



***State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Subcommittee Hearings***

March 13, 2014

FY15 Department of State Budget Request



Witness:

Secretary of State, John Kerry



Senator Blunt: ... could you comment a little bit on what plans we might have for the disposition of the roughly 3000 Iranian dissidents at Camp Liberty in Iraq, and whether our allies, others in the world, are willing to take some of these people, and whether we are? Could you give me a sense of that...



Secretary Kerry: Yes, I have appointed a special advisor, a special envoy, very qualified lawyer, who is really tackling this on a day to day basis, with exceptional energy and focus. We have been able to place, I think it is about 300 or so; The Albanians have graciously agreed to accept some. One of the things we found .. our goal is to get all 3000 out of there, camp Hurriya, we really want to get them out of there. We know they are at risk. We know there are dangers, and we are trying to find the countries that are willing to do this. It is tough

negotiation. Frankly it would be greatly assisted by our ability to make a determination about how many we are going to take. and that is where our focus is right now, we are making an analysis of that, and some judgments and the sooner we can get that concluded and moving, I think the better opportunity we are gonna have to get people relocated elsewhere.

We have had some problems incidentally, in the beginning when I first came in, I learned that there were some problems internally in the camp, in the administrative process and the willingness of the people to submit interviews, and. you know I think that has been resolved but we have had a lot of difficulties in being able to really get the population properly vetted and defined, so we know who might be able to go where and what appropriate accommodations could be made.

Senator Blunt: It is my view that time is not our friend there ... (Kerry: agree) ... at the camp, would you agree with that?

Secretary Kerry: I totally agree with that.

Senator Blunt: Whatever I can do to be helpful, and whatever I can do to encourage your efforts to find places for these people to go, while they can still hopefully get there would be very important.

Secretary Kerry: Absolutely.