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## **IACA-MO: Senate Briefing Urges Policy Change on Iraq, Resettlement of Camp Liberty Residents to U.S.**

WASHINGTON, July 28, 2014 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Several senior former officials and a U.S. senator strongly condemned the Iranian regime's destructive role in Iraq at a senate briefing at Capitol Hill, entitled "Tumult in Iraq: Maliki's Role and Iran's Nefarious Influence."

Speakers said Tehran and its ally in Baghdad, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, are not part of the solution for Iraq. They also called for the urgent transfer of exiled Iranian opposition members at Camp Liberty, whose lives are in serious danger as Iraq drifts further into conflict.

Armed Services and Appropriation committees member Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO), former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, former Democratic National Committee Chair and Vermont Governor Howard Dean, former State Department Policy Planning director Ambassador Mitchell Reiss, prominent author and Middle East expert Dr. Walid Phares, and former Senior Antiterrorism/Force Protection Officer, Coalition Forces - Iraq, Retired Col. Wes Martin addressed the briefing.

Senator Blunt referred to a letter he and colleagues Carl Levin (D-MI), John McCain (R-AZ), and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) had recently sent to Secretary of State John Kerry to "press for the protection of Camp Liberty and to expedite the resettlement of the Camp Residents to countries outside Iraq, including the United States."

"We made a commitment. And in a democracy ... it is unbelievably important to do what you say you're going to do," Senator Blunt added, referring to the U.S. government's written promises of protection to Camp Liberty residents.

Governor Dean said if President Obama fails to protect members of the main opposition Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), he "will forever be the president who allowed 2,800 unarmed civilians to be killed on your watch."

Secretary Ridge described Maliki as the "Prime Minister of the green zone," and urged Congress to "be more vocal" and "call for Maliki's ousting."

Colonel Martin noted, "We have constantly pointed out to our government, Nouri al-Maliki is not a good person. ... He's a puppet of the Iranian government."

Drawing on decades of research, Dr. Phares dissected Tehran's designs for the region: "Iraq happens to be the basis of [Tehran's] strategic regional outlook. Iraq is vital for the Iranian regime to reach Syria. And Syria is vital to reach Lebanon and Hezbollah." To protect its expansionist policies, the regime needs the umbrella of a nuclear weapon, he added.

"We have learned over the years that only a strong organized, centralized, multiethnic, pluralistic opposition can be the deterrence and the reversal of the Iranian regime. There are no other alternatives. ... that is crucial to the understanding of why Tehran wants the head of the [opposition] MEK," Dr. Phares added.

Ambassador Reiss called on the U.S. government to find a safe haven for "the brave men and women" of Camp Liberty, and said, "President Bill Clinton wrote in his memoirs that his single largest regret when he was president was his unwillingness to move quickly to stop the slaughter in Rwanda," We hope the same fate will not await President Obama, he concluded.