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IRAQ

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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CONTENTS

Page

DATES

Briefing: January 17, 2007 1
Briefing: January 19, 2007 43
Hearing: February 28, 2007 79

BRIEFERS

The Honorable Madeleine Albright, former Secretary of State 2
The Honorable Lee Hamilton, Co-Chair of the Iraq Study Group (Baker-Hamilton Commission) 49

WITNESSES

The Honorable Richard C. Holbrooke, Vice Chairman, Perseus LLC, Former United States Ambassador to the United Nations 84
Mr. Frederick W. Kagan, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute 91

LETTERS, STATEMENTS, ETC., SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

January 17, 2007:
The Honorable Madeleine Albright: Prepared statement 6

January 19, 2007:
The Honorable Gary L. Ackerman, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York: Prepared statement 47
The Honorable Lee Hamilton: Prepared statement 54
Letter dated September 8, 2006 to His Excellency Hojjatoleslam Seyyed Mohammed Khatami, Former President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, from the Honorable Christopher H. Smith, a Representative in Congress from the State of New Jersey 72
Article entitled "Fresh Eyes on Iraq" from the September 24, 2005, *Washington Post* by Frank Wolf 74
Op-ed entitled "If you must engage Syria, do it the Lantos Way" from the January 18, 2007, *San Francisco Chronicle* by David Schenker 75

February 28, 2007:
The Honorable Richard C. Holbrooke: Prepared statement 89
Mr. Frederick W. Kagan: Prepared statement 96
The Honorable Gene Green, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas: Prepared statement 113

APPENDIX

January 17, 2007:
The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas: Prepared statement 125
The Honorable Ted Poe, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas: Prepared statement 128
Written responses from the Honorable Madeleine Albright to questions submitted for the record by the Honorable J. Gresham Barrett, a Representative in Congress from the State of South Carolina 129
The Honorable Albio Sires, a Representative in Congress from the State of New Jersey: Prepared statement 129

Page

January 17, 2007 (continued):
Written response from the Honorable Madeleine Albright to question submitted for the record by the Honorable Albio Sires 130

January 19, 2007:
The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee: Prepared statement 130
Written responses from the Honorable Lee Hamilton to questions submitted for record by the Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee 132

February 28, 2007:
Article entitled "Opportunity For Turks And Kurds?" from the February 12, 2007, *Washington Post* by Richard C. Holbrooke 135

IRAQ

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Tom Lantos (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman LANTOS. Committee on Foreign Affairs will please come to order. We are particularly honored this morning to have not only the first lady Secretary of State in American history to honor us with her presence, but we are delighted to have one of this Nation's most outstanding academic experts on foreign affairs appear before us.

Madeleine Albright and I share many things. Although we have not yet decided whether the city of Prague or the city of Budapest is the preeminent city of the continent, we both come from the same neck of the woods, and it is the ultimate tribute to the openness of this society that a talented extraordinary lady from the city of Prague could ascend to the position of first ambassador of the United States to the United Nations and then Secretary of State of this great Nation.

And I know from countless conversations with Secretary Albright, there is nothing in her life she is more proud of than having represent, having represented the United States at the highest levels with so much grace, diplomacy and effectiveness.

I want to welcome the new members of the committee, and we will have a formal introduction of all new members when the committee will have organized since we still have a couple of vacancies to be filled by the Speaker.

We anticipate our first organizing meeting to take place next Tuesday, at which time, all new members of the committee will be properly acknowledged and introduced.

We are extremely anxious and eager to use the time this morning first to listen to and then to engage in a dialogue with our most distinguished former Secretary of State.

So I shall forego my opening comments and urge all of my colleagues to do likewise. I will call briefly on my good friend and the distinguished ranking member, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and for whatever observations she would like to make. Then we will turn to Secretary of State Albright, and if any member would like to make an opening statement, we will insert those statements in the record.

Congressman Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, Madam Secretary. I look forward to engaging with you in some questions about the Iraq study group recommendations that you might make for future action in the President's plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Madam Secretary, we ask you to deal principally with the subject of Iraq. But this is an unruly crowd, as all Members of Congress are, and you may be getting questions on Iran or North Korea or our relations with China or Russia or Venezuela. I can't predict. Knowing you and knowing your encyclopedic knowledge of the issues, I know you will be able to handle everything with great aplomb. It gives me extraordinary pleasure to introduce our former Secretary of State, Secretary Albright.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and let me also congratulate you.

Chairman LANTOS. Could you hold for a second because we need to activate your mike.

Good, please.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and let me, in turn, congratulate you on taking the chairmanship. We have known each other a very long time. I respect your knowledge and do share with you the admiration of the United States for letting people like us take leading roles. And so I am delighted to be able to testify in front of you and Congressman Ros-Lehtinen, it is a pleasure to see you again. We have done a lot of work together and delighted to see you in the position of ranking, and members of the committee, many of whom I have worked with and are very good friends.

I am pleased to return to these familiar surroundings and to have the opportunity to testify regarding United States policy toward Iraq.

To maximize time for discussion and I am happy to take questions on anything, I will speak both plainly and bluntly. There are no good options.

At this point, we can go or stay, deescalate or surge, change our tactics or not, and disturbing even horrifying events will continue to occur.

The goal of our policy must be to minimize the damage. The question is how.

The first step is to clarify what our interests are. Three nightmares come to mind.

First, an Iraq that serves as a recruiting ground for al-Qaeda; second, an Iraq that is subservient to Iran; third, an Iraq so torn by conflict that it ignites a region wide war.

As a direct result of U.S. policy, all three nightmares are possible. We have brought a lot of this on ourselves.

In so doing, we have our Armed Forces in an absurd position, and like many of you, I have talked to some of the Iraqi leaders who have come through town. The Sunnis want our troops to protect them from the Shiites, and the Shiites want us to get out of the way so that they can consolidate their power.

What sense does this make? Is our mission to play the role of hired gun for one side against the other? Is it to be a referee trying to prevent mayhem in a game without rules? Or is it to protect all sides from violence by all sides.

That is impossible.

I desperately want General Petraeus and our forces in Iraq to succeed. Those troops are the finest in the world and will accomplish any mission that is within their power. But it is the responsibility of civilian authorities to assign them missions that they can achieve.

I agree with the President. It would be a disaster for us to leave under the present circumstances. But it may also be a disaster to stay. And if our troops are no longer in a position to make the difference, we have an overriding moral obligation to bring them home.

James Baker and Lee Hamilton recommended a more limited role for the United States troops.

Their view, which I share, is that Iraqis must take responsibility for their own security because although we can assist, we cannot do the job for them.

We don't have enough people. We don't speak the language. We don't know the culture. And quite frankly, we do not have the recognized authority to go into Iraqi homes and order people around.

Each time we do, we lose as much ground politically as we might hope to gain militarily. This is crucial because if there is to be a solution in Iraq, it will come about through political means.

An arrangement must be worked out that will give each side more than they can obtain through continued violence.

If Iraq's leaders should decide to move in this direction, we would likely see progress on the security front.

And I think the American people would be more patient about the continued presence of our troops.

But from the evidence thus far, this is neither a likely outcome nor one we can dictate. For better or worse, the Iraqis think they know their own society and their own interests better than we do. They have responsibilities to each other that they must meet, but no reason, based on our recent record, to take our advice. They have no appetite after Abu Ghraib and Haditha to listen to our lectures about human rights. And they know that President Bush has ruled out leaving, so where is our leverage? And that is why the President's speech last Wednesday night should be viewed less as a statement of policy than as a prayer.

It was not about reality. It was about hope.

But hope is not a strategy.

Iraqis will continue to act in their own best interests as they perceive them, and we must act in ours.

And this begins with the fact that Iraq is not the central front from the war against those responsible for 9/11. It remains, instead, the main distraction from that war. Iraq's Sunni insurgents may be terrorists, but their goals are local and national, not global. There are elements of al-Qaeda in Iraq because, to a great extent, because we are there. As for Iran, its influence on its neighboring country is inevitable. But no Arab population will take orders from Iran if it has an alternative.

As for the risk of regional war, the good news is that no one except al-Qaeda wants it. The bad news is that events may get so far out of hand that it will happen anyway.

I have no magic wand. I expect this year to be brutal. My recommendations are simply designed to make the best of a truly bad situation. First, we must recognize that U.S. credibility could not be lower.

If we are going to influence events anywhere in this region, we have to revive a meaningful peace process in the Middle East.

Secretary Rice understands this and has begun to engage.

I only worry that it is too little too late. Middle East diplomacy is a full-time job.

It requires a willingness to be blunt and the resources and prestige to encourage real compromise.

A road map does no good if it is never taken out of the glove compartment.

After the past 6 years, the prospect for peace may seem dim, but the logic of peace has never been more compelling.

Although we should focus first on Israel and the Palestinians, the question of the Golan Heights must also be addressed.

The basic outlines of a just and lasting peace are well known.

America's urgent commitment to such a peace should also be clearly understood.

Second, both in Iraq and in the region, we must avoid the temptation to take sides in the millennium old Sunni Shiite split. We must be mindful of the interests of all factions and willing to talk to every side, but our message should not vary. We should pledge support to all who have observed territorial borders, honor human rights, obey the rule of law, respect holy places and seek to live in peace.

Third, Congress should continue to support efforts to build democratic institutions in Iraq, including the next step, provincial elections. As Chair of the National Democratic Institute, I am not neutral about this, but neither is America.

It was always unrealistic to believe that a full-fledged democracy could be created in Iraq even in a decade. But it is equally unrealistic to think that a stable, peaceful Iraq will ever be created if democratic principles and institutions are not part of the equation.

Fourth, we should make one more effort to encourage others, especially our NATO allies, to expand training assistance to Iraq's military and police. Every country in Europe has a stake in Iraq's future. Every country should do what it can to help.

Finally, we are calling on religious leaders from all factions and faiths to take a stand against the violence in Iraq.

Given our own lack of credibility, we can't get too close to this initiative without poisoning it. But there are many figures of respect who might be able to articulate the religious case for reconciliation in Iraq. Everyone is so convinced they have God on their side, we should at least make the case that God is on the side of peace.

At the same time, we should reiterate our own pledge on moral grounds to minimize harm to civilians and guarantee humane treatment to prisoners.

An element of confession in this would not hurt.

The bottom line is that there must be a political settlement in Iraq that will end the civil war and reduce the level of insecurity to something that can be managed. Over all, despite the fact that I am an optimist, I am not optimistic about this.

I do, however, oppose efforts at this point to cut off funds for military operations in Iraq. There are more constructive ways to express concern about administration policies.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, America's own War Between the States lasted about as long as the current war in Iraq. It went on so long that Abraham Lincoln said in frustration that the Heavens were hung in black. We might say the same today.

I see profound problems ahead, but I have confidence in the resilience of our Nation. We can, in time, regain our balance and restore our reputation.

All that is really required is that we live up to our own principles and that America become America again.

I know that this is primarily about Iraq. But I feel very strongly at the end of my oral testimony that I need to say something about Iran.

There is no question that Iran is a terrible problem given its nuclear ambitions and the ridiculous statements that President Ahmadinejad has been making and the interference in Iraq and going around the world making various deals.

But that does not mean that we should not talk to them. I do think that the ideas that are in the Iraq Study Group are worth pursuing. I think we have to get out of the concept that talking is appeasement and immediately putting forward what they would want from us as a reason not to talk.

That I don't think is a good way to even begin.

The Iranians may not want to talk to us, but if we would, in fact, say that we are prepared to have discussions on all issues and they then decided not to talk to us, they would be at fault and it would not be us that are isolating ourselves but them that would be isolated. So if I might suggest, I think it is important to figure out how we got into the war in Iraq and I think it is very important to figure out what to do now.

But I think it is also very important for Congress to ask what is going on about Iran.

Why didn't the President accept the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group and on the contrary, why has his message become so belligerent? Why is a carrier group being sent into the Gulf? We got into a war in Iraq on the basis of false information. We cannot let our relationship with Iran deteriorate even further. And as Senator Biden said in the Senate, the President does not have authority to go into Iran. So may I respectfully suggest that there be oversight hearings on what the role of Iran is and what the plans of the administration are about Iran?

Thank you very much and I now would be very happy to answer whatever questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Albright follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

I am pleased to return to these familiar surroundings and to have the opportunity to testify regarding U.S. policy toward Iraq.

To maximize time for discussion, I will speak both plainly and bluntly.

There are no good options.

If there were, many of us would not have objected to the timing of the invasion in the first place.

At this point, we can go or stay, de-escalate or surge, change our tactics or not, and disturbing—even horrifying—events will continue to occur.

The goal of our policy must be to minimize the damage.

The question is how.

The first step is to clarify what our interests are.

Three nightmares come to mind.

First, an Iraq that serves as a training and recruiting ground for Al Qaeda.

Second, an Iraq that is subservient to Iran.

Third, an Iraq so torn by conflict that it ignites a region-wide war.

As a direct result of U.S. policy, all three nightmares are possible.

We have brought this on ourselves.

In so doing, we have put our armed forces in an absurd position.

In Iraq, the enemy has been variously described as the supporters of Saddam Hussein, Al Qaeda, the Sunni insurgency and Shiite militias.

Our ally, presumably, is the government which includes people responsible for those Shiite militias.

The military and police, which we have tried to train, include many good soldiers, but also kidnappers, killers, torturers and thieves.

If I were a soldier in Iraq, I wouldn't know whom to shoot at until I was shot at, which is untenable.

Like many of you, I have talked to some of the Iraqi leaders who have come through town.

The Sunnis want our troops to protect them from the Shiites and the Shiites want us to get out of the way so they can consolidate their power.

What sense does this make?

Is our mission to play the role of hired gun for one side against the other?

Is it to be to be a referee trying to prevent mayhem in a game without rules?

Or is it to protect all sides from violence by all sides? That is impossible.

I desperately want General Petraeus and our forces in Iraq to succeed.

Those troops are the finest in the world and will accomplish any mission that is within their power, but it is the responsibility of our civilian authorities to assign them missions that it is reasonable to hope they can achieve.

I agree with the president it would be a disaster for us to leave under the present circumstances.

But it may also be a disaster to stay—and if our troops are no longer in a position to make the difference, we have an overriding moral obligation to bring them home.

James Baker and Lee Hamilton recommended a more limited role for US troops—with an emphasis on training, working in tandem, and providing a back up rapid reaction capability.

Their view, which I share, is that Iraqis must take responsibility for their own security—because although we can assist—we cannot do the job for them.

We do not have enough people; we do not speak the language; we do not know the culture and, quite frankly, we do not have the recognized legal and moral authority to go into Iraqi homes and order people around.

Each time we do, we lose as much ground politically as we might hope to gain militarily.

This is crucial because, if there is to be a solution in Iraq, it will come about through political means.

This has been obvious for years.

An arrangement must be worked out that will give each side more than they can obtain through continued violence.

Such an arrangement would allow the Shias to look forward to majority control in a major Arab country for the first time in 800 years.

It would give the Sunnis minority rights, including the security they need from Shia militias, a role in the police and military, a fair deal in Kirkuk and a healthy share of oil.

The Kurds would be assured of a high degree of regional autonomy and continued significant representation in the national government.

If Iraq's leaders should decide to move in this direction, we would likely see progress on the security front.

And I think the American people would be more patient about the continued presence of our troops.

But from the evidence thus far, this is neither a likely outcome, nor one we can dictate.

Secretary Rice says she has told Iraqi leaders, "You have to perform."

I say that we cannot have it both ways.

We cannot celebrate an elected government in Iraq and then demand that it act like a performing animal in our circus.

For better or worse, the Iraqis think they know their own society and their own interests better than we do.

They have responsibilities to each other that they must meet, but no reason, based on our recent record, to take our advice.

They have no appetite, after Abu Ghraib and Haditha, to listen to our lectures about human rights.

And they know that President Bush has ruled out leaving, so where is our leverage?

That is why the president's speech last Wednesday night should be viewed less as a statement of policy than as a prayer.

It was not about reality. It was about hope.

But hope is not a strategy.

Iraqis will continue to act in their own best interests as they perceive them.

We must act in ours.

This begins with the fact that Iraq is not the central front in the war against those responsible for 9/11; it remains instead the main distraction from that war.

Iraq's Sunni insurgents may be terrorists but their goals are local and national, not global.

There are elements of Al Qaeda in Iraq only because we are in Iraq.

As for Iran, its influence in its neighboring country is inevitable, but no Arab population will take orders from Iran if it has an alternative.

Iran will dominate Iraq only if Iraq's Shiite population feels it must turn to Tehran for protection.

In judging Iraq's Shiites, we should remember that they endured two years of attacks before they began to retaliate.

The idea that U.S. troops should take on the job of defeating Iraq's Shiite militias is madness.

Such an attempt would drive great chunks of Iraq's population in the political direction of Iran; it would cost many American soldiers their lives; and it won't work.

As for the risk of a regional war, the good news is that no one except Al Qaeda wants it.

The bad news is that events may get so far out of hand it will happen anyway.

I have no magic wand.

I expect this year to be brutal.

Ordinarily, civil wars end in one of three ways. One side defeats the other. An outside force intervenes to compel peace. Or the sides exhaust themselves through violence. The first outcome is unlikely in Iraq and the second unrealistic.

My recommendations are designed to make the best of a truly bad situation.

First, we must recognize that US credibility could not be lower. If we are going to influence events anywhere in this region, we have to revive a meaningful peace process in the Middle East.

I know the Palestinians are in dire straits, but the perception—not the reality, but the perception—has been universal that this administration doesn't care.

That makes it far harder for moderate Arabs to cooperate with us and easier for extremists of all descriptions to find support.

Secretary Rice understands this and has begun to engage. I only worry that it is too little, too late. Middle East diplomacy is a full time job. It requires a willingness to be blunt and the resources and prestige to encourage real compromise. A road map does no good if it is never taken out of the glove compartment.

After the past six years, the prospects for peace may seem dim, but the logic of peace has never been more compelling. Although we should focus first on Israel and the Palestinians, the question of the Golan Heights must also be addressed. The basic outlines of a just and lasting peace are well known. America's urgent commitment to such a peace should also be clearly understood.

Second, both in Iraq and in the region, we must avoid the temptation to take sides in the millennium old Sunni-Shiite split.

It would be an error to align ourselves with the Shiites (because Saddam Hussein's loyalists and Al Qaeda are Sunni) or the Sunnis (because Iraq's worst militias

and Hezbollah are Shia). We must be mindful of the interests of all factions and willing to talk to every side, but our message should not vary.

We should pledge support to all—Sunni, Shia, Christian, Druze, Jew, Arab, Kurd, Persian—who observe territorial borders, honor human rights, obey the rule of law, respect holy places, and seek to live in peace.

Third, congress should continue to support efforts to build democratic institutions in Iraq including the next step—provincial elections. Though the odds seem long, the best news coming out of Iraq these past few years have been the rounds of balloting, the approval of a constitution, the convening of a national parliament, and the beginning of a multi-party system. Given where Iraq began, these events have occurred with startling rapidity. As chair of the National Democratic Institute, I am not neutral about this but neither is America. It was always unrealistic to believe that a full-fledged democracy could be created in Iraq even in a decade. But it is equally unrealistic to think that a stable and peaceful Iraq will ever be created if democratic principles and institutions are not part of the equation. Security is necessary to create democracy; but in the long run, democracy will be essential to create real security. Give up on democracy and you give up not only on Iraq, but also on America.

Fourth, we should make one more effort to encourage others, especially our NATO allies, to expand training assistance to Iraq's military and police. Every country in Europe has a stake in Iraq's future; every country should do what it can to help.

Finally, we should call on religious leaders from all factions and faiths to take a stand against the violence in Iraq. Given our own lack of credibility, we can't get too close to this initiative without poisoning it—but there are figures of respect—Mustafa Ceric (Grand Mufti of Sarajevo), Mohammed Khatami (former president of Iran), King Abdullah of Jordan, Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Ayatollah Sistani—who might be able to articulate the religious case for reconciliation in Iraq. It's worth a try. Everyone is so convinced they have God on their side; we should at least make the case that God is on the side of peace.

At the same time, we should re-iterate our own pledge—on moral grounds—to minimize harm to civilians and guarantee humane treatment to prisoners. An element of confession in this would not hurt.

The bottom line is that there must be a political settlement in Iraq that will end the civil war and reduce the level of insecurity to something that can be managed. With a settlement, we could withdraw gradually, with mission accomplished. Without a settlement, our troops can do little good and might as well come home sooner rather than later. In that case, we should do all we can to help the Iraqis who have taken risks to support us these past few years.

Overall, I am not optimistic. I do, however, oppose efforts at this point to cut off funds for military operations in Iraq. There are more constructive ways to express concern about administration policies.

Mr. Chairman, America's own War Between the States lasted about as long as the current war in Iraq. It went on so long that Abraham Lincoln said in frustration that the Heavens were hung in black. We might say the same today.

I see profound problems ahead, but I have confidence in the resilience of our nation. We can, in time, regain our balance and restore our reputation.

All that is required is that America become America again.

We must use the full array of our national security tools.

We must live up to our own democratic principles.

We must, in the words of John Kennedy, pursue peace as the necessary rational end of rational man.

And we must honor the men and women of our armed forces by ensuring that they have the right equipment, the right leadership AND the right missions.

Thank you very much, and now I would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much, Madam Secretary, and as always, you didn't pull any punches. We are deeply in your debt for a straightforward, very candid, very substantive presentation.

Let me begin by agreeing with you that there are no good solutions. You cannot unscramble an omelet. And while many measures currently being proposed could have been useful 4 years ago, their usefulness is now purely a theoretical possibility.

I remember flying over a good part of northern Iraq with General Petraeus in his helicopter as he pointed out to me large ammuni-

tion dumps and expressed his great anxiety that since he had no troops to guard them, these will be used sooner or later against us.

And this very serious prediction has become a reality. I couldn't think of a better person to be in charge of the military operations in Iraq than General Petraeus, but it is unrealistic to expect him to create a miracle and have a good resolution to what is an impossible situation.

I would like to ask you to expand on your comment of building democratic institutions in the Middle East. And I am very pleased that you indicated that despite the naivety which characterized some recent attempts hoping that elections are identical to the creation of a functioning political democracy, what kind of a timeline do you envision for some of these countries from moving from a dictatorial totalitarian, authoritarian structure to a functioning, not Jeffersonian, but a functioning more open society? Because clearly, the two options which we have had in recent years, therefore there is nothing you can do about these regimes or expecting that elections by themselves will bring about an open society without a willingness to respect minority rights, have had an attitude of compromise.

What kind of a time frame do you envision that as head of the Democratic Institute, you would recommend for realistic expectations?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Mr. Chairman, we have learned that democracy is not an event. Democracy is a process.

Our own country is over 220 years old. We have been evolving in a variety of ways. Democracy takes a long time.

I have been obviously a great advocate of democracy, and I was one of the people that celebrated, along with you, the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of democracies in central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Republics. And in looking at their evolution, there have been zigs and zags and it has not been simple.

I clearly was very involved in our policies in the Balkans.

And in Bosnia and Kosovo, it is taking a long time. I don't think that we can expect miracles. And it is very hard to give you a timeline, but it is a relatively long one.

But that doesn't mean that there can't be a variety of events to help to build the infrastructure of democracy in former dictatorial and authoritarian regimes, and we are learning more and more how to do that.

Elections are good, but they are not the only part.

We know that elections, you can win 99 percent and they don't prove anything.

I have always said the existence of an opposition party is a crucial aspect because it provides accountability.

There has to be the rule of law and a variety of other aspects. I do think that we cannot underestimate that there is political activity taking place in Iraq.

NDI for instance has trained——

Chairman LANTOS. National Democratic Institute.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. National Democratic Institute is there primarily because we are now international with a lot of Canadians and non-Americans. And we have been involved in a lot of political activity.

And one of the reasons that I believed, and I said in my testimony, it is important to have provincial elections so that people can get closer to it. But we can't expect instant democracy. But I don't think we should give up on democracy either.

And what troubles me so much is that our campaign in Iraq has given democracy a bad name. It is associated with militarism. You cannot impose democracy. That is an oxymoron. You can support and promote.

