

## **U.S. threatens to halt services to Iraq without troop accord**

by Roy Gutman and Leila Fadel via reed - McClatchy Newspapers Monday, Oct 27 2008, 11:19pm  
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### **But blackmail tends to backfire!**

*[The latest hair-brain tactic of the US mass murdering military is to threaten the cessation of services to Iraq by January 1st, if the Iraqi puppet government does not comply with US DEMANDS, brilliant! China and Russia are waiting patiently in the wings for an invitation to do business in a civilised manner. Neither superpower feels the need to murder over one million INNOCENT civilians in order to develop Iraq's valuable resources. By all means, yankee doodle moron, CEASE ALL SERVICES AND FUCK OFF!]*

BAGHDAD -- The U.S. military has warned Iraq that it will shut down military operations and other vital services throughout the country on Jan. 1 if the Iraqi government doesn't agree to a new agreement on the status of U.S. forces or a renewed United Nations mandate for the American mission in Iraq.

Many Iraqi politicians view the move as akin to political blackmail, a top Iraqi official told McClatchy Sunday.

In addition to halting all military actions, U.S. forces would cease activities that support Iraq's economy, educational sector and other areas -- "everything" -- said Tariq al Hashimi, the country's Sunni Muslim vice president. "I didn't know the Americans are rendering such wide-scale services."

Hashimi said that Army Gen. Ray Odierno, the top U.S. military commander in Iraq, listed "tens" of areas of potential cutoffs in a three-page letter, and he said the implied threat caught Iraqi leaders by surprise.

"It was really shocking for us," he said. "Many people are looking to this attitude as a matter of blackmailing."

Odierno had no comment Sunday, but U.S. Embassy officials told McClatchy that a lengthy list of the sort Hashimi described has been passed to the Iraqi government. Among the services the U.S. provides are protection of Iraq's principal borders, of its oil exports and other shipping through the Shatt al Arab into the Persian Gulf and all air traffic control over Iraq.

The status of forces agreement, which calls for a final withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq by the end of 2011, was supposed to resolve a number of contentious issues between the two countries, but its completion 10 days ago has instead provoked a political crisis within Iraq's Shiite-dominated government and between Iraq and the United States.

Fearing a major battle in the Iraqi parliament, Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki solicited proposed amendments from his cabinet and called a meeting to review them Sunday afternoon.

However, the two main Shiite parties, Maliki's Dawa party and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, were unable to produce their full lists of demands, and he postponed the meeting until Tuesday, other cabinet members said.

Hashimi said that Iran, a longtime backer of both parties, is pressuring Iraq's leaders not to accept the agreement.

The dispute "is real and factual. The government is not manipulating this dispute," Hashimi said. He said he hadn't yet seen the objections to the accord, even those from his own Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party.

Political party heads, including Hashimi, say that Maliki is responsible for the agreement, but Maliki has been unwilling to back the accord unless his Shiite coalition and other party members join him to take the political heat.

An additional complication is the decision of Hashimi's Iraqi Islamic party to suspend all "official communication" with U.S. military and civilian officials until it receives an explanation and an apology following a joint U.S.-Iraqi military raid against party backers in Anbar province in which one man was killed.

It's unclear what will happen when the Iraqi cabinet offers a list of proposed changes and Maliki winnows them down to proposed amendments.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates has said, "I don't think you slam the door shut" on amendments, but Hashimi said the U.S. is "adamant in saying, 'We close the door, we are not accepting any sort of amendment.' "

He said that if the United States met Iraq halfway and accepted amendments to the controversial articles of the accord, it would make it "rather easy" to submit the agreement to the parliament.

The alternative to a new agreement governing U.S. forces, an Iraqi request to the U.N. Security Council to extend the U.N. mandate, which now expires on Dec. 31, is also highly contentious.

One of the biggest concessions Iraq won from Washington in the negotiations over the forces accord was a stipulation that private contractors such as Blackwater that have been accused of killing Iraqi civilians would become subject to Iraqi law.

Immunity from prosecution for private contractors and for all official U.S. entities under Iraqi law was promulgated by the U.S. occupation government in June 2004, and ending that order is the subject of another confrontation between Iraq and the United States, Hashimi said. He said the United States insists that it would reject any Iraqi request to change the mandate.

Ironically, Iraqi politicians of practically every stripe agree that the proposed agreement would be a major advance toward restoring Iraq's full sovereignty and a vast improvement over the initial U.S. proposal made last spring.

He credited President Bush with changing the U.S. position as a result of twice-weekly conference calls with Maliki.

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