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INSPECTOR GENERAL INTRODUCES IRAQI COUNTERPART TO DCIE AS A “FELLOW CHAMPION OF INTEGRITY”

Remarks as delivered by Department of Defense Inspector General Joseph E. Schmitz to the Defense Council on Integrity and Efficiency, July 14, 2005.

At the beginning of these monthly meetings [of the Defense Council on Integrity and Efficiency], I usually start by summarizing the monthly meeting of the President’s Council on Integrity & Efficiency (PCIE). Today, I have brought with me in person the “main event” of this week’s PCIE meeting – Ms. Layla Jassim al-Mokhtar, the Iraqi Ministry of Defense Inspector General.

Ambassador Jerry Bremer appointed Layla Jassim al-Mokhtar as Inspector General of the new Iraqi Ministry of Defense in May 2004, as the last of 29 IGs for every Ministry in Baghdad. The Iraqi IG System is one three Iraqi anti-corruption pillars, and is built upon the American IG Act; the other two pillars are the Commission on Public Integrity and the Board of Supreme Audit.

The month after her appointment, I visited in Baghdad with Inspector General al-Mokhtar, along with her fellow Iraqi Champions of Integrity-in-training -- just before the transfer of sovereignty. Two days ago, following an introduction by Ambassador Bremer, Inspector General al-Mokhtar presented an inspiring speech to the President’s Council on Integrity & Efficiency.

Today, she has agreed to share her experience, vision, and message of hope with each of us who serves as a Champion of Integrity in this Department of Defense. She has also courageously allowed herself to be videotaped, with the idea that some or all of her speech might subsequently be transmitted as a message of hope for the Iraqi people.

Aside from more than 20 years experience as an auditor, at a personal level shares something in common with many of us. She hails from an

Army family (her father was an Army Engineer; and both of her grandfathers were Knights of the Ottoman Empire).

I will not belabor my introduction except to repeat three things Ambassador Bremer mentioned Tuesday, three elements of hope that Layla Jassim al-Mokhtar represents for the Iraqi people:

- A combination of competence and courage;
- A commitment to fight corruption; and
- A positive role for women in Iraqi society.

Please join me in welcoming the “Engine for Positive Change” for the new Iraqi Ministry of Defense, our fellow Champion of Integrity: Inspector General Layla Jassim al-Mokhtar.