~~

The President: That is good Mr. Prime Minister. Let me comment on the two months. I have been very strong in saying that I support your government and I will not let Iraq be torn apart. You need to take these words as the policy of my government and not let the rumors distract you from taking the lead like you have been doing. You see, I deal with rumors all the time about my government, and the thing I do is ignore the rumors and I lead like I know you're doing. I think it is very important for your government to conclude the progress you have made on the political front, and it would be helpful if you get it done by Eid. I think if you close the agreements it will send a strong message to the Iraqi people about your ability as a good leader. I know you can't get all the issues solved, but the idea is to

get a timetable for when you will. I say this because it's important and would help get rid of all these rumors. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Maliki: God willing. (U)

The President: I have two other points I would like to make. One, I know Vice President Hashimi has had a tough go, he has lost his loved ones. I think it is important that you take a personal interest in the investigation. It would help show you are a leader of all the people of Iraq. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Maliki: God willing. (U)

The President: And the other point I would like to make is thank you for coordinating with Ambassador Khalilzad and General Casey on the militias. The situation in Baghdad is troubling you and troubling me, and the more coordination there is, particularly bringing political and security issues into alignment to quiet down the situation, will be very important. Mr. Prime Minister, give me a sense if you don't mind on how you see the security situation in Baghdad. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Maliki: Mr. President, first of all I would like to assure you I will not hesitate at all to confront the difficulties we have here to make sure the situation is under control. Secondly, I have no doubt at all about your words and commitment. All I am doing is speaking with you as a friend and sharing issues we have and seek your help and support. I told Vice President Hashimi yesterday we will continue vigorously investigating the murder of his brother. ~~(S)~~

The President: Thank you. (U)

Prime Minister Maliki: Mr. President, regarding the security situation in Baghdad, I would like to be realistic. We still have difficulties and problems with the security situation in Baghdad, but I believe our efforts, planning, and political initiatives are working together for the purpose of containing that threat as well as cooperating with various elements to achieve national reconciliation, and we will see that in reality in areas like Anbar, Diyala and other areas as well. In preparation for reforming the various security organizations, I cannot say we have gone a long way in that, but all would say we've achieved significant progress. I believe the plan is going well. Cooperation is going, and despite images on TV of bloodshed, we are determined in combating terrorist organizations and isolating militias, we are already down that road. There will be clear coordination with General Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad in preparation of reforming both the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior. The message will be clear

to militias that they will have to end their activities. After that, we would be prepared to have elements of those militias incorporated into the security forces. We will continue our work, continue reforming those security organizations. The message to the militias is clear, we are trying everything possible, but use of force is always an option. (S)

The President: Well, Mr. Prime Minister, I'm listening carefully to the tone of your words, and I'm glad you are confident you can succeed, because a lot of the success depends on you. It needs a firm hand, and it seems like you have a firm hand on the wheel, which is very important. In Baghdad I know, Mr. Prime Minister, I know you have hard decisions to make, but innocent people and those who want a normal life are counting on you. I saw some surveys the other day that most people are optimistic about the future of the country, and lots who think you're the right leader. I think we should have this call every two weeks, and I can assure you, you can tell from my words how I feel, and that is important. (S)

Prime Minister Maliki: Mr. President, I thank you very much. I would like to pledge to you again, Mr. President, I will continue down this road. For everything you have said we are grateful, you have done much for the Iraqi people, and I will continue to rely on your help and support. I am full of hope we will, despite everything we hear every now and then, but I believe we are working hard to contain both terrorism and militias, and very soon we will reap the fruits of these efforts, both by use of force and national reconciliation. (S)

The President: Well that is good, Mr. Prime Minister. I thank you for the call. I will be in touch with you in a couple of weeks. (C)

Prime Minister Maliki: God willing. Thank you very much Mr. President. (U)

The President: Thank you very much, and let's talk again. (U)

Prime Minister Maliki: Thank you, bye. (U)

The President: Yes sir, thanks. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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Mandatory Review 2016-0190-M

Collection: National Security Council – Office of the National Security Advisor

Series: Hadley, Stephen (Steve)

Folder Title: Binder 1 - 2008 Meetings with Bob Woodward, Transcripts and Documents

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23-11a

Summary of Discussion on Iraq Strategy 22 July 2006 SVTS

Participants

NSA Hadley
Secretary Rumsfeld
General Abizaid
General Casey
Ambassador Khalilzad

Observers

John Hannah
Jim Jeffrey
Meghan O'Sullivan
Peter Rodman

Overarching Strategic Question: What has changed about the situation in Iraq and do these changes warrant alterations to our military and political strategies?

