

Lt. General (Ret.) Jay Garner
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Subcommittee on National Security

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for arranging this session today. I regret that I am unable to testify to you live and in person. I would say that I wish I could be in Washington to do so, but to be honest; there is no place I would rather be right now but in Baghdad.

I would like you to walk away from this testimony with two facts in your head. First, there is no humanitarian crisis. There may be some humanitarian issues that ORHA has to work through, but the crisis that so many predicted never materialized.

Second; we arrived in Baghdad on April 20th, a little over three weeks ago. Since that time a lot has been accomplished, a lot of work that we are very proud of, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

I would like you to look at Iraq as we see it. It is a country the size of California, with a population of over 23 million people. This land is the cradle of civilization, and has a deep and rich history because of it. What is modern Iraq has been the epicenter of some of the world's largest and most powerful empires.

Saddam Hussein took control here in 1979 and over the years the brutality of his regime escalated. I don't think anyone can truly understand the power Saddam had over the Iraqi people unless they come here and talk to the Iraqi people as we have. Saddam was not a good steward of Iraq or its people. His regime used the neglect of vital infrastructure as a tool of repression.

Before the war, only 60% of the Iraqi people had access to safe drinking water. Ten of Al Bashrah's 21 potable water treatment facilities did not work. 70% of sewage treatment plants were in urgent need of repair. UNICEF reports that 500,000 metric tons of raw or partially treated sewage has been dumped into the Tigris or Euphrates rivers, Iraq's main water supply.

Before the war, 70% of Iraqi children under 5 suffered from malnutrition.

Before the war, Iraq's electrical power system was operating at half its capacity of 5,500 megawatts.

Before the war, 80% of Iraq's 25,000 schools were in poor condition. The schools averaged one book for every six students. In some cases as many as 180 students were crowded into a single classroom.

60% of the population is wholly dependent on the oil for food program for basic subsistence.

Now, where are we today? There is important progress to report.

Before the war started the Iraqi people had a 60 day stock of food. Although there was much looting, the World Food Program has large stocks of food in country and will bring in 487,000 metric tons of food per month. The rations for June are already on their way to Iraq. Distribution of this will be a challenge and we are working with the World Food Program manager, Central Command, and others to address it

The water system in Baghdad is operating at 60% of pre-war levels. We are making minor repairs and providing supplies to water facilities. In certain places where we have reliable electric power, people claim that they have more potable water than they did before the war.

In both the north and the south some, Iraqis have more electric service than they've had in the last 12 years. People in Basrah have electricity twenty-four hours a day. That is more than they have ever seen. Only Baghdad is suffering from electric shortages beyond pre-conflict levels. When the National Grid Backbone becomes functional late this month, excess power from the north and the south will be exported to Baghdad.

There has been no major disease outbreak in the country. Although many of Iraq's hospitals are up and running, water supply and electrical power to hospitals is

sporadic, and the national medical supply system is not functioning. There are warehouses full of medicine and supplies. ORHA is working with the Ministry of Health, the Red Cross, WHO, and UNICEF to coordinate distribution to hospitals in the absence of a medical supply system.

Regarding schools, primary schools across Iraq opened on May 4. Secondary schools and universities may open this week.

We are working towards a vital improvement in the security environment. Half of the former police force has returned to work.

Finally, despite the predictions, the number of people displaced by the war was negligible. What few refugees there are in Iraq are being cared for by relief agencies.

Over the next four weeks, I have a series of priorities on which we will focus.

One of the first and most important steps is the payment of salaries. We have made emergency payments of \$20 to over one million civil servants. The numbers will double this week. We are also going to unveil a national salary structure shortly. These \$20 payments, and salary payments, come from frozen Iraqi assets and funds we have gathered in Iraq, not from appropriated funds.

ORHA is also working with the World Food Program to buy the northern and southern crops. This will stimulate the Iraqi economy promote growth in the agricultural sector and start to break the cycle of dependence on the oil for food program. An agricultural team from Australia is arriving this week to educate farmers in the south about better use of arid farm land.

We are working hard to have the National Electric Grid operational by the end of May. This will substantially improve power all over the country.

In your invitation to testify, you asked me to address lessons learned from other post-conflict situations.

Each situation, each country, is obviously unique. Although I have no direct experience in Afghanistan, I have some impressions.

Afghanistan is a smaller country that had been at war for twenty years and had endured five years of Taliban repression and four years of drought. There was nothing there. No infrastructure and little education for the people. It was an agrarian society in a land that had little to offer. Afghanistan also has few wealth creating natural resources.

In Iraq the people are highly educated, industrious, and have a rich culture inspired by a long history. It is a country that has wealth through oil, wealth that has been squandered to date. Since 1979 they have been dominated by a brutal dictator who

took excellent care of his relatives and close associates, but let his people suffer. He stripped the Iraqi people of their human dignity and rights, and they are totally dependent on the government for food, water and electricity.

