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### **IN BRIEFING TO SECURITY COUNCIL, SECRETARY-GENERAL'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF JANUARY ELECTIONS**

#### **United States, Iraqi Representatives, Citing Critical Role Of UN Presence, Call for Increased Numbers of UN Staff in Iraq**

Against the backdrop of an overall difficult security situation and polarized political opinion, the upcoming elections in Iraq would represent a test of that country's new political order and of the transition process under way, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq told the Security Council this morning.

Briefing Council members on key developments in Iraq's transition process, including preparations for the planned elections, scheduled for 30 January 2005, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, the Secretary-General's Representative, said it was critical that the elections provide a platform for the expression of all shades of Iraqi political opinion. While violence, much of it extreme in its brutality and indiscriminate in its nature, had disrupted a significant portion of Iraq, he was convinced that most Iraqis abhorred such violence and demanded a way out of the situation through the establishment of a government that enjoyed the assent of the majority of the population.

Free and fair elections conducted by an independent electoral commission had not been part of Iraqi political life, he said, which was why it was so important that, despite the challenging security environment, Iraqis participated in the forthcoming elections. With calls from some quarters to boycott or postpone elections, every effort had to be made to promote dialogue and reconciliation among all Iraqis. The next year would see many challenges and opportunities, namely the election of a Transitional National Assembly, a constitutional referendum and general elections under the new constitution. As such, broader consensus in the international community would be all the more important.

While the security situation remained difficult, the increase in United Nations staff and support was essential to Iraq's political transition, the United States representative stressed on behalf of the multinational force. The United Nations' presence was critical to successful elections next 30 January and beyond, and to economic development and reconstruction. The force understood the United Nations' concerns about the safety of its brave and dedicated people, and was committed to providing security for the growing United Nations staff in Iraq. As security was provided -- the number of Iraqi security forces had tripled since his last report -- he urged the United Nations to put additional people on the ground.

Few issues before Iraq loomed larger than the upcoming elections, Iraq's representative said. The Transitional Administrative Law set out a process to lead up to a system of democratic government with checks and balances, such as Iraq had not previously known. The elections were a key step in that process. Given the opportunity, Iraqis would turn out in large numbers to participate in the first elections of their lives. Any risk to the election and its credibility and inclusiveness was likely to come, not so much from a boycott, but from the campaign of violence and intimidation.

Concerning United Nations participation in elections preparations, he welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to increase the number of election workers in Iraq, noting, however, that the increase was still not enough. He wondered how the United Nations could play the "leading role" mandated by resolution 1546 if it remained largely insulated from the people. The phrase "as circumstances permit" should not become a mantra, repeated to justify insufficient presence on the ground in Iraq, he said.

The meeting began at 10:10 a.m. and adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

### Background

Before the Council was the Secretary-General's report pursuant to paragraph 30 of resolution 1546 (2004) (document S/2004/959), which requested the Secretary-General to report within three months from the date of the resolution on the operations of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The report provides an update on United Nations activities in Iraq since his last report in September, a summary of key developments and an update on security arrangements for the United Nations presence there. It pays particular attention to the United Nations role in the political process, including preparations for the planned elections, and the work of the Secretary-General's Special Representative.

Providing an overview of the situation in Iraq, the report states the current security situation remains a major challenge. Although certain parts of the country, especially in the south, remain relatively calm, violence continues to adversely affect the centre of the country, particularly in and around Baghdad and other key cities, such as Falluja, Samarra, Ramadi and, more recently, in Mosul. Iraq's security and law enforcement institutions remain fragile. Attacks, including acts of terror, against State institutions and government officials continue unabated.

On 7 November, the Interim Iraqi Government, under the National Security Law, declared a 60-day state of emergency in all parts of Iraq, except the three northern governorates, the report states. Specific measures were announced for Falluja and Ramadi. During the reporting period, central Iraq has witnessed a particularly high level of insurgent and military activity. The city of Falluja has been a particular flashpoint in this regard. On 3 November, the Interim Government authorized Iraqi security forces and the multinational force to regain control of Falluja through military action. Recently, Kirkuk, Mosul and other locations have witnessed increased violence.

