

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2011 1:35 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: Camp Ashraf meeting readout

From: Mull, Stephen D
Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2011 1:30 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: FW: Camp Ashraf meeting readout

Discouraging news from Iraq...

From: Spande, Jennifer S
Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2011 11:35 AM
To: SES_DutyDeputies
Cc: SES-O_SWO
Subject: Camp Ashraf meeting readout

Ambassador Mull—

Please see below an email from Baghdad Pol-Mil Counselor David Lindwall summarizing today's 2½ hour Kobler-Maliki meeting on Camp Ashraf. Kobler described the meeting as "surreal" and said that it appeared that National Security Advisor Al Fayyad had not been briefing Prime Minister Maliki about negotiations, as Maliki seemed completely unaware of many aspects of the proposed MOU. Maliki initially rejected the proposed plan and demanded instead that Ashraf residents leave Iraq entirely or be arrested by the Iraqi police, though by the end of the meeting, Kobler convinced Maliki to speak with Fayyad and give the plan a second look. Kobler plans to write Maliki a letter asking that the UN have several additional months to reach a satisfactory agreement and implement the move.

Regards,

Jennifer

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Bottom line up front: In today's 2 ½ hour meeting with Kobler, Maliki claimed to be completely uninformed about the UN-GOI MOU regarding Ashraf and disagreed with many of the fundamental assumptions. Maliki wants all Ashraf residents out of Iraq, not at Camp Liberty. By the end of the meeting, Kobler had convinced him to give the process that had been agreed to by Fayyad a second look, and Kobler is going to make some revisions to the MOU. Kobler is writing Maliki a letter arguing that it is now too late to implement this plan before the end of the year and the GOI must give him time. Kobler has cancelled his plans to spend Christmas away from Iraq.

Kobler described the two and a half hour meeting with Maliki this afternoon as "surreal," and even wondered if Maliki had been drinking. He said Maliki was totally unaware that UNAMI was negotiating a MOU with Fayyad and was taken aback by its terms. He had never heard of Camp Liberty and expressed complete disagreement with creating a second Camp Ashraf, while still keeping the original one open (at least provisionally). He said he expected the UN to move the Ashraf residents out of Iraq, not just out of Ashraf. When Kobler asked him where Maliki proposed the Ashraf residents go to, Maliki responded he could take them "to the UN." When Kobler walked Maliki through the terms of the MOU,

Maliki became indignant, shouting several times. He said "these are criminals and terrorists" and should not be "coddled" as outlined in the MOU. When Kobler said he had agreed with Fayyad that the GOI would sign this MOU with him today, Maliki could not understand why the GOI should sign anything.

Maliki said he was prepared to give the Ashraf residents a few more months in Iraq but wanted Kobler's guarantee that in six months they would all be out of Iraq. Kobler said he could not give Maliki that guarantee. Furthermore, he couldn't even guarantee that the Ashraf residents would accept this process. Maliki asked why the Ashraf residents had to leave Ashraf for Camp Liberty, and Kobler said that the UN prefers that they not leave Ashraf and that the UNHCR processing take place at Ashraf, but that the GOI negotiators had told them that would not be possible. Maliki argued that the MEK will not allow UNHCR into Camp Ashraf, and Kobler corrected him noting that it was the GOI that forbid UNHCR from visiting the Camp. When Kobler suggested that the best option would be to keep the residents at Camp Ashraf at least through the phase where they are being processed for refugee status, Maliki said that was unacceptable. Kobler said he felt that he was really back at square one and that Al Fayyad had not been briefing Maliki on his talks with UNAMI on Ashraf. Kobler asked Maliki what the alternative is if the MOU is not signed and the UNAMI resettlement plan doesn't proceed. Maliki said we would arrest all the Ashraf residents and spread them out to the different prisons. Kobler said that would result in violence. Maliki retorted that his police would go into Ashraf unarmed.

By the end of two and a half hours Kobler had convinced Maliki to speak with Fayyad and give the plan a second look. Maliki proposed some changes that Kobler is going to incorporate. Kobler is still waiting for UN Headquarters authorization to sign, so he will send the revised text back to New York and will try to talk with Fayyad. Fayyad has not returned his calls for several days now.

Next steps: Kobler cancelled his vacation and will be staying in Baghdad. He turned off the UN monitors who were supposed to fly in to Baghdad in 48 hours. He will edit the MOU and shop it back to UN HQ and to Fayyad. He is also writing a letter tonight to Maliki explaining that it is now too late to renegotiate the MOU and set up the logistical steps needed to begin moving Ashraf residents out of the camp before the end of the year. On top of that, the recent deterioration of the security environment makes a large move like the 400-person moves envisioned in the MOU unsafe. He will argue that Maliki must give the UN several months into 2012 to reach a satisfactory agreement with the GOI and the Ashraf residents and begin the move.

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