We planned this mission for the most difficult case. Intelligence reports and in depth studies by a wide range of public and private organizations predicted a humanitarian crisis.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that there would be 600,000 refugees costing \$60 million, while another 500,000 Iraqis would be displaced. Those predictions never materialized. Reporting on the numbers of displaced persons varies, but at best they are a fraction of UNHCR's estimate. The numbers do not constitute a humanitarian crisis.

The World Food Program pre-positioned 30,000 tons of food to feed 2.1 million refugees and internally displaced persons.

Due to the weakness of the Iraqi defense, and the skills of the coalition military, the crisis never came. There are huge humanitarian issues, but the good news is that we are able to help the Iraqis by taking care of their basic needs, while planning for the longer term.

For example, the Ministry of Trade and the UN's World Food Program are working hand in hand to begin the Public Distribution System for food. Also, the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the Red Cross, and ORHA have formed an International Aid Committee to review offers of medical assistance.

This committee also asked me how ORHA is organized to meet humanitarian needs. ORHA is a collection of experts from across the US Government and across the world. I would like to take a moment here to express to you how proud I am of the people who are working here. They have taken on monumental tasks under very difficult circumstances.

Among the group here in Baghdad with me are a number of people who have done this sort of thing before. They include Ron Adams, Jerry Bates, Bruce Moore, Bob Gifford, Van Jorstad, George Mullinax, David Nummy, Chris Milligan, Richard Naab, and others. All of them are from various agencies in the US Government.

One of the things that impresses me most is how well all of these representatives of several different agencies are working together. We are all one team working for one goal. This includes the Military who bring their experience from Bosnia and Kosovo and knew up front that when the war was over they would have to rebuild this country. The precision with which they ousted the regime has been key to advancing our mission. USAID / OFDA- DART deployed the largest team ever fielded for a crisis. USAID / OTI came with \$6 million in hand and is working for more to fund small scale projects.

To address your concerns on how agencies are selected to participate in humanitarian efforts I will run through who is here and what they are doing.

International Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations are the primary source of humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people. The U.S. Government provided money to the IOs and NGOs in preparation for a humanitarian crisis. Organizations are selected from their reputation in past conflicts, how they carry out business, and their ability to function in Iraq.

The UN is helping coordinate assistance. ORHA has already established a working relationship with the UN, the Red Cross and other non-governmental organizations.

Also, this week ORHA will stand up the Iraq Forum, a facility to help international organizations and non-governmental organizations conduct direct coordination with Iraqi ministries and reconstruction efforts, as well as the coalition military forces. The Iraq forum will allow organizations in key sectors like water, sanitation, food, power and human rights; to meet regularly and de-conflict projects and programs.

As you would expect, we are encountering some barriers in getting assistance to the Iraqi people. The primary barrier is security. It is not the threat of left over forces continuing the fight, but from looters and other personnel using lawlessness to their advantage.

We are working hard to improve the security situation in Baghdad. We are bringing the local police force back on the job. Last week we asked the police force to come back to work and a few thousand already have. We are in the process of separating the good officers from the bad. We are sending them back to police academies to learn basic skills and how to be police officers in a free society. The police will work closely with the coalition military police.

Another challenge is communications. There are no communications in the country of Iraq. We are working this problem everyday, and I expect limited cell service in and around Baghdad within a month. We will still have to rely on the Thuraya satellite system to communicate with outlying areas. The Thuraya system is marginal at best.

Our final barrier is fuel. Gasoline and Liquid Petroleum Gas are critical to the Iraqi people, both are critically short.

LPG is Iraq's primary fuel for cooking. Currently there is a shortage of LPG, so purchases have been made in Turkey and Kuwait until production lines in Iraq get up and running.

In order to refine more LPG and Gasoline, which the Iraqi people desperately need, we must pump more oil. We cannot pump more oil until the oil currently in storage tanks and pipelines is cleared out. The only way to clear out the oil is to sell it. If the situation does not change quickly, one of the most oil rich countries on earth will find itself in a fuel crisis. The only way to alleviate this problem is to lift UN sanctions and allow Iraq to sell oil. This will open the pipelines and storage tanks so that LPG can begin to be refined again

Again Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate, in the short time that we have been here, the ORHA organization has achieved much. The hard work will continue. I am proud of the dedicated Americans and our coalition partners who are here serving. No one doubts that there is much hard work left to be done, and I have no doubt that we can do it.

Mr. Chairman, I hope I have answered the questions of this committee. I am deeply appreciative of all of the support that the Congress has given to ORHA and our critical mission here. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify.