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Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and
International Relations
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On Humanitarian Assistance Following
Military operations: Overcoming Barriers, Part II

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am honored to be here today to discuss the humanitarian effort that followed military operations in Iraq from the perspective of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Humanitarian Response to the Iraq Conflict

Thanks to early, prudent, and thorough contingency planning that began last fall, the pre-positioning of emergency supplies, and careful coordination within the U.S. Government, and with private sector partners and international humanitarian organizations, the humanitarian crisis in Iraq that many had predicted was avoided. Consequently, a major reconstruction effort was initiated quickly upon the cessation of large-scale military operations.

Working closely with other departments and agencies of the U.S. Government, including with our military colleagues, and drawing upon extensive post-conflict reconstruction efforts over the past several decades, USAID undertook an early planning process to identify likely humanitarian needs and prepare to meet those needs. USAID identified four categories of required humanitarian and reconstruction assistance that it would be called upon by the President to meet. These were: (1) urgent relief in the immediate aftermath of military actions; (2) food requirements to restart the ration system; (3) small, quick-impact projects to jump-start the transition to stability in Iraq; and (4) longer-term major reconstruction projects to return normal life for the majority of Iraqis.

In the first category, urgent relief, USAID mobilized quickly, pre-positioning staff in neighboring countries while military operations were ongoing. In fact, USAID deployed to the region its largest ever Disaster Assistance Response Team ("DART" team) outside of search and rescue teams. At its peak there were 65 people, working from Turkey, Jordan and Kuwait and prepared to respond to potential urgent humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. In addition, USAID stockpiled emergency relief supplies including water tanks, hygiene kits, health kits, plastic sheeting for shelter, and blankets.

Second, to ensure food would be available in the aftermath of the conflict, USAID provided the World Food Program (WFP) substantial quantities of commodities for emergency food distributions. Timely USAID grants, including \$60 million for logistics and \$200 million for regional purchases, helped prepare WFP to undertake the largest mobilization operation that this United Nations organization has ever carried out. Following the end of the war, WFP successfully renegotiated approximately 1.4 million metric tons of Oil-for-Food (OFF) Program contracts and accessed additional U.N. Office of the Iraq Program (OIP) resources for operational costs. These combined tonnages mean that the 2.4 million metric ton pipeline for WFP's six-month emergency operation is fully resourced. In addition, the U.S. Government, through its food aid programs, including P.L. 480 Title II, section 416(b), and the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust, has committed about \$230 million for nearly 255,500 metric tons of additional food for Iraq.

On June 1, Iraq's ration distribution, which provides food to all Iraqis, and is the sole source of food for 60 percent of the population, was restarted, thanks to the work of WFP, Iraq's Ministry of Trade, and coalition forces. As a result of careful preparations and planning, there has been no food crisis in Iraq.

Third, USAID launched a number of small, quick-impact programs as soon as regions of Iraq became secure enough for our personnel. For example, USAID grants are currently helping the town council in Umm Qasr, Iraq's principal deep water port, get up and running and funding sports activities for young people there. One of the lessons we have learned from USAID's work in other failed or reconstructing societies is the need to keep young people, especially young men, off the streets, employed or in school, and in healthy activities such as sports. Unless they are occupied, young men are often a source of disruption,

for they can be easily lured into looting or organized crime and violence.

Lastly, USAID is overseeing a substantial reconstruction effort, which is focused on critical areas that will contribute to substantial improvements in the lives of the Iraqi people. These efforts include: rebuilding electricity, water, sanitation, and infrastructure; rehabilitating ports, airports, and public buildings; and revitalizing Iraq's health, education, and local governance.

USAID's reconstruction team has achieved a number of accomplishments since the conflict's end.