And I hope very much that we understand that America will always be a beacon of democracy and that we can provide support for something that is a long-term process and that democracy has to deliver. People want to have a life in which they feel secure and can earn a living as well as vote.

Chairman LANTOS. Madam Secretary, one of the very specific suggestions you made a few moments ago is that you oppose cutting of funds for the military operations in Iraq. Since this is clearly one of the top items on the agenda of the Congress, would you be willing to expand and elaborate?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, I, as I also stated, I have the highest admiration for our military.

I think they have done an incredible job with an impossible mission that has been, in many ways, incoherent. We are asking them to sacrifice on behalf of all of us, and I think we have a moral obligation to support them. I think the question is what one does about increasing numbers of troops. But the current troops that are there need to be supported. I do believe that it is worth considering a cap on the number of whatever the surge is, and I am opposed to the surge as I clearly stated. But I think that one has to be very careful before cutting off funds for troops that are over there fighting on our behalf.

Chairman LANTOS. Let me press you a little bit on that. I don't think anyone is recommending, or I have seen no one recommending cutting of funds for the troops in the field. But the issue relates to the authority to increase the number of troops of curtailing, or preventing funds from flowing for a surge. How would you deal with that issue?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, I think, Mr. Chairman, I think one of the approaches, and I know that there are numbers of different thoughts here, is to put a cap on the number of forces that should be in Iraq, and that is one way to limit the number—the amount that would be spent on additional numbers.

To me, the surge makes absolutely no sense. I think as Senator Durbin said, it is too small a number to make a difference and too many to die, and/or to be involved in an incoherent mission.

So, I do know that Congress has the ability and the requirement, through purse strings, in order to look at this very carefully, and I think the hard part here for all of you is how to distinguish support for the current forces from those that might be added, since some of them have will have been redistributed from somewhere else and, perhaps, be taken out of Afghanistan to put into Iraq.

So, I think the question is how you distinguish the mission and which part of it you would pay for and which you would not. But I think that there are ways that Congress can do this.

Chairman LANTOS. I believe you referred to the President's speech as a prayer but not a policy. Just recently, you published one of the most interesting and valuable dissertations on the role of religion in foreign policy.

How would you apply this to the current Iraq situation?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, I must state flat out that I believe in a separation of church and State. But I do think that since large aspects of what is going on in Iraq has a religious basis, that we should consider trying to involve some religious leaders that might be able to work on some conflict resolution.

I have named some that I know well, the grand mufti of Sarajevo, Mr. Ceric, has a very good reputation, has worked in a very difficult area in the Balkans. We might also consider looking at the role of moderate—one of the hardest parts I have to say is finding the right adjectives or even nouns for describing people, but to try to get people that have religious connections and know how to work within a secular society, for instance, Prime Minister Badawi of Malaysia, who is also chairman of the Organization of Islamic Countries, to help.

But I would try to get some religious leaders involved in trying to mend the rifts and also to try to get, Ayatollah Sistani who has, who continues to have great influence involved in this.

I have basically, in my book, advocated the fact that religious leaders can be used in connection with diplomacy in order to try to resolve conflicts if people believe that God is on their side.

And therefore, it is at least worth trying. I would involve more religious leaders.

Chairman LANTOS. My final question relates to your call for a dialogue. I am a great believer in dialogues. I was one of the first to open up dialogue with Albania a decade and a half ago. I have been in the forefront of the dialogue with Libya and North Korea, as you were, I didn't see the spectacular programs that you described so vividly, but I am maintaining my effort to open up North Korea. And I fully favor a dialogue with Iran.

I think the administration is dead wrong in opposing a dialogue with Iran.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Dead wrong.

Chairman LANTOS. But in all fairness, the Iranian authorities bear a very, very heavy share of the responsibility in preventing a dialogue. I am one of several Members from Congress who, for years, have been attempting to visit Iran to commence a dialogue. And at this moment, the Iranian authorities in Tehran have denied visas to Members of Congress who have sought to visit them for a conversation.

What is your view of the responsibility of the Iranian authorities in preventing a dialogue?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, first of all, I think as I said, and I believe that you have also said is that we have to make clear that talking to another country is not appeasement.

I think a very simple fact that actually Prime Minister Rabin used to say, you actually make peace with your enemies. And the only way to begin that is to talk to them.

I have—you commented that my statement was characteristically blunt. I have talked to many people, leaders abroad, that I have not liked or not agreed with.

And therefore, it is possible to have pretty direct conversation and say what you think, but you can't do it if you are not talking to them at all.

And I think the designation of the axis of evil was one of the biggest mistakes that was made, not that all three countries are not in some form or another propounding policies that we don't like, but simply saying that they cannot be talked with is counterproductive.

I have some experience in terms of trying to deal with Iran, because we were, during the Clinton administration, we did try to develop dialogue with them. They are very difficult. There is no question about that.

They have ways of preventing discussion, as you have pointed out, but I think that we are isolating ourselves at the moment if we decide that we don't want to talk to them.

They definitely are in a position—frankly, I think they are the ones that have benefited the most from the war in Iraq and they are taking advantage of it. They are obviously, the statements that President Ahmadinejad has made are unacceptable, but there are those within Iran that are expressing somewhat different views in a very difficult way.

So I don't think we should just decide because they are difficult or saying things we don't like that we will not at least try.

And I do think they are responsible for some horrendous statements on issues of the Holocaust or generally about the existence of Israel. But I think we need to go past that, at least in the ideas forward and not do frankly what the administration is doing, is basically setting up arguments about why we never should talk to them and the kinds of statements that the President has made as well as Secretary Rice has made, which make it seem as though it is even hard harder to begin the talks.

So you don't have to like them. You don't have to agree with what they are doing. But I think it is worth putting talks without preconditions on all subjects on the table and let's see where it goes.

Chairman LANTOS. Well, I fully agree with you, Madam Secretary, but let the record show that it takes two to tango. And if the Iranian authorities refuse to issue visas for Members of Congress who wish to engage in a dialogue, they share in the responsibility of preventing a dialogue. And this is the case as of this morning. And I hope the Iranians are watching and listening and will change this singularly counterproductive policy, because I stand ready to take a delegation from the Foreign Affairs Committee to Tehran at any time for a serious dialogue without any preconditions.

But in order for members of this committee to engage in a dialogue, the Iranian authorities must be willing to invite Members of Congress to Tehran so the dialogue can take place.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I fully agree with you.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much. I am delighted to turn to my friend and colleague, the ranking member, Mrs. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, Madam Secretary, it is a pleasure to see you again. You testified that you agree with the President; in your own words, it would be a disaster for us to leave under the present circumstances, and as you pointed out, you also testified that you do not support withholding appropriations.

I am proud to say that my stepson, Doug and his wife Lindsay, both served in Iraq as Marine pilots and they joined many other brave Americans in ridding the world of the regime that was responsible for so many atrocities against the Iraqi people, and for my family members who could be returning, the prospect of Congress withholding funds is worrisome.

So my first question, Madam Secretary, is, would you please tell us what is at stake if we were to pull out of Iraq precipitously; and secondly, you had been in favor of troop increases before, but now you are critical of President Bush's plan. If you can tell us what has changed in your views? Thirdly, about the Iraq Study Group, Madam Secretary, that report places a security and stability on top of the list of priorities in Iraq without significantly reducing the level of sectarian violence and effectively fighting the insurgents and their death squads. There is no doubt that little progress can be expected in establishing peace and stability in Iraq. And as a part of the effort to stabilize Iraq, it is essential that the Iraqi Government reach a power sharing agreement with secular and moderate leaders so that major issues such as oil revenue distribution, is quickly resolved.

And in the Iraq Study Group, and the administration agrees, that addressing these issues would likely lead to a significant reduction in the current level of insurgency and instability in Iraq.

The President's plan also calls for doubling the number of provincial reconstruction teams, to bring together military and civilian experts to help Iraqis strengthen the moderates, pursue national reconciliation, and accelerate the pace so that we can have self reliance of the Iraqi people.

Given your particular expertise, Madam Secretary, could you amplify your recommendations for specific benchmarks that we should require of the Iraqi leadership and to what extent should we link progress on the Iraqi political front to our support on this the security front? And also, Madam Secretary, could you——

Chairman LANTOS. If I may interrupt my good friend, and, this is a caution to all members of the committee, I want to be totally fair to all members of the committee. Every member is allotted 5 minutes. It is not 5 minutes to present the questions and then have another 5 minutes to listen to the answers.

So I will count obviously the time that it takes to raise the issues against your 5 minutes, because otherwise, we will be here ad infinitum, and it is unfair to the junior members of the committee because the Secretary, at a certain point, will have to leave.

So while I certainly won't penalize my friends and colleague, I want to caution all members that the longer your questions, the

less time there will be to answer them, and I will cut off each member's time at 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do you have a count of how long your opening repartee was?

Chairman LANTOS. We do.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. You do. May I ask what it is?

Chairman LANTOS. It is exactly the same length of time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. It is sort of unusual to interrupt me in the middle of mine to make that statement but——

Mr. ACKERMAN. Welcome to the minority.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I don't think that Mr. Chairman Hyde and Mr. Lantos had that difficulty, Mr. Ackerman. Thank you. But fine, I will just leave it at that, Mr. Chairman, and just one minor note. When you talked about the Israeli Palestinian issue and linking it to Iraq, I believe that so many countries and leaders of institutions have used that linkage as an excuse to wash their hands of responsibilities that they might have to help the Iraqi people achieve peace and stability. And I will shut it off.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Congresswoman, I also said it would be a disaster to stay under the current circumstances. I think that we have an incoherent policy toward Iraq. I personally have not been for increases in troops. My position on Iraq has been is—and I said this from the very beginning—that I understood the why of the war because Saddam Hussein was a terrible person, and all the things that President Bush said. But I did not think that Iraq was an imminent threat.

I did think that Afghanistan was the problem from whence those who hit us on 9/11 came and that we should have kept our eye on the ball, so I didn't understand why now and I certainly did not understand what next. Because those are the issues that I have been involved in when we were in office in post conflict resolutions and there was no plan and that is what we are suffering from now in terms of a lack of understanding of the sectarian issues that you have raised or understanding the divisions between the Shi'as, Sunni, and their religious basis to those, and there has been no plan.

I have been very worried about the reconstruction units because as I understand it, part of the problem is that many of our political people that are there are within areas like the Green zone where there really is not enough contact with the Iraqi people.

The problem that we have is we are involved in the worst chicken and egg problem that I can ever think of, which is you cannot do anything unless you have security. And the security situation is constantly deteriorating. And the only issue here and the one that I think we have to work on is to realize that there is not a military solution to this problem, that the only solution is a political one.

And rather than being a cheerleader for Prime Minister Maliki, we need to press and suggest ways for a political settlement, which is why the question about using religious leaders, using other countries to help, but we cannot make Maliki do anything.

But we don't have to cheerlead for him, when he makes his statements.

I think, as I made very clear, there are no good options here, and the question is, how to minimize the damage and how to leave in

a way that does not undercut America's position more than it already has been undercut and that allows the evolution of a stable Iraq.

But there are, I have to just keep repeating, there are no good solutions. And increasing the troop numbers, I do not believe, adds to the situation in a positive way at all.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and Madam Secretary, it is good to have you here again. And I would like to push a little more your—for you to sort of fill out your first recommendations of things we might be doing.

Ms. Ros-Lehtinen touched on it, but, and that is a higher level of engagement in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians and Syria, essentially is, what you are suggesting there.

First of all, I think, in and of itself, that should be done. I think this administration quite dropped the ball at the time after the Israeli troops were moved, Israeli settlers from Gaza and during that 3- or 4-month period, we failed to produce results on the ground in Gaza to make life better for the people there, working with the Gulf countries and others who had the resources and the result was a Hamas election in January of the following year.

But the notion—there is tremendous reasons to do that, to try to settle those conflicts. But originally, the advocates of going into Iraq, one of the many reasons was it would change the whole face of the Middle East. The road, in effect, to Jerusalem was through Baghdad, obviously that turned out to be naive and inaccurate as an analysis.

Isn't the notion which the Iraq Study Group makes a point of talking about and choosing to also support that all-out effort to try and create a positive process between the Israelis and Palestinians, something that I think I would like to see on its own merits, that that is somehow going to make our situation in Iraq better, that the fundamental problems that exist there will somehow improve because of that effort that somehow the role of Hezbollah in Lebanon will fundamentally change, that somehow Sunni governments that we have worked with in the past will be willing to be more assertive in the context of Iraq because we are doing that? I am not sure why that follows. And I was wondering if you could just expand on this.

I am not sure why that in the end it isn't as erroneous as the notion that we will create a peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians by getting rid of Saddam.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I do think—and you know, Congressman, the Middle East better than anybody—that it is a difficult region with a very complicated history. I worked for a President who assigned reading to us, and a book that President Clinton told me to read was *A Peace to End All Peace*, which shows the complications of setting up the modern Middle East, and I think is the beginning of understanding of a variety of complex issues that indicate linkages among the different countries, but also very separate histories, and I think it is important to know that.

It is—this is the first time that I have appeared before all of you as myself. I am not representing the United States Government,

and my positions have not been cleared by the bureaucracy of the State Department.

So I am speaking for myself here.

I think that what needs to happen is that we need to look at the various problems of the Middle East separately but also as a region. I personally think that it would be very useful to have a large view of what the issues are and to think about having Summit meetings and regional conferences than a major push in diplomacy.

Part of that would be the Middle East peace process, because I agree with you that on itself, on its own merit, it is essential to deal with, but it is also being used by a lot of players within the system as an excuse.

And so for 2 reasons, it would—or many reasons—it would be good to solve it and to take away the excuse issue, but primarily for the people of Israel and the Palestinians.

And so that would be a key part.

But I think we need to begin to look at some kind of a new security system within the Middle East. Part of the problem with Iran is that they need to both feel that they are a part of the Middle East, but also bear responsibility for some of the things that are going on. You can deal with any issue by separating it into all its little parts and deal with one part at a time, or you can have a large agenda and do a series of negotiations to do deal with those particular issues. That is what I would recommend.

But it requires a belief in diplomacy. It requires diplomats who really want to get in there and roll their sleeves up and spend days and months in the area, looking at Israel's relationship with Syria, as well as with the Palestinians, looking at what Iran's role in the 21st century is going to be, understanding the role of Turkey in the region, understanding the Shi'a-Sunni split, and I think there is a need to look at this as a regional issue with full understanding of the details of every one of these countries. And I don't think—the idea would be nice if they were all democracies, but there are not a lot of countries that are looking at Iraq at the moment and thinking I want my country to look just like that.

So it is not a great advertisement for democracy. And I do think there needs to be a larger approach to all of this.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Thank you, very much. Madam Secretary, welcome, once again, to the committee. In your written testimony, you mentioned that the United States should be more engaged in an effort to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. You explain exactly what steps you would take in resolving the conflict. If you could comment on how the United States should deal with the Hamas-lead Palestinian authority, and secondly, if you would elaborate on your statement that the question of the Golan Heights must be addressed.

What exactly do you mean by that?

And third, I, too, like many colleagues, have serious, troubling questions about the surge. You, however, a year ago in an op-ed in *USA Today* on January 25, 2005, advocated for achieving success in Iraq by admitting mistakes, increasing troop levels to secure key areas and creating an economic reconstruction program to employ and feed Iraqis, thereby undercutting insurgents recruiting. My

question is would you have supported the surge if it was a year ago, which the op-ed clearly seemed to convey, or is it the timing? What is the problem with the surge now? And I ask this very sincerely, because, like I said, many of us have some very real troubling questions about it.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I think on the Middle East peace issue, first of all, when we left office, we were pretty close to some kind of an agreement on a variety of issues to deal with the Middle East.

I would have hoped that some of those initiatives would have been picked up and worked on for 6 years.

Congressman Berman mentioned dealing with the Palestinians prior to Hamas winning. I fully agree, it would have been very helpful to give greater support to President Mahmoud Abbas and to give him an ability to show that democracy did deliver.

He was not, I think, supported enough.

I also think that as I mention in my testimony, it is absolutely essential, Middle East is the bread and butter work of the Secretary of State. And it is absolutely essential that it be done all the time, either by a peace team that is very much there in a variety of ways, and it needs constant work. And I think that as I mentioned, you know, it is a good sound bite, but it happens to be true, the road map was never taken out of the glove compartment.

So I think that there was not enough work done. I personally think that it would be useful to try to figure out ways to create jobs for the Palestinians, there is a huge unemployment rate of very young people.

I am part of the Aspen Institute effort to try and get Palestinian Arab and Israeli businessmen to create jobs both in Gaza and on the West Bank. I think that is very important.

And I think we have to show that, as I said, democracy has to deliver.

And I think that has not happened enough. I am very glad that Secretary Rice is there now. It needs attention——

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. If I could interrupt briefly, but on Hamas, what do you recommend we do?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I am the one who put Hamas on the terrorist list, so we cannot deal specifically with Hamas. I do think, however, that there are others that can, in many ways, try to do something akin to what happened in Ireland is to try to figure out politically how to separate some of the more peaceful aspects of it from the violence so that the violence was not used as a tactic by Hamas.

We could spend a long time on this, but I want to answer your question. My op-ed that I wrote——

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. If I can interrupt again on the Golan Heights.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I am sorry, on the Golan Heights, I was very interested to read in the papers today actually that there have been some private discussions between the Israelis and Syrians on the Golan Heights with very close, looks to me from the newspapers, to the ideas that we had, which was a way that the Golan Heights, there would be agreement on the line, there might be the possibility of creating a peace park—we were almost there on that also, there were just several hundred yards that divided us, and it is a matter of putting some of those ideas back on the table.

And I think it is important because Israel, I believe in the existence and security of Israel, it is essential to the way that we all see our foreign policy and the security of the Israeli people and trying to work out on the basis of those ideas I think would be a very good idea.

Which leads to the other point, which is, there is no reason in the fact that we are pressing Israel and Syria into—I am sorry, Iran and Syria into some kind of an alliance. We should be dealing with Syria also.

My op-ed was written in early 2005, really before there was a civil war.

And that, I think, in many ways, the mission at that time made a certain amount of sense.

I think that as the insurgency increased, and I don't want to see our troops trying to figure out who we are supposed to hit. They are unfortunately in the middle of insurgent and civil war fighting. And I think that was my perspective.

I think that it would have been helpful a long time ago to have a better plan for reconstruction.

I think part of the problem was, as I said earlier, I was among the people, I call us the former people, that were asked to come and be briefed at the Pentagon before the war started, and I specifically asked what the timeline was on reconstruction and on the post-conflict part of Iraq. I could not get an answer.

There was no timeline. There was no sense of what the next steps were going to be. And I don't think we did enough on the reconstruction. But it is so easy to go back and look at all the mistakes. I know it can be done about any number of things.

I think the problem is now that we need to figure out a way that our forces are not there in the middle of a civil war and we need to press for a political settlement. It is very important. And we need to look at a regional aspect and we need to ask questions about what we are doing about Iran and Syria.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The former Secretary of Defense told us that you go to war with the army you have, not the army you want.

The President of the United States told us that he is listening to the generals in the field.

The difference is that when he doesn't have the generals that he wants, he just replaces them to get the advice that he has already decided.

Generals Abizaid and Casey seemed to have gotten the Shinseki treatment, the President replaced them.

First could you comment on whether or not an increase in our troop strength will indeed result in an increase in violence? And my second question is I think a bit heavier, and it goes to the crux of theory, philosophy and what the heck are we doing now. You are right, democracy is not the answer.

Somehow sanity is the answer.

The world is confronted by people who are driven by either evil or God. And I have no problem with people who pray. They can pray all day and talk to God all day. I have a problem with the

people that God then talks to and directs to do things that are not very, very sane.

Hitler was elected democratically. He was directed by evil.

So many people today are directed by God.

I think North Korea is an easier do for us because it is really in negotiation. And while they might be bad, I don't know that they are pure evil, and they are certainly, they certainly have no belief in any God.

How do we deal with people? And I believe, as do you, and as has also been championed by Chairman Lantos that the Churchillian advice that jawing is better than warring. How do you compromise by people who are driven either by evil, or religious convictions that tell you that they have to annihilate an entire other people? How do you negotiate with that?

You know, we didn't talk, as you point out, to certain factions if they—like Hamas, because they were terrorist organizations. How do you talk to a compromise with a government that is a terrorist state? Do you say, okay, we will allow you to kill half the world's Jews? Or cut up Israel into factions? Drive them halfway off the planet? How do we sit down? And I know we have to find opportunities to do something. But where do you begin a compromise with people like that?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, first of all, I think that it is one thing to talk; it is another to give in. I am not suggesting compromise on issues that are of vital importance to us, whether it is their ambition to have nuclear weapons or obviously their destruction of Israel. I do think that what has to happen is that more enemies are being created than we are capable of dealing with at this point in time. I think that is the tragedy of our times, and what I would have suggested as far as Iran is concerned, there was a period shortly during the beginning of the Afghanistan war where there were a number of issues on which we agreed with the Iranians, to look for areas where there can be some agreement on common interests, but it does not mean giving up on your principles. I would never advocate that, but we aren't getting anywhere in terms of our relationships, not only with Iran but with other countries because we are looking as though we are isolating ourselves.

You know, the role of God—this is what I was examining in this book, the role of God and religion in policy is actually not new. It has been something that has motivated the United States for a long time. I went back, and I looked at our history. And President McKinley, for instance, thought it was our duty to Christianize the Philippines even though they were Catholic or perhaps because they were Catholic. And so they—this is not something new. Woodrow Wilson was also somebody who felt that God had a role in our policy. I think the question is how you look for the various aspects of commonality among people instead of just the differences. I have not turned into a religious mystic, and I am not a theologian, but I do think that there are ways that we need to begin to parse the issue that there are Iranians, for instance, who would like to see some change. And it is not beyond the intelligence of American diplomats to try to parse some of this.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Pence.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome, Madam Secretary. I appreciate your candor. This is our first opportunity to meet in person. While I have had occasion to disagree with your judgments, I have never failed to admire you personally, and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak with you today in this capacity.

Two quick questions that I would like to hear more from you than you would like to hear from me about. Number one has to do with the topic that you added on, having to do with Iran, and your successor spoke at that table just a few short days ago and wondered aloud about recommendations that we engage Iran in a dialogue, and I think Secretary of State Rice asked the rhetorical question, What would that conversation look like? And I wondered if, Madam Secretary, you might speak to that: What would we talk to Iran about at this point? And is there—is there not more profit to be had in continuing to build international consensus in opposition to the course they seem intent upon pursuing with regard to nuclear ambitions. And the second question I would welcome your response to, Madam Secretary, is having to do with this—with this business of the role of the Commander-in-Chief. You served a Commander-in-Chief. We have a Commander-in-Chief now. You have spoken I think provocatively today about opposing efforts to cut off funds for current military operations, but at the same time, you have referenced favorable sentiment about a cap, your opposition to a surge. I wonder, once Congress has authorized the use of force, how would you as a former Secretary of State, how would you express your understanding of the duty and the authority that the Commander-in-Chief possesses with regard to tactical decisions on the ground? Is that the purview of the Congress in your judgment? Or are tactical decisions, like the number of troops on the ground once war has been authorized, is that in fact the purview of the Commander-in-Chief in most instances? I welcome your response to either or both.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, first of all, on Iran, I do think there are numbers of issues that could be discussed, some still in connection with Afghanistan, for instance, or looking for areas where we might be able to find agreement. I do think that the nuclear issue actually is being handled within the Security Council, and I think that there needs to continue to be built consensus on the international position there. I do think also that it would be useful to talk about energy issues there. One could subdivide in terms of a number of issues that could be found. What I was surprised about was the way that the administration has basically made it seem as though just talking to them will create a negative—it is going in with preconditions of negativity, if I could put it that way. I am not saying it would be easy, and I think it is perfectly possible, also given what Congressman Lantos said about visas, that they are going to say no, but part of what is going on here is how the United States re-establishes itself in the world as a force for good and for those who want to solve problems, who want to deal with others on fighting terrorism, who want to deal with others on issues of energy security. So maybe at another time we could spend longer on it, but I do think there are aspects.

