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Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich thank you for inviting me to appear again before you. As you know, I am not a security specialist. Rather, I speak to you as one who has lived with security issues in the practical realm. I have been under threat of assassination in Yemen, had my embassy stormed by mobs in Bahrain, traveled armed in Iran in the days of yearly terrorist assassinations of Americans, been shot at as both a soldier and diplomat by small arms, rockets and mortars, and served in three critical threat posts, two as Ambassador. On the basis of that experience I would like to offer some ideas, a few of which coincide with the GAO report but several of which address other matters; some of which require legislative attention.

Before doing so however, I would like to pay special tribute to the brave and hard working personnel, RSOs and ARSOs, who have protected me and my missions in dangerous times. I would also like to acknowledge my respect for the men of DynCorp and Blackwater who ran my personal protection details in Iraq and Afghanistan. They performed with courage, judgment and restraint and one lost his leg in the process. Whatever opprobrium now attaches to others I owe all those gallant men—State Department and contractor employees--my gratitude and I am glad to have a public forum in which to express it.

Changed Conditions need Changed Concepts—technical issues

The GAO report observes correctly that we now maintain diplomatic personnel in security conditions from which we would previously have evacuated our personnel. And it is correct that this has required a vast expansion of secure facilities, vehicles, and personnel. There are still gaps between some of our standards and practices and the needs of the service under these new conditions. These gaps affect communications, protection standards, who carries out protection, and movement security. Some have made progress but are still worth noting because the problems may reemerge. Some have needed attention for more than a decade. Let me enumerate the challenges I know of.

Communications security standards

We lack the standards—not the equipment—to provide secure, deployable computer based communications to our personnel in rapidly evolving situations. In both Iraq and Afghanistan we have and do deploy State personnel into the field with our military colleagues and those of allied forces. We did so under the Coalition Provisional Authority as well as Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan-OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and NATO/ISAF PRTs in Iraq. Secure communications are a must to alert our personnel to intelligence generated threats, share communications between provincial areas, and allow them proper means for reporting sensitive information. Our military colleagues have the equipment to do this. They protect the same US government secrets that the State Department protects. Yet State has never accepted and fielded deployable secure

computer technology for use outside posts because it does not fit our standards adopted and designed for fixed locations.

In some cases we have been able to work around the problem with the cooperation of our military colleagues. In Afghanistan, then General Eikenberry generously authorized all State personnel deployed with US units to use military (Sipernet) communications. I believe our regional posts are now using Sipernet in Iraq as well although that was not the case when I left in June 2005. However, this is a temporary fix that has neither solved all our current problems nor prepared a solution for the future.

It is past time for State to summon the willpower to resolve the bureaucratic problems involved and find a way to send deployable secure computers to the field with our officers. Begging from our military friends is not a solution and the problem is still with us. That is because we are now deploying officers to work with non-US NATO forces and NATO works on a communications system that—unlike the US military's Sipernet—is not compatible with State secure systems. In my time in Kabul we had to install a few separate computers with separate technology to receive classified material from NATO/ISAF and our officers serving with NATO units. However, techniques for migrating information from one system to another were imperfect and slow. Deployments to dangerous or difficult areas in the future will not always be with US forces. The limited secure communications we have for deployment of larger groups, i.e., teams rather than individuals, do not permit receipt of all levels of classified information. To repeat, *State needs to give its deploying officers secure communication devices and standards that allow them to be used in the field.*

Secure Mobility

The need to move with relative security is well known. In the past many of our problems centered on vehicles. When the buy American standards that Congress has mandated were applied to security they have caused problems in the past. In recent years I am told that we have made great progress. It is important that this progress be maintained because it took a long time to deal with the issues of profile and sustainability.

In some countries no one but us uses American SUVs. This makes it easy for an ambush to recognize an approaching American target at a greater distance. When I served in Algeria the US Ambassador's convoy was distinct from that of every other diplomat in the city. When stuck in traffic, as we often were, I could have foregone the honor of being the most easily identified senior US official in a country with a blanket death threat against all foreigners.

In Iraq in the early period of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) we had no armored vehicles. Because of these same regulations we had to use highly identifiable vehicles with no armor. That no State personnel were killed in that period of shooting on the street was due far more to luck than the deficient security provided by the Department and military. Later we did get armored Suburbans, and just in time as the road ambushes of my colleagues in the provinces began to increase very shortly after the first armored vehicles were issued.