The ongoing violence, the causes, sources and motivations of which are not monolithic, reflects deeper grievances and cleavages between and within Iraqi communities, the report says. Carefully designed political solutions are required to address this situation. A mutually reinforcing dynamic between a credible political process and an improving security situation offers the best hope for achieving the goal of a stable, durable and democratic transition.

Regarding the transitional political process, the report states that the most immediate priorities are the preparations for direct and democratic elections. The exclusive jurisdiction for the oversight, organization and conduct of the transitional elections has been vested in the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, which the United Nations advises and supports. According to the Transitional Administrative Law, elections are to take place to fill positions in the Transitional National Assembly, governorate councils, and the Kurdistan National Assembly. Subsequent to the elections, the Transitional National Assembly will draft a permanent constitution by 15 August 2005, which would then be presented to the Iraqi people for approval in a general referendum no later than 15 October 2005. If approved, elections for a permanent government will be held no later than 15 December 2005.

Turning to the issue of security for the United Nations presence in Iraq, the Secretary-General states that, during the reporting period, certain parts of Iraq continued to experience a very serious security situation. In addition to attacks on the multinational force and other targets, the main threat was clearly directed at the new Iraqi police and armed forces. In view of the very high levels of violence in certain parts of Iraq, staff security remains the overriding constraint for all United Nations activities throughout the

country. The most recent review by the United Nations Security Coordinator assessed the threat to United Nations personnel in Iraq as remaining in the critical category, necessitating continuation of the very extensive staff protections set out in his August report to the Council.

The recent increase in the ceiling for the deployment of United Nations staff in Iraq, which has been taken primarily in support of the electoral process, is, therefore, confined to the “International Zone” in Baghdad. Movement outside the International Zone remains extremely hazardous. The United Nations and other international organizations remain high-value, high-impact targets. Any expansion of United Nations staff or activities outside the International Zone will require not only implementation of the extensive protection arrangements but also a qualitative improvement in the overall security environment.

In addition to the protection provided by the multinational force, there is a requirement for an integrated United Nations security structure, including security of United Nations premises and personal security details. Since his last report, an initial group of protection coordination officers have been recruited and deployed to Iraq. Following the receipt on 1 October of a letter from the Council President welcoming his proposal for the recruitment and deployment of a guard unit consisting of formed units of armed civilian police, military or paramilitary personnel, a contingent of 135 military personnel has been provided by a MemberState. This United Nations guard unit will be responsible for controlling access to UNAMI facilities.

With the planned elections, Iraq is approaching a key point in the transitional political process, the Secretary-General states. Credible and inclusive elections are the keystone towards achieving legitimacy and stability in Iraq. As such, they will be the foundation for the next chapter in Iraq’s history. The men and women elected to the Transitional National Assembly are to be entrusted with writing the future of Iraq in the constitution. The kind of constitution that emerges will shape the country and, through it, the region for a long time to come. The Interim Government has made a strong commitment to holding the elections and has supported the role of Independent Electoral Commission in organizing and conducting the elections.

The United Nations is playing a full role in helping with the technical and operational preparations for elections, the report states. Elections also require a conducive political and security environment, including the participation of all sectors of society. The widespread insecurity in Iraq, including intimidation, hostage-taking, targeted and indiscriminate attacks on civilians and brutal acts of terror, is a major obstacle. At the same time, while restoring security throughout Iraq has become imperative, the use of military force should be a last resort and undertaken in strict conformity with international humanitarian and human rights law.

The United Nations’ overriding concern in this connection is the safety and protection of civilians caught in the crossfire of the current conflict, the Secretary-General continues. Every effort must be made to spare civilian lives and to provide immediate relief and assistance to those affected by violence and military action. If elections are to have an optimal impact, sustained political efforts are needed to make the transition as inclusive, participatory and transparent as possible. The electoral process must offer an opportunity for all Iraqis to participate in the constitutional process that is to follow. He encourages the Interim Government, together with the Interim National Council, to reach out even more broadly to all segments of Iraqi society, in an effort to promote genuine political dialogue. The aim should be to create incentives for Iraqis to converge towards national reconciliation and peaceful political competition through the ballot box.

For all sides in Iraq, coming together as a people and talking to each other is “the need of the hour”, he states. The political transition should be inclusive, so as to heal Iraq’s wounds rather than prolong its suffering. Iraqis need to be reassured that the transition process is on track, enabling them to see light at the end of the tunnel. This requires simultaneous progress in three mutually reinforcing areas: security, political and economic. “It is time for the international community to close ranks in support of Iraq’s political and economic reconstruction”, the Secretary-General states.

The challenge is for Iraq's neighbours, the international community and the United Nations each to play their part to help Iraqis achieve their potential, the report adds. Just as Iraqis must take leadership inside Iraq, the neighbouring countries must take the lead in helping to normalize Iraq's relations with the region and the international community. Iraq's neighbours need a stable Iraq as much as Iraq needs a stable region. Iraq and its neighbours have a mutual responsibility towards each other.

The multinational force, which continues to be a major presence in the country, has been mandated by resolution 1546 (2004) to contribute to the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq in support of the political transition, especially for upcoming elections and to provide security for the United Nations presence in Iraq. For its part, the United Nations, which only has a limited presence due to the prevailing circumstances, is determined to do its utmost to implement the mandate entrusted to it under that resolution. As circumstances permit, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and UNAMI remain committed to doing everything possible to support the Interim Government and the Iraqi people in the transitional process.

The Secretary-General believes that the United Nations has been able to deliver effective support for Iraq's transition. In coordinating humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, as well as by ensuring that electoral preparations are in place, the United Nations continues to work with the Interim Government and the multinational force, taking into accounts the needs of Iraqi civil society, to maximize possibilities for it to implement its mandate, while carefully assessing the risks it faces.

#### Briefing by Secretary-General's Special Representative

ASHRAF JEHangir QAZI, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, said the forthcoming elections represented a test of the new political order and of the transition process. The Iraqi people had yet to be given the opportunity to assert their political rights through the ballot box. While there was clearly a widespread desire among Iraqis to participate in the election, some important segments of the population still felt excluded from the political transition.

The overall security situation remained difficult during the reporting period, he said. All types of violence, much of it extreme in its brutality and indiscriminate in its nature, had disrupted a significant portion of the country. Daily reports of insurgent, terrorist and criminal activities, and of military and security operations graphically illustrated the fragility of the situation. The chief victims were, as always, the civilian population.

He said he was convinced that violence was abhorrent to the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people. They demanded a way out of the situation, through the establishment of a government that enjoyed the assent of the majority of the population. The desire to find political solutions to political problems was shared by all Iraqis, with the exception of a few irreconcilable extremists. The vast majority, including those who had so far chosen to remain outside the political process, understood that the long-term consequences of violence seldom, if ever, met expectations and were most often counterproductive to the achievement of desired goals.

Over the past three months, the United Nations had actively continued its effort to engage in dialogue with a wide spectrum of Iraqi opinion, including those outside the political mainstream, with the aim of understanding their needs and encouraging them to enter the political process. The forthcoming elections must provide a platform for the expression of all shades of Iraqi political opinion, and allow for the adequate representation of Iraqis of all backgrounds. To its credit, the Interim Government had made efforts to reach out to alienated elements and was continuing to do so. It needed every encouragement to increase its effort in that direction, he added. The success of the transition depended to a great extent on those efforts.