I have to say that I have worked in Congress; I worked for Senator Muskie. I understand the role of Congress. I teach about this, and I was Secretary of State. So I have looked at this issue of what roles, who has what, quite a lot. And clearly the way that the Constitution is set up and is described in some books, it is an invitation to struggle. There is no question about that. What I think needs to happen in terms of not getting into a constitutional argument—I think this is a great debate. It is very important. I wish we had had this debate 4 years ago where there really were questions about why we went into this war, were the facts accurate? And to have a—and I happen to be a great believer in bipartisanship, in having this kind of a debate. I think the President, you know, he is the Commander-in-Chief, and I remember we were in the middle of the war in the Balkans when I was summoned up here in order to discuss whether there should be a cut off of funds. It is not easy when you are in the executive branch, but what has happened, frankly, Congressman, is that there has not been a great interaction between the two branches in the last—or an ability to have an open discussion representing the will of the American people, and so I do think—I don't question the power of the Commander-in-Chief, but I also urge all of you, all of you on both sides of the aisle to ask a lot of questions. It is not much fun when you are sitting here representing the administration, I can tell you that. I have been through that, but it is what the job is about, and it makes you really rethink what you are saying. It makes the bureaucracy become active in terms of providing answers, and it is what America is about. It is an open dialogue about how, what our role in the world should be, and also how we use our forces, and that is what we should be doing.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, I thank you for making this appearance before the committee. And I do want to thank you for the most eloquent commentary of the mess that we have created in Iraq. I am reminded of one of Clint Eastwood's cowboy classics called, The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. The good is that we got rid of the brutal dictator Saddam Hussein, although he was not responsible for the attacks of 9/11. It was Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda group, and today we are still looking for Osama bin Laden. The bad in that, as a result of our waging war against Iraq, we have caused more tension in the Middle East than ever before, we are now occupiers and not liberators as some of our neo-conservative leaders managed to persuade our President to believe that. And we went into this war based upon false intelligence, false information and simply going through this whole ordeal on the cheap. And by not having enough military force structure, as General Eric Shinseki rightly stated, you cannot fight a war with only 9 divisions when you need to have 12 divisions to do the job. And ugly now because it has cost 3,000 lives of some of our finest soldier who have made the ultimate sacrifice to our Nation, and let alone some 20,000 wounded and maimed for life, not even accounting for some 50,000 Iraqi lives that we have cost in this mess that we have caused.

Can you share with us, Madam Secretary, and I am having a little problem, how would it be possible for us to send 20,000 addi-

tional soldiers to go into a city like Baghdad with 6 million people and to pair our soldiers with the Iraqi counterparts or partners, supposedly, and perhaps as some of these Iraqi soldiers may not have the same training, the capacity, you know, if something happens, would I really put any trust in my Iraqi counterpart in going through the streets and getting shot at? I am very curious. How is it possible that we are going to be able to solve the problem by adding more soldiers to the mess that we have created?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, that is really the question because I think that while the President has talked about the number of 20,000 overall and 17,500 I believe in Baghdad, not all of those are really fighters. I think there are a lot of support troops with it. So it is not a very large number in order to do a very difficult job. And also I think there is the problem which is that Prime Minister Maliki had a different idea. He is now acting—all I know, frankly, is what I read in the papers—a little lukewarm about all this, so there are questions about how the Iraqi forces and the American forces will interact. So those are the kinds of issues and questions as to whether this is a well-thought-out redeployment or addition to our forces. But I think one thing I would like to make clear for myself; I don't want us to fail. I think the last thing I want is to be in the position to say the Americans failed, and our troops failed because they haven't. Our troops have been unbelievable. They have been asked to fulfill an incoherent mission, and the very aspects of the way the Baghdad mission is described sounds incoherent to me. And so I am troubled exactly by the kinds of questions that you have asked. And our generals, you know, Congressman Ackerman spoke about changing generals. General Petraeus was the person that—I don't know him, but he seems to be very highly respected because of what he did in terms of training Iraqis. He has also written about counterinsurgency. So theoretically, if we are in this particular mess then maybe he is the one, in many ways, that can deal with—clearly, the decision has been made to send these troops, so that they can do the best possible job in a very, very difficult mission because none of us want them to fail.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. We are putting tremendous pressure on Prime Minister Maliki to come through this whole ordeal, but my problem here is he is a Shiite. Sixty percent of the entire population of Iraq is Shiite, and what else can we expect of the fact that this will be the Shiite-controlled Government out of Iraq simply because of the numbers? How is it possible that we can bring 20 percent of the Sunnis to expect that they are going to get something more than what they could expect, especially after 40 years of brutal administration from Saddam Hussein who is a Sunni himself? I just wanted to ask you, do you really think that Prime Minister Maliki can do what he can do, given the circumstances that he is under?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, I think that he is not alone. What would be the best is that it is possible to have majority rule and minority rights, and that revenge by one group against the other is not an ultimate solution. So it is possible within the framework of the constitution and some amendment of it to have a way that the Sunnis can fulfill a minority role within the government. But the way that things are going now, Prime Minister Maliki, you know, is not in

a position or does not have the will or doesn't have the support or doesn't know how to build coalitions, whatever. At the moment, things do not seem to be working, and I think that is part of the issue here. Plus there seems to also be a disagreement between how he would use forces and the way that the United States used forces. We celebrate the fact that he was popularly elected, and then we expect him to do exactly what we want. So it is part of the—I could do a whole testimony on the paradoxes of Iraq, and that is certainly one of them.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you very much.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. Madam Secretary, you mentioned that—or you compared our situation to a scrambled egg in a ham and scrambled egg omelet.

Chairman LANTOS. That was my statement.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. That came from the Secretary.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I make omelets, too.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let me note that the Chairman made that comparison, but that comparison, if we have to look back and find out when this omelet first began to take shape, that Madam Secretary, you were the chef at the stove. The eggs were cracked when you were Secretary of State. You mentioned that 9/11 came about because of what was going on in Afghanistan, not Iraq. And let us note, Madam Secretary, that you were at the helm; you were making the decisions when the Taliban was established. And you were making the decisions that kept the Taliban basically from being overthrown earlier on in the regime. You, actually, were the person who established the Taliban policy that was still in place at 9/11 because this administration didn't act to change that when they first came in.

Let us also note that I don't find anything incoherent about our policy. It may not be working, but our policy is coherent, and it is also transparent as compared to the policies that were in place when you were Secretary of State, toward the Taliban and toward bin Laden. Let us note that when Ben Gilman was chairman of this committee and I was a member of this committee, we asked you, we required and requested on several occasions information concerning your policies on the Taliban. We were met with a stonewall, Madam Secretary. We did not get cooperation. You had anything else but a transparent policy, anything but a coherent policy as the Taliban then began to offer themselves as a basis of operation for bin Laden who eventually did attack on 9/11.

With that said, let me go on to some specific questions that you have raised today. I have not forgotten that Mr. Smith has brought forward the fact that, just a year ago, you were advocating an increase in the troop level, which that was not answered. And let me note that, in your testimony, you had suggested that you were opposing the introduction of a carrier, another aircraft carrier. How do we expect to have any negotiations in the Middle East without actually giving our President or this administration or anyone who is negotiating for us the leverage they need with the extra military presence, whether it is an aircraft carrier or a surge in Iraq? And let me just note that while you suggest that you were supporting our effort there, I don't believe that it does any good to the United

States or helps our troops' position over there when you suggest that we are treating the elected officials as elected—the elected officials as performing animals in a circus. I don't think that bringing up Abu Ghraib and Haditha is something and actually playing into those incidents, which I say were wrong but grossly exaggerated by America's enemies; I don't think that does our troops any good. And it doesn't do any good for us in order to give us leverage in dealing with the issues that need to be dealt with to bring peace and prosperity and let's say a level of stability in that area. So with that said, I will be happy to let you respond to these comments, and I am sorry if they seem a little harsh, but frankly, I think that your testimony has been very harsh on this administration. And compared to your own record, I think this administration has a very positive record.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Congressman, I am very pleased to be able to continue our very pleasant discussion from the last 6 years or previous to the last 6 years. I am usually accused, actually, of being too harsh on the Taliban, that there were those who thought that we should have recognized them in various aspects. I was the first American official to criticize the activities of the Taliban. Also, we were the ones that went after Osama bin Laden, but we can argue that point at length. We have now been with hundreds, several thousands of troops trying to find Osama bin Laden. That has not happened yet, and I am very proud of the policies that we carried out in the Clinton administration where we worked on a regular basis on the Middle East peace process, had a policy to deal with fighting terrorism and managed in fact to free some people in the Balkans from ethnic cleansing. So I put our policy up, but that is not what this is about.

I think that the problem with what is going on and what has happened in Iraq is that, for the last 6 years, we have not been involved in a dialogue and a national debate in front of the American people about what this is all about. And my question on the carrier is, I didn't say I was opposed to the carrier. I would just like all of you to ask why this is happening. I don't understand fully all of a sudden what the various more belligerent aspects toward Iran are doing in terms of developing a more coherent policy. So all I am advocating is that we actually have a debate and that it is not viewed as being unpatriotic or not supportive of the troops to ask a lot of questions. I believe that our patriotic duty, whether elected officials or former officials or ordinary American citizens is to ask the questions, and so that is all I am suggesting here.

I did respond to Congressman Smith about my op-ed. It was written in early 2005 before there was a civil war. And I do think that the situation changed in a way where, in fact, adding troops now in what I consider an incoherent policy partially because it is unclear how 20,000-minus, because as I said, they are not all fighters, can deal with a huge population in Baghdad. I just think it is a matter of asking the right questions, and I hope very much that we could have a bipartisan discussion about what to do next and what our policy is on Iran. That is the next—it looks to me—like the next big problem, and there are a lot of people who wondered where Congress was for the last 6 years, and I am only suggesting

that we are—should all be in a position to not only discuss where we are in Iraq now but also look to what are the thoughts on Iran.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. It is always good to follow my colleague from California. He is amazing. It is almost like Rip Van Winkle. You know, Rip Van Winkle, when he went to sleep, King George was the head of the United States; his picture was on the wall. When Rip Van Winkle woke up, George Washington was President. He had slept through a revolution, and it seemed like these past 6 years reminds me of Rip Van Winkle. You criticize the former Secretary of State.

Let me just bring out a couple points. I really wish I had more time, but one, when the roadmap was that close, when the two Palestinian authorities were that close to coming together, the Bush administration said, you know what, it is too much pressure. Let them just go and decide for themselves, and when they want to get together, they will come together. A year and a half wasted, and we have the situation that we have today. Absolutely insane.

Number two, we had six-country talks with North Korea, but also, we had bilateral talks, and you know, there was not the situation with—North Korea is even telling us now. Let me tell you something, Iran is at least trying to lie. They are saying we want this for domestic consumption. North Korea says, you know what, we are doing this, we are making a bomb, no question about it. But we decided to drop the six-country—the bilateral talks and only leave it up to the six-country talks. Another mistake.

The whole question of the support for 9/11, the world was on our side. We had a golden opportunity, but Rumsfeld said there were no good targets in Afghanistan. He had this flip way about himself. And so we go into Iraq. Inspectors there, Hans Blix was given full authority. Of course, Saddam had denied the inspectors in the past, so he violated some U.N. resolution, saying that the inspectors should be able to go anywhere. But then Saddam, knowing he had no weapons of mass destruction or biological or chemical weapons, said, okay, inspectors, you can go all the way. Well, the bluff was over. What did we do? President Bush orders the inspectors out in 48 hours so he could have his shock and awe and mission accomplished. Absolutely the worst foreign policy that I have seen in my life, and then you talk about, why would we talk about Abu Ghraib? Because if we are going to wallow in the gutter with the worst in the world, then how deep have we gone? I mean, even in Dante's Inferno, there are only seven levels of purgatory. Could we farm an eighth? It makes no sense at all. It is ridiculous. I have never heard anything so strange.

Even taking Somalia, all of a sudden, the United States Government decides we are supporting the warlords. Who are these warlords? They are the same ones who brought the Black Hawks down, remnants of the same clans. So all of a sudden just because Islamic Courts Union is in all of Somalia, 99.9 percent Islamic, so it is not that you have got some persecution of Christians. We, therefore, go and support the warlords, pay them money, equip them, and now we are saying, well, there are three al-Qaeda operatives in Mogadishu, and that is right. They have been there for 10 years. They have been there with the support of the warlords that we are

paying and supporting to have this current program going. Those al-Qaeda people should have been gone after 10 years if we knew they were there. They said that there is a training camp near the border of Kenya. This has all been controlled by the ones we are backing now to try to oust the Islamic Courts Union, which has stopped the piracy, which has taken the warlords off the streets. So then we encourage Ethiopia to invade Somalia, and we send in troops. When we try to get the United States to at least have a no-fly zone in Darfur—not to send troops but just to say, like we did for the Kurds in Iraq, you can't come over this border—we don't put a troop on the ground. But we send troops into Somalia to look for three guys where 450,000 people have been killed.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chairman, is the gentleman's time up?

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time has just expired.

Mr. PAYNE. Let me conclude by saying that I do think that when we compare your time as Secretary of State to the current 6 years, I think that there is absolutely no comparison.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Time's up.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Manzullo.

Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Madam Secretary. There is much that I agree with in your testimony, but I have to say that some of your terms, frankly, are surprising and, Madam Secretary, I think unnecessary and I think harmful. As mentioned before in your written testimony, you state, we cannot celebrate an elected Government in Iraq and then demand that it act like performing animals in our circus. And I guess my point is what would be the point of that rhetoric? In one part of your testimony later on, you celebrate democratic progress in Iraq, yet I think that is lost. I certainly think it would be lost to Iraqis because you have told the world that America has demanded that the elected Government in Iraq act like a performing animal in a circus.

You know, let's criticize the shortcomings. The President, the President has admitted shortcomings, and you and I agree on a number of those shortcomings, but it seems that we should check the rhetoric so as not to disrespect the fundamental goal of promoting democracy and stability in the eyes of Iraqis. And I would like to give you the opportunity to clarify your circus remark on that.

And then I would like to just say, we can debate what is the central front, but it seems to me that you agree that al-Qaeda in Iraq is a concern. I would like to know how you think we should best address this threat. Does a U.S. withdrawal help or hurt? And then you place an emphasis on reaching out to NATO allies. I am for that, but I think you are right that they have a stake in Iraq's future, but this committee has been frustrated by NATO's shortfall in Afghanistan let alone Iraq. So this recommendation sounds a bit fanciful. And again, as you said, hope isn't a strategy. So I would just like your observations on that.

Thank you, Madam Secretary.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I think that what has troubled me a lot is this paradox of being pleased at a democratically elected government, a sovereign Government in Iraq, and at the same time following at

least the public reporting of what our relationship is with that government, something is said that they have to do X but Prime Minister Maliki doesn't know about it until after it has been announced, so that there is a disconnect between treating them as a sovereign government and celebrating them, and then basically giving them directions and also doing things as a fait accompli. I have said that I wanted to be blunt. It is a blunt image that I think people understand, but I do think there is this paradox.

I happen to be a supporter of democratic evolution in Iraq, and as I mentioned earlier, there are signs of it, but it does not improve if the Maliki Government is viewed as being totally dependent and manipulated by us. I think it is a problem. I don't have the answers totally, but that does strike me as a paradoxical situation.

I am mostly concerned about the fact that what has happened in Iraq, and on Secretary Rumsfeld's own statements, is that more terrorists were created than in fact we could deal with. And so there has to be a larger way to deal with this issue and to deal with al-Qaeda in general in other places. We have not seen that many foreign fighters in Iraq.

Mr. ROYCE. At this point, with al-Qaeda, does a United States withdrawal help or hurt, in your view, with respect to Iraq?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I think that a U.S. withdrawal—I personally have never been for a date certain for withdrawal, but this is another paradox, the American presence is both the solution and the problem. We are providing a lot of security, but at the same time, our presence is also a magnet for creating more terrorists and insurgency. And the question is how we get out in a way that does not create worse problems.

On the issue of NATO, let me just—I have been in Europe and other places and saying it in just this way, the United States did not start World War I or World War II, but when we saw that it affected our national interests, we went in there, and we won. Many Europeans and people in other countries did not agree with this war, but if they look at how this war is affecting their national interests, they have to realize that it affects them as much if not more than us in terms of the proximity, the potential to spread, the question about their energy resources, especially as they are having more trouble with the Russians and their pipelines. I think they need to get in there and help. They need to help in training. They need to help in reconstruction. They need to see that this is not just our problem, that it is an international issue. That is all I am arguing, and we need to make that case strongly to them, and that is, again, where diplomacy comes in. So that is my argument.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I love the Clinton administration, but I don't think we can take credit for being the first to condemn the Taliban since the Taliban didn't exist until the Clinton administration came to power. We should be proceeding on the roadmap, but I hope that we don't stay in Iraq until we see peace between the Israelis and the Arabs because that might be a long time, and I think it would be wrong to pressure Israel on the theory that Baghdad will be a love fest if Israel withdraws from the Golan.

I believe we should talk to Iran, but the fault is in Tehran. Secretary Rice has offered to go anywhere and talk about anything with the Iranians so long as they suspend their nuclear enrichment, uranium enrichment during that process. If the Iranians were serious about talking to us, they would agree, talk with us expeditiously. And then if the talks didn't go anywhere in the first week, they could always go back to enriching uranium. They did suspend enriching uranium for a while in order to talk to the Europeans. Instead, my fear is that the talk about talks followed by the talks themselves will provide cover for the uranium nuclear enrichment program. There are those that want us to go well beyond talks to make unilateral concessions to Iran as kind of a sweetener before the discussions begin. I want to point out, Madam Secretary, that the last year of your office, that is exactly what we did. We opened our markets to everything Iran would want to sell us except oil. Carpets, et cetera. In other words, we would buy anything that we didn't need and that they couldn't sell anywhere else. Iran's public response was a personal rebuke to you, Madam Secretary. Their private response was to continue their nuclear program and to aid the 9/11 hijackers, though they may not have known and probably didn't know their exact mission.

I agree with you, Madam Secretary, that Iraq is not the central front on the war against radical Islam. The President has asked us to compare the war against radical Islam to the Cold War.

I remember Vietnam. We were told that if we didn't prevail in Vietnam, there would be Communists on the beaches of Santa Monica. Instead, we prevailed in the Cold War beyond our expectations because we had the good sense to leave Vietnam, a battlefield which was not of our choosing.

Madam Secretary, what strategy should we have for success in the war on global terrorism and radical Islam, assuming Iraq goes very poorly in the end? And I hope you will address the idea that you and I have discussed or at least that I have put forward to you, that we try to reach a grand bargain with Moscow to get their complete support, especially in the U.N., especially with regard to Iran's nuclear program in return for us making some concessions and accommodations on issues important to Russia in Russia's own neighborhood.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, you have put a lot of points on the table, Congressman. I do think that fighting terror is absolutely essential for us, but are we doing it in the best way? And I think that we need to do a better job of not isolating ourselves and finding allies to help us. You were talking about something to do with Vietnam and the end of the Cold War and Iran in addition to that; it reminded me to make the following point which is, the Soviets, according to everything that we knew, had missiles pointed at us, and wanted us to be in the dustbin of history. We talked to them throughout the entire time. There are a number of reasons why the Cold War ended, and some of it had to do with the fact that they spent themselves into oblivion but also that their system did not work and that we had a capability of operating in a variety of ways with the Soviet Union, helping with dissidents, looking at a variety of ways that they might be undercut. And Vietnam obviously also played a role, but the point I want to make is, throughout the Cold

War, we spoke to the Soviet Union, and I think that is one reason to try to deal with Iran.

And I read very carefully the testimony that Ambassador Pickering gave here in terms of a variety of steps that could be taken, of sticks and carrots with Iran. I think they were very useful, I won't go through them all again, but it does point a way—I hesitate to use the word roadmap—but a way that one could look at some way to change the situation. I also do think that we—it would be useful to look at your suggestions on Russia because they must also feel that they—they don't want to see a nuclear Iran. They also do have a relationship with Iran to do with Bushehr. That is something that could be used as leverage. So I do think that is a good idea.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Paul.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Madam Secretary. I appreciate very much your testimony because a lot of it I sincerely agree with. Your dire assessment I think is absolutely accurate. I think the opportunities for a good option, very slim. So there are no good options, and I was very pleased to hear your position that we should be willing to talk to the Iranians and have a little bit of diplomacy. And that, to me, is also a very important.

I am also concerned not only about the current events but how we get ourselves into these predicaments. We are in a hole, and it seems like we keep digging a bigger hole for ourselves, and this is the reason I think some of our problems start as far back as 1998 with the Iraq Liberation Act where the policy became regime change. And of course, between 1998 and 2003, I spoke out quite a few times in trying to get the Congress and the people not to endorse a military effort to have regime change. And to me, it seems like we should concentrate on that. And one thing that we could do is look to the Constitution, that we not get ourselves involved in wars that aren't declared. I mean, we did this constantly, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf. So I think someday we have to reassess that.

You mentioned that there are three possible nightmares: The al-Qaeda growing in this area; the Iranian influence; as well as a spreading to a regional conflict. And I share those concerns, but if we are honest, we have to look back and say that those three things were held in check. As evil as he was, Saddam Hussein, you know, ironically held all those concerns in check. And if politicians were required to do a cost-benefit analysis, we would have to go back and say, was this all worth it? And I think one question I would like to ask you is, Saddam Hussein is gone, but was it really worth 3,000 American lives? And the other question I would like to ask you is, in your assessment, what do you think the odds are of our country, this administration, our current policy leading to a military attack on Iran?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I think that what my position is, as I said earlier, on Iraq—and I did have the job for 8 years, first at the United Nations and then as Secretary of State, following up on the Gulf War, of making sure that various resolutions were fulfilled at the United Nations. So Iraq was kind of something that I did every day. I do

think that Saddam Hussein was dreadful, and I am glad he is gone. But I think that he was not an imminent threat to the United States. I personally did believe there were weapons of mass destruction there by deduction because the inspectors had not been able to account for all the weapons when they left in 1998, but I did not think they were a threat to us. They had no delivery system. We also had them within a tight strategic box, and we bombed regularly in the no-fly zones. And somebody mentioned that President Bush had been able to get the inspectors back in. I thought that was a great diplomatic victory, and a lot of it was based on the fact that there was a sense, a unity in Congress to support the President on providing a diplomatic solution to Iraq. And I think he should have taken them up on that. So I think the numbers that came out yesterday, that 30,000 Iraqis were killed in 1 month, we know our losses, and I think I am glad he is gone. But I think this was a war of choice, not of necessity. And I have written in this book that Congressman Lantos mentioned, I think Iraq is going to go down in history as the greatest disaster in American foreign policy, which means that it is worse than Vietnam, not in terms of the number of Americans who have died or Vietnamese versus Iraqis who have died, but in terms of its long-term consequences which we have been talking about here.

Mr. PAUL. Do you think there is much of a chance that there is going to be a strike against Iran?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I don't know that, which is why I am suggesting that you all have oversight hearings about it. I think there are various signs that are, to me, questions. That is why I decided at the end to pose these questions. I don't know, and obviously, the President, any President has to keep military options on the table. That is something that I said any number of times. Secretary Rice says it. Secretary Gates says it. That is part of the job. But I do think it worth it for all of you, if I might be so bold, to ask these questions. Because I have no access beyond reading the newspapers. And we all depend on all of you to represent us and ask the questions.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you very much.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Albright, I have always been an admirer of yours and continue to be so. Thank you for coming and testifying today.

I want to mention a point that others here have touched on, and that is what I believe is a misnomer and I disagree with the Iraq Study Group's recommendation, when they say or they seem to imply—I think they say it—that the key to settling the problems in the Middle East lies in a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While I agree with you that, of course, it would be important to resolve that conflict and of course the United States needs to be engaged, it seems to me that too many groups who say, if you can solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, everything else in the Middle East will fall in place, really are saying, put pressure on Israel to make concessions without getting very much in return. Now, we know that that has happened before. There have been administrations, not the Clinton administration or the Bush adminis-

tration, but there have been administrations that have put pressure on Israel, and I think very, very unfairly.

We know that what is happening in Iraq, as you pointed out, it is more and more like a civil war. It is Shi'a versus Sunni, and the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in my opinion, would have nothing to do with helping resolve that situation. So I am wondering if you can comment on that.

The other thing I would like to mention, and it was also mentioned by the Iraq Study Group and people here have said that we should talk to all sides. While I do think it is important to talk to everyone, I don't necessarily think it should be done by formal negotiations. There are ways to do it in a back channel way. Because I have no problem, frankly, if we don't talk to terrorist groups like Hamas, and you mentioned that that was a policy of the Clinton administration. And it has been a policy of the Bush administration. Why do we talk to countries that are terrorist states? And I regard Iran as a terrorist state. It aids and abets terrorism. It is a country that is fanning the fires of all these movements. I don't think you can isolate them. And sure I think it would be important to have some kind of back channel dialogue, but I don't know how we have a consistent policy. We won't talk to Hamas, and I don't believe we should, but we will talk to Iran. So I am wondering if you can comment on those two things.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. First of all, I am definitely one of those who is not blaming everything on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, and I think while it is very important, it is not the answer to everything. But I do think for its own sake, it should be resolved. And I think a lot can be done without putting pressure on Israel. And I hate to—well, I don't hate to—I like to refer to what we left in 2000. I mean, basically, there was pretty much an agreement that was not putting pressure in a way that you described but a way of finding a solution that suited both sides. So it is possible to work out a solution. I think it is important for its own sake, but I don't think it should be viewed as the central and only way to resolve the issues with Iraq or the Middle East.

My point about talking to Iran is—I also happen to agree with you that there are a number of different ways to do this on a track to diplomacy and other groups. But there are other ways to have these negotiations embedded within others. For instance, when we were dealing with Iran, and granted in the end it didn't work out, but there were ways, for instance, where there was a group at the U.N. called the "Six Plus Two" that basically dealt with Afghanistan. And we sat at a table with Iran, looking at issues to do with Afghanistan. I think there are different diplomatic methods of getting these kinds of dialogue, discussions going. And to go back to something Chairman Lantos said, I think there needs to be some kind of exchange, but it is this kind of flat-out way that the administration turned down what I thought the Iraq Study Group presented were some very good ideas about having a surge in diplomacy, and that is what I am advocating also, is that that be used.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

I yield 45 seconds to Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Wilson.

Part of my opening questions, Madam Secretary, I was reminded of it when, in Mr. Paul's question to you and your response, you had said that in Iraq we had a greater need for diplomacy, that there was no overwhelming need to go to war, no overriding United States interest to justify our military involvement in Iraq. And I am reminded of your leadership, sterling leadership in the Balkan issue. Despite the lack of an overt and immediate threat to United States national security posed by the developments in the Balkans, thanks to your leadership, we led the effort to end ethnic slaughtering in Bosnia and Kosovo. In fact, and I am going to quote your response to the arguments raised by Colin Powell who was then the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he argued against United States military involvement in the Balkans. And you said, "Madam Secretary, what is the point in having this superb military you are always talking about if we can't use it?" And more than a decade later, we and many other countries are still heavily involved in the region in an effort to secure stability there. And I would argue that the Iraqi people are no less deserving of our commitment than the people of the Balkans.

Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Madam Secretary, for being here today. And I appreciate very much in your statement, I desperately want General Petraeus and our forces in Iraq to succeed, and I share your passion for that. That is so important for the security of American families.

But I disagree with your statement that Iraq is not the central front in the war of those responsible for 9/11. We know that 9/11 was an al-Qaeda operation. We are aware that Osama bin Laden through his deputy Zawahiri wrote a letter to the al-Qaeda leadership at that time, Zarqawi in Mesopotamia, in Iraq and the letter of January—excuse me, July 9, 2005, said: "I want to be the first to congratulate you for fighting the battle in the heart of the Islamic world which was formerly the field of major battles in Islam's history which is now the place for the greatest battle of Islam in this era, and our enemies have declared Iraq as a central front in the war on terrorism."

Can you respond? If our enemies acknowledge this, and I think it is really important for all of us, Democrat and Republican, to acknowledge who our enemies are and face them.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, first of all, I fully agree with you: We need to define who the enemy is, and that is part of our problem, frankly. I do think there was no connection between Iraq and Saddam Hussein on one side, and Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda on 9/11. I mean, that is something that, as facts have been shown, the people that hit us came from and were supported out of Afghanistan, and I fully supported and continue to support what is going on in Afghanistan.

I think that what has happened is—and again, I quote Secretary Rumsfeld on this, that there has been a creation of more terrorists, et cetera, in Iraq than when this started. I can't remember his exact quote, but basically I think that there are other areas where we should be fighting terrorism. I think that whatever it is we are doing is, in fact, making this insurgency more complicated, and therefore, I am very concerned that we are not paying attention to

fighting terrorism in other places, and that we have determined that it is the central front on terrorism. And I don't believe that. I think it is a horrible place, and I think there is a civil war taking place. And I think there are foreign fighters taking advantage of it, but the central front of terrorism, Afghanistan is where we still need to be looking at the problem.

Mr. WILSON. But shouldn't we go after al-Qaeda wherever they are? Successfully, we have killed the al-Qaeda leadership in Algeria, in Egypt, the al-Qaeda leader in Iraq. Shouldn't we go after the al-Qaeda wherever they are? And how would you respond to bin Laden's statement that the third world war has begun in Iraq?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, first of all, I do think we need to go after al-Qaeda and anybody who wants to kill us. I do think that we need to get rid of the terrorists who want to kill us. But I think it requires us to understand in what areas this is taking place and what the effect of—whether we are really doing what we say we are doing. I can't, you know, I think that bin Laden takes advantage of situations. He writes—or somebody on his behalf writes things that then get us all diverted from what we should be doing, is going after him and looking how to defeat al-Qaeda. I fully believe that.

Chairman LANTOS. Ms. Woolsey.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, thank you for sharing your knowledge, your opinions and your voice with us today. You are needed, and you are missed, believe me. Thank you for being here.

Today, Madam Secretary, I and others will introduce legislation to bring our troops home and to reinstate sovereignty to the Iraqi people and the Iraqi Government, and we will be using the funds that are appropriated—have been appropriated that are in the pipeline as we speak—to escalate training of the Iraqi security and to ensure that our troops come home safely. But at the same time, this bill commits to supporting an international effort to assist the Iraqis in rebuilding their government and with reconciliation, providing we are invited to do that. You see, we believe that continuing this occupation is the ultimate disaster. So that is where we are, and we believe, the American people are virtually with us on that.

My question to you today is, What authority does this President have to expand his occupation to Iran and possibly Syria?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, I think that is the question because, as far as I can tell, there has been no way that Congress has spoken on the fact that this needs to be extended into other countries. There was a question about who has—whether some Iranian agents or something were seized in Iraq. There clearly is an influence that Iran has over Iraq, and that Syria has an involvement in it.

But I think that the President, any President, has to be very careful about his role as Commander-in-Chief in terms of expanding a military action. And so, again, this goes to my point, is that there need to be hearings on what the intentions are in Iran and questions of where the authority comes from. I think we are in a position now where we are involved in a war that went way beyond what anybody expected, that has clearly been badly managed, and

has not done honor to our country and has not served our troops well.

I feel so strongly about the fact that our troops are out there in an incoherent mission. We have to help our troops. And that is what I hope we all address ourselves to in terms of how this might spread.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, just to continue, our legislation resumes the Iraqi war powers that we gave the President. Would that force the President to come back to the Congress before he can take action in Iraq—in Iran?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, it is very hard for me to speculate about what is influencing the members of this administration. I mean frankly, the voters spoke November 7th and you all changed where you sit. And I really do think that that is the message. But it is hard for me to interpret how, out of all the information that has been out there, and also out of all the work that the Iraq Study Group did, that the President came to the decision that he did.

So I am not competent to tell you how he would see what you do here.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, thank you for joining us here today. To whom should we speak in Iran? Whom should we engage? What platform is available for such a conversation? I would like to hear your thoughts on some of the practical aspects of that, and I will tell you my own disposition toward it. In my mind, it is always essential to keep open some lines of communication without which you can have very limited hope of any type of relationship, no matter how meager.

But with that said, would you give me your thoughts on the practical aspects of that position which you hold?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, I do think that there are—I have personally not been to Iran, but I do think that there are members of the political configuration that would be willing to have some discussions.

That is why I actually think Congressman Lantos sending a group of you there would be useful. I think there also are private citizens, there are various groups of business people and various aspects of a small civil society that I think would be willing to talk.

There are also without—I think part of the issue here is as one lays this all out, you don't want to—you don't want to in any way make their life more complicated, but there was an election in Iraq. President Ahmadinejad actually did not do that well in terms of some of the local elections. Mr. Rafsanjani was someone who had run against Ahmadinejad.

I think we need to understand better the configuration of Iranian society than we do. It is much more complicated, it is more layered. And I think that with a will to talk to various groupings, one can find people to talk to.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Would you be at all concerned about the unintended consequence of empowering further the geopolitical aims of Iran as expressed by the current regime?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, I am worried about that, but I think what you have to do is look at a map and look at how big Iran is, and the role that it has played. It has—and I find this very troubling

to say—but it has gained influence and generally more power as a result of Iraq, there is no question in my mind.

And you watch what Ahmadinejad is doing, going around making deals with Chavez and doing all kinds of things and not being helpful on issues to do with Sudan and other places. They have gained an influence. And so they are there.

That is a statement of fact now. And therefore, from a diplomatic perspective, trying to figure out how to engage them and change the correlation of forces is what we should be looking at.

And I would hope that this administration is looking at it in a way other than just saying they are going to isolate them. And that is all I am advocating at this stage is that there be a new look at how we deal with Iran and that you all be a part of that discussion.

Chairman LANTOS. Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much and, Madam Secretary, let me thank you for your leadership. I am new on this committee and honored to be here, and certainly I have appreciated your enormous leadership for women around the world and empowering them as well as your strong advocacy for human rights.

Might I just say as a reflection on your leadership and that of the past administration, we lived in peace. It was not an easy time and certainly we confronted large challenges around the world. But it is interesting that for that period of time, we were able to use diplomacy in a very effective manner and I think that history should not go unnoticed.

This morning we had the opportunity to greet the new United Nations Secretary General, and I appreciated the broadness of his perspective. And I think all of us encourage the United Nations to be an effective new tool for peace and reconciliation, whether it is in the Palestinian-Israeli question or whether it may ultimately be in Iraq. I think it should be noted that former U.N. Secretary Kofi Annan had to be one of the most courageous Secretary Generals on his strong advocacy for peace and confronting ills no matter where he found them, whether or not it was the United States or otherwise.

I may not have an opportunity to hear your answer in respect of the 5-minute time, but let me just share with you how I think this Congress has failed the American people regardless of what our position is, our party, and whether or not we voted for or against the war or voted against it. But it is interesting that when Franklin Delano Roosevelt wanted to pack the Court, for example, the Supreme Court, the Congress rose up to whether you agree or disagree to challenge the Presidency on the basis of our constitutional premise of three equal branches of government. The same thing happened with respect to Vietnam.

Interestingly enough, after Richard Nixon took office we did in fact pass an initiative that said none of the funds herein appropriated under this act may be expended to support, directly or indirectly, combat activities in or over Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam and South Vietnam by United States forces, and after August 15, 1973 no other funds heretofore appropriated under any other act may be expended for such purpose.

I don't want failure and I certainly don't want any failure to be attributed to the United States military forces. In fact, if we had good sense, we would have declared their victory. We—they toppled Saddam and in many instances abroad brought light to areas of Iraq that just have not been able to be supported because of the Iraqi forces and, I think, the will of the present government.

So my thoughts are this: One, I think it is imperative for Congress to use its congressional veto. And I believe that we should craft and define the mission of the military as having succeeded. And, always, warriors are going to want to continue, they never want to cease a battle to think that they have not fulfilled their obligation.

We have to craft the definition of the success of our military. We have to bring them home with honor and dignity. And we have used that veto, congressional veto, and it is obviously a defined term, a term that I have characterized constructively, not by public opinion, that we should be the puppet of public opinion. I realize that we are policymakers that have to look at the broader question. But we are the ones that have made the decision, wrongly I believe, to send troops into battle where this was not the Iraqi—that it did not equal the war on terror. So I raise that point to say that we have an obligation.

I also believe that we do a disservice to the debate by engaging in nonbinding resolutions. I am delighted to join Congressman Woolsey on a legislative initiative that I think can work. But to have us debate nonbinding resolutions misrepresents to the American people. This is obviously—I have not heard you advocate for it—but I am disappointed that we would engage in that route.

My question, then, is have we failed diplomatically? I notice the resignation of a number of State Department personnel, John Helyar, Henry Crumpton and Philip Zelikow, I believe. Have we failed in taking the lead diplomatically to engage the region, Qatar, Jordan and others who may have early on been able to engage us, and should we take the Iraq Study Group's instruction and get them involved?

They might better be able to speak to this secular division and then, of course, provide our troops to the border to assist or be able to encourage the Iraqi national forces.

And I yield to the distinguished Madam Secretary, and I think—I am frustrated by us being impotent when we are in fact an equal branch of government. I thank the Secretary.

Chairman LANTOS. Gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Inglis.

Mr. INGLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Madam Secretary, I think it is very helpful to have you here and your insights have aided me in thinking through some of these things.

My view is three phases in Iraq. Phase 1, we overran the country because we thought there was a national security threat to the United States. We were successful in that.

Phase 2, we were forwardly deployed and the insurgents sort of brought the fight to us and we disrupted terrorist networks, and arguably you can score that as a victory.

Third phase is the one that I think we all fear, is that we are now dealing with a civil war.

When I was in Congress before, I was not real excited about the Balkan intervention. And the thing that worries me about this intervention is really the same thing; it is whether we are capable of being nation-builders.

At some point it seems to me the Iraqi people need to make these political decisions, and I fear that the surge may actually delay that day that they make these political decisions. Benefiting from the protection of the United States can sort of delay the day that they have to deal with the oil, deal with the de-baathification, those sorts of things.

So help me understand the difference between the Balkan intervention and what we are doing now. And I distrust this neocon notion of going out to rearrange the world the way we want it. And so I worry that, am I consistent? In other words, in the Balkan situation I was hesitant. I am also hesitant now. Do you think that is consistent or do you see a distinction between the two?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well I think there are some major differences and some similarities. But I think that what has happened in the Balkans, first of all, you can't nation-build in 5 minutes and you can't expect that you are going to be greeted as saviors and occupy.

We didn't occupy the Balkans. And what has happened is that in Bosnia, for instance, they are moving in a way to create a national system and a national army, and we are we are no longer the major force there. There continues to be interest from the international community, because I think they saw it also as a strategic interest because it was the last piece for a Europe that was whole and free. Which I think goes to a point that Congressman Ros-Lehtinen made.

But I think that there has been a slow—I know nation-building was almost a four-letter word there, but basically there has been a slow evolution. I think that, and also if I may say so, a better understanding of the forces within the Balkans. Here, we did not follow up, I think, well enough in an initial invasion phase, because we were operating on the basis of a set of facts that we wanted to believe versus what was really happening, and a civil war has erupted and we don't belong in the middle of a civil war.

I don't think it is particularly bad for the United States, as the world's great democracy, to help others who are interested in evolving a democracy in their own style, not our brand of it. And that, given as a result of some major miscalculations in Iraq, is not happening. And so a mistake—this is a major error. And I think to keep our forces there beyond a certain time when we can withdraw them in a legitimate way without creating more chaos, that it is unfair to keep our forces there in an incoherent mission.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chairman, if I could ask the gentleman to yield.

Mr. INGLIS. I would be happy to.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Just following up on that, I know we only have a few seconds, but you say we don't belong in the middle of a civil war when it comes to Iraq, yet many of you were talking about the ethnic slaughter that was going on in Bosnia, Kosovo, similarly in those terms. And just following up on his ques-

tion, why was it correct for us to react militarily in that time, in that circumstance, and incorrect now in this circumstance?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, let me just say I think what happened in Bosnia was a case study, and also in Kosovo, of a combination of diplomacy and force. Just look at the diplomatic efforts that went on at the same time that we were——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Secretary, in all the U.N. resolutions on Iraq, didn't we also pursue diplomatic means? It is not that we went to war, boom, and that is it.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. We didn't—Dayton. Take Dayton the amount of effort that was put in in order to bring the parties together, and there was a combination of force and diplomacy. It was true also in Kosovo. I do not think that the diplomatic string was followed out on Iraq after the President won a great victory of getting the inspectors back in.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Miller.

Mr. MILLER. Madam Secretary, my question also has to do with the allocation of powers between Congress and the President in this area, a topic which you said you had given a great deal of thought to over the years. I know that the Constitution makes the President the Commander-in-Chief, but I have also read the enumeration of the powers of Congress in article I, section 8, and I don't think the framers of the Constitution intended that the President could commit our Armed Forces to hostilities, to place our Armed Forces in harm's way and leave them there with just the agreement of the President's wife and dog.

You said earlier—well, in your testimony you said that you opposed efforts to cut off funds for military operations in Iraq. You said there are more constructive ways to express concerns about the administration's policies; you said we could cap the President's—the forces in Iraq. Could we do that as a condition of funding or through authorization? What is the way that we can do that?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I do think that there are ways through, I think, a cap. I know it is some idea that has just kind of been surfaced in one way to try to figure out how to put some limit on the President's authority without undercutting his authority as Commander-in-Chief and making clear that you all are a coequal branch of government and actually, according to article I, the controllers of how the militaries are raised.

And you know, as I have studied the Constitution, there was a real attempt to limit an imperial Presidency. That was part of what was going on.

And it is not easy—having been on other side—on the other side of this, it is not easy to work with a coequal system branch of the government. But it is what our system is based on.

And that is what the American taxpayers pay the money to in order to be able to support forces and do—and they send a pretty strong signal. That was my message.

Mr. MILLER. I have read the Federalist Papers and those topics, and I think you are right about your reading of the Constitution.

In the Clinton administration, to your great credit, the last 6 years of the administration when there was a Democratic President and Republican Congress, the Clinton administration avoided con-

stitutional confrontations with Congress and provided documents that were quite arguably within the executive privilege: Providing—allowed testimony to very private conversations between the President's top advisers, usually preserving the constitutional claims by asserting them and then waiving them.

With respect to the War Powers Resolution, providing reports required by the War Powers Resolution, but saying that the report is not pursuant to, not required by the administration, was conceding that was constitutionally required, but providing them anyway, saying that they were consistent with the requirements.

I am not so convinced that this administration will avoid constitutional confrontation.

If we take the position that we can cap, for instance, cap the American forces in Iraq, and the President takes the view that we cannot constitutionally do that, how do we resolve that conflict?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, I hope that it isn't something that ultimately ends up in the courts, but I do think that this is a discussion that is worth having. I think that there has to be some way that Congress shows what its desire is, representing the American people are, on this particular issue.

I am not capable of this at this point to give you exact details about how you would frame this particular piece of legislation. But I think it is worth considering the fact that you are, I presume, planning to support to fund the troops that are there, if that is a hypothesis, or that there has to be a way to exert a view that adding forces without additional authorization is something that should not—not involve you in a constitutional battle, but is part of your job in terms of questioning how moneys are raised to support the military.

Mr. MILLER. Madam Secretary, since there are just a few moments left, what are some of the other constructive ways to express concern? Concern, by the way, is a very mild term, in my view, of the policies of this administration in Iraq.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, I do think there has been some issue as to whether a nonbinding resolution is right. I think there is a way, again, without—I was taught not to interfere with the domestic affairs of other countries and also in the domestic affairs of Congress here. I can't micromanage this. But it strikes me that it would be useful to do a series of steps that would begin to deliver a pretty strong signal to the administration that they are going down the wrong path. In a way, I think we all have to always be careful to make clear that we are not trying to undercut our troops, because at least none—nobody that I have spoken to thinks that we should be doing that nor is that appropriate because they are defending us.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Boozman.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Secretary, for being here. And we do appreciate your service to our country.

You know, I had a lot of friends that I had great respect for that oppose the war, and then I had many others that supported it. And I know that, you know, you had a lot of friends who voted for the war and things. So we can argue as to whether or not we should be there. But the reality is that we are there.

We also can argue as to whether or not it is central front on the war on terror, or a front. But I am very active in the NATO Parliament and I think it is fair to say that our NATO allies, most of our allies, whether they are European or in the region, the Bahrainians, the Egyptians, the Saudi Arabians, and the list goes on and on, the Turks, are very concerned about the problem if we are a failure in Iraq. And I think you could argue that if we are, if it is not, if it is not a front, you know, the foremost front now, that with failure it could very easily become that in the future.

Can you tell us if we do fail in Iraq, if we leave too early, if the place descends into chaos, can you tell us what do you think will happen? Can you tell us the effect on our allies like Saudi Arabia? Will that increase the possibility of nuclear proliferation in the area? Will those countries defend themselves against Iran? Which is a risk, you know, has traditionally been a tremendous adversary.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I am also concerned about a failed mission in Iraq, which is something that, unfortunately, I don't know what you call what is going on now. I say mess. That is a diplomatic term of art. But they can't say that there is a success there now.

I think as somebody who very proudly represented the United States, I think it is very bad to see a questioning of American military power and a stretching of our military to the extent that has been taking place, and I am very troubled about the long-term effect of this.

Therefore, I do—I believe that there needs to be a—and to go back to something I said earlier, a new look at how the Middle East should be treated, a regional approach that would show that we do not have an intention to have permanent bases there, but we continue to have an interest; that there needs to be some kind of a new security framework for them, that we do not condone Iran's behavior, that we cannot allow the whole region to be overtaken by those who want to kill each other. But failure for the—at the moment, you cannot say that America's power is respected or that we are fulfilling the role that I have always believed we should have is as the indispensable Nation. And we have to figure out how to build that kind of trust. But putting more troops into a mission that is incoherent doesn't make sense to me.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Yes, ma'am. Again though, like I say, if we—right now, certainly everyone would agree that things are not going—have gone like we would like for it to do, but if Iraq descends into worst-case scenario, okay, and you have got tremendous Iranian influence, again, what do you see the allies in the region—how do you see Pakistan? How do you see Saudi Arabia? How do you see some of these other countries? The Turks, what will their response be in your——

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, since Secretary Rice's trip as she is going around, I think that she is trying to gather support. I think we do not want the area to spin out of control so that there is increased nuclear proliferation.

Brings me to another subject. I think we need to rethink how the nuclear proliferation regime is set up. We need to rethink some of our nuclear doctrine. We have to figure out a way that there are not loopholes and that we don't let the whole area spin out of control.

Mr. BOOZMAN. So with failure——

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I don't know how you define failure.

Mr. BOOZMAN. In the sense of the worst-case scenario that we pull out, Iran descends into full-scale civil war, blood bath, the whole bit. Perhaps Iran comes in, this and that, there is a Sunni-Shiite slaughter, that because of that, you mention an increase in nuclear proliferation, there is the—that is a very real situation isn't it?

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Well, I would like to avoid all that. I am not sure that adding 20,000 troops in the current plan is the way to avoid it, and therefore why I would have looked at some of the suggestions made by a bipartisan commission—the Iraq Study Group, I am not sure, you know—they had over 70 recommendations in all of them, but they had an approach that allowed there to be something other than this descent into failure that you describe. And so I think there are ways to look at this that would prevent that. But we are not, as I said in my remarks—there are no good options at the moment.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Madam Secretary, we are all deeply in your debt not only for the tremendous wisdom and judgment and experience you brought to us, but for your stamina in being here for this length of time.

We have four votes scheduled. And I will express my regret to my colleagues who haven't had a chance to ask questions, and at the next hearing we will give priority to our colleagues who haven't asked questions here.

On behalf of all of us, Madam Secretary, we are deeply in your debt and we hope you will honor us by coming back on a future occasion.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I was very glad to be back here trying to answer some of the difficult questions that you and your colleagues have posed, and I will be very happy to come back any time. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. I think you have succeeded. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

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THE BAKER–HAMILTON COMMISSION

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Tom Lantos (chairman of the committee) Presiding.