However, that brings up the second issue, vehicle maintenance. This is a problem when the vehicles are basically unsupportable in or unsuitable for the countryside where they are used. The US Army has a massive logistics chain to maintain its equipment in environments like Iraq and Afghanistan and even so faces many challenges. State has no equivalent support system in the field. When the new armored vehicles broke down in some PRT in Iraq or Afghanistan they could be deadlined for long periods in the absence of parts or mechanics who knew how to repair them.

In Afghanistan we compounded the problem by sending long wheel-base armored Suburbans to PRTs in areas marked by steep sided gullies and few roads. So the wonderful and expensive armored vehicles stayed inside the compound and the State and USAID officers drove unarmored Nissans or Toyotas or bummed rides in military vehicles.

Diplomatic Security (DS) has made considerable progress and is now fielding a much better mix of foreign and domestic vehicles. I commend their progress and the Congressional support. I hope that the Congress will continue to support State with the authority and funding flexibility to meet the need for secure and maintainable vehicles. However, as the US military re-deploys from Iraq we are going to face complex issues of how to handle protection for our movements. There are no simple solutions.

The State Department may need much more robust maintenance capabilities. Additionally, State may need to consider having air assets of its own, both fixed and rotary wing, for the future in Iraq if we maintain regional posts there without military support. I understand that there is some planning going on for this but many issues

remain to be settled and future funding is a significant issue. These resources and the authorities to use them wisely need to be thought about now and budgeted for. Supplemental budgets are not the answer since by their nature they are neither sustainable nor dependable for year to year operating costs. Supplemental budgets impede sensible planning and rational budget execution. The Administration—State, OMB, and the White House share with Congress the need to stop flinching from the requirement to pay for the mitigation of the dangers we ask our personnel to accept.

Changed Conditions need Changed Concepts—Risk vs Gain

Operating in areas like Afghanistan and Iraq requires that we adopt new ways of thinking about risk. It is true that Foreign Service officers are not soldiers. They did not sign up to fight the nation's wars, although increasingly they signed up knowing that they might be sent into the midst of conflict as they were in Vietnam and are today in Iraq and Afghanistan and a number of other countries. But our nation's need for sophisticated judgments on complicated economic and political subjects does not end when risk arises. Good political judgments will not be made on the basis of poor information. Effective coordination with foreign partners will not take place over the telephone alone, particularly not in countries where personal relationships and one-on-one discussions are essential to deal with difficult subjects. In short, we have to be able to move.

And moving, Mr. Chairman, Senator Voinovich, is hampered not only by danger and by shortage of RSOs, and ARSOs, and vehicles but by our self imposed standards. Those standards, often described informally as zero tolerance, made our jobs in Kabul and

Baghdad even harder than they needed to be. We avoided the problem in the field largely by turning security over to the military and living by different standards. However, as we convert from PRTs to State branch posts and Diplomatic Security (DS) assumes responsibility for security in the field we are likely to face again the potentially crippling problems of putting people in a dangerous country and then keeping them from being usefully employed.

I want to be clear:

- I do not advocate that we blindly or easily assume high levels of risk, and
- I absolutely would be opposed to ordering officers to take risks they considered unreasonable.

But we must find better answers than we have to date. Because of danger we have often limited officers in such situations to moving only with a full convoy and because of the limitations of equipment and personnel that required scheduling movements 48 hours in advance. But we are applying this to societies where the vast bulk of social and bureaucratic actions are decided without such advance preparation so the result is our officers don't see the people they need with the frequency they need under the conditions needed to be effective. In short, we limit our access to knowledge and coordinate ineffectively when we can't move about. We have to have standards that allow for the use of judgment in weighing the risk of doing something against the gain to be derived from the action.

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, I want to be clear that I am not criticizing the excellent RSOs who worked for me. I was clear that I had a job to do and they had to help

me find ways to do it safely. Because they accepted that approach I went to most of the places I needed to go and generally saw the people I needed to see. And when an RSO who accepted that his or her job was not just to keep me safe, but to keep me safe while doing my job, came to me and advised against an action I listened.