Because the future Transitional National Assembly would also be the constituent assembly, it must be seen as representative by all constituents of the Iraqi polity, he said. Equally, for those opposition elements who claimed to have a substantial base of political support, there could be no better opportunity to demonstrate that support than by participating in the forthcoming elections. Accordingly, there was no alternative to an inclusive and successful national election. Free and fair elections conducted by an independent electoral commission had not been part of Iraqi political life. That was why it was so important that, despite the challenging security environment, Iraqis availed themselves of the opportunity to participate in the forthcoming elections. The self-restraint and accommodation exhibited with regard to certain opposition groups, and their subsequent decision to eschew violence and participate in the political process, showed that peaceful political alternatives were always available.

At the same time, it was a fact that political opinion remained very polarized, he continued. Along with the general insistence that elections be held as scheduled, there had been calls from some quarters for the boycott of elections. Others had called for the postponement of elections to allow time and reconciliation efforts to heal the wounds of recent events. It was imperative that every effort be made to promote dialogue, compromise and reconciliation among all Iraqis in order to bring about a more secure environment. Otherwise, there was a real danger that the political transition process would be impeded, rather than facilitated.

A successful transition would also be facilitated through sustained regional and international engagement with the Interim Government and with representatives of the spectrum of Iraqi civil and political opinion. The Sharm El Sheikh Conference in November had brought together key regional and international actors and the subsequent meeting of regional interior ministers in Tehran had built on the consensus reached at Sharm El Sheikh. The Sharm El Sheikh and Tehran communiqués should help to bring about a conducive regional environment for Iraq's transition. Political outreach efforts inside Iraq, as well as growing regional cooperation with respect to Iraq, offered the best prospect for an improved political and security environment and a successful transition in Iraq, he said.

He was optimistic that the Interim Government and the people of Iraq were willing and able to successfully negotiate the transition to a united, democratic and prosperous Iraq. Despite its current problems, Iraq possessed the human and material capital to rebuild itself. Moreover, the international community's support to Iraq's political and economic reconstruction was reaffirmed in October at the Tokyo meeting of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility. The Paris Club had decided to significantly reduce Iraq's external debt burden, and it was hoped that other creditor nations would follow suit.

Substantial resources had been used to mitigate emergency and rehabilitation needs, as well as to support the work of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, he said. Additional economic support could be expected as Iraq succeeded in advancing its political transition. Iraq's potential remained its surest hope of success. That was why the United Nations was in Iraq, despite many constraints.

The next year would see many challenges and opportunities, namely the election of a Transitional National Assembly, a constitutional referendum and general elections under the new constitution, he said. It would be all the more important to have wider and deeper consensus in the international community, particularly in the Council, in support of the Secretary-General's efforts and UNAMI to implement the mandate under resolution 1546 to the fullest extent possible, as circumstances permitted. He and the Secretary-General remained committed to doing their utmost to help promote peace, stability and development in a unified Iraq.

#### Briefing by United States

Updating the situation on behalf of the multinational force in Iraq, JOHN DANFORTH (United States) said that, while the security situation remained difficult, the increase in United Nations staff and support was essential to Iraq's political transition process. The United Nations' presence was critically

important to successful elections next 30 January and beyond, and to economic development and reconstruction.

He said that the multinational force of more than 150,000 troops and support personnel from more than 30 countries remained in place at the invitation of the Iraqi Government, with the goal of contributing to security and stability and assisting the Iraqis in building a democracy. The multinational force, in conjunction with the Iraqi Government and international and national non-governmental organizations, provided extensive humanitarian assistance and highly specialized reconstruction resources. Of course, the force worked aggressively to isolate and neutralize those who threatened the security of the Iraqi people. Members of the force continued to work bravely and tirelessly alongside their Iraqi counterparts to combat terrorism, destroy weapons that threatened Iraq's stability, gather intelligence, and wage combat operations against insurgents and terrorists.