Chairman LANTOS. The committee will come to order. The situation in Iraq is grave, and it is deteriorating. This was the most ringing and most often quoted phrase from the Iraq Study Group released 6 weeks ago. Today it appears to be more serious still. We read that a Sunni insurgent group linked to al-Qaeda is asserting with evident pride that it was behind the murder of a 28-year-old Ohio woman in Baghdad. She was there to help improve the lot of everyday Iraqis by working with the National Democratic Institute. Together with three of her security aides, this brave young woman, 28, was eliminated by thugs who want nothing more than for her mission to fail.

Today our distinguished witness, the co-chairman of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, Lee Hamilton, a former chairman of this committee, by whose side I sat for some two decades, and from whom I learned a great deal. Lee Hamilton is one of the most distinguished public servants of the United States whose contributions to our national security and foreign policy are immeasurable. We are very pleased to have you, Lee.

Mr. HAMILTON. Thank you very much.

Chairman LANTOS. Unfortunately, due to a sudden illness, former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger could not join us today. Both Chairman Hamilton and I have known Lawrence Eagleburger for decades. He, on the Republican side, has provided invaluable advice and assistance and services both abroad and in this country to Presidents, Republican and Democratic, and we wish him a quick and complete recovery. He served on the Iraq Study Group as it prepared to release its milestone report. The report generated much praise and criticism from all sides, both within the United States and abroad.

I commend Secretary Baker and Chairman Hamilton and all the authors for the real reason that they injected into the national discussion on Iraq at a time when much of it had devolved into polemics and separate sets of facts. Time has moved on since the release of this report, and we now have an official tally of some 30,000 or more Iraqi civilians killed in this last year alone. Given the relative population of Iraq and the United States, that would be as if

400,000 Americans had died in 1 year, and were the conflict on our own soil, we would certainly refer to it as a civil war.

In fact, historians note that in the course of the entire U.S. Civil War, more than 600,000 soldiers from the north and south perished, most of them from disease. Figures on civilian casualties are less reliable.

Chairman Hamilton, I strongly commend you for the Commission's proposal to draw down our troops and withdraw virtually all combat forces by early next year, but our reservations about the proposal to leave some of our forces embedded in the Iraqi army down to the company level well after the bulk of our forces have departed. I would like to feel confident that this will not leave the embedded forces more vulnerable to attacks by anti-American Iraqis, including from within a sectarian Iraqi military.

As you know, I am a firm believer in dialogue and I strongly support the proposal in this report to engage Iraq's neighbors in efforts to create and maintain stability in Iraq. Unfortunately, the report has been widely interpreted to mean that we should go to the Syrians and the Iranians and ask for help. I very much hope you will clarify this point. I see no reason why Damascus and Tehran, after having spent almost 4 years attempting to undermine our efforts, would suddenly come around and be helpmates.

I am also puzzled by the implication that resolving the Israeli-Palestinian problem, which certainly is a very desirable goal, is central to resolving our problems in Iraq. These two issues, both difficult to resolve, should not be artificially conflated. The status of the Palestinians does not prompt Shiites and Sunnis to engage in reciprocal mass assassinations in Iraq, as I am sure you agree. There are countless sound reasons to encourage the continuance of serious efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian problem, but Iraq is surely not one of them. I hope you will speak to this issue, and I will welcome your clarification. I would also like to hear your evaluation of the response to your report by Iraqi officials, Chairman Hamilton, including Kurdish leaders.

As you know, President Talabani was scathing in his comments. He called it an insult to the Iraqi people and made other stunningly bitter comments, including this, I quote: "We can smell the attitude of James Baker in 1991 when he liberated Kuwait but left Saddam in power."

I want to conclude by pointing out that the best barometer of the wisdom of the President's new plan is the response not of his critics but of his supporters. Two of the administration's strongest supporters, Charles Krauthammer and Peggy Noonan, have been unrestrained in denouncing the plan in recent days. In today's *Washington Post*, Mr. Krauthammer, a determined proponent in the War in Iraq, states that Maliki's government is, I quote, "hopelessly sectarian." And the President's plan to increase our forces "will fail because the Maliki government will undermine it."

Former Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* earlier, what a dreadful mistake the President made when he stiff-armed the Iraq Study Group report, which are bipartisan membership and air of mutual party investment, the imprimatur of what remains of and is understood as the American establishment and was inherently moderate in its proposal.

Ms. Noonan concluded, I thought the administration would see it as a life raft. Instead, they pushed it away. Like the old woman in the flood who took to the roof and implored God to send a boat to save her, a hunk of wood floated by as she prayed with fervor, a busted wooden door floated by as the waters rose, and she doubled her prayers.

Finally she cried, "God I asked you to save me and you didn't send a boat." And the voice of God replied, "I sent you a hunk a wood and a door." We don't always recognize deliverance when it arrives.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like you to comment briefly, if you would, on the various legislative proposals that have been introduced in recent days, ranging from the bipartisan proposal in the Senate, some proposals here in this body and the general negative reaction to the search advocated by the administration.

I now turn to the esteemed ranking member of the committee, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, for whatever remarks she wishes to make.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Chairman Lantos, and I would also like to thank Chairman Hamilton for testifying before our committee today. I had the great pleasure of serving on this very same committee under his leadership. So we welcome you back to your home, Chairman Hamilton.

And I would like to commend the members of the Iraq Study Group for their work on the difficult situation in Iraq and for providing many useful recommendations to help us in our debate regarding United States policy in that country. Ensuring stability and security must be our overriding priorities. Without significantly reducing the level of sectarian violence and effectively combating the insurgents and their death squads, little progress can be expected in establishing peace and stability in Iraq.

However, we cannot achieve these goals by ourselves. As the President has stated, the principle responsibility for ensuring peace and security in Iraq lies with the Iraqi Government and the Iraqi people. As for the report itself, I have strong reservations regarding some of the Commission's assessments and recommendations. The first concern is regarding the proposal to turn to state sponsors of terrorism, namely Iran and Syria, to help stabilize Iraq. Recommendation nine on page 51 to 52. Direct engagement with Iran and Syria without first requiring that these regimes end their support of the insurgency groups within Iraq and end their assistance to Islamic Jihadist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah would send a terrible message that the United States is willing to overlook almost any outrage by our enemies in return for the vague prospect of help.

The reality is that the interests of Iran and Syria in Iraq are opposed to those of the Iraqi people and the United States. These repressive regimes are not interested in establishing a stable democracy in Iraq because that would directly threaten their own priorities.

Iran continues to provide arms, funding and training to Iraq's Shiite militias including al-Sadr's army which has been responsible for much of the bloodshed in Iraq and which has targeted United States-led coalition forces. Syria also reportedly continues to fund many of the insurgents in Iraq and has allowed money and weap-

ons to be funneled to al-Qaeda and other extremist groups that are operating there. The truth is that the reason Iran and Syria might want to cooperate is not to help Iraq, but to help themselves by reducing the international pressure now building on them in other areas.

The United States and our allies have placed significant pressure on the Iranian regime to stop its clandestine nuclear program. The U.N. Security Council is also taking steps to hold Iran accountable for its nonproliferation violations, calling on Tehran to suspend its uranium enrichment program. However, Iran continues to ignore these and other measures and refuses to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency, even though it is bound by the international treaty to do so. Merely saying that Iran should stem the flow of equipment, technology and training to any group resorting to violence in Iraq as stated in page 53 of the report is not sufficient. The same is true for Syria. The Syrian regime hopes to use the appearance of cooperating with the international community to divert attention from its involvement in the 2005 assassination of the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Hariri, and its ongoing efforts to reassert its influence over Lebanon.

Given the interest of these two countries, their ongoing terrorist activities and their poor record of international cooperation, I strongly believe that it would be a mistake to turn to them for assistance in Iraq. Further, I am concerned that such unconditional negotiations with rogue regimes like Iran and Syria would hamper, rather than promote and encourage, United States allies in the region to engage in the diplomatic offensive of described in the report. Another significant concern I have with the report is its linking the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the situation in Iraq. Recommendations 13 and 15 and 17. I have a hard time believing that if the Israeli and Palestinians were to make peace tomorrow, the insurgents in Iraq would stop their attacks, that ethnic strife would immediately stop, that al-Qaeda would pack up their bags and leave, and that Iran would give up its plan for regional domination.

I believe that it is essential that the United States continue to make every effort to help the Israelis and the Palestinians achieve peace and security. However, we should not adopt the rhetoric or give credence to the excuses offered by the likes of Syria to justify their support for Jihadists and suicide bombers as legitimate resistance. I am concerned that if some of these recommendations were implemented, these and other recommendations would greatly complicate the situation in Iraq and have damaging consequences for United States policy throughout the Middle East. I believe that there is much value in the report. It does pave the way for creative thinking, and I commend all of the participants for putting it forward. I look forward to the testimony of Chairman Hamilton today and to hearing the statements made by other members. Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen. According to the policy of the committee, the chairman and ranking member of the appropriate committee are now recognized for 3 minutes. Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I want to concur with the statements, opinions that you have expressed as

well as that of the ranking member, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen. I thought they were very good.

Mr. Hamilton, it has been a pleasure working and serving with you on this committee for so many years, and I just want to tell you that your personal modesty has denied us the delight of having your portrait on the wall with so many other of the past chairmen, but we want you to know that the work that you have done and the impression that you have made still have a lasting imprint on the work that is done in this room.

Mr. Chairman, I have a brilliantly written 3-minute opening statement that—not to set a precedent for me, but in the interest of saving time, I would like to put in the record.

Chairman LANTOS. I appreciate that.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ackerman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE GARY L. ACKERMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Thank you Mr. Chairman for again bringing our Committee together to discuss Iraq. There is no more pressing issue for the United States and I think your decision to focus on to the situation there is entirely appropriate. The Republican Congress was, for too long, a silent partner in a losing venture. The American public, however, made its view of the situation clear in November of last year. They expect more of us than fraudulent debates for political gain and meaningless resolutions stuffed with platitudes and pieties.

Perhaps, greater congressional attention to Iraq might have improved the Administration's conduct of the war to date. I'd like to think so, but no one knows. I don't think there's any question that it couldn't have made things worse—if only because the Bush Administration has fouled up more or less every part of this entire horrific enterprise. But what is critical, is that we come to recognize that the political pattern we are seeing today is no different than the original pattern set in 2002.

Back then, the Bush Administration decided on a policy of dubious wisdom, and then set about terrifying the American people in order to justify it. Their facts, or at least what they called facts, turned out to be fictions. Of their errors, misstatements and exaggerations, some were known to be false, some should have been known to be false, and some were just wild guesses dressed up as real thinking. Our military was given a job without proper resources or a comprehensive plan to guide their mission. No inclusive, coherent regional strategy was considered necessary because nothing succeeds like success.

Skeptics and critics were aggressively dismissed as being unrealistic, foolish, cowardly, unpatriotic, or some combination of all of the above. The President addressed the nation, put his proposals in the ill-fitting garments of World War II, and set in motion plans no deeper than a Power Point presentation and no more effective at shaping events than a fairy tale.

And then, of course, reality intervened, in the form of the real Iraq with all its chaos, ethnic and religious tension, tribalism, decay and ambiguity; the real interests and motives of Iraqis which were and are, far too complex to be captured in the happy talk the President likes to make on TV; and the unanticipated, though stupefyingly obvious efforts of Iran and Syria to advance their own interests in what is, in fact, their own backyards.

We have seen this pattern again and again. And it's the same thing, again and again. Before the war. After the war. With the creation of the Coalition Provisional Authority and the appointment of Jerry Bremer as Grand Poo-bah. With the handover of sovereignty. With the adoption of the Constitution. With the elections. With the appointment of the new government. And now with the surge of 21,000 troops. Success is always around the next corner, on the far side of the hill.

We shouldn't have believed this nonsense the first time around; we definitely should have asked hard, serious questions the second time around and, frankly, there never should have been a third time around.

How we got here, at the fifth or sixth iteration of this, by now, familiar and tragic pattern of fear mongering followed by incompetence begetting failure, should be plain. It is the Bush Administration's standard operating procedure. It is their default method of operation and they will continue this pattern as long as they are not checked by the Congress.

If Congress does not intervene, if we do not act, does anyone really believe we will not find ourselves at exactly the same point only months from now? Does anyone really believe that the collapse and failure of Iraq's institutions, the swirling cauldron of ethnic and religious hostility and the raw anarchy of Iraqi society will be ameliorated by the addition of 21,000 American soldiers and marines? I don't. I don't think anyone should.

Mr. Chairman, managing failure is unpleasant; reinforcing it is criminal. I look forward to hearing from our very distinguished witness.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I yield back my time.

Chairman LANTOS. I appreciate that very much. Mr. Pence.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I don't want to begin my relationship with the chairman of my committee, by doing otherwise, but allow me to say to Chairman Hamilton very humbly, welcome back to a committee that you so helped to define both in this institution and its place in American foreign policy. Despite our political differences, I hope you see my contributions to this committee from your old hometown of Columbus, Indiana, as evidence of your continuing inspirational power.

I probably know less about your career than my colleagues do here in Washington, but I know more about your jump shot and the esteem that the people of Indiana hold you in. Let me just thank you publicly for the outstanding work of the Iraq Study Group, a serious proposal thoughtfully prepared. I would echo some of the concerns both Chairman Lantos and Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen raised about the external approach and welcome your thoughts on that, and just close by saying that while you have served the United States in a variety of roles in recent years at home and abroad, you are a unique source of pride in Indiana, and I would like to express my public thanks for your role in this manner.

Chairman LANTOS. I want to thank my friend from Indiana. And let me just add that Chairman Hamilton's reputation is that of a great American. We don't let Indiana claim him entirely, but we are delighted to have you and Chairman Hamilton represent what are called Indiana values, and since occasionally you hear comments about San Francisco values, the two representatives of San Francisco, Nancy Pelosi and myself, have a combined marriage duration of 100 years and 23 grandchildren. So that is what San Francisco values are, 100 years of marriage and 23 grandchildren. I hope my Republican colleagues have taken note of that.

Mr. Faleomavaega. If there are any requests for 1 minute on this side, if not, we will go directly to Chairman Hamilton.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your courtesy, but I will defer at this time.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First let me welcome our distinguished former chairman, Lee Hamilton, and I, like Chairman Lantos and Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, had served a number of years with Lee, and I have always had the deepest respect for the manner with which he wielded the gavel, fair and impartial and his commitment to forging a bipartisan sustainable foreign policy.

I also want to thank Chairman Hamilton for the extraordinary work and leadership he provided as cochairman of the Iraq Study Group, but also for the exemplary leadership along with my Gov-

ernor, former Governor Tom Kean, on the bipartisan 9/11 Commission. The work of that Commission has been of enormous value, and it has helped America to realize and to implement lessons learned. It was not just about accountability, it was about where to go forward, just like the Iraq Study Group.

But finally, I want to thank and pay special trouble to our colleague Frank Wolf for his extraordinary vision and the actions that he took to establish the Iraq Study Group. As many of my colleagues know, the Iraq Study Group was the brilliant idea of Frank Wolf. It was his brainchild, conceived after his third trip to Iraq in September 2005. Mr. Wolf created the consensus, he worked with the administration, he worked in a bipartisan way, and authored the appropriation of $1 million to establish the Iraq Study Group.

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. SMITH. And I thank the Chair for yielding, and I thank Mr. Wolf again.

Chairman LANTOS. Unless there is strong objection, I would like to go from our distinguished witness, because if we hear from everybody and with the pending vote that we anticipate, he will not even get a chance to begin.

Chairman Hamilton, we are delighted to have you. Please proceed any way you choose.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE LEE HAMILTON, CO-CHAIR OF THE IRAQ STUDY GROUP (BAKER-HAMILTON COMMISSION)

Mr. HAMILTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and the Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen. I appreciate greatly your most gracious comments. It is very good to be back in this room where I have spent many, many hours. I think I felt a little more comfortable on that side of the witness stand rather than this one. I have always thought it was a little easier to ask the questions than it is to answer them, but I will do the best I can this morning.

I am very sorry that Secretary Baker is not able to join us, because of a lot of conflict and his schedule, and I am also sorry that Secretary Eagleburger is not here, both of them would add a lot of depth to this discussion this morning, and I know you are disappointed in not having them, but believe you me, I am just as disappointed, perhaps more than you that they are not here. I do ask permission to revise and extend my remarks.

Chairman LANTOS. Without objection.

Mr. HAMILTON. I will address in my statement a number of the comments that you and the ranking member have made about criticisms of the report, but of course, we will be happy to return to that if you have questions about it.

Let me begin by noting some of the common elements of the Iraq Study Group report and the President's position. We agree with the President when he said in his speech that the situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people. We agree when he said that the consequences of failure are clear, we agree when he said that only the Iraqis, as I think share—the ranking member quoted, "only the Iraqis can end the sectarian violence and secure their people."

We do support increasing the number of American advisors embedded in Iraqi army units with the goal that the Iraqi Govern-

ment would be able to assume control of security in all of the provinces in Iraq by November 2007. We recommended many of the benchmarks that President Bush outlined for Iraq and agree that now is the time to press the government to act. As part of my prepared statement, I have attached a statement by Secretary Baker and myself, released after the President's speech. I have also attached a chart from the January 11 *Washington Post*, comparing key proposals from the Iraq Study Group report with the President's proposal.

I know that our report has been analyzed at some length, and I am not going to go into it in detail. What I am going to try to do is emphasize a few points, and I will try to do that succinctly. The first point I want to talk about is our recommendation that the primary mission of United States forces in Iraq should evolve to one of supporting the Iraqi army, which would then take over primary responsibility for combat activities. The President used different language. It is very significant I think. He said that we will accelerate the training of Iraqi forces, which remains the essential United States security mission in Iraq.

So while there are a little bit of similarities here, there is a gap, maybe it is a large gap, between our two positions. We state very clearly and flatly that the training should become the primary mission of U.S. forces. Training, in our view, cannot become the primary mission for United States forces in Iraq if the mission includes a stepped up security mission in Baghdad.

Now I am sure the administration will argue that our soldiers can carry out both missions, and I really agreed with that, but I am also confident that if you do both, the training mission is going to suffer. All you have got to do is look at all of the attention that is now placed on the question of the surge and the troop levels in the media, in the remarks by the administration and in remarks by critics of the administration. The training mission is getting pushed back. We were told on several occasions that more United States forces can bring stability on a temporary basis in a specific area, but only the Iraqis can step up and secure their country. Sometimes the presence of United States forces inflames tensions and enables the Iraqis to put off responsibility. Unless the training mission is the primary mission, you delay the date of completion of the training mission; you delay the date of handover of responsibility to the Iraqis. You delay the day of departure of United States forces from Iraq.

It is my view that we at some point will have to make the training of Iraqis the primary mission. The question is not whether you do it. The question is when. It is the only way you get out of Iraq eventually to train the Iraqi forces. The President's plan gives no indication how long the training mission or the security mission in Baghdad will take. The key point of difference then is that the Study Group believes that a change in the primary mission of U.S. forces will enable the United States to begin to move its combat forces out of Iraq in a responsible way.

Now, the second point I want to make relates to the performance on the benchmarks. No security plan will work in Iraq in the absence of national reconciliation. We said that the United States forces can cannot stop the violence or even contain it if there is no

underlying political agreement among Iraqis about the future of the country. The Study Group, the President, Prime Minister Maliki agree on the key measures that the Iraqi Government must take. There is extraordinary agreement at this point. You are very familiar with them. Sharing the oil revenues fairly and provincial elections later this year, reform of the de-baathification laws, and, of course, a fair process for considering amendments to the constitution. The Study Group sets dates for performance. It calls on the United States to consult closely with the Iraqi Government to develop additional milestones tied to calendar dates.

Prime Minister Maliki's words on behalf of these goals have been good, but his performance has been weak. I like the President's statement where he says that I have made clear to the Prime Minister and Iraq's other leaders that America's commitment is not open ended. If the Iraqi Government does not follow through on its promises, it will lose the support of the American people, and it will lose the support of the Iraqi people. Now is the time to act. It is a very good statement. What is lacking, I believe, in the administration's approach, is holding Iraqi leaders to specific benchmarks and to specific dates of performance. The United States needs to use its leverage to get Iraqi leaders to perform. We use conditionality of assistance with many other recipients of U.S. aid. We should do so with Iraq. We stated in our recommendations that if the Iraqi Government does not make substantial progress toward the achievement of milestones on national reconciliations, security and governance, the United States should reduce its political military or economic support for the Iraqi Government. Some of you who have been around this institution for a while know that that language really came out of legislation dealing some years ago with El Salvador.

In the absence of pressure, the Iraqi Government will not perform. In the absence of pressure, there will be no national reconciliation. In the absence of national reconciliation, there will be sectarian violence without end. The third point is diplomacy. And I, of course, was struck by the comments made by the chairman and the ranking members about some of our recommendations on diplomacy. The President did not, of course, endorse a diplomatic effort including all of Iraq's neighbors. He did say in his speech that we will use America's full diplomatic resources to rally support for Iraq from nations throughout the Middle East. The Study Group took the view that the United States should engage directly with Iran and Syria in order to try to obtain their commitment to constructive policies toward Iraq and other regional issues. I suspect that is not the most popular recommendation we made. Iran and Syria have influence in Iraq. That is simply a fact. There are things they are doing that we want them to stop doing, a good many of them. There are things they could be doing that they are not doing, also a good many of them. But we cannot wish that influence away. Undoubtedly, they are part of the problem. It was the view of the Study Group that we must try to make them a part of the solution. Sometimes the argument is made that Iran has momentum in the region, and the United States should not negotiate until it has more leverage over Iran. I do not accept that the United States of America is too weak to negotiate.

We negotiated with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. We certainly can and should negotiate with Iran on behalf of stability in our interests in Iraq. We ought not to fear to negotiate, but we ought not to be afraid to negotiate. Now on the Arab-Israeli peace question, the Study Group, as has been accurately stated here, calls for a renewed and sustained commitment by the United States to an Arab-Israeli peace on all fronts.

And I have been encouraged by the recent trip of the Secretary of State to the region in which she clearly is trying to reactivate elements of this effort. Her efforts to launch informal talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis, I think, are a very positive development. Some have asked us, what does the Arab-Israeli conflict have to do with the war in Iraq? Well, why make one problem harder by taking on two? The answer I think is simple, you really cannot get anything done in the Middle East without addressing the Arab-Israeli issue. We want these other countries, especially the Sunni Arab countries, to help us. And when you go to talk to them about Iraq, they will want to talk to us about the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The United States says that we want to empower moderate Muslims. The only way to empower the moderates is to take away the most potent grievance of the extremists, and that grievance is that the United States does not care about the Palestinians.

A comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace will deal the extremists a blow in Baghdad and in Beirut. It will bolster American prestige; and above all, it will guarantee the long-time security of America's ally, Israel. We do not have starry eyes about what can be achieved through diplomacy, but we do think it is a very important tool in the American arsenal, and all of us understand that the peace process is difficult and that results will come in years, not in months. But a sustained effort counts, a sustained effort will help us with Iraq and will win us important diplomatic leverage across the Middle East.

On the question of economic assistance, the President calls for $1.1 billion in additional economic assistance for Iraq. That is a good step. We thought it ought to be larger, $5 billion a year, not $1 billion. And I guess the principle reason we thought that is because you need more balance in our approach, our approach for a variety of reasons, and I think understandable reasons, is very heavily weighted toward the military mission. We are spending about $2 billion a week on the military alone. We need to do many things right in Iraq if we are going to succeed, and we certainly need, in our view, to devote a lot of economic resources to job creation and capacity building. Job creation is necessary to give some hope and purpose to young Iraqis. Too many of them, as you know, are frustrated and cannot provide for their families. Too many have turned to militias and the insurgency, and our commitment to the job creation effort, which certainly should include the Commander's Emergency Response Program, but it has to be broader than that, and we need to help Iraqis start their many idle factories. Capacity building is necessary because the Iraq Government is weak, not just in the Prime Minister's office but all the way through, you cannot help but be impressed that the ministries of that government need a lot of help in terms of governing the country. It cannot de-

liver the basic services of government today. It falls short in providing electricity and water, it falls short in providing security, and the current Government of Iraq can succeed, only if it starts to win the confidence of those it governs.