Themes resulting from discussion

- **The nature of the conflict is changing.** The security situation is more complex today than at any other point in the past three years. Violence has been escalating, although one participant underscored how violence is not a good measure of success in this type of transitional process. While the terrorists are still a problem, the main security challenge is moving away from an insurgency against Coalition forces to a struggle between Iraqis for political and economic power. The violence in Baghdad increasingly appears to have a "geographic component," where Shi'a groups in particular are seeking to consolidate territorial gains. There is a role for our forces and diplomats in stemming sectarian violence, although we cannot do this absent significant Iraqi will to staunch the fighting.
- **Stabilizing Baghdad is central to success.** The strategic center of the country lies in Baghdad. Bringing a greater sense of security to the city is essential to reverse recent negative trends and stabilize Iraq. This improvement will require additional efforts on both the security and political sides. A greater exertion of leadership by Iraqis from all communities is needed, and could bring about some progress. There may be opportunities to split "death squads" from "militia" by offering political and economic incentives to those outside the hard core. Yet the centrality of Baghdad to our broader efforts requires that we be prepared to add greater Iraqi and/or Coalition forces to the effort as needed. General Casey is constantly monitoring the pace of the transition of security responsibilities to put the weight of the effort on Iraqis, while not requiring Iraqi forces to take on responsibilities they cannot execute.

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by SAH NARA, Date 3/23/2023

- **Engaging the Sunnis is still a fundamental tenet of our strategy.** Engaging Sunni politicians and insurgent groups has not yet led to tangible improvements in the security environment. Yet, the potential for strategic gains remains. The Sunnis still need to see some tangible progress from their entry into a democratic political process. Sunnis now in the political tent cannot yet point to deliverables for their community; violence against Sunni civilians has actually dramatically increased since these leaders joined the political process. Sunnis are also in a difficult situation, with Al Qaeda, Shi'a militia, and even the Coalition fighting against elements of their community. To decide there are no benefits to further engagement with Sunnis would leave them with the sole option of fighting the new Iraqi state.
- **The Shi'a are increasingly uncomfortable with the situation in Iraq and need our reassurance.** Shi'a leaders wonder if the Sunnis are reconcilable or if efforts to bring them in the political process has just fueled Sunni demands. Shi'a are nervous that the United States believes that the experiment with (Shi'a-led) democracy has failed, and it must now invest more heavily in the Sunnis. We see evidence such concerns are even held by leaders like Ayatollah Sistani. After years of patience and resilience, Shi'a death squads are now avenging Shi'a deaths, leading some Shi'a to feel they finally have protectors. A shift in mainstream Shi'a attitudes against the Coalition or the democratic institutions in Iraq would have severe, negative implications for our strategy and presence in Iraq.
- **Reconciliation must extend beyond the Sunnis to encompass the Shi'a as well.** The complex situation in Iraq now means that members of both the Shi'a and Sunni communities are victims; members of both are also perpetrators of violence. Reconciliation therefore needs to take on a broader context, where Shi'a and Sunni are both parties at the table and need to make concessions and gain reassurances. Right now, Sunnis and Shi'a either do not accept the other as a credible partner or, at the least, the two communities have not agreed on the terms of the partnership that they know is central to Iraq. Forging this broad political understanding is the necessary complement to more capable and reliable Iraqi security forces.
- **The transitional nature of the government creates tensions about the chain of command.** The government is not yet 60 days old and the security ministers have been in place for even less time. All members are still learning about the relationships with MNF-I and the tools they have to advance their policies. Under the current arrangement, the Coalition has tactical control of the Iraqi army and the national police, although the Iraqi ministries have responsibility for care and feeding of the forces. The local police are under control of the Iraqis. As of September 1, Iraqis will have direct chain of command for all Iraqi army units that are in the lead. This change should diminish the current tension with the Minister of Defense, who often wants to deploy his forces independent of MNF-I. General Casey seeks and tries to

accommodate political guidance from PM Maliki, but in limited quantities so as not to paralyze the system.

