

But if you look at the polls, and polling is still primitive here, poll after poll you'll find 85 percent say we want democracy right away or we want democracy. They say democracy means, interestingly, not just majority rule but protecting minority rights. The polls show for things like freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, you will find over 90 percent in one poll we have supporting those things.

So if you think of democracy in terms of the fundamental rights that democracy protects, there's quite a strong understanding of that. I think in accordance again with the outline of the November 15th agreement, we'll find a strong bill of rights, as we would call it, written into this transitional law that shows there's a real understanding of these elements of democracy. They haven't experienced it but they understand the elements.

Q: What did you and the Secretary discuss? Essentially what were your conversations and your briefings centered around?

Bremer: We talked about what you would expect us to talk about -- the security situation. But we spent a fair amount of time talking about the transition from the Coalition Provisional Authority into a U.S. mission, what will be the largest U.S. mission in the world and how to go about making that a smooth transition so it's not just a sudden thing that happens from one day to the next. You guys cover the Pentagon so you're familiar with the term right cheek, left cheek. We're going to start. We've already started transforming elements of the Coalition Provisional Authority into elements that will become part of the U.S. mission. We spent a fair amount of time on the sort of bureaucracies of that.

Q: On the security architecture, the \$3 billion plus for security, are you thinking now about moving some of those resources around to put more into the ICDC, perhaps less into the Iraqi Army? Just share with us your thinking on that.

Bremer: Yes. We've already made several reprogramming decisions. The security supplemental covers a variety of forces. It covers the Army, the Civil Defense Force, the police, and border security. We've already shifted some funds around in various places.

The net effect of it is to allow us to pay for the 36 battalions of the ICDC that we would like to have stood up by the middle of April, and I think in the end we probably will find we're going to need to spend a little bit more on the border police but we haven't reached any conclusions there. But we can move funds around as long as we meet the congressional requirements for notification. We'll do that.

Q: And is there an impact on the immediate size and direction for the Iraqi Army, or will that be unaffected?

Bremer: We're still planning to have an army of 27 battalions by September. It could affect the rate at which they buy equipment if we have to reprogram funds, but we're still counting on an army of 27 battalions. Twenty-four to 27. In that range. It doesn't affect --

Q: How many people is that?

Bremer: I think that's slated in those battalions at about 35,000, but you ought to get those details from Larry. Larry may know. I think it's 35,000.

Q: Ambassador Bremer, I know you are working with Secretary General Kofi Annan's recommendations, but still since you have the primary responsibility for it do you have any parameters in your own mind about what mechanism there ought to be now to approach the caucuses? What might be not acceptable to you, what you would rule out? What are your parameters on all this?

Bremer: We basically are, as you said, we're waiting to hear from the Secretary General and we hope to hear