Capacity building means technical assistance and advice. It means better procedures in government agencies, including a greater delegation of authority, and much better internal controls.

The Secretary of State has named a reconstruction coordinator in Baghdad. That may be helpful, but it does not go to the problem that we described in the report. The problem is coordination at the interagency level, and it is most acute here in Washington. The new coordinator is capable, but he is the Secretary of State's appointee, not the President's appointee. He cannot chair the NFC meetings in Washington and make other agencies do what he tells them to do.

Let me conclude, and I will make a few comments about the surge. The President has decided on a new strategy. Its hallmark is a surge of United States forces, about five additional combat brigades for Baghdad. We stated in our report that we could support a short-term redeployment or a surge, and we use the word "surge," of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad, complemented by comprehensive political economic and diplomatic efforts.

All of the attention right now is on the military aspects of policy. That is true of the President. It is true of his critics. To some degree, that is quite understandable. We are all concerned, deeply concerned when young men and women are sent into harm's way. But the violence in Baghdad will not end without national reconciliation. The violence will not end unless Iraq's leaders step up and make difficult decisions about the future of their country. The President correctly stated that only the Iraqis can end the sectarian violence. We are placing all of our bets on the performance of the Iraqi Government.

The Prime Minister's rhetoric is good. His performance so far has been disappointing. He has not been effective. He has not proved reliable, nor have many of Iraq's other leaders. Too often they have acted in their sectarian interest, not the national interest. The Study Group believes in the comprehensive military, diplomatic, economic and political approach. The primary U.S. military mission must shift from combat to training. Iraq's neighbors and the international community must be engaged to play a constructive role on behalf of stability in Iraq. We need a robust economic program focused on job creation and building the capacity of the Iraqi Government. And above all, Iraq's Government must be able to meet performance benchmarks on national reconciliation. One of the American generals in Baghdad told us, if the Iraq Government does not make political progress, all the troops in the world will not provide security.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I will be pleased to respond to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Lee Hamilton follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE LEE HAMILTON, CO-CHAIR OF THE IRAQ STUDY GROUP (BAKER-HAMILTON COMMISSION)

Chairman Lantos, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, distinguished members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs: It is a distinct honor to appear before you this morning. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group report.

Introduction

Let me begin by noting some common elements in the Study Group report and the President's recent speech. We agree with President Bush:

- "The situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people . . ."
- "The consequences of failure are clear . . ." and
- "Only the Iraqis can end the sectarian violence and secure their people."

We support increasing the number of American advisors embedded in Iraqi Army units with the goal that the Iraq government will assume control of security in all provinces in Iraq by November 2007.

We recommended many of the benchmarks President Bush outlined for Iraq, and agree that now is the time for the Iraqi government to act.

As part of my prepared statement, I have attached a statement that Secretary Baker and I released after the President's speech. Also attached is a chart from the January 11th *Washington Post* comparing key proposals from the Iraq Study Group Report with the President's proposal.

The report of the Study Group already has been analyzed at length. If it is agreeable to the Chair, I would like to be fairly brief in my opening remarks and concentrate on making a few points on:

- the security mission;
- benchmark performance;
- diplomacy;
- economic assistance;
- the military surge; and
- the Maliki government.

Training the Iraqi Army: Primary versus Essential Mission

There are points of similarity between the Study Group report and the President's plan. Both keep rapid reaction and special operations forces in place to strike al Qaeda in Iraq. Both increase the number of U.S. personnel embedded with Iraqi Army units. Both emphasize the training mission.

The President stated: ". . . we will accelerate the training of Iraqi forces, which remains the essential U.S. security mission in Iraq."

The Study Group stated (p. 70): "The primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq should evolve to one of supporting the Iraqi Army, which would take over primary responsibility for combat operations."

While there are similarities between these two proposals, it is my belief that there is still a very large gap between them.

The Study Group states flatly that training should become the primary mission for U.S. forces.

The President states that training "remains the essential . . . mission." The President's plan also makes clear that U.S. forces will be sent to Baghdad to "help Iraqis clear and secure neighborhoods." That means door-to-door sweeps. That means combat operations.

Training cannot become the primary mission for U.S. forces in Iraq if the mission includes a stepped-up security mission in Baghdad.

The Administration will tell you that our soldiers can carry out both missions.

I agree—our soldiers can do both missions. I am also confident that if you do both, the training mission suffers. All of the attention now is on the surge, not on the training mission.

We were told on several occasions that more U.S. forces can bring stability on a temporary basis in a specific area, but only the Iraqis can step up and secure their country. Sometimes the presence of U.S. forces can inflame tensions and enable the Iraqis to put off responsibility.

Unless the training mission is the *primary* mission:

- You delay the date of completion of the training mission;
- You delay the date of a handover of responsibility to the Iraqis;

- You delay the date of departure of U.S. forces from Iraq.

Now, the Iraq Study Group set no timetables and set no deadlines, but it did set a clear goal and direction for policy: "By the first quarter of 2008, subject to unexpected developments in the security situation on the ground, all combat brigades could be out of Iraq."

The President's plan gives no indication how long the training mission or the security mission in Baghdad will take.

The key point of difference is that the Study Group believes that a change in the primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq will enable the United States to begin to move its combat forces out of Iraq responsibly.

The President's proposal spells out no comparable plan for a transition of combat forces out of Iraq.

Performance on Benchmarks

No security plan can work in the absence of national reconciliation. The Study Group report stated that U.S. forces "cannot stop the violence—or even contain it—if there is no underlying political agreement among Iraqis about the future of their country."

The Study Group, the President, and Prime Minister Maliki agree on key measures the Iraqis need to take. Those measures include: legislation to share oil revenues among all Iraqis; provincial elections later this year; reform of the de-Baathification laws; and a fair process for considering amendments to Iraq's Constitution. The Study Group sets dates for performance. It calls on the United States to consult closely with the Iraqi government to develop additional milestones tied to calendar dates.

Prime Minister Maliki's words on behalf of these goals have been good, but his performance has been weak. I commend the President for his statement:

> I have made clear to the Prime Minister and Iraq's other leaders that America's commitment is not open-ended. If the Iraqi government does not follow through on its promises, it will lose the support of the American people and it will lose the support of the Iraqi people. Now is the time to act.

What is lacking in the Administration's approach, however, is holding Iraqi leaders to specific benchmarks and to specific dates for performance. The United States needs to use its leverage to get Iraqi leaders to perform. We use conditionality with many other recipients of U.S. assistance. We should do so with Iraq. The Study Group stated in its Recommendation 21 (p.61):

> If the Iraqi government does not make substantial progress toward the achievement of milestones on national reconciliation, security and governance, the United States should reduce its political, military, or economic support for the Iraqi government.

In the absence of pressure, the Iraqi government will not perform. In the absence of pressure, there will be no national reconciliation. In the absence of national reconciliation, there will be sectarian violence without end.

Diplomacy

The President stated in his speech that "We will use America's full diplomatic resources to rally support for Iraq from nations throughout the Middle East."

Iran and Syria. The President did not endorse a diplomatic effort including all of Iraq's neighbors. The Study Group took the view that "the United States should engage directly with Iran and Syria in order to try to obtain their commitment to constructive policies toward Iraq and other regional issues."

Iran and Syria have influence in Iraq. That's simply a fact. There are things they are doing that we want them to stop doing. There are things they could be doing that they are not doing. We cannot wish that influence away. Yes, they are part of the problem. It is the view of the Study Group that we must try to make them part of the solution.

Sometimes the argument is made that Iran has momentum in the region, and the United States should not negotiate until it has more leverage over Iran. I do not accept that the United States of America is too weak to negotiate. We negotiated with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. We certainly can and should negotiate with Iran on behalf of stability and our interests in Iraq.

Arab-Israeli peace. The Study Group also calls for a renewed and sustained commitment by the United States to an Arab-Israeli peace on all fronts. The Secretary of State has been traveling in the region. Her efforts to launch informal talks between Palestinians and Israelis are a positive development.

Some have asked us: What does the Arab-Israeli conflict have to do with the war in Iraq? Why make one problem harder by taking on two?

The answer is simple. You cannot get anything done in the Middle East without addressing the Arab-Israeli issue. We want these other countries, especially the Sunni Arab countries, to help us. When we go to talk to them about Iraq, they will want to talk to us about the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The United States says it wants to empower "moderate Muslims." Yet the only way to empower the moderates is to take away the most potent grievance of the extremists: that the United States does not care about the Palestinians.

A comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace will deal the extremists a blow in Baghdad and Beirut. It will bolster American prestige. And—above all—it will guarantee the long-term security of America's ally: Israel.

All of us understand that the peace process is difficult, and that results will be measured in years, not months. But a sustained effort counts. A sustained effort will help us with Iraq and will win us important diplomatic leverage across the board in the Middle East.

Economic Assistance

The President asked for over $1.1 billion in additional economic assistance for Iraq. That is a step in the right direction. The Study Group believes the commitment should be substantially larger—$5 billion per year. Why?—because our current approach needs balance. It is too heavily weighted toward the military mission. We are spending $ 2 billion a week on the military alone. We need to do many things right in Iraq if we are going to succeed. We need to devote resources to job creation and capacity building.

Job creation is necessary to give some hope and purpose to young Iraqis. Too many of them are frustrated and cannot provide for their families. Too many have turned to militias and the insurgency. Our commitment to job creation should include the Commander's Emergency Response Program, but it must be broader. We need to help Iraqis restart their many idle factories.

Capacity building is necessary because the Iraqi government is weak. It cannot deliver the basic services of government. It falls short in providing electricity and water. It falls short in providing security. The current government of Iraq can succeed only if it starts to win the confidence of those it governs. Capacity building means technical assistance and advice. It means better procedures in government agencies, including a greater delegation of authority and better internal controls.

The Secretary of State has named a reconstruction coordinator in Baghdad. That may be helpful, but that is not the problem we described in our report. The problem of coordination is interagency, and it is most acute in Washington. The new coordinator is capable, but he is the Secretary of State's appointee, not the President's appointee. He cannot chair NSC meetings in Washington and make other agencies do what he tells them to do.

Conclusions

Mr. Chairman, the President has decided on a new strategy. Its hallmark is a surge of U.S. forces, especially five additional combat brigades for Baghdad.

The Study Group stated that it could "support a short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad," complemented by comprehensive political, economic and diplomatic efforts.

All of the attention right now is on military aspects of policy. That is true of the President, and true of his critics. To some degree it is understandable: We are all concerned when more of our young men and women get sent in harm's way.

But make no mistake: The violence in Baghdad will not end without national reconciliation. The violence will not end unless Iraq's leaders step up and make difficult decisions about the future of their country.

The President correctly stated that only the Iraqis can end the sectarian violence. We are placing all of our bets on the performance of the Iraqi government. The Prime Minister's rhetoric is good. His performance, so far, has been disappointing. He has not been effective. He has not proved reliable, nor have many of Iraq's other leaders. Too often, they have acted in their sectarian interest, not the national interest.

The Study Group believes in a comprehensive military, diplomatic, economic and political approach.

- The primary U.S. military mission in Iraq must shift from combat to training;
- Iraq's neighbors—and the international community—must be engaged to play a more constructive role on behalf of stability in Iraq;

- We need a robust economic program focused on job creation and building the capacity of the Iraqi government; and
- Above all, Iraq's government must be held to performance benchmarks on national reconciliation.

As an American General in Baghdad told us, if the Iraqi government does not make political progress, "all the troops in the world will not provide security."

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I would be pleased to respond to your questions.

APPENDIX #1

STATEMENT OF THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE IRAQ STUDY GROUP—JANUARY 11, 2007

JAMES A. BAKER, III AND LEE HAMILTON

We are pleased that the President reviewed the report of the Iraq Study Group carefully and seriously. Some of our recommendations are reflected in the new approach that he outlined Wednesday, while others have not been adopted.

We agree with President Bush that, "the situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people," the consequences of failure are severe, and "only the Iraqis can end the sectarian violence and secure their people." As the President said, "the essential U.S. security mission" in Iraq is the training of Iraqi forces. We support increasing the number of American advisors embedded in Iraqi Army units with the goal that the Iraq government will assume control of security in all provinces in Iraq by November 2007. We recommended many of the benchmarks President Bush outlined for Iraq, and agree that now is the time for the Iraqi government to act.

We hope the President and his Administration will further consider other recommendations of the Iraq Study Group. The President did not suggest the possibility of a transition that could enable U.S. combat forces to begin to leave Iraq. The President did not state that political, military, or economic support for Iraq would be conditional on the Iraqi government's ability to meet benchmarks. Within the region, the President did not announce an international support group for Iraq including all of Iraq's neighbors, nor mention measures we suggested to reach a comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement.

The Iraq Study Group indicated that it could "support a short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad" complemented by comprehensive political, economic, and diplomatic efforts. Questions, of course, remain about the nature of the surge. We are encouraged by the President's statement that "America's commitment is not open-ended" and Secretary Gates' statement that the addition of 21,000 troops would be viewed as a temporary surge. The violence in Baghdad will not end without national reconciliation.

America's political leaders have a responsibility to seek a bi-partisan consensus on issues of war and peace. We want to be helpful in forging that unity of effort. We welcome President Bush's commitment to form a working group with congressional leaders that will work across party lines in pursuit of a common policy. #

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much, Chairman Hamilton, for your typical thoughtful, serious substantive and very somber remarks. There is only one issue I would like to open up with you before turning to my colleagues, and that relates to the Study Group's recommendation of dialogue with Syria and Iran.

There is no Member of Congress who is more in favor of dialogue than I am. As you well remember while you were Chairman of this committee, I opened dialogue with Albania some 15 years ago. I opened more recently dialogue with Libya and dialogue with North Korea, and I have been trying, unsuccessfully thus far, to open a dialogue with Iran. But I do believe that there is an enormous difference between the dialogue and an attempt to hope that countries which have been primary players in undermining U.S. foreign policy objectives will suddenly turn around and be helpful partners and allies in dealing with problems that they consider to be very much of importance to them, and they view their goals as totally different from ours.

Iran would like to have Iraq as much under its way as is humanly possible. Iran wants to see a Shi'a-dominated Iraq. We want a coalition and open democratic friendly entity. And I truly believe that the Study Group's stated hope that this can happen, that Iran and Syria will turn around on their basic policy goals and long-established practices, is utterly unrealistic. With respect to the observation you just made, Mr. Chairman, which repeats the Study Group's printed statement, that you cannot get anything done in the Middle East without resolving the Palestinian-Israeli crisis, may I just remind you, and I would use two dozen examples, that we succeeded in having Syrian troops removed from Lebanon with no change in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

So the fact that any progress has to be achieved only after the Palestinian-Israeli dilemma is resolved, which will take a long time, I simply believe is unrealistic. I would be grateful if you can expand on your observation.

Mr. HAMILTON. Well, you changed one very important word in what I said, Mr. Chairman. We did not say that you have to resolve the problem between Arabs and the Israelis. We said you have to address it. And there is a very big difference. Now let me go into a little more detail here because obviously this has been a huge criticism of the Iraq Study Group report. The first point I want to make is that the current approach is not working. We have tried to isolate, and we have tried to pressure Syria. Where has that gotten us? Iran has become the most powerful country in the region. Excuse me. The most powerful country in Iraq with the exception, probably, of the United States. It is a rising regional power. It is developing its nuclear program. How can you possibly argue that American diplomacy toward Iran is working? Syria has been a negative force in Iraq for sure. It continues to support terrorist organizations in Lebanon and Palestine. We have a long list of complaints against Iran. I don't know if there is any country in the world that has caused us more heartburn in the last several decades than Iran, and the chairman is absolutely right, and so is the ranking member when they point out all of these grievances we have got against Iran.

We don't make any prediction about what comes out of this negotiation. We just say you ought to try it. We know the obstacles. The obstacles are pretty easy to set forth, but how do you know unless you try? Talking is not appeasement. It is diplomacy. Conversation with a country is not capitulation. The United States doesn't sacrifice its interests or values when we talk to another country.

As you were talking, Mr. Chairman, I thought of events many decades ago that occurred in this room. The early conversations between the United States and the Soviet Union occurred right here. They would get up and read formal statements. We would get up and read formal statements. Then we end with a toast to vodka and telling everybody we were for peace on earth, then we would go home. And we kept that up decade after decade after decade, and we didn't make much progress, but we kept talking. And eventually those talks loosened up a little bit, and we began to talk to people, we got to know them a little better, and we put aside the set speeches, and we began to address the real issues, and we kept talking, and we kept talking, and eventually the Soviet Union fell.

I think there is a misunderstanding, quite frankly, of what diplomacy is all about. I think a lot of people say diplomacy is reaching an agreement. That may be part of diplomacy, but diplomacy is much more than that. You may want to withhold agreement; you may just want to explain your position. You may want to collect some intelligence. You learn an awful lot when you talk to people.

Maybe you want to deter some actions, you may want to dispel some misunderstandings. All kinds of things can happen when diplomats get together and begin talking about the relationships between the two countries. Now, you can't be starry-eyed about this. We certainly were not on the Iraq Study Group. So I don't think talking by itself is good or bad. Do we have so little confidence in the diplomats of the United States that we are not willing to let them talk to somebody we disagree with? Now the other point here is that I mentioned in my remarks are these two countries, Syria and Iran have a lot of influence in Iraq. We don't like that fact. And they are certainly part of the problem.

Now, look, we talked to Iran not very long ago with regard to Afghanistan. We had a common interest there. There aren't very many common interests we can identify with Iran, but this is one of them. Neither one of us wants the Taliban in Afghanistan, and we began talking with one another, and for a brief period of time, it worked effectively. I don't, for a minute, think we will sit down and reach an agreement with Iran on all of these multitudes of problems you mentioned. That is going to take a long, long, long time. Let me remind you when Ronald Reagan was President of the United States and he said, "tear down that wall," that very week he sent a negotiator to Moscow on arms control.

Now finally, Mr. Chairman, on this I think there is a common interest between the United States and Iran in stability. I understand that Syria and Iran want to see us tied down in Iraq, and I understand Iran is doing all sorts of things in Iraq that are making life more difficult for the Iraqis and for us. But it is not in their long-term interest to have a chaotic Iraq. Look at the population makeup of Iran.

Only about 50 percent of that country is Persian. There are a lot of centrifugal forces operating in that country today. Look at the morning newspaper. The President of Iran is being scolded by the supreme leader. Okay. If you are smart, you are going to try to take advantage of those kinds of divisions within Iran.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Chairman, your——

Mr. HAMILTON. I am talking too long?

Chairman LANTOS. No. We have a vote.

Mr. HAMILTON. I get a break there, don't I?

Chairman LANTOS. Your clarification——

Mr. HAMILTON. I am just getting wound up.

Chairman LANTOS. We noticed that. That is why I interrupted you. We are very grateful for your clarification, and I have good news for you, Chairman Hamilton. We have one vote which is the last vote of the week. We will return in a few minutes, and then we will continue uninterrupted. The committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman LANTOS. The committee will come to order.

The gentlelady from Florida, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this important committee.

And thank you, Mr. Hamilton, for your testimony. I agree with the chairman about what he had said about trying to link the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the difficult situation in Iraq, and I think many of our allies used that as an excuse to not further engage and help us with our conflict.

But because of the limited time, Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield my time, with your permission, to Mr. Barrett.

Mr. BARRETT. Mr. Hamilton, in a perfect world, I agree with you that diplomacy is an important thing, but I have got a blunt question.

If we know that Iranian forces are operating within Iraq and attacking our soldiers, if we know that Syrian soldiers are operating in Iraq and attacking our soldiers, is that not an act of war?

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Barrett, if they are attacking our soldiers, that is a very grievous act. The phrase "act of war" is a legal one, and I am not an expert on that; but obviously we couldn't tolerate that.

But I don't believe that we—by advocating diplomacy, I therefore don't want to take military action. I think you have to integrate these.

Do I support strong military action against those who attack us? You bet I do. But I also support diplomacy, too. How do you achieve peace without talking to your enemies? I don't know how you do it other than to talk.

So given the hypothetical, as far as I know, that you put before us, I would say it is a very grievous act, and in all likelihood is an act of war. We have often negotiated with people who have committed acts of war against us.

Mr. BARRETT. And I am—I hear you loud and clear, Mr. Hamilton, but I think the first thing, the first act of diplomacy when we are talking with these guys is to say that if we can verify, if we know and can verify that, then you need to suffer the consequences. If you are going to attack a sovereign nation that is defending another sovereign nation, then we will be against that.

Would you agree with that?

Mr. HAMILTON. I do not think military action and diplomacy are mutually exclusive. I think you have to do both. Even after very severe circumstances, I think you have to do both.

Mr. BARRETT. Thank you.

Mr. HAMILTON. What is the option with Iran? Suppose you reject altogether the idea of diplomatic contacts with Iran. What is the option?

Okay, one option is that the regime change. That is a popular phrase. What does it mean? Everybody is for regime change in Iran. I am for regime change in Iran. We don't want like this guy that is President.

But that is the question. The question is, What are you going to do about it? What are you prepared to do about it?

Okay. We are going to ratchet things up. We are going to put an aircraft carrier in the Gulf. That probably makes sense because those oil supplies are pretty doggone important.

The question is not—the alternative to negotiation, as far as I can see, is regime change. And there the question becomes, what are you prepared to do to bring about regime change? Some people wanted to kind of dodge the question and say, well, we can get him out of office by encouraging the democratic elements of Iran and so forth. That probably is worth trying.

But that is the core problem, it seems to me. It is a tough one. It really is a tough one.

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Sires.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your courtesy.

Mr. Hamilton, as someone who lives in 13th District of New Jersey across from the World Trade Center, I want to thank you for the work that you do for America and the fact that you are here.

I have a question which basically I asked Secretary Rice last week.

Mr. HAMILTON. About what?

Mr. SIRES. I have a question that I asked Secretary Rice last week regarding Saudi Arabia. In her comments, she made a statement how everybody, for self-preservation, that they are concerned about Iran. And when I asked her last week about getting the neighbors of Iraq engaged, I asked about getting Saudi Arabia engaged in this process to try to help to stabilize Iraq.

One of the comments that she made is that the first thing that they could do is they could start by canceling the Iraqi debt over the government and private institution.

For a country that is bent on self-preservation and the war is so close, it seems to me that is not enough. I mean, they are so preoccupied themselves with self-preservation, what can we do to get Saudi Arabia more engaged in this process? Because I really don't understand how they can just sit back and watch what is going on so close to them. And I don't understand why we don't use our diplomacy and our relations to get them more engaged and get them to help to stabilize a country that is in their best interest.

I mean, we put up all the money. We put up all of the soldiers. We do all of the fighting for their self-preservation.

You know, there is something missing here, and I really don't know why we don't use other diplomacy more to get them involved.

Mr. HAMILTON. First of all, I believe that the Saudis and, indeed, most of the neighbors that we consider friends and even allies in the region have not been very helpful with regard to Iraq and certainly have not given us much help financially or militarily in dealing with our problems in Iraq; and that is a point of very great distress to us.

The Iraqi-American relationship is an exceedingly difficult one. It has been a very shallow relationship over the years. And we have had a deal with the Saudis. It has worked out pretty well. And the deal has been, you give us oil at an affordable price, and we will support the kingdom. Now, these held for many decades, several decades. But the world has become a more complicated place and the shallowness of that relationship needs to be strengthened and deepened.

We need Saudi oil. We have to have it; not just our economy, but the economy of the world needs that oil. And so we have to be very careful in our dealings with this country.

I would like to see them—you say, what can they do and we do. I would like to see them crack down on the funding of the insurgents by Saudi individuals. So far as I know, it is not done by the government. I don't think it is; the government denies doing it. But money is clearly flowing in to some of the Sunni insurgents. They are getting money from, we believe, private individuals in Saudi Arabia.

So I don't have a simple answer to your question. The debt relief, obviously, as the Secretary said, would be a very positive step.

You see, I think you cannot sit here in Washington and figure out all of the possibilities that might arise from diplomacy. And my guess is, if you call the kind of a conference which we asked for and which the President really supported, some things might flow from that that we don't really—we are not able to articulate specifically now. And one of the things that might flow is, we get some more help from them on questions of stopping the flow of money to the insurgency and in support of national reconciliation.