- Despite widely reported incidents of sabotage and looting that have hampered the full restoration of electrical power, Iraqi national electrical generation has been substantially increased from the immediate post-conflict condition. As of July 11, national electrical generation was at 3,200 megawatts, which is about 75 percent of the highest pre-war level.
- Systems and facilities are being restored to open Basra International Airport and Baghdad International Airport to commercial traffic.
- Chemicals and water purification tablets were delivered for water treatment for communities in 15 governorates of south and central Iraq.
- Over 22.3 million doses of vaccines were purchased to cover 4.2 million children and 700,000 pregnant women.
- Plus, as of July 1, more than 80,266 tons of food commodities have been dispatched at the Umm Qasr port, where USAID-funded crews are both dredging the harbor and refurbishing the grain storage silos.
- The local governance team has begun implementation of an interim neighborhood council advisory structure to represent the population in the Baghdad metropolitan area. Such councils now represent over 85 neighborhoods (over 5 million Baghdadis), and select members of the nine district councils and the Baghdad city council. The Interim Baghdad Advisory Council was officially inaugurated July 7.

In each of these humanitarian assistance efforts, USAID has worked closely with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations within and outside the United Nations system, and the for-profit private sector. These organizations are our indispensable partners in post-conflict humanitarian assistance and reconstruction. Unleashing the enormous capacity of the American private sector, both non-profit and for-profit, has been a key component of the U.S. Government's ability to alleviate human suffering as wars end. Iraq has been no exception. I should note that, as a former officer of an American NGO myself, I am aware that the independence and strong humanitarian ideals of the U.S. NGO community sometimes require such organizations to engage in soul-searching when called upon to participate in the immediate aftermath of military operations. But, we at USAID are proud that we are working with more than twenty NGO partners in Iraq.

Lessons Identified

Let me turn briefly to the broader questions raised by the Subcommittee of the organizational lessons we have learned in Iraq and in many previous humanitarian environments, to suggest ways we can continue to improve our performance. First, let me say that the President's decision to create the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), and the follow-on Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), was the right decision from the perspective of effective humanitarian and reconstruction programs. These structures have allowed all agencies of the U.S. Government to work together under a unified management system, in order to manage perhaps the most complex humanitarian and reconstruction effort we have undertaken since the end of World War II and the Marshall Plan. In such complex undertakings, and especially in the chaotic immediate aftermath of war, coordination requirements will inevitably arise, and they have arisen within ORHA and CPA. Overall, however, the President's decision to create these coordinating entities is a quantum leap forward in how the U.S. Government can and should respond to humanitarian crises. The USAID mission director in Baghdad, and our regional offices throughout the country, are fully integrated into the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Looking forward, USAID's experience in hundreds of responses to natural and man-made humanitarian crises suggest two areas in which we could make further improvements in our capacity. These are (1) further integration of civilian-military planning; and (2) increased stand-by capacity for critical humanitarian tasks.

1. **Further integration of civilian-military planning:** Prior to the initiation of hostilities in Iraq, indeed prior to any decision to initiate military action, USAID and other civilian agencies of the U.S. Government worked closely and well with our Department of Defense colleagues. These consultations suggested ways that military operations could be conducted to minimize humanitarian crises, methods for our DART team to coordinate with military personnel on the ground, and how the U. S. Government could jump-start immediate relief efforts once portions of Iraq became permissive for civilian workers. Such civilian-military planning paid dividends, for us and for Iraqi civilians, and should be further deepened and institutionalized prior to future conflicts.

2. **Increased stand-by capacity for critical humanitarian tasks:** Based on our experience in Somalia, in the Balkans, and in other post-conflict humanitarian interventions, we now know that certain categories of civilian functions will be required immediately upon the cessation of military operations. These categories include public administration specialists to re-establish basic government services. We are currently meeting these needs through a combination of military civil affairs officers and contract specialists hired through USAID and other U.S. Government agencies. To ensure that such critical specialists arrive when they are needed immediately after hostilities cease, and in sufficient, highly trained quantities, we need to improve our systems for locating and deploying these experts. We need to have them "on-call" prior to the next humanitarian intervention.

USAID appreciates the interest of the Chairman and the Subcommittee in these important humanitarian issues, which are central to the mission of the U.S. Agency for International Development, and we appreciate the opportunity to testify today.