

April 8, 2008: Wittman Statement on Petraeus and Crocker Testimony

(Washington, D.C.) - Congressman Rob Wittman (R-VA) released the following statement on the Senate hearings with General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker earlier today:

"During my January trip to Iraq, I met with General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. I was impressed with their steadfastness to completing the mission and bringing peace to a nation that had been terrorized for decades under the brutal reign of Saddam Hussein. Their dedication to the troops was evident and their knowledge and understanding of the myriad of issues facing Iraq was remarkable. I left Iraq confident that under the leadership and guidance of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker our efforts will succeed.

"Today, both the General and the Ambassador appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committees. They provided a candid assessment of the situation in Iraq and left little doubt in my mind that victory in Iraq will be achieved if we maintain our resolve and allow our troops to finish the job. That is the key however; we must finish the job. The success of the surge is undeniable but the situation in Iraq is still fragile.

"Like my colleagues I want to see our troops return sooner than later but there will be severe consequences to a hasty, arbitrary troop withdrawal. Any rush to withdraw troops and resources before the mission is completed will yield a safe-haven for terrorists and leave open the possibility of genocide.

"Tomorrow, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker will testify before the House Armed Services Committee, of which I am privileged to be a member. I look forward to engaging them in a frank discussion about the current state of Iraq and what steps they are taking to ensure that the Iraqi government is being held accountable for the future of their country.

"Democracy does not occur overnight, so we must be patient, trust our commanders on the ground and provide the

leadership the world expects from the American people. The Iraqi people are still trying to find their way. We must not abandon them in their hour of need."