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Clinton, in Iraq, Blames 'Rejectionists' for Violence By MARK LANDLER BAGHDAD — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton arrived here Saturday morning for a one-day visit, delivering an American show of support for Iraq as it battles a sudden eruption of violence, in the wake of suicide bombings that killed at least 140 people and wounded several hundred more on Thursday and Friday.

Mrs. Clinton, in her first visit to Baghdad as secretary of state, acknowledged that the attacks were worrisome. She said she would seek a briefing on the security situation from the American military commander, Gen. Ray Odierno, in her first meeting on Saturday, a day packed with appointments.

But she played down suggestions that the attacks augured a return to the relentless sectarian violence that convulsed Iraq in 2006. She said they did not signal that a new jihadist movement was taking root in Iraq, which could derail the progress the country has made in the last two years.

"In Iraq, there will always be political conflicts," Mrs. Clinton said to reporters before setting off on the unannounced visit Friday evening. "But I really believe that Iraq, as a whole, is on the right track."

She characterized the latest bout of violence as the last gasp of "rejectionists" who fear that the government will succeed in creating a united and peaceful Iraq. The suicide bombings, she said, are "in an unfortunately tragic way, a signal that the rejectionists fear that Iraq is going in the right direction."

"Are there going to be bad days? Yes, there are," Mrs. Clinton said. But she added, "If you look at the evidence, overwhelmingly the progress that's been made has been positive."

The Obama administration, she said, was determined to help Iraq achieve "stability, sovereignty, and self-reliance," as the United States prepares to pull out the last of its troops by the end of 2011.

Mrs. Clinton has been a regular visitor here, coming three times as a senator to chart the progress of a war she voted to authorize, but later said had been mismanaged by the Bush administration. She said she was pleased to be back, though the attacks have cast a shadow over her visit.

While the violence is far below the worst levels in 2006, 18 major attacks this month have kindled fears that Baathist and jihadist elements could be reconstituting themselves into a smaller, but still deadly, insurgency that will exploit the withdrawal of American troops between now and 2011.

Mrs. Clinton compared these latest suicide bombings to a spectacular terrorist attack that occurred several months after the Good Friday peace accord ended years of conflict in Northern Ireland.

At times, her analysis almost echoed that of former Vice President Dick Cheney and former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. When the sectarian violence was relentless several years ago, Mr. Cheney spoke of the insurgency being in its "last throes," while Mr. Rumsfeld talked of "dead-enders" who kept fighting a lost cause.

On Friday, Gen. David Petraeus, the head of the military's Central Command, testified before a House appropriations committee that the suicide bombers may have been part of a militant network based in Tunisia. Four of the bombers, he said, were from Tunisia.

Mrs. Clinton said she did not have specific information on the bombers, but said: "We've seen suicide bombers from many countries in Iraq over the last six years. It's unfortunate that young men, and occasionally even a young woman, would travel to Iraq to kill other people in that way."

The violence did not seem to curtail Mrs. Clinton's ambitions for her brief visit. In addition to General Odierno, she was scheduled to meet a retinue of Iraqi leaders, including the president, Jalal Talabani; the prime minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki; and the foreign minister, Hoshiyar Zebari.

She is also playing host at a roundtable of Iraqi women, something she has done in previous trips to Iraq. And she is to hold a town-hall meeting with Iraqi students, as well as members of nongovernmental organizations and provincial reconstruction teams.

This is a format Mrs. Clinton savored as a presidential candidate, and that, as secretary of state, she has used from South Korea to Turkey. "I want to listen," she said, "I want to respond to their questions and concerns. I want some feedback and ideas of about how are we going to make this transition as successful as possible."

When President Obama visited Baghdad earlier this month, dusty skies prevented him from traveling by helicopter from Baghdad International Airport into the city. He met with Mr. Maliki at a palace near the airport and General Odierno at the American base, Camp Victory.

The new American ambassador, Christopher R. Hill, beat Mrs. Clinton to Baghdad by one day. He was confirmed by the Senate on Tuesday after a lengthy process that was held up by Republican senators, who objected to his lack of experience in the Arab world and his handling of negotiations with North Korea over its nuclear weapons program.

In Iraq, Mr. Hill will spearhead the shift in emphasis by the United States from military to civilian operations. Some Iraq experts said the American civilian presence here had been lacking momentum since the departure in February of the last United States ambassador, Ryan C. Crocker.