- **Maliki's government is better than previous Iraqi governments, but it is still constrained by Shi'a politics.** Maliki's ability and willingness to take on the tough issues far exceeds Ja'afari's, but Maliki still faces real pressure from political leaders in the United Iraqi Alliance. This pressure, especially from Moqtada al Sadr, makes it difficult for Maliki to address Shi'a death squads and militia. Other institutions also play a stifling role; Iraqi army commanders complain that they will not arrest instigators of sectarian violence without an explicit mandate from the Assembly, lest the Assembly bring pressure to bear on the commanders for detainees' release.
- **We need to combat the perception that our forces are focused on leaving Iraq, regardless of the situation on the ground.** The existence of Coalition and U.S. plans to draw down forces by the end of the year are confusing the public. It sees these plans – in the absence of a public statement that we do not expect to execute such plans given the current situation in Iraq – as an indication that the military is eager to leave Iraq and the administration has lost its commitment to this fight. Such misperceptions are reinforced by stories that our forces are “garrisoned” in bases, waiting to leave.
- **Our strategy is the best course of action when compared to the radical alternatives, although we need to constantly assess it and make necessary operational and tactical adjustments.** Alternatives, such as suspending Iraq's democratic institutions or dividing the country along ethnic lines, are not attractive, particularly feasible, or desired by Iraqis. We will continue to need to make adjustments as the situation evolves in Iraq. For now, we recognize that stabilizing the security environment and stimulating more reconciliation are prerequisites for further progress on building representative institutions.

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Actions from the Meeting

- Work with PM Maliki to devise agreed-upon approaches to pressing security problems – such as the reform of the Ministry of Interior – before the meeting between PM Maliki and the President.
- Examine the advantages and disadvantages of significantly different strategic approaches and weigh them against our strategy.
- Find and schedule a regular forum for the President to pose questions and discuss the situation in Iraq with his commanders.
- Provide the President with a more detailed presentation of the plans for improving the security situation in Baghdad. Assessment should seek to answer the question of how much improvement can be achieved through additional forces on the street and how much requires more reconciliation.
- Develop a strategy to clarify misperception that our military is more focused on leaving Iraq than it is on winning; strategy to include 1) how we are revising our plans for troop drawdowns in light of conditions in Iraq and 2) more information on the actual actions of our forces in Iraq.
- Draft and deliver a letter from the President to Sistani to underscore the continued commitment of the United States to a stable, democratic Iraq.
- Develop and execute a more systematic Shi'a strategy, geared at maintaining Shi'a support for the Coalition and for the institutions of the state, cultivating strategic partnerships with multiple elements of the Shi'a community, and reducing the influence of Sadr over time.
- Maintain and intensify efforts to bring Sunnis into the political process away from violence, including actions such as going after the death squads and reforming the Ministry of Interior. Such efforts must continue to be supplemented by hitting back hard against terrorists and insurgents, so as to maintain faith with the Shi'a.
- Consider broadening the scope of reconciliation efforts, to encourage a bold initiative akin to the revival of the "national compact" idea where all parties need to come to the table and compromise. (This is in contrast to a reconciliation approach that focuses more narrowly on tackling Sunni alienation from the state.)
- Strategize how to best help Maliki with his political pressures, and specifically how to win Assembly support for action in Baghdad.

Drafted: Meghan O'Sullivan

Reviewed: John Hannah, Jim Jeffrey

(H)

Iraq: Potential Civilian and Military Requirements

Draft Non-Decisional Working Paper

December 7, 2006

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Authority LPGLWS 2016-0190-11
By SLK NARA, Date 3/24/2023

12/07/06 1:30am

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4/19

Potential Concept for a Surge

- A short-term, mission-specific and time bounded infusion of civilian and military assets to achieve key underlying objectives of the new way ahead.
- A surge may or may not be needed, depending upon:
 - The number of additional military/civilian missions assumed and the requirements they involve.
 - The extent to which current military/civilian missions are maintained.
 - The timeline across which military/civilian missions are adopted and shedded.

