

## House Foreign Affairs Committee

### OUTLOOK FOR IRAG AND US POLICY

September 10, 2009

**Mr. Poe:** Thank you Mr. Chairmen, Thank you for being here Mr. Ambassador. I want to follow up on my opening statement, I'm concerned about the Iranian government- The Iranian government wants to develop nuclear weapons, they are involved in Iran- they are involved in Iraq directly and indirectly, they cause mischief, they kill people, and now they're involved in Camp Ashraf, with influence on the Iraqi government. Apparently the United States knew there was trouble in Camp Ashraf, that there might be some type of problem, and of course there was a problem, with the invasion of the Iraqi security forces killing 11 people capturing 36 others. Then ordered by a judge to release these people,-uh they're still in captivity. And We have the legal and moral obligation-right or wrong, we're in that situation to protect Camp Ashraf, we're on our way out. How do we know that this Camp, and these Iranian dissidents will be secure, that there lives are not in jeopardy, is the fourth Geneva convention going to be used as a designated person, and make sure that we as the united states push to protect these individuals. My personal opinion is our quarrel is not with Iranians, either in Iraq or Afghan- Iran, or Iraq, our quarrel is with the government. So what are we doing specifically to make sure that the people of Camp Ashraf are safe that we leave town.

**Ambassador:** Well first of all we sought and received written assurances from the government of Iraq that it will treat the Mujahedin-e-khalq humanely, it will not forcibly transfer them to any other country-

**Mr. Poe:**Excuse me- just to clarify the question and answer. Was this before or after the security forces came into camp Ashraf that we got this assurance.

**Ambassador:** This was before because, our- the UN mandate for the, for us to be responsible for this camp ended in the end of 2008. After 2008, that is starting January 1 this year, it is the sovereign and sole responsibility of the Iraqi government, and because of that we sought from them written assurances that they would treat them humanely and that they would not forcibly repatriate them, where they would be-they could be tortured or persecuted based on their religious or political beliefs.

**Mr. Poe:** It doesn't appear that they have been threatened humanely if 11 of them were murdered , 36 others were arrested.

**Ambassador:**Well On July 28<sup>th</sup> Iraqi forces went in to try to setup a police station. They regarded that as an exercise of their sovereignty because Ashraf is in Iraq,

**Mr. Poe:** Did we know about that before it happened?

**Ambassador:** Uh- I understand that they told us that yes, they were going to do this, yea.

As your well aware the operation of setting up this police station resulted in, uh, in violence and deaths of several of the residents. The United States gave immediate medical attention to the injured, and provided medical supplies and expertise to the clinic there. We also evacuated the most seriously injured to US medical facilities. We have continued- the US has continued to monitor the treatment of the 36 mojahedin-e-khalq members who were arrested on charges related to the rioting and illegal residence in Iraq. So we have uh-we have continued to monitor them, and we have continuously and clearly made-told the Iraqi government of our interest in their treatment. I can assure you sir that we are continuing to be in touch with the Iraqi government and urge that they live up to their written assurances to us with respect to the treatment of individuals, and especially to the issue of repatriation, because it is repatriation that I think we have to make sure does not happen.

**Mr. Poe:** Let me ask you a question with the time I have left- let's just cut to the chase- When we leave, what is your personal opinion about the safety of the people in Camp Ashraf.

**Ambassador:** Well we have made this very clear to the Iraqi government- I think this committee in fact has made this very clear as well. That we are interested in the well being of these people, we're interested in perseveration of their human rights, we're interested in the fact that they should not be forcibly repatriated to Iran. It is therefore my view that the Iraqi government respects our concerns in this regard, and will work with us on those. That said, they do want to exercise sovereignty over their own territory, but that sovereignty should not come at the expense of human rights or repatriation, so Mr. Congressmen I can assure you that we will continue to be very vigilant on this matter.