



Fox & Friends

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Steve Doocy: Joining us from DC is Fox's foreign affairs analyst and President of Strategic Policy Consulting, Alireza Jafarzadeh. Good morning to you, Alireza.



Alireza Jafarzadeh: Good morning, Steve.

Steve Doocy: So it's 7 minutes before 7 Eastern Time. If people are just getting up, the big news is that they jumped the gun; Iraq officially a sovereign nation two days ahead of time. How would you characterize this because we've been talking about this strategically how brilliant it is on many different levels but that's just our perspective, what do you think?

Alireza Jafarzadeh: I think this was brilliant, this was a great move, a very smart move on the part of the coalition, or whoever made the decision. I think this would definitely pre-empt any possible efforts or big plans, if you will, that the Islamic extremists and terrorists might have had. It would also be received very well at the NATO Summit. So it's basically hitting two birds with one stone.

Steve Doocy: Right. Of course, officially the transfer of power happened at 2:26 am Eastern Standard Time and Alireza, we understand in just about 6 or 7 minutes they should have the ministerial swear in. We've got live pictures of an empty chair in downtown Baghdad and we're going to see the apparently the Prime Minister sworn in by

the Chief Justice and then the ministers are going to be sworn in by the Prime Minister, so really the Iraqis are running the show now?

Alireza Jafarzadeh: They are, and I think it's now the opportunity and the time for Prime Minister Alawi and his ministers to really be able to address the most serious and significant issues that are facing the Iraqis now, and obviously the number one issue is the security, and Gen. Kimmitt said yesterday on Fox News that "it's the security, stupid." And I agree with that. What I think Prime Minister Alawi needs to do, he needs to eliminate the main sources of insecurity, the driving engine which has been for the most part Islamic extremism and that needs to be addressed; otherwise no other issue would be resolved. And I think the Islamic extremists would have a lot more reason to want to attack, it's not going to be an easy ride, there is a bumpy road ahead. They want to make sure that the new government that is taking baby steps, would not get the opportunity to consolidate and I think the Prime Minister will have to focus also on the foreign sources of insecurity that would have more reasons now to step up their attacks; sending arms, money, and agents. Iran has definitely been playing a very very destructive role and they will continue to do so.

Brian Kilmeade: Now Alireza, when you talk about the Iranian government, how are they going to spin that in their news agency and I can imagine the headlines as this: American appointed Prime Minister officially in charge is that correct?

Alireza Jafarzadeh: Well, that has been their line since the past few weeks, ever since the announcement had come. That's definitely going to be their line. They don't feel good about this whole situation; they feel if there is progress in Iraq, that's bad news for them. So their intention is to disrupt this whole process, to do everything possible that would eventually lead to erecting a sister Islamic Republic in Iraq. I mean that is their ideal situation.

Brian Kilmeade: So, what would rattle Iran's cage not to do that?

Alireza Jafarzadeh: I think the new government should really be firm and decisive. They should show them that they are not afraid of them; they will not tolerate such actions from them. The 900 miles of Iran-Iraq border has been extremely porous and has been pretty much wide open; that needs to be strongly controlled, the agents who have been arrested should be punished. The other thing the Prime Minister and the new government need to do: They need to strengthen the position of the voices of moderation and tolerance within the Muslim community and among the Muslims as a counter-balance to the rising threat of Islamic extremism. They need to do anything possible to form a sort of a united front of anti-fundamentalist, modern, democratic Muslims as a counter balance. And I think one way they could effectively do it; is an example that happened two weeks ago. Some 50,000 Iraqi citizens went to the main base of the Iranian opposition in Camp Ashraf about 100 miles north of Baghdad, who are moderate Muslims, who are opposed to Tehran, they are anti-fundamentalists. They joined voices and they spoke with one voice, Iranians and Iraqis, who denounced Iran's terrorism and Islamic extremism by saying that Iraq needs to be free of the influence of the Iranian regime. And that is when Tehran will take you seriously.

Steve Doocy: Alireza, I'm looking at a remote five incoming videos from the NATO summit and good news for the Iraqis out of the NATO summit is that apparently NATO has agreed to train some of the Iraqi security forces. Also apparently incoming video from Istanbul and they have also agreed to boost the Afghan peace keeping force to 10,000 before the elections. Real quickly, NATO's impact on Iraq?

Alireza Jafarzadeh: I think they can really play a constructive role in different ways, certainly by training, but the very fact that you would have the political weight of NATO behind the Iraqi Interim Government is perhaps most important and it would send a strong message to others.

Steve Doocy: All right, Alireza Jafarzadeh. Thanks for joining us.

Alireza Jafarzadeh: Thank you.