

Question for the Record—
“Examining Recommendations for Improvements to Iraq’s Justice System”

Senator Specter

1. Recommendation 59 from the Iraq Study Group stated that “The Iraqi government should provide funds to expand and upgrade communications equipment and motor vehicles for the Iraqi Police Service.”

One of the essential elements of the telecommunications build-out undertaken by the Ministry of Communications under the Coalition Provisional Authority was emergency police communications to include, in effect, a nation-wide first responder network. A Bearing Point audit, completed in April, 2004, revealed that approximately \$435 million dollars went unaccounted for in the Ministry of Communications. (See attached Bearing Point Memorandum to the Record, dated April 13, 2004) Now, three years later, such a nation-wide first responder network capability is still not a reality. In your judgment, how can Recommendation 59 be implemented in a manner that guarantees against such impenetrable losses?

Answer (by Mr. Hamilton): The Study Group was aware of the findings of the Government Accountability Office, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, and many others with respect to the poor financial controls and the lack of accountability for use of funds provided to Iraq by the American taxpayer.

In addition, the Study Group was aware of the large budget surpluses in Iraq, because of the government’s inability to execute capital budget investment plans.

For this reason, the Study Group recommended that the Iraqis should spend their own money to upgrade the communications equipment and motor vehicles of the Iraqi Police Service.

The Study Group also stated (p.86) that “building the capacity of the Iraqi government should be at the heart of U.S. reconstruction

efforts,” and added that “the Iraqi government needs help with all aspects of its operations, including...better internal controls.”

In short, the Study Group believes the Iraqis need to spend their own money, and U.S. technical assistance to the Interior Ministry can help Iraqis spend their money more wisely.