The Saudis have a lot of influence with the Sunnis in Iraq, and the Sunnis, of course, have a major grievance at the moment with regard to national reconciliation. So the Saudis can be very helpful in ways other than money. They can be helpful to us on——

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Mr. Hamilton, as you know, the Iraq Study Group puts a very heavy emphasis on reconciliation. You have mentioned it many times, and you call it essential.

In September, I met with several members of the 30-member commission in Baghdad, including its chairman, al-Hakim, and as we all know, like in El Salvador and South Africa, it was the reconciliation commissions that made an enormous difference in leveling the hate and replacing it with the sense that if you want to move forward, the hatchet needs to be buried to the greatest extent possible.

Could you speak to your views of the commission formed last July, the National Reconciliation Commission in Iraq? Like I said, I met with the chairman and three of its members. They had numerous meetings, but it seems as if the commission does not receive the international support it deserves.

Secondly, if you could comment on Recommendation 29, that provincial elections should be held at the earliest possible date. I would be concerned that since national elections, the working Parliament needs to get its feet further—roots further into its democracy and work at its problems—we saw what happened when Hamas won.

Would an election too early—and we are past the date when they wanted to hold them—possibly exacerbate the situation?

On the issue of conditionality, I remember, like you, what happened in El Salvador. I remember a meeting with President Duarte where he said:

> "Keep the conditionality on human rights because I have right-wing death squads that I am concerned about. The FMLN is

committing atrocities; there are people on the right that are committing atrocities. Keep that conditionality. It helps me do a better job."

The other day when Secretary of State Madeleine Albright testified, she made what I considered to be, and many of us did, an outrageous statement when she said, "Secretary Rice says she has told Iraqi leaders, 'You have to perform.' I say we cannot have it both ways." She goes on, "We cannot celebrate an elected government in Iraq and then demand that it act like a performing animal in our circus."

You properly pointed out, I believe, that it is important that the United States needs to use its leverage to get Iraqi leaders to perform. Conditionality doesn't mean that we don't respect their right to govern or the institutions that they have forged with great sacrifice. But we are friends. Friends don't let friends commit human rights abuses, and it seems to me that saying that the Iraqi leaders need to perform is somehow acting like a puppeteer or training an animal in a circus is outrageous and can foment real damage.

So conditionality, I think, is essential. It seems to me that you think so as well. We have benchmarks. We have to hold them to a very, very high account.

I know this is a lot of questions, but please, if you could answer to what I have asked.

Mr. HAMILTON. First of all, on the national reconciliation on Iraq, we met with them. It is a start, but they really haven't taken any action, and that is the problem.

When you meet with all of these Iraqi leaders, Mr. Smith, as you know and I know—you have met with some of them—the question that is uppermost in our mind always is, are they Iraqi leaders or are they sectarian leaders. And too often I think they are sectarian leaders rather than Iraqi leaders.

So I like the idea of the National Reconciliation Commission. I think it can be a great tool, as it was in the South African consideration, but they have got to start moving here. Taking actions to—and there is no mystery about what those actions are. I mean, everybody agrees what steps need to be taken; they just haven't taken them.

On the question of the provincial elections, we do think they are necessary and important because they will give a tool mechanism for the Sunnis to participate. And the Sunnis, as you know, feel very much left out of things there, and this would give an opportunity for them to participate.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you.

Mr. Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And it is indeed an honor and privilege, Mr. Hamilton, to have you as a witness and, in essence, as a role model for this particular committee, because the work that you have endeavored on and how you do it twice sitting with a bipartisan committee working together for the benefit of the country.

I think that often the American people would like to see Democrats and Republicans doing the same as you have done on the two missions. You are sitting down in a bipartisan way, without politics, really playing a major role; and in particular, when we are

talking about foreign policy, because there is too much at stake to play politics on foreign policy when lives are on the line.

And I think that that is what you have demonstrated with what you do and what you have done with the Iraqi Study Group and in the 9/11 Commission. I want to commend you for that.

And in that regard, you know, I am frustrated because when we went down to go to the war in Iraq, I don't think that we asked the kinds of questions that we should have. We allowed politics to play a little bit into that, in whether we should go to war.

I was one that was against going to the war altogether. But I sit here as a Member of Congress, and I tell a lot of individuals how proud I am to be a Member of Congress. And when I look at what is happening now and how the President has moved on with reference to Iraq, and looks like Iran, I ask myself, What can I do as a Member of Congress?

We know we talk about diplomacy with the diplomats from the State Department, et cetera, and it seems that this President is not moving forward or—either President, whether it is Ahmadinejad or President Bush. But what can I do as a Member of the House of Representatives?

And so, you know, one of the things that I am thinking of and started looking at Iran a little bit closer, and I would like to get your opinion on some of this. Then I started watching and looking at their elections, and I saw that Ahmadinejad wasn't elected by a landslide margin. In fact, his initial election was contested, I thought, similar to the United States in 2000.

Then I looked at what has taken place, whether or not there was freedom of press there, whether he could be criticized in public in Iran, and I am finding, as you have indicated, sort of headlined today, he is.

And then I looked at where are the people of Iran; forget just the leadership, but the people, the average, everyday people of Iran. And just like our country, you know, there is a midterm election that we had here that did not like the direction that our President was taking us in, and as a result, I now sit on this side of the majority, and I saw in the last elections in Iran that, in fact, Ahmadinejad's party lost.

So I am saying that maybe then there are some individuals who sit, like I do, in their Parliament that might be individuals that we can talk to in a similar fashion that you talked about, whether it is in—you know, we talk about visas, whether we can go there or they can't come here either, but maybe there can be some other place. We can go and we can start. I have talked to some of my colleagues, Rangel, I think we are going to start a dialogue in Congress.

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time has expired. We will have to wait for the answer, briefly.

Mr. HAMILTON. I think he is driving at a very important point, and that is the whole idea that parliamentarians can play in the foreign policy that Congress obviously yields to the President.

The President is not only the chief maker of foreign policy, but he is also the sole implementer of foreign policy. But the Congress still has a very important role. And the kind of thing that you are

talking about seems to me to be a very worthwhile initiative, and that is to begin a dialogue with Iranians.

Now, that dialogue can be in the private sector, unofficial channels, but it can be also at the parliamentary level. That is not easy to work out today, because there are restrictions in contacts between our two countries, but I think it is very much worth the effort. And I commend you for it.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I wanted to say that I respected your work when you chaired this committee, when we served together, and I have appreciated your continued service to this country since you left Congress. I thank you for that.

Mr. HAMILTON. Thank you.

Mr. ROYCE. In response to maybe an observation made by some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I would, just in discussing Iran, point out that we won't find democrats as parliamentarians in Iran because those who ran as democrats were taken off the list by the Mullahs, and as a result, you have got to be, you know, a member of the Iranian revolutionary cadre to be in that Parliament.

Now, this was not always the case, but we seem to be losing ground on that front in Iran. We are putting considerable hopes in neighboring states, and I understand that strategy. And you identify incentives there, but your report states that no country will benefit in the long term from a chaotic Iraq, and then you say objectively that that does prove—that does depend upon a certain level of rational self-interest, wouldn't you say, by today's Iraq?

And I think that is where we begin to question whether some of the current leadership is capable of rational self-interest. It requires that the political leadership can get over what must be as little satisfaction with our predicament and act in its long-term interest.

Your report discusses briefly the ethnic dynamics that could harm Iran if Iraq spirals out of control, and I would like to hear about that and ask what we might be able to do to make these longer-term risks a little more evident to the Iranian leadership.

But at the same time, I would like to point out that the *Financial Times* had an article on the growing schism there in Iraq, and they said a new political coalition is emerging in Iran in response to growing United States pressure, especially over their nuclear program and concern over the radical approach of their President in both foreign and domestic policy.

So here you have a situation where top Iranian officials complain that our efforts to cut off finance are harming their oil sector. Inflation is out of control. Employment is out of control. These are sticks, it seems to me, that the administration and others are effectively wielding. And I would like to know how your report's recommended engagement with Iran squares with our continued pressure on Iran over its nuclear program.

Those are my concerns.

Mr. HAMILTON. Well, I think when you are dealing with a diplomatic relationship as difficult as ours is with Iran, you have to look at all of the carrots and all of the sticks you can. And I think you probably have to apply both of them.

One of the things, Mr. Royce, that bothers me is there is an awful lot of speculation about what is going on in Iran, and we make a lot of assumptions about Iran. And I don't know that all of those assumptions are right, and you don't either. We are guessing; that may be an educated guess, but we don't really know.

This is a complicated country. It is a great big country. And I think we have to put together packages of disincentives and incentives. Look, there are incentives here. Iran wants stability in their own country. They don't want chaos there. Iran wants to get into the world community, more, the WTO. Iran agrees with us with regard to Afghanistan on the influence of the Taliban. Iran agrees with us—I think they agree with us, with regard to al-Qaeda. And there are a lot of areas where there is a commonality.

Now, the grievances are pretty formidable and the chairman has spelled those out. But diplomacy is about trying to persuade people to act in their own self-interest. Iran is not going to do anything because we tell them to do it or because we think it is in their self-interest. They just reject that out of hand. And indeed, any other country in the world does. But the art of diplomacy is to try to persuade them that it will be in their self-interest to do certain things.

Stop fooling around in Iran, and that is what we have to focus on, I think.

Chairman LANTOS. Thanks.

Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Sticking with Iran, at one point in time my memory is, the administration was willing to sit down with Iran if the topics were restricted to Iraq. Am I correct, about 2 years ago that Iran opted not to participate?

So, I mean, I don't think this is—would be a very dramatic departure from a previous position that was held by this administration.

But let me pursue what I see as a divergence of interests between Iraq and the United States vis-a-vis Iran. According to CRS, there have been a number of agreements that have been reached between Iraq and Iran, including a bilateral military cooperation agreement between those two countries, and I have asked on numerous occasions, including the most recent appearance by Secretary Rice, if we had information regarding the provisions of that particular agreement; and that question goes unanswered.

But it is clear that the most recent incident in Irbil where American troops raided a facility which the Iranians claim was a working consulate was really met with strong statements by Iraqi officials——

Mr. HAMILTON. Yes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. President Talabani, as well as a more restrained statement by the Prime Minister Maliki.

You know, we presume that Iraq's interests vis-a-vis Iran are the same as ours. And I don't see evidence of that. I see a warming relationship between Iraq and Iran. Given the realities in the Middle East. They are neighbors.

And then I read policies that are commissioned by our consul, the Department of State, where a survey of the Iraqi people concludes with what I think were startling results: 75 percent of the

Iraqi people want the United States troops out of Iraq and 60 percent of the Iraqi people approve of attacks on Americans.

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. HAMILTON. Well, with regard to the Iraqi-Iranian relationship, I agree with what the gentleman said. President Talabani went to Iran a while ago. They have regular contacts with Iran. So this is a difference; we have none, they have a lot.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Tancredo.

Mr. TANCREDO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Is it possible to really conceive of a situation in that part of the world where if we leave, instead of the—what we have heard over and over again as the most reasonable expectation of what would go on, and that is a bloodbath, that the various groups would go after each other?

Is it feasible to think about the possibility that because there are all of these interesting coalitions that have developed and that have been in the way, naturally, the fact that of course it is in the Saudis' interest and the Jordanians' interest and the Egyptians' interest to make sure there isn't a Shi'a presence or that there isn't a predominant Shi'a interest in Iraq, those various alliances that we have almost blundered into in terms of what happened when we overthrew Saddam?

And things have now developed in a way that it is possible for us to think that removing our presence from that area of the world would actually be a stabilizing force as opposed to what we have heard, and even with, I think, what the report suggests. Wouldn't all of the pressure—wouldn't there be a great deal of pressure being applied by all of the other interests in the area to make sure that the violence did not expand? And wouldn't their pressure be as significant, in a way, as anything we could do? And does our existence, our presence in the country itself actually prevent that kind of coalition of forces from actually taking hold?

Mr. HAMILTON. It is certainly possible. I think that the problem for us is how you move out of Iraq in a responsible way. And by that I mean, How do you move out of Iraq in such a way that protects our interests as a country, but also the interests of Iraq as a nation?

These parties have been dealing with one another for hundreds, hundreds of years, for sure. And it is certainly possible that they can work it out. A lot of people predict a bloodbath. I don't think anybody knows for sure whether it would occur. And when you predict it, you might be wrong.

But one of the things that I want to emphasize here is in response to a very good question, that there are a lot of interests of the United States in Iraq and in the region, and we have to remove ourselves, either sooner or later, from Iraq with new appreciation of those interests.

We do not want to see Iran expand its influence any more in that region. We do understand that those energy resources in Iraq could be jeopardized and could fall into the hands of the wrong people. We don't want to embolden our enemies in the region. We don't want to give al-Qaeda a sanctuary. We don't want chaos in that part of the world. We don't want to see terrorism grow.

A lot of bad things can happen if we come out of Iraq in the wrong way. So the problem here is, how do you begin in some manner to reduce your commitments and obligations in Iraq?

You may be exactly right. You may be, but I am not sure you are right.

Mr. TANCREDO. That is why I am asking.

Mr. HAMILTON. And if you are not right, then a lot of bad things can occur.

What all of this says to me is that we have to be very careful and very cautious in what we do in trying to change the dynamics in the region.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you so much, Mr. Hamilton, for your time and your insight and your analysis of what we are facing.

I don't feel at all that this administration, the State Department, really understands the elements, the psychological elements that we are dealing with in the Middle East. You have got to know how people think. And the bloodbath is going on right now. It is plain for the world to see.

Because the way the Middle Easterners think, they see America coming in and doing nation-building, occupying first Iraq, then they want to tell Iran what to do, ignoring their sovereignty. We are certainly guilty of that. We are nation-building.

Why do we have to tell Maliki what to do? We ought to set our benchmarks and say look, it is going to be on you. And I really don't think that democracy will ever stick and can be applied to the theocracy that exists now.

Our troops are not getting killed from bullets shot from guns. It is the IEDs. We don't know who the enemy is. So, to me, it doesn't make sense to put manpower over there so we will have more targets because we don't—we are not able to identify who the enemy is.

So my question to you—and I hope I am not using up all of your time—is, what do you think about our nation-building, and that certainly is—and civil war, it certainly is Sunni, Shiites and other groups killing, you know, at the marketplace, going into school yards, killing each other. And we have not really understood how these people think in that.

Thank you so much for your response.

Mr. HAMILTON. Well, surely our experience in Iraq is in the future going to make us very cautious about intervention. And we have to understand that, how complicated intervention can be.

I think you make a very, very good point about the—our lack of understanding of the complexity of these societies. Particularly in a country like Iraq, but of course it applies to many other places as well. We simply did not understand that country, and we didn't understand what we were getting into. And we have paid the price for that very, very heavily.

Now that leads me to your question about nation-building. I don't have much doubt that future Presidents of the United States are going to have to wrestle often with the question of intervention. And it will probably be the toughest question they have to deal with, because we are going to be asked to do it again and again;

and there are going to be a lot of Americans who want us to do it. And we are going to intervene at times in the future, but I hope we will do it much more carefully.

To be very blunt about it, I have got real doubts about our capacities to engage in nation-building. I am not sure we know how to do it.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Paul of Texas.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Hamilton. Nice to see you here.

You have spent a good bit of time already on your Recommendation Number 9, to pursue diplomacy dealing with Iran and Syria. And I certainly agree with your answer being very persuasive, but I do have a follow-up question on that.

This past week, just as we did have Madeleine Albright, you know, before our committee, and she certainly agreed with your assessment. But I would like to follow up and see if I can get you to maybe quantify your recommendation there on how urgent it is.

Is it just a good idea? Very urgent? Critical? And I would like to get some definitions or adjectives there to define the need for that, and also see if I can get some suggestions from you if we refuse to do it.

Are there consequences if we refuse to follow diplomatic terms, diplomatic relations with Iran, at least engagement with them?

The other question I have deals with working on diplomatic engagement between the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch. And you stated that the way we get ourselves out of Iraq is pretty darned important; we have to be very careful and very cautious. And that is obviously the case, because we are in a hole, and it is hard to climb out of a hole, and sometimes you dig a bigger hole. And I have emphasized over many years, it is the way we get involved that really is where we have to be very careful and very cautious.

This past week a bipartisan group introduced legislation that requires that the President consult with the Congress before there is any initiation of force taken on Iran, that the Congress give the permission for this explicitly. So I would like you to comment on that with the sole purpose of that legislation being that we should be careful and cautious before we begin digging another hole; and even in the midst of this, that Iraq will make us more cautious.

But then again, we had a military success, but we weren't very cautious about getting engaged in Somalia. We just used a proxy army to take over Somalia. We were very much engaged there. And the whole region buildup of our Navy, to me means we are not cautious enough. And I would like to get your comments.

Mr. HAMILTON. Well, the first question of how urgent it is on how to deal with Iran, we understand that in dealing with a country like Iraq and where we are today, that a lot of tools of American power have to be brought to bear in order to achieve your objectives. And if you deny yourself the use of one of those tools, in this case diplomacy with Iran, you lessen your chances of success, I think. You have to use all of the tools, including military power, in order to succeed.

How urgent is it? I don't think it is the end of the world if we are not able to begin conversations with Iran and Syria immediately. On the other hand, I think our chances of stabilizing Iraq are higher if you begin to do it. Nobody can tell how that plays out. We didn't make any predictions in the report as to what might happen. There is good reason to believe that the talks would get nowhere for a long period of time, and that was pretty well articulated here a moment ago.

I can't deny that that is a possibility. It could easily be the case. But how do you know unless you try? And who can be satisfied with the way things are today? And what have you got to lose? Are we so fearful that if we sit down with this country that we are going to agree to make all kinds of concessions to them? That just shows a total lack of confidence in American diplomacy.

So I think I would answer your question by saying that your chances of success in dealing with Iraq are better if you employ all of the tools of American power, including diplomacy and including direct talks with Iran and Syria.

Will it work? I don't know.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Costa.

Mr. HAMILTON. On the executive relationship, that is another seminar, Mr. Paul, but you are right about that. The consultation has to be much deeper and much improved, and it is going to come to the fore on Iran.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Costa of California.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Again, another, I think, very important hearing that we are having this morning.

Mr. Hamilton, it is good to have you here. My question is going to focus on your comments of the current Iraqi Government and Maliki's capability of performing. You mentioned that his words have been good, in your opening statement, but his follow-through has been weak. I share that feeling.

We were among the first congressional delegations to visit the Maliki government last May, and I told him then that the patience of the American public was wearing thin, and that by the end of last year I believed he needed to show some initial victories. He responded by saying that victory was more important than timing. I indicated that that may be so, but that American patience again was running thin and that if he didn't have some victory soon, I think he might run out of time.

I told the President 2 weeks ago, when he met with a group of us, to put me in the doubtful column on this surge if it was not accompanied by a political agreement that the Maliki government would hold with the Kurds and the Sunnis on power-sharing and sharing of the oil revenue. And I think absent a political agreement like we make political agreements here, where they say it in Arabic to their constituents and they hold hands and then they follow through, that we are kidding ourselves.

I would like your take on whether you think this current Maliki government is capable of performing the political agreements necessary to make this effort a success because, frankly, absent that,

I don't see, even with the best of your recommendations, us getting out of there successfully.

Mr. HAMILTON. The honest answer is, I don't know. We can all make our judgments. The one thing we can all agree on is they have not performed. He has been in office now how long? About 9 months. He certainly knows what needs to be done. But he just hasn't done it.

Mr. COSTA. Do you think politically he is incapable of doing it because of——

Mr. HAMILTON. Well, is he incapable? I think politically he has very formidable obstacles to doing the kinds of things we are asking him to do on national reconciliation. There is no doubt about that, I think. But he seems to recognize the need to do it.

Does he have the strength, the political will to do it? I just do not know.

Now, in the President's approach and in our approach in the Iraq Study Group, we depend very heavily on Maliki performing. But what other choice do you have? You can't pick people off the streets of Baghdad and make an agreement with them. You have got to deal with the government as it is.

Mr. COSTA. But the timelines, you think we will know that very soon?

Mr. HAMILTON. I would think that we will begin to know very soon that he is willing to take the steps. There are already some indications in the press that he is firming up a little bit. I hope that continues. And certainly with regard to the acid test with whether or not they get a sufficient number of Iraqi groups to help support our groups, we should know in a matter of weeks, I would think.

All of us in this town are engaged in the question of trying to judge Maliki's ability, capabilities to perform. But one of the things that strikes me about it is, what are your alternatives here?

Chairman LANTOS. The gentlemen's time has expired.

I would like to pose a question to our distinguished witness.

Mr. Chairman, when do you need to leave?

Mr. HAMILTON. Right now.

Chairman LANTOS. Well, we promised Chairman Hamilton that we will not keep him beyond 12 o'clock, and under those circumstances, I request members who have not yet asked questions, without objection, the record will be kept open and you may submit your questions in writing. You need to provide committee staff with your questions within 7 days.

I want to put a number of items, without objection, in the record including a letter from Mr. Smith, an op-ed from Mr. Wolf, an op-ed from the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

[The information referred to follows:]

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

September 8, 2006

COMMITTEES:

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
VICE CHAIRMAN

AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
CO-CHAIRMAN

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam Seyyed Mohammed Khatami
Former President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
The Willard Intercontinental Hotel
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear President Khatami:

Just as we meet today at the Willard in an atmosphere of mutual respect and candid dialogue, I respectfully request your immediate personal assistance in securing the release of several incarcerated men and women in Iran.

In recent years, hundreds of prominent Muslim political activists and dissidents have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms, allegedly on charges of seeking to overthrow the Islamic system, while other individuals have been arrested and charged with blasphemy and criticizing the nature of the Islamic regime. Reformists, democracy activists, and journalists are also targeted, with Iranian authorities regularly trying them under press laws and the Penal Code on charges of "insulting Islam," criticizing the Islamic Republic, and publishing materials that deviate from Islamic standards. I am deeply dismayed by these governmental actions, the pervasive use of torture coupled with long imprisonments, and especially the recent death of two political prisoners while in custody.

Religious liberties in Iran are also a concern. Recent statements by government leaders have led to an increase in harassment and imprisonment of, and physical attacks against, non-Muslims. In addition, reports of systematic discrimination and harassment toward Christians, Jews, and Sunni and Sufi Muslims continue to arise, while Baha'is are repeatedly subjected to particularly severe religious freedom violations.

Surely you understand and appreciate the utter disgust I share with many others over the oft repeated anti-Semitic tirades, Holocaust denial, and calls for the destruction of the Israeli state by high Iranian officials. All anti-Semitism—just like anti-Muslim sentiment—is offensive, deplorable, and totally unbecoming of any man or woman who loves God and seeks to do His will.

As a practicing Catholic, I have fought for 26 years in Congress to protect the religious liberties of peoples of all faiths, whether they be Uighurs, Christians and adherents of Falun Gong in China, Evangelicals and Buddhists in Vietnam, Shi'a Muslims in Azerbaijan, Sunni Muslims in Uzbekistan and Sufi Muslims in Turkey. One doesn't have to accept the tenants of another's religion in order to respect their right to practice their faith as they see fit.

President Khatami
September 8, 2006
Page Two

Mr. President, I ask for the unconditional release of all political and religious prisoners, including the following individuals:

- Ahmed Batebi
- Manouchehr Mohammadi
- Ali Akbar Moussavi Khoeini
- Hamid Pourmand
- Bahram Mashhadi
- Pooya Movahhed
- Ramin Jahanbegloo
- Arzhang Davoodi
- Ali Khodabakhshi (also known as Elyaz Yekanli)
- Ashraf Kolhari
- Abed Tavancheh
- Mehdi Babaei Ajabshir (also known as Oxtay)
- Elham Afroutan
- Abbas Lisani
- Sa'id 'Awda al-Saki

I also ask for a full pardon for the approximately 130 Baha'is who have been released from prison on bail (between August 2004 and June 2006) that are awaiting trial. Every human life, regardless of religious or political beliefs, is precious and deserving of respect, compassion and tolerance.

