

L. Paul Bremer
Remarks
Opening of the
Council for International Coordination
17 August 2003

Thank you, Ambassador Belka for your introduction and for your service as Chairman of the Council for International Coordination.

It is a pleasure to speak to the representatives of Poland, Australia, Italy, Denmark, the Czech Republic, the United States, South Korea, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Jordan and Romania as well as an observer from the United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq.

Before discussing the Council's role in the reconstruction of Iraq, I want to spend a moment on the political situation. I do this because I believe that economic assistance which takes not account of the political system into which it is injected will seldom

have a lasting effect. I am sure many of your own experiences have led you to the same conclusions.

Iraq is well on the way to a democratic, constitutional government. The 25-member Governing Council, which is broadly representative of Iraqi society, takes as its primary duty the creation of a legitimate, constitutional government here. To that end, they have named a Preparatory Committee which will report back to them next month with recommendations on the mechanism needed to draft Iraq's constitution.

That constitution, which will be written by and for Iraqis, will then be voted on by the Iraqi people. This will be the first time in the history of Iraq that its people have had a chance to vote on their form of government.

How long with this take?

I really cannot say. I have publicly stated that I think such a process could be completed in six or seven

months. But that is my estimate, not my order, not my prediction. It is not my job to define the process. It is not my job to write the constitution. In order for there to be an *Iraqi* constitution, it must be created by *Iraqis* in a context that reflects the *Iraqi* national experience and *Iraqi* perceptions.

With a constitution in place, elections can take place and the winners of those elections can be sworn into office as legitimate leaders of a constitutional government. At that point all attributes of sovereignty belong to the new government and the Coalition Provisional Authority ceases to exist.

One of the additional duties of the Governing Council is the appointment of interim ministers. These ministers are taking over ministries which are coming back to life. For example, as we speak the ministries are working to meet an August 25 deadline for completing their 2004 budgets.

The imminent presentation of these budgets highlights critical role the Council for International Coordination plays in revitalizing Iraq.

This Council, reviews and reconciles needs information from the ministry budgets, the forthcoming UN and World Bank needs assessments and consultations with NGO. From these multiple sources of information the Council will prepare a catalog of needs and, in cooperation with the Iraqis, present that catalog to potential donors through all appropriate means and channels.

All this leads up to the Donors' Conference in Madrid on 23 and 24 October. It is important that we all understand that the Donors' Conference is not the beginning of the process. The Donors should come to Madrid with commitments in hand. The Conference is for last-minute coordination and announcement.

This Council's job does not end with Madrid. Given the Iraq's vast needs, there is a likely need for more than one tranche of donations and for a wider pool of donors.

This Council is well-suited to accomplish both tasks.

Nor should the Council necessarily disappear with the Coalition Provisional Authority. Should the new Iraqi government wish it, I believe the Council could prove valuable for coordinating continuing assistance to a sovereign Iraq.

I commend you and the governments you recommend for your support to the people of Iraq and to the democratic institutions they are creating.

Thank you very much.