While the opponents of peace and security were tenacious, the multinational force had made progress that would allow for free and fair elections and a transition to democracy, he stressed. The force units devoted to reconstruction and public welfare repaired bridges, ports, roads and railroads. They constructed and repaired schools, hospitals, post offices, and other public buildings throughout the country. They provided medical treatment and vaccinations for civilians. The force unit devoted to security had continued to dispose of thousands of tons of ammunition and mines that could otherwise be used by insurgents to destabilize the Government.

He said that Security Council resolution 1546 welcomed ongoing efforts by the Interim Iraqi Government to develop its own security forces. The multinational force was helping to build that capacity through recruiting, training, equipping and mentoring Iraqi security forces. The Iraqi forces, which included the police, border enforcement officers, army, national guard, intervention force, special operations force, air force and coastal defence force, currently numbered roughly 116,240 trained and equipped people — almost three times the number of troops from the last reporting period. While the trends were positive, much work remained before Iraq's forces could take full responsibility for security.

Until Iraqi forces were fully trained and operational, and insurgents ceased terrorizing the country, security would remain a serious concern, he stressed. In the months since his last report to the Council, there had been significant attacks against the multinational force and the Iraqi people with small arms and rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and explosive devices. Insurgents had attacked Iraqis who worked for their Government, as well as workers from outside the country, in efforts to disrupt the country's rebuilding.

He said that the multinational force understood United Nations concerns about the safety of its brave and dedicated people, and was committed to providing security for the growing United Nations staff in Iraq. As security was provided, he urged the United Nations to put additional personnel on the ground. "Additional United Nations support was essential to the future of Iraq, and especially to the success of next month's elections", he said.

Resolution 1546 had authorized a distinct entity to provide security for United Nations personnel in Iraq, he recalled. In its absence, United States troops had done that work. He had been encouraged that several governments had recently confirmed their intent to contribute to the distinct security entity authorized by the resolution, and he was hopeful that that group would be operational by January 2005 in time for the elections. Also, the United Nations was taking important steps to provide for its own security by including a substantial formed guard unit and personal security details for its personnel. Security for the United Nations in Iraq would be a key issue for some time, and he urged donors, in the strongest possible terms, to step forward with donations of forces and finances.

He said it was with great hope that he anticipated Iraq's elections on 30 January. Those elections would not be the end of a process but, rather, a beginning — an important step in the development of a democratic nation. With perseverance, a steadfast commitment to the effort and a strong partnership of the

Iraqi people, the multinational force and the United Nations, a free and democratic Iraq would emerge from the tyranny and terrorism that had plagued the country for so long. That day would be a great one for Iraq, for the United Nations, and for the world.

#### Statement by Iraq

SAMIR SUMAIDA'IE (Iraq) said the Secretary-General had presented a comprehensive report on the situation in Iraq and on the United Nations involvement in it. On the whole, it represented a fair evaluation and contained a welcome reaffirmation of values and goals set out in resolution 1546 and more recently by the Sharm El Sheikh Conference. While he agreed with most of the report, some parts required reflection.

He said few issues before Iraq loomed larger than the upcoming elections set for 30 January 2005. The Transitional Administrative Law set out a process designed to lead up to a system of democratic government with checks and balances, such as Iraq had not previously known. The elections were a key step in that process. The *raison d'être* of the Interim Government was to guide Iraq through that stage of the political process and assure the holding of elections. In the next stage, an Iraqi Transitional Government would draft a permanent constitution and oversee the first elections pursuant to that constitution by 15 December 2005, with a new government assuming office by the end of 2005. While that was an ambitious schedule, Iraqis needed a return to normality as soon as possible.

He said that, while his Government was obviously fully aware of and preoccupied with the current security situation, it believed that it had a legal and political obligation to the people of Iraq, an obligation it intended to discharge, to the extent possible, on time. The Transitional Administrative Law and resolution 1546 stipulated the timetable for elections, and the great majority of the Iraqi people wanted and expected them to take place as planned. To postpone them might be seen as giving in to the terrorists, whose goal was to wreck the political process and prevent elections from ever taking place. The Secretary-General's report referred to those who had called for a boycott of elections, which underlined the urgent need to promote consensus on the important issue.

