



## After Iraqi Trip, Unshaken Resolve

*By Shailagh Murray*  
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CHICAGO - When Rep. Jan Schakowsky made her first trip to Iraq this month, the outspoken antiwar lib

At times that proved a challenge, as when Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih told her congressional d

But the real test came over a lunch with Gen. David H. Petraeus, who used charts and a laser pointer to

Still, the U.S. commander cautioned, it could take another decade before real stability is at hand. Schak

The trip gave Schakowsky a good look at the challenge that Democrats face next month, when Petraeus

The lack of political progress among Iraq's rival factions and Petraeus's estimate of the time needed to s

"This is not the structure that's going to say, 'Why? Why are we here? What are we really accomplishing

The Illinois Democrat recounted her trip from a table in the front window of the Venus Cafe, an Iraqi rest

A co-founder of the House Out of Iraq Caucus, Schakowsky saw only fleeting glimpses of Iraqis' day-to-

But the military presentations left her stunned. Schakowsky said she jotted down Petraeus's words in a s

"I felt that was a stretch and really part of a PR strategy -- just like the PR strategy that initially led up to

As a war opponent, Schakowsky has always taken extra care to do her homework, and she can recite fa

Seated at the Venus, her white notebook in front of her, Schakowsky recounted some of the day's more

She lost track of all the PowerPoint presentations that she and her colleagues sat through -- it was eithe

One pleasant surprise was how much Schakowsky enjoyed the company of her Republican colleagues,

And that's more or less how it unfolded. After the group returned from the trip, which also included visits

But it wasn't just Republicans who came away impressed after visiting Iraq. Rep. Brian Baird (D-Wash.)

Schakowsky acknowledged that the military's presentation may have been effective. "If you took the brie

Schakowsky said she asked U.S. officials about the consequences of withdrawal, and she conceded tha

In the next room, her Iraqi Christian constituents were still waiting. Schakowsky said she didn't respond