However, it is one thing for an RSO to make such judgments under direct orders of the Ambassador with the latter's delegation of Presidential authority and quite another to ask the RSO to go outside current tolerance standards completely on his or her own or with the varying judgment of other officers. That is asking the RSO to accept both greater physical risk and greater risk to career in a system that in the past has given no bureaucratic protection in the event that someone is hurt or killed. I am told by those still in the service that in Iraq, and perhaps in Afghanistan, our posts have made some progress in using "low profile" movements and more flexible ways of handling risk.

I hope that we are beyond the issue of the past in which dedicated officers frequently pushed the bureaucratic boundaries to accomplish what they, often correctly, believe to be essential tasks. I know of State and AID officers who regularly travelled to dangerous areas to collect essential political information necessary for my judgments as ambassador or to oversee projects essential to development and counter-insurgency alike. In many cases they travelled under different military rules but that only illustrates that State has abdicated a responsibility it cannot discharge in the field. In some cases, I have learned of officers who waited months or in some cases never reported to the Embassy that they had been ambushed. They did not report because they were concerned that they would

be ordered to leave or remain at base and therefore be crippled in their mission. By not reporting they also limited the RSOs understanding of the regional risks.

These were not matters of officers necessarily taking foolish risks or using bad judgment. Rather the point is to note the tension between security standards and professional responsibilities that do not connect well. I recognize that there has been progress. But I believe that that some point the problem is going to reappear.

Some speak of "risk management;" an antiseptic and bureaucratic term to avoid saying that someone may get hurt or killed taking a risk that was sensible on the basis of what was known and worth taking for a specific gain. But it is exactly the flexibility to make such difficult decisions that we need to strengthen. There are two levels of decision making to consider.

One is in the field. Senior officers with policy responsibility together with RSOs must continually weigh the risks of any movement against the need for the mission. Agencies need to work harder at coordinating moves to the same locations when they compete for security assets. These are difficult decisions and there are neither simple solutions nor "right answers." I have known RSOs who were too cautious to allow proper mission performance and senior officers who erred on the other side, being too cavalier and reckless in their judgments. It is therefore necessary that the issue of how to make these judgments needs to become part of regular Foreign Service and USAID officer training as well as that of RSOs. Officers should be exposed to roll playing and risk vs. gain trade off thinking in training for all officers, not just those deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan.

That brings us to the need to deal with the issue of security judgments at the policy level in Washington. We need a more systematic policy view of where the balance should lie between local responsibility and Washington review, weighed in favor of the field but maintaining room to examine whether judgments were reasonable when things go wrong. If the nation's interest requires us to send Foreign Service and AID officers into dangerous situations, and I believe it does, then it is up to our leaders to resolve these issues just as it is up to Congress to support reasonable flexibility to keep our people safe. We seem to be moving toward that balance in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am less persuaded that we have achieved the same balance in other dangerous areas of the world or that the balance will be maintained with future changes in senior personnel. The issue merits continuing study.

PRTs and Branch Posts—Back to local security

Ever since we began deploying civilians into the field in Iraq and Afghanistan we have encountered the problem of how to provide protective security for their essential movements. In the past we have not done well with the answers. In Iraq we made the decision to deploy civilians to PRTs without knowing how we would solve the movement protection issue and then wasted a prodigious amount of time and effort on an entirely foreseeable problem. In Afghanistan we have delegated the protection of our civilians in the provinces to the military. That has been only partially successful. Protection has been good but restrictions on movements caused by a shortage of force protection personnel,

and hence on civilian ability to do their work limited has the utility of the civilians. Strains between civilian and military personnel generated by friction over access to available security escorts were a frequent source of tension.

AS we go forward with the increase in civilians now projected for Afghanistan I predict that the problem will get much worse and the lack of adequate protective escorts will force civilians into a zero-sum game as to who gets to work and who twiddles their thumbs back at base. I am not convinced that our military will be able—not willing but able—to devote sufficient resources to the issue as the civilian presence expands. And in any event, the US military cannot handle the protection requirements for State and AID officers based with non-US NATO/ISAF PRTs where issues of adequate security for frequent movements remain unresolved.

This problem is likely to get significantly worse in Iraq as our military withdrawal proceeds and in Afghanistan as we set up branch posts outside the perimeter of military bases. If we do not make decisions early on how to provide adequate movement security we will find ourselves with posts that are secured at base but incapable of discharging their larger missions. We have done this before and it is likely we will do it again if the thinking and the budgets are not prepared now.