He said that one might have the impression that those who were calling for boycotting the elections were of similar weight to those who wanted to participate. That was far from the case. Also, if consensus meant unanimity, then an impossible task was being set up. He was fully aware of the need for national reconciliation, which would be vigorously pursued. There were indeed some groups and individuals who had arrogated to themselves the right to speak on behalf of whole communities in Iraq. Yet, there was no reason to suppose that they spoke for any sizeable contingents of Iraqis. They were entitled to their views, of course, and as long as they did not resort to violence to enforce them. They were encouraged to take part in the political process.

He said there was no reason to believe that those calling for a boycott would be headed by any sizeable segment of the population. Boycotts had failed in other countries transitioning to democracy, and Iraq was unlikely to be an exception. Given the opportunity, Iraqis would turn out in large numbers to participate in the first elections of their lives.

Any risk to the election and its credibility and inclusiveness was likely to come, not so much from a boycott, but from the campaign of violence and intimidation, he said. That had been directed at the general population, in order to thwart the elections. The Government was doing its utmost to combat that and reduce the effects of that "campaign of terror" to a minimum, while safeguarding the rights of all citizens to express their will freely, for which it would need continued help from all concerned, including Iraq's neighbours.

He said that the report before the Council noted that the security situation had deteriorated in some places in the country, although it also noted that, in most areas, there was relative calm. It indirectly criticized the use of force to dislodge terrorists in Falluja, yet it offered no alternative which had not already

been tried for months, to no avail. The report noted and commended the Interim Government for its efforts in reaching out and engaging groups willing to talk. Despite all such efforts, however, he had witnessed increased audacity and brutality in targeting Iraqi children, women and men for wholesale massacre.

The Interim Government had concluded that those responsible for the atrocities were not interested in negotiating, and those who were in dialogue with the Government were incapable of delivering an end to the violence, he said. The Government's strategy, therefore, had to be to deprive terrorists, bent on destroying the transition process, of safe havens in Iraq. No responsible government could do anything else.

He said that the discoveries made in Falluja during recent military action had vindicated the Interim Government, which had found no fewer than 203 major weapons caches, 11 factories for improvised explosive devices, and three slaughter houses for captives and hostages. Was the Government supposed to stand by while Falluja's inhabitants, foreign aid workers, and the rest of the Iraqi people were terrorized and murdered? he asked. Without law and order there could be no government, and without government, only chaos and more misery would ensue. (He offered the Council an opportunity to make copies of a map containing detailed photographs of those findings).

Further vindication of the Government's firm policy had been the encouraging result of its intervention in Najaf earlier this year, he noted. Much to the relief of the inhabitants of Najaf and Sadr city, there was now general calm and programmes for reconstruction, which involved the communities themselves. Evidence of that had been referred to in the report itself.

Meanwhile, he said, using large-scale military force in any city was not a preferred option by any responsible, compassionate government. That was a duty, however, if that was the only way to save a whole nation from greater suffering and to secure its future.

Concerning United Nations participation in elections preparations, he said he welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to increase the number of election workers in Iraq, but the increase was still not enough, and he was concerned that that shortfall might adversely affect election preparedness. He wondered how the United Nations could play the "leading role" mandated by resolution 1546 if it remained largely insulated from the people. The phrase "as circumstances permit" should not become a mantra, repeated to justify insufficient presence on the ground in Iraq.

He said there was broad agreement with the report, and he had greatly appreciated the effort of the Secretary-General and his colleagues to help Iraq. As the report stated, "A mutually reinforcing dynamic between a credible political process and an improving security situation offered the best hope for achieving the goal of a stable, durable and democratic transition". He totally agreed and would add a third factor, namely, resuscitating the economy. In all of that, the help of the United Nations and the international community was indispensable.

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