

REMARKS OF HAROLD W. GEISEL  
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND  
THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS

BEFORE THE

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, HOMELAND  
DEFENSE AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS

ON

OVERSIGHT IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN:  
CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

DECEMBER 7, 2011

Thank you, Chairman Chaffetz, Ranking Member Tierney, and members of the subcommittee, for the opportunity to testify today about oversight of Department programs in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Since standing up its overseas offices in 2008, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) has:

- conducted 31 investigations and issued 27 reports related to Iraq;
- conducted 14 investigations and issued 22 reports related to Afghanistan; and
- issued 11 reports of activities affecting Department program and transition issues in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Our efforts during FY 2011 resulted in more than \$200 million in questioned costs and funds put to better use, \$16.6 million in investigative recoveries, and 20 contractor suspensions.

These results demonstrate the impact that OIG has achieved since establishing a presence in Baghdad and Kabul. As a result of Congressional support, OIG has fulfilled its commitment to vigorously oversee the Department's transition and soon will be one of the few remaining oversight entities in Iraq.

The challenges the Department faces in the transition to a civilian-led presence in Iraq are significant. DOD's planned withdrawal of its troops by the end of this month requires that the Department of State provide security, life support, transportation, and other logistical support that DOD presently provides in Iraq.

Our Office of Inspections has issued two reports—a July 2009 inspection of Embassy Baghdad and an October 2010 compliance follow-up review (CFR)—which address the embassy's transition planning efforts. In response to our CFR, the Department appointed a Washington-based Ambassador in February 2011 to manage the Iraq transition process.

We also issued reviews, in August 2009 and May 2011, of the Department's efforts to transition to a civilian-led presence in Iraq. Both reviews found that the transition was taking place in an operating environment that remains violent and unpredictable.

Our August 2009 report on the Department's transition planning efforts recommended that Embassy Baghdad develop a unified transition plan and assign a senior transition coordinator in Iraq; establish a workforce plan to ensure timely completion of large infrastructure projects managed by the embassy; determine what LOGCAP services and contract management personnel would be required; and verify resources needed to meet increased support requirements following DOD's departure. All of the recommendations have been closed.

Our May 2011 report noted that Embassy Baghdad and the Department had established planning and management mechanisms to effectively transition to a civilian-led presence. It also mentioned that while the Department had made progress, several key decisions were pending, some transition planning could not be finalized, and progress was slipping in some areas.

We remain concerned that some reconstruction projects were still experiencing delays and were not expected to be completed until mid-2012; and that establishing a viable diplomatic mission without DOD support and funding would require considerable resources, making it difficult to develop firm or detailed budget estimates.

The Department generally agreed with and was responsive to the intent of the recommendations.

Looking forward, we have 15 investigations related to Iraq, and 9 related to Afghanistan. Our 2012 Iraq and Afghanistan oversight plans include six audits, plus a proposed joint audit with DOD OIG, of programs in Baghdad and Kabul.

In Baghdad, we will look at the Worldwide Protective Services (WPS) contract for Embassy Baghdad, medical operations in Iraq, and the Department's oversight of the WPS task order for Kirkuk and Mosul. We also have proposed to DOD OIG that we undertake a joint audit of transition execution in Iraq, including implementation of the Baghdad Master Plan.

In Kabul, we plan to audit the WPS task order for the Kabul Embassy Security Force, contracts to build prisons, and the WPS task order for Herat and Mazar-E-Sharif.

For 2012, our Office of Inspections has planned inspections of the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism and the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. The Office of Audits is following up on its work in the region regarding treatment by contractors of third-country nationals, and our Office of Investigations also is actively engaged on this issue. We will continue to provide the Department and Congress with a comprehensive spectrum of audits, inspections, and investigations of post-transition activity in Iraq and preparations for transition planning and operations in Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Tierney, and members of the subcommittee, thank you once again for the opportunity to appear today, and I am ready to answer your questions.