Key Civilian Missions in Consensus Way Ahead

- **The Consensus Way-Ahead has recommended a number of new civilian missions, or existing civilian missions that might benefit from additional emphasis in support of the GOI**
- **These include:**
 - Providing requisite civilian personnel (including State, CIA, Treasury) to execute a fully resourced counterinsurgency mission.
 - Fully staffing an expanded Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) initiative (including State, DOJ, CIA, Treasury).
 - Executing a large scale jobs program, particularly in Anbar province.
 - Preparing for and carrying out genuine and credible local elections.
 - Significantly bolstering intelligence collection and analysis capacity.
 - Targeting capacity development in the key national ministries of defense, interior, oil, and electricity.

Key Military Missions in Consensus Way Ahead

- **The Consensus Way-Ahead has recommended a number of new military missions, or existing military missions that might benefit from additional emphasis in support of the GOI**
- **These include:**
 - Mitigating the risk of accelerated transition and embedding.
 - Filling the gap before needed Iraqi Army units come on line and / or maintaining aggregate combat capability in the short term.
 - Implementing a fully resourced counterinsurgency strategy in Anbar and elsewhere to open space for Sunni moderates to rise.
 - Confronting Iran and Syria inside Iraq with direct action where necessary. Conducting operations in border areas to reduce inflow.
 - Dampening sectarian violence in key mixed provinces (Diyala) and areas of Baghdad (perhaps with Peshmega) to set conditions for political accommodation and accelerated ISF control.



Key Issue

- **Can all of these new and existing missions be performed with current force levels, civilian or military? Or:**
 - Do we need more military or civilian personnel on a long term basis?
 - Do we need a near term surge for a short period of time until the mission(s) is completed or can be taken over by Iraqi forces or personnel.

The Iraqi Context and Iraqi Contribution

- **Increased U.S. commitments – long-term or a surge – must be acceptable to the Iraqis.**
- **Increased U.S. commitment could be matched by (or help facilitate) Iraqi commitments to:**
 - Take on extremists in their own communities.
 - Use leadership to galvanize Iraq and the region against sectarianism.
 - Pursue national reconciliation and demonstrate progress.
 - Make room for Sunni moderates (IIP) who eschew violence.
 - Be full participants in a counterinsurgency strategy, which will involve aggressive disbursement of funds to cleared areas.
 - Reform ministries and ensure provision of services to all Iraqis without discrimination.
 - Support efforts to counter destabilizing Syrian and Iranian activity inside Iraq.
- **Increased U.S. commitment – long term or a surge – would be designed to bolster the moderate center.**

Potential Risks of Surge

- **A surge could delay the transition to Iraqi leadership – “keeping the hand on the bicycle”**
- **A surge if it failed could make it difficult or impossible to sustain an effort equivalent to our current approach later.**
 - Failure following a surge would also be perceived as a significant blow to US credibility and prestige.
- **There are logistical problems associated with a surge.**
- **It might prove difficult to win bipartisan support for a surge.**
- **Could result in US forces being further tied down, with a resultant loss of strategic initiative both in Iraq and in the region.**

1.4d

Potential Benefits of a Surge

- Matches our effort in Iraq to our rhetoric about its centrality to GWOT.
- Gives GOI opportunity to build capabilities before it takes on complex tasks.
- Provides breathing space for moderates.
- Safeguards the only real national institution – the Iraqi Army – from fracturing. Helps minimize the risk associated with accelerating handover to Iraqis.
- Positions us to *successfully* adopt a more modest posture in medium term.
- Increases deterrent effect against primary enemies in Iraq including Al Qaeda.
- Sends strong signal in the region that change in strategy is not a recipe for U.S. disengagement and exit from Iraq.
- Reinforces support for the Iraq mission from core domestic constituency.
- Strengthens U.S. troop morale by demonstrating commitment to victory in Iraq.
 - Might mitigate strains by simultaneously announcing an end strength increase.