

in the next few days. We're not in the habit of ruling things in or out at this point. What we want to do is hear what their suggestions are.

The impression, the statement that Lakhdar Brahimi made was clear that elections are not possible by June, so the question then is how do we select a transitional government by June. There are literally dozens of different ways to do this. They're all complicated. There's no easy way. Caucuses are complicated. There are cascading caucuses, there are upward cascading caucuses, there are downward cascading caucuses, sideways caucuses, elections, partial elections, elections with caucuses. I've seen at least two dozen different ideas all of which have been presented at various times to the United Nations by us, by NGOs. Let's wait and see what they say and then we'll react.

Q: Do you think it's feasible to look at the notion of an expanded Governing Council here? Would that get public support as a mechanism?

Bremer: That's one of the many ideas that is around, and again, I just think it's -- you're asking me to speculate on a hypothetical. We're waiting to see what the advice is of the U.N. The Governing Council is waiting. Once we get that advice we'll consider it and talk to the Governing Council and we'll reach some conclusions as to how to go forward.

Q: You talked about the security situation with Secretary Rumsfeld, you're halfway through this changeover in troops and it doesn't sound like you've had a lot of attacks on the troops that are rotating either in or out. Can you talk a little bit about the security situation and how that has changed in the recent months.

Bremer: I think the most important -- There are two trends to point to. The arrest of Saddam Hussein had a beneficial impact on us because we got important intelligence as a result of that arrest about two things. About the organization of the insurgency, how is it actually wired together, and about its financing. And both of those tracks have allowed us to conduct much more precise, targeted actions by our forces, and we have as a result disrupted a lot of insurgent activities, we've captured a number of high value detainees, or high value targets. The more important impact has been I think on the psychological side which is that we're finding a lot of people who are fence-sitters have sort of said, they sort of said they don't want to be in the insurgency anymore. One of two things is happening. They're turning themselves in. We've had major generals come and turn themselves in. Or they are giving us information about the bad guys. They may have been afraid to do that while Saddam was still around. It is quite amazing how the fear of Saddam while he was still at large impacted on people. I've had a number of Iraqis tell me that they really felt liberated on December 13th when they knew he finally was captured. We've seen a lot of intelligence come in.

The second security problem is the, now it's quite clear in the last few months that we've seen a real step-up on the part of these professional terrorists from al Qaeda and Ansar Al Islam conducting suicide attacks. We had another one today in Kirkuk. I don't know whether, we don't have enough information yet. It certainly is the same method of operation we've seen before. The same MO, and it certainly suggests that these terrorists are targeting the Iraqi security forces because as the Zarkawi letter makes clear, that's one of his prime targets. He wants to stop the Iraqis from being responsible for their own security, and of course that's one of our main objectives.

Q: Are you in your office planning on developing a Status of Forces Agreement that will allow for a continued U.S. military presence here after the transfer of political power?

Bremer: The whole question of what kind of arrangements there will be is still to be discussed. The general political context is the following. On June 30th the occupation will end when we pass sovereignty from this office back to an Iraqi government, whatever it turns out to be.

At that moment the occupation ends we have a sovereign Iraqi government in place. It is clear that no matter