

**Testimony of Nathaniel Fick**  
*Former Captain, United States Marine Corps*

“I’m here today as neither a Democrat nor a Republican, but as a citizen and a veteran. My message is urgency. Urgency because 776 Americans were wounded, and 72 were killed, in Iraq in September, following record high Iraqi casualties earlier this summer. Urgency because the consequences of losing in Iraq are staggering, and our finite window of opportunity to make progress is slamming shut. Urgency because the American people have not been engaged in this war, and we cannot succeed if the burden is borne by our military alone. The most shocking part of serving in Iraq is coming home and realizing that most of the nation hardly knew we were gone.”

...

“The defining phrases in Iraq today are our strategy of “Clear, Hold, Build,” and the plan to “stand down as the Iraqis stand up.” Both are fundamentally sound. The problem is that we’re not implementing them, and never have.”

...

“I didn’t see many ideologues in Iraq. I saw normal people who wanted the same things for their families that we want — electricity twenty-fours per day, basic healthcare, access to clean water, and safe neighborhoods. They were willing to side with whoever appeared most able to provide these basic goods, and we have consistently failed to prove that we’re that side.”

...

“After September 11, 2001, our government advised its citizens to go shopping, telling us that any disruption to our way of life would hand a victory to our enemies. As a consequence, we have utterly failed to mobilize our population for what may be a Long War. In fact, it often seems as if there is a concerted effort to keep the war and its sacrifices out of the daily lives of our citizens. My fellow Marines are confused when images of our friends’ flag-draped caskets are kept off the evening news in a purported ‘show of respect’ for the dead and their families. What is disrespectful about a military honor guard?”

...

“I am no fan of a draft. But I cannot help noticing that college campuses, once hotbeds of activism, are now islands of apathy. This war simply doesn’t touch most Americans. We can slap a yellow sticker on our SUVs, and never acknowledge the relationship between energy consumption and national security. We can declare that military service isn’t for ‘our kind of people,’ and then wonder why our leaders seem to have so little experience in military matters.”

...

“Whenever I took Marines into harm’s way, I had to know two things: first, that what I was asking them to do was morally right, not in a political or strategic sense, but in our little slice of the war; and second, that, if anyone were killed, I would be able to stand in a living room months later and explain to a mother and father why their son had died working for me, and why I had thought that sacrifice was worthwhile. That sets the bar exceedingly high, and yet we cleared it every day. We cleared it because we knew what we stood for. Torture and indefinite imprisonment without trial are not about our enemies. They are about us. As a junior officer, I don’t see how they can possibly meet the litmus test I’ve described, and I don’t believe they’re in keeping with the values of the United States and our military.”

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“We will not, however, hear an outcry about any of this from the men and women in uniform. They are professional volunteers who swore an oath to obey the lawful orders of a democratically elected government. 140,000 of them are valiantly doing that in Iraq today. Leading them is a sacred trust, partly because they cannot publicly advocate for themselves. We simply can’t afford to kick this can down the road past November, or past 2008. Too many people are dying, too much money is being squandered, and too much damage is being done to the United States’ standing in the world. Our Soldiers and Marines are trained to have a bias for action. Indecision is a decision, and inaction has consequences all its own. You on this committee are in a position to act. I implore you to do so, and do it urgently.”

### **Testimony of Gerald F. Burke**

*Senior Police Advisor to Baghdad Police Chief May 2003 through June 2004; National Security Advisor to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, March through February 2005*

“By almost all accounts, military, civilian, the media and even our Coalition partners, [the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)] was a disaster. CPA was never able to get ahead of the curve of events. CPA’s mistakes have been well documented from the broad de-Ba’athification process to the disbanding of the Iraqi Army.”

...

“Our original team developed a recommendation for 6,000 international civilian police trainers and advisors. While this recommendation was quickly reduced to 1,500 by powers-that-be above our pay grade, it took six months before the first 24 civilian trainers and advisors arrived from the US. A year after our report was submitted, there still were fewer than 100 civilian police trainers and advisors in Iraq.”

...

“In Iraq, the funding for civilian police trainers and advisors was not available until after October 2003 — eight months after the start of the war. In fact, funding was even scarce for our advance team: I worked under five or six contracts during my first tour as funds were transferred to keep us in country.”