There are solutions but choices must be made early. In some parts of Afghanistan protection requires such heavily armed escorts that only the military can move our personnel. But in other areas lighter security could do the job. This could go to

contractors but that is very expensive and the problems of expanding bases to take additional contractors as well as civilians will be large.

Another possibility is to use Afghans trained and led by Americans, preferably RSOs. We have done that successfully in many countries and under dangerous conditions. Such forces provided security in Lebanon for many years. My security in Algeria resided with very courageous Algerians trained, led and supervised by diplomatic security agents. We could do this again in Iraq and parts of Afghanistan, at somewhat lower cost than contractors and with great expansion of our broad mission effectiveness.

In Iraq I understand that we are making strides in integrating Iraqi police into our mobile and static security programs in some selected areas. It is a painstaking process that is being done with great attention to detail. This model needs study and may require additional funding in the future. Plans to use more local forces in Afghanistan need to be completed and funded.

Depending partly on local security will pose problems in the midst of an insurgency. There are real risks including deciding to vet Iraqis and Afghans for security tasks. But DS has solved those problems before. We mitigated threats in Algiers by providing very specific steps concerning when guards were armed, briefed and so on. We have Afghans available who have worked extensively with our military and other organizations thereby providing the most solid vetting possible; the survival of their American counterparts. Situation specific solutions are being worked on in Iraq. In short, if we choose to use such methods then we have the knowledge, the training skills and the personnel to provide a

reasonable solution for part of the coming problem at a more manageable cost than contract security. I believe the Department should make, or where it has begun continue to make a very serious study of selectively expanding the use of Afghan and Iraqi guards.

Expand the resource reserve

Finally, I would like to call to your attention the need for a financial reserve for Diplomatic Security. The military has very large operating and maintenance (O&M) funds from which funds can sometimes be drawn under particular authorities to deal with some deployment crises before a supplemental budget is available. The State budget does not have equivalent resource flexibility. In my experience, this is a very significant but unacknowledged drag on Diplomatic Security decision making. If a guard contractor is not performing the cost of firing one contractor, providing for security and rebidding the contract can be very high. Where is that money to come from? State, largely DS, is going to have to find it by delaying or scrapping other projects to find the funds. I cannot testify to exactly how this makes Washington officials hesitate to make necessary security decisions but I am convinced it has and will happen.

I recommend that Congress work with the State Department to design some form of reserve or emergency drawdown authority to allow State to meet new and critical security contingencies. Definitions and terms would have to be designed to make sure such authorities or reserves did not become simply bureaucratic slush funds. But with good will on both sides this could be done.

Summing up—Where is the strategic plan?

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, thank you again for inviting me to appear. I have raised major issues drawn from my field experience. Each one is fairly long standing. Some are showing progress and others, like communications, remain unaddressed. Some issues reside in DS, some in Department leadership (and OMB where money is concerned), and some problems require cooperation of the Congress. To sum up, the problems are:

- Inadequate secure computers for deployment;
- Secure mobility, especially in the future when significantly expanded air assets may be required;
- Utilizing local security forces for PRTs and branch posts in conflict areas;
- The need to accept some greater degree of risk when the gains warrant such risks; and
- The need for an enhanced ability to draw on funds for security emergencies.

Lurking behind the individual problems is the lack of a strategic plan. The GAO report has noticed this and recommended corrective action. I strongly endorse that recommendation. Strategic planning is not a strong point in the State Department. Some of this is cultural and some is the fault of a miserly allocation of personnel to State. The fact is, unless State gets more people it will not be able to do strategic planning. My organization, The American Academy of Diplomacy, documented this in our report with the Stimson Center, *The Foreign Affairs Budget of the Future.*

But it is also a fact that State must adopt a more serious approach to strategic planning if it is to use its new resources well and justify their continuation by the Congress. Secretary Clinton has decreed a new process of planning, the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review. I believe this to be an excellent and necessary step. But I also recognize that in the short term the Department is being asked to undertake considerably expanded strategic planning in a very short time frame without having yet added the staff to do the planning. This will be a strain. The strain will be larger where it works against the grain of old habits. But the grain must adapt, planning is essential to meet the future needs of American diplomacy broadly as well as in security. I hope State will meet Secretary Clinton's requirements and your demands and thus foresee the need for programs and funding for future challenges. I hope you in the Congress will continue to press them for the long term strategic thinking they must learn to do; and then support the conclusions including regular appropriations for personnel and equipment.

Thank you and I am happy to take your questions.

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