...

“In early 2004, partly due to the inability of the Iraqi Police Service to respond to insurgent activity, the Iraq Ministry of Interior and the U.S. Military organized ‘third force’ Public Order Battalions, such as the Special Police Commandos. These Battalions have now grown to Division-level strength and have been recruited en masse from former Republican Guard units and the Islamic fundamentalist Badr Brigade... There have been numerous allegations from Iraqis and non-government organizations that these Special (National) Police are functioning as death squads committing human rights abuses such as murder, torture, and kidnapping. Some American military and police advisors sarcastically refer to these Special Police as our ‘Salvadorian Option.’ Some refer to them simply as death squads.”

### **Testimony of Stephen Pierson**

*Military Policeman in Operation Iraqi Freedom, March 2003 to August 2004*

“I was tasked with writing the curriculum for the [police academy in Al Hillah]. I met with the company commander, first sergeant, noncommissioned officer in charge, and others for the specifics. It quickly became apparent that there was no template or command guidance on what should be taught, but rather the amount of time that we would teach was the only hard and fast rule. I was told that each class would run for a week and that there could be up to 200 students per class...I protested that 40 hours was not nearly enough time to teach someone the basics of law enforcement, especially with a class size of up to 200. I was then informed that the training would not be 40 hours, but rather 20 hours because it was too hot in the afternoon to teach (the academy was being conducted in an open air soccer stadium). My frustration increased when I learned that the fifth day of the academy would be a graduation ceremony. This in effect left only 16 hours of class time to teach up to 200 students, using an interpreter.”

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“After a couple of months of working with the IPs we were starting to make some progress with them as far as their response to calls and how they treated the public and prisoners. In August 2003, however, we were told to ‘stand down’ our responses with the IPs. Orders had come down telling us to let the IPs handle calls; we were supposed to

observe. This effectively ended our joint patrols with the IPs and stopped any continued progress we could have made.”

...

“We need to ramp up our commitment to training by dedicating the resources needed to train and equip the Iraqi police, army and security forces. We need to do now what we didn’t do in 2003 when it would have been easier.”

### **Testimony of Phillip Carter**

*Former Military Police and Civil Affairs Officer, U.S. Army,  
October 2005 to September 2006*

“Despite the violence which swirled around our compound, and the trend towards consolidation of U.S. units onto massive super-bases in the desert, my team remained in downtown Baqubah...Our proximity made us more effective, both because it made it easier for us to engage the Iraqi leaders with whom we worked, and because our experience living downtown helped us to understand our Iraqi counterparts. When the Iraqi power grid failed or water supply stopped working, we knew and felt those events first-hand. Likewise, when explosions or firefights erupted in the city, we heard and felt them, and could so judge their severity with our own senses. We learned that counterinsurgency cannot be conducted from afar.”

...

“[D]espite our successes in developing the police and promoting the rule of law, we still saw the security situation deteriorate. As the public reports make quite clear, all attack trends continue to move in an upward direction, with the greatest violence directed at the Iraqi security forces, followed by the Iraqi population, trailed by U.S. forces. This is the great paradox of the Iraq war in fall 2006: how can we be succeeding at developing the Iraqi army and police, while the insurgency continues to become stronger, broader, deeper, and more lethal?”

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“Senior military leaders called 2006 the ‘year of the police.’ But when the time came to allocate resources to this fight – to put their money where their mouths were – we received less than we needed. In Diyala, we continually stretched our military police and civilian police adviser assets to conduct the mission with economy of force. We visited the stations in the key city of Baqubah frequently, but neglected those throughout the rest of the province, because we had only enough assets to visit them a few times a month, if that.”

...

“I remain optimistic that U.S. soldiers can continue to do good in Iraq, and that their presence continues to help the Iraqi people build a better society. However, I am unsure that we can achieve our stated national goals in Iraq with the resources we have committed to the effort. I believe that an unconventional strategy – emphasizing adviser teams like mine, engaged with the Iraqi security forces and people – can continue to make progress. But to be successful, we must link the hard work of these brave men and women to a larger counterinsurgency strategy which wins the support of the Iraqi people by making good on our nation’s promises to them.”