Mr. President, I respectfully ask you to intervene on behalf of these suffering people.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Chairman
Africa, Global Human Rights
and International Operations

The Washington Post
September 24, 2005

Frank Wolf

Fresh Eyes on Iraq

Having just returned from my third trip to Iraq, I came away with three thoughts.

One, real progress is being made, despite the ongoing security concerns. Two, the Bush administration should pull together an independent and balanced group of respected individuals to go to Iraq to conduct a critical review of our efforts. Three, a necessary element of this review would be communicating to the American public what it would mean to our country if the Iraq mission failed.

I have now visited all but the Kurdish areas in northern Iraq and have seen improvement with each trip I have made. Schools are being renovated. Hospitals and health clinics are being built. Safe drinking water is available in places that it never was before. The new Iraqi army is being constituted. While we still have a long way to go, positive things are happening. Regrettably, they are often overshadowed by the suicide attacks carried out by foreign fighters who have poured into Iraq in hopes of undermining our progress and turning the Iraqi people against us. Yes, security remains our biggest challenge. It also limits where reporters can safely go, leaving them with little option but to focus on the bloodshed and bombings. But in truth, all across Iraq, in regions rarely visited by the media, there are heartening, albeit less riveting, stories of measurable progress.

These underreported but significant successes could be explored by the group tasked with reviewing our efforts in Iraq. The review would essentially provide "fresh eyes on the target" and assure Americans — no matter what their positions are on the war — that every effort is being made to protect our troops and realize our goal of a secure and peaceful Iraq. While the Bush administration has sent other teams to Iraq to assess the situation, the "fresh eyes" review I propose would be different in that, rather than just reporting back to the president, the secretary of defense or the secretary of state, this group would report to the American public. It would assess answers to questions such as:

- How accurate a picture do we have of the insurgency?
- What can we do to get better tactical intelligence on the enemy?
- How reliable and effective is the growing Iraqi security establishment and what is its ethnic makeup?
- What will it take in terms of resources, organization and time to effectively control Iraq's borders?
- What criteria should guide the pace of withdrawal of American and coalition forces?

In making its report to the American public, this group would also be assigned the task of outlining the potential consequences of failure in Iraq. During my trip I asked everyone I met with — from members of the Iraqi leadership to senior military officers to State Department personnel — what "failure" in Iraq would mean to the United States and the world. The responses were chilling. Most agreed there would be civil war, leading to chaos and the creation of another safe harbor for terrorists, reminiscent of Afghanistan in the 1990s. Many said the entire Persian Gulf region would become destabilized, possibly leading to the downfall of the governments of Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. I heard references to Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, with its ethnic cleansing. U.S. credibility also is at stake. Reformers throughout the region would believe that America is a fair-weather friend, not to be depended upon, and the fragile seeds of democratic reform would be destroyed before they even took root.

The Bush administration needs to face the reality that a growing number of Americans are becoming skeptical of our efforts, partly because they do not have the benefit of seeing the entire picture. No one I talked to during my recent trip believes we will lose the war on the ground in Iraq; it's here at home that they are concerned about. One general told me point-blank that the "center of gravity" for our success in Iraq is the American public.

For the United States to stay the course in Iraq the public needs to fully appreciate the progress that has been made, be able to trust that those directing the war have made an honest assessment of what has gone right and what has gone wrong, and understand the potentially cataclysmic consequences of walking away from Iraq before the job is done.

The writer is a Republican representative from Virginia.

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Print This Article

On U.S. Foreign Policy

If you must engage Syria, do it the Lantos way

- David Schenker
Thursday, January 18, 2007

President Bush's address to the nation on Iraq last week dispensed with many of the 79 recommendations included in the 142-page report of the Iraq Study Group. The headline on the speech was the decision to surge 21,000 troops, rather than downsize the U.S. military presence in Iraq as the ISG had advised. But the Bush administration also took a pass on study group's controversial recommendation to engage with Syria and Iran, in an effort to convince these state sponsors of terrorism to play a more productive role in Iraq. Instead, the president implied a military solution, saying that U.S. forces would "interrupt the flow of support" to the insurgency from these states.

Administration opposition to engagement with Syria, in particular, is sure to ruffle some feathers in the new Democratic-led Congress. Indeed, after the Iraq Study Group report was released in early December, members of Congress -- ignoring State Department counsel -- started to press forward with the suggestion to engage with Syria.

A week after the Iraq Study Group report was published, U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., traveled to Damascus to gauge for himself whether Syrian President Bashar Asad might be willing to "be part of a solution" on Iraq. Then, a week later, Democratic Sens. John Kerry, D-Mass., and Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., made the pilgrimage. These legislators' visits were the first of their kind since 2004, when Rep. Tom Lantos, D-San Mateo, visited Damascus.

The White House has been critical of renewed engagement with Syria on Iraq. Its own extensive efforts at dialogue failed miserably, leading the Bush administration to the conclusion that engagement was unhelpful at best, and counterproductive at worst. Legislators such as Sen. Kerry maintain that "you can't begin to resolve those differences if you're not willing to try to understand." But even those making the trek to Damascus aren't optimistic that engagement will work. Rather, the argument seems to be that engagement can't hurt.

Regrettably, the Bush administration's experience has proven otherwise. Meetings, in which U.S. emissaries delivered blunt messages to Asad, were spun by Damascus as "breakthroughs" in Syrian-U.S. relations, undermining the morale of the region's democrats and alleviating pressure on the regime. As White House spokesman Tony Snow said after Nelson's visit, even if delegations deliver a tough message, "the Syrian have already won a PR victory."

So Bush administration engagement has proved unproductive. But what of congressional visits? A quick assessment suggests that these meetings have also undermined Bush

administration policy. A 2003 meeting of U.S. Reps. Darrell Issa, R-Vista, and Nick Rahall, D-W.Va., with Asad is emblematic of the problem. During the trip, Issa and Rahall discussed with Asad the presence in Syria of former Iraqi regime elements who were aiding the insurgency in Iraq. The congressmen later told the press: "We looked the president [Asad] in the eyes and asked for his assurance that he would expel any Iraqi leader in his country and not grant asylum. He agreed." With this pledge in hand, Issa and Rahall declared victory. Issa later pronounced that Asad's "word seems to be good."

The problem, of course, is that Asad lied. Two years later, in February 2005, the Bush administration announced that Syria continued to harbor a dozen former top-ranking associates of Saddam Hussein, who were helping to orchestrate the insurgency.

The notable exception to the stream of highly damaging congressional visits has been Lantos, incoming chairman of the House International Relations Committee. In 2003, when he was in the minority, Lantos met with Asad, but unlike his Democratic and Republican colleagues, Lantos towed a hard line both in the meeting and out. In fact, immediately after his audience with Asad in 2003, Lantos returned to the Damascus Sheraton hotel and gave an unprecedented press conference, reviewing the full litany of U.S. grievances with Syrian policy, from human-rights abuses, to active undermining or stability in Iraq, to Syrian support for Palestinian terrorists and Hezbollah.

Although the Bush administration was likely not pleased with the Lantos trip at the time, his courageous public message countered the potentially negative implications of the visit. Not surprisingly, when Lantos returned to Syria in 2004, he was not granted a meeting with Asad, but instead had to settle for then Foreign Minister Farouq Sharaa.

The difference between Lantos and the other congressional visitors to Damascus is that Lantos reinforced the Bush administration's message with regard to Syria, instead of undermining it. But Lantos is the exception to the rule. Generally speaking, the post-meeting statements by these delegations left -- and continue to leave -- Asad with the (mis) impression that he has little about which to worry. This mixed message on U.S. policy has in turn diluted the effectiveness of an already tenuous Syria policy.

Now that the new House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., is encouraging contact with Syria and Iran as a central plank of the new Democratic Congress, congressional travel to Damascus may be inevitable. Of course, it would be best if members of Congress did not visit Syria, as it cannot but legitimate the regime. But if these legislators do feel a need to "fact find," the general principal should be to do no harm.

In this regard, delegations would be well advised to follow Lantos' lead, and not shy away from publicly articulating in uncompromising tones the tough messages they say they are conveying in private, and doing so on Syrian soil. Meeting Asad should not be about blandishment or gaining "understanding," but rather about conveying an unvarnished message. Given Syria's continuing problematic behavior -- and the pending investigation into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, in which Syria is a leading suspect -- engagement absent this public component risks sending the wrong impression and further emboldening this already dangerous regime.

David Schenker is a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. From 2002 to 2006, he was the Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestinian affairs adviser in the

Chairman LANTOS. And on behalf of all of us, Chairman Hamilton, from the seat that you occupied with such effectiveness and distinction for so many years, may I thank you on behalf of every member of this committee and on behalf of the American people for your excellent service.

Mr. HAMILTON. Thank you very much. Pleasure to be here.

Chairman LANTOS. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

IRAQ AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2007

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:08 a.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Tom Lantos (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman LANTOS. The committee will be in order.

I want to begin by commending both Secretary Rice and the Government of Iraq on the initiative for a regional conference which is scheduled to take place soon in Baghdad. As my colleagues know because we have discussed this on numerous occasions, I am passionately committed to dialogue with those with whom we disagree. That is the only way potentially to clarify and, perhaps, to diminish disagreements. Clearly, one multilateral meeting will not solve our problems with Iran or Syria. But it is a first step, and potentially of great significance.

As my colleagues will recall, I had the privilege after a 50-year hiatus to be the first Member of Congress to go to Albania at a time when not a single American citizen was in Albania and we had no diplomatic relations with that country. And while I certainly do not claim credit, Albania's Communist dictator at the time after our meetings gave me a letter to our President requesting the resumption of diplomatic relations. And a few months later I had the pleasure of being at the State Department, witnessing the signing of the exchange of documents reestablishing diplomatic relations between Albania and the United States.

I had the privilege of being the first American official to visit Libya at a time when we had no relations with Libya. And my goal was to work for the establishment of full diplomatic relations with that country. I have been there now six times with six extensive meetings with Colonel Kadafi, and while again there were many factors at play, we now have full diplomatic and commercial and cultural relations with Libya.

I was one of the first to visit North Korea for two lengthy meetings. And this afternoon, our committee will have as its principal witness Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and Pacific Affairs Chris Hill, who just completed successful negotiations with North Korea.

It has been very difficult to have a dialogue with Iran for a number of reasons. Until this change in administration policy, our administration opposed dialogue until Iran suspends its nuclear activities. I disagreed with that position, and I am pleased to see that the Secretary of State yesterday made a 180 degree change in United States administration policy by looking forward to sitting

down with our counterparts from Damascus and Tehran for a dialogue. I think this is long overdue.

It remains a fact, however, that the government in Tehran has steadfastly refused to issue visas to Members of Congress. For 10 years, I have been attempting to obtain a visa to visit Tehran, which I last visited under the Shah, and despite considerable help from the then-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, over a period of a decade, the Iranian regime has adamantly refused to issue a visa not only to me, but to any member of the United States Congress.

I publicly call on the Government of Iran to change its policy, and in view of the forthcoming meeting with our Secretary of State, issue visas to Members of Congress who chose to visit Tehran. I will be among the first ones to do so once this visa is granted.

Today, we have the honor of welcoming two witnesses who have made critical, if differing contributions to this Nation's Iraq debate; my good friend, our former, most effective Ambassador to the United Nations, the Honorable Richard Holbrooke, and Dr. Frederick Kagan of the American Enterprise Institute.

Ambassador Holbrooke is currently vice-chairman of Perseus, a leading private equity firm. But he basically is one of this country's most distinguished and singularly gifted diplomats in our Nation's history. He is one of the few people who have served this Nation in many places, ranging from Europe to North Africa to Asia, played the most pivotal role in bringing about a successful conclusion of the Balkan War.

He is one of the few people to serve as Assistant Secretary of State on two important, different regions, Europe and East Asia. In both of these positions, he displayed extraordinary wisdom and bold leadership, not only orchestrating but creating the Dayton Accords that brought peace to Bosnia, and presiding over Sino-American relations when ties were normalized in 1978.

He was one of our Nation's most successful Ambassadors to Germany at the end of the Cold War. And he has been a tireless advocate as a leading businessman in the private sector in the global fight against HIV/AIDS.

We have had a number of former Secretaries testify before this committee—Secretary Perry, Secretary Albright—we had twice the privilege of having Secretary Rice, our current Secretary of State, and we may be seeing the testimony of a future Secretary of State which I would warmly welcome.

Dr. Frederick Kagan is a scholar in residence at the American Enterprise Institute, an accomplished military historian, who had a distinguished career at West Point. His recent publication, entitled *Choosing Victory: A Plan for Success in Iraq*, was responsible, I believe, for shaping President Bush's decision in the last months to call for a troop increase in Iraq, although the President's plan differs in some respects from that of Dr. Kagan. We are delighted to have you, Dr. Kagan.

I would like now to turn to my dear friend and distinguished colleague, the ranking member of the committee from Florida, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. As always, it is an honor to serve with you, and I welcome our witnesses here this morning.

It is my sincere hope that today's hearing, Mr. Chairman, will focus on the future and not become yet one more forum to revisit the past and launch criticisms at the administration without offering concrete, viable alternatives. I hope that it does not become a forum for those who former Ambassador to the United States to the U.N. Jeanne Kirpatrick, whom we lost recently, warned us about, the "blame American first crowd."

I look forward to proposals that go beyond directly engaging Iran and Syria, to rogue regimes that are involved in fermenting violence and attacks in Iraq. This committee has held hearings and heard testimony from such experts in the region as former CIA Director Woolsley outlining the potential disastrous consequences of such an approach.

I would like to underscore my grave concerns over the media reports this morning announcing that the U.S. State Department officials will participate in talks with Iran and Syria on issues concerning Iraqi security. We had seen in press reports about our new director of national intelligence saying that we access the Tehran seeks to develop nuclear weapons and has shown greater interest in drawing out the negotiations rather than reaching an acceptable diplomatic solution.

That said, we are now in the first few weeks of a new approach, a new strategy to relinquish greater responsibility for security and reconstruction to Iraqi security forces and to the Iraqi Government. General Petreus, who was unanimously approved and confirmed by the Senate, has said that he cannot accomplish his mission without the deployment of additional U.S. forces. We should allow the imitative to be fully implemented before we rush to judgment on whether it has been successful or not.

Some believe that the impact of these decisions can be confined to Iraq, but Iraq is just one front in the global war against radical Islamic militant Jihadists. Let us focus on what al-Qaeda leader al Zawahiri said in December of last year. Iraq, Allah permitting, is the gateway to the liberation of Palestine and the restoration of the Islamic Kalifate, or when he emphasized that Afghanistan and Iraq are the two most important fields for confronting the contemporary crusader war, therefore the Muslim nation should support the Mujahadeen in these two countries with all of its power.

Thus, we should be cognizant of the dramatic potential consequences of a withdrawal or a phased redeployment from Iraq for other United States security and strategic interests elsewhere. If we run away from Iraq, they will pursue us. And for those, who as I do and all of us care about the situation in Afghanistan, this means that the Islamic militant Jihadists will intensify their efforts as they already have been doing in Afghanistan.

Once we retreat in Iraq where will it stop? Will we retreat from Afghanistan and another part of the world that is in turmoil? And how does a withdrawal or a phased redeployment strengthen our position with other nations in the region such as our United States allies in Jordan, Israel and Turkey?

Some have argued that a national unity government in Iraq that can defend itself is not possible in Iraq today, and they support proposals that would partition Iraq and create what they call stronger regional governments within a single Federal state. By contrast, others contend that such an effort would merely intensify the sectarian divide and others raise concerns about the potential benefits for Iran of such an arrangement given that the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, one of the most powerful Shiite groups in the country with strong ties to Iran, have made similar proposals.

So we have many complex challenges in front of us, Mr. Chairman. Thank you again for your leadership in holding these hearings. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

I am delighted to call on my friend and distinguished colleague, the Chair of the Middle East Subcommittee, Congressman Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for scheduling today's hearing, and assembling yet another very distinguished panel to talk to us about United States policy in Iraq and elsewhere.

Dr. Kagan, I read the executive summary of your statement that you provided us with, and found it to be very interesting and certainly provocative and challenging, at least from my perspective.

Ambassador Holbrooke, I read your statement with very keen interest and I couldn't agree more with the issues that you have raised in your discussion of the choices that America now faces. It is clear, at least to me, that in Iraq we should be focused on managing the consequences of a disastrous policy that underestimated the enormity of the task in Iraq, and did not provide sufficient troops necessary at a time when sufficient troops would have made a different in stabilizing the situation.

Now, as pointed out, we are in a position where we cannot resolve the differences between Iraqis. Only Iraqis can do that.

I would note on a positive step forward by the Iraqi cabinet in approving a draft law on the distribution of oil revenue. This step, while necessary, is not sufficient however to stop the sectarian violence in Iraq. But instead of implementing a rational policy that would extricate us from the mess that is now Iraq, we seem instead to be intent of fomenting region wide Sunni-Shiia conflict with the aid of our friends, the Saudis.

If Seymour Hersh's recent article is even half right, then the United States is engaged in supporting Sunni extremists with Saudi money as a way to counter Iran. It strikes me that such a policy carries with it the very real risk of region wide conflict. The law of unintended consequences will apply here as it did in Afghanistan during the war with the Soviet Union. With our blessing and our instigation in the eighties and nineties, the Saudis supported the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan. That policy produced both good and bad outcomes. Withdrawal of the Soviet Union was good, descent into civil war of Afghanistan was bad. The birth of al-Qaeda proved worse than bad.

The administration seems ready to repeat this sequence across the Middle East in an effort to counter Iran, but we don't have any

control over where this money goes. It seems to me that there is a significant risk of winding up in the hands of groups who are just as happy to attack us and our interests as they are to attack Iranian interests.

Mr. Ambassador, I would be interested in your view of such a policy, the likelihood of its success and an assessment of the potential risks that are involved as well as hearing from Dr. Kagan on the same matter.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much. And before going to Ambassador Holbrooke, I am delighted to call on my good friend from Indiana, the distinguished ranking member of the Middle East Subcommittee, Mr. Pence.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for calling this important hearing and bringing these two learned, experienced, and distinguished witnesses before this panel.

I believe there is simply no more pressing matter before the Nation today than the issue of succeeding in Iraq as the success of our overall foreign policy I believe is inextricably linked to victory in Iraq.

The great Prussian military philosopher Karl von Clausewitz, with whom our distinguished chairman is quite familiar, described the nature of war nearly 200 years ago.

Chairman LANTOS. I know him personally.

Mr. PENCE. I know. [Laughter.]

I meant academically familiar, Mr. Chairman.

As you know he wrote, "If you want to overcome your enemy, you must match your effort against his power of resistance which can be expressed as the product of two inseparable factors: The total means at his disposal and the strength of his will."

American might is unsurpassed. That is a bipartisan opinion on this committee. Therefore, our enemy targets our will.

I was home in Indiana this past week, had a number of town hall meetings, and I heard two things. Number one, I heard Hoosiers who were concerned about our lack of progress in Iraq, but I also heard profound concern over the possibility that we might abandon this cause before we achieved a stability and a victory for freedom in that troubled part of the world.

Yes, the Iraqi Government needs improvement. My concern is that the repeated reference to a political solution overlooks the administration's nonstop effort to accomplish that. I agree with Dr. Kagan's statement that "The strategy of relying on a political process to eliminate the insurgency has failed." Nonetheless I do want to credit the administration for recently making extraordinary progress in negotiating an agreement on oil revenue. The *New York Times* credited Ambassador Zol Kollazaid's negotiations as crucial to achieving unanimous cabinet approval this past Monday.

Mr. Chairman, I say respectfully it is not sufficient for those charged with national leadership to just be armchair quarterbacks. I think the critics of this administration's policy in Iraq, including those distinguished witnesses today, ought to be willing to tell us what course they would take, and specifically what the Middle East would look like in the wake of an irresponsible American withdrawal. Clever words like redeployment I don't believe will fool

America's enemies, they know exactly what it will mean, withdrawal, defeat and retreat. It will mean that because they will define it that way.

I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses and I also appreciate their agreement on two main issues. They both desire success in Iraq and they both recognize according to testimony that rapid withdrawal would be disastrous. I believe that we should declare victory as our national policy in Iraq, and I look forward to the insights of these two distinguished men.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much, Congressmen Pence. It is a strong preference of the Chair to our witnesses at this point, but I will, as always, be happy to entertain 1 minute statements should anybody be so inclined.

If not, Ambassador Holbrooke, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD C. HOLBROOKE, VICE CHAIRMAN, PERSEUS LLC, FORMER UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a great honor to appear again before this committee which, as I will never forget, was the very first committee I testified before in 1977, almost exactly 30 years ago. But the pleasure if far greater today, because you, Mr. Chairman, are a man who has been a close friend and advisor to me personally for many years, and also to my wife who shares with you a common country of birth and a commitment to the values that you have always epitomized.

Chairman Lantos's career is well known to all of you, but his influence often exercised in low key and subtle ways may be less well understood to many of you. While I was at the United Nations, Congressman Lantos, as my wife would say, Lantos, was by far the most helpful member of the House in dealing with issues of immense complexity, including the absolutely extraordinarily difficult issue of fixing the arrears problem. Congressman Lantos's role in deepening understanding on the most vital issues of national security whenever possible on a bipartisan basis has been huge to our Nation.

This has been true on the crises we face in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran. This committee has an opportunity—indeed, I would suggest, an obligation—to address these issues urgently. It is with this in mind that I appear before you today, just after a trip to northern Iraq and Turkey, which concluded with the Munich Security Conference at which Congressman Berman, among others, was present as well.

Let me start, Mr. Chairman, with a statement that I never thought I would make and never wanted to make. The situation in Iraq is far worse than it ever was in Vietnam. I speak as a veteran of services as a civilian in Vietnam for over 3 years, and four more years on working on the problem in the White House of Lyndon Johnson, the State Department, the Pentagon where I wrote one volume of the Pentagon Papers, and the 1968–1969 Paris Peace Talks with the North Vietnamese. Never, in the years since, did I imagine that anything would or could be worse.

But Iraq is worse than Vietnam except in terms of American casualties, and this is compounded by the fact that we are waging a second war in Afghanistan that is also not going well, although I believe strongly that it is still salvageable in Afghanistan and must be turned around.

What makes these two wars all the more disastrous is that the major beneficiary is the country in between them, Iran.

First, we eliminated regimes they despised but could not get rid of themselves, the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Then, even as we got tied down in protracted insurgencies in both countries, Iran fattened its coffers with high-priced oil, backed two dangerous anti-Israeli movements, Hamas and Hezbollah, quietly supported extreme anti-American movements within Iraq, and exported the most virulent brand of anti-Semitism since the Holocaust. And last but certainly not least, they are defying the world and developing a nuclear capability.

Now, Mr. Chairman, my opening statement, which I submitted to you on Monday as requested, has been overtaken by events that you and your colleagues have already alluded to. As everyone knows, the Secretary of State announced yesterday that the United States will participate in international meetings convened by the Iraqi Government, to which Iran and Syria have been invited.

While this falls short of what many, including myself, think would best serve our national interest in regard to Iran, it is an important step forward, and I share your acknowledgement, both you and the ranking member of the minority, in regard to that.

It is also a clear response to the recommendations and pressures from the American public, the new Congress, and the Baker-Hamilton Commission. It should therefore be welcomed and encouraged, and it is to be hoped that these meetings will have the participation of Iran and Syria. Both nations must have buy-in in Iraq is ever to be stabilized. This is equally true of the other neighbors, Turkey, Syria, Jordan and of course Saudi Arabia.

Discussions with Iran should not be restricted to the nuclear issue but the whole range of things they are doing to destabilize a vast region, and I might add, the Russians must be part of this process.

But until yesterday the idea of participating directly in a broadly-based international effort to deal directly with Iran had been rejected by this administration. This is doubly remarkable in light of the recent breakthrough by Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill in his talks with North Korea, and I think in light of the announcement yesterday it is extremely fortuitous that you have him as your witness this afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

The model Chris Hill used, with the full backing of President Bush and Secretary Rice, was simple and elegant, and it definitely bridged the rather public internal disagreement within the administration. Hill conducted a bilateral negotiation within a multiparty forum, the Six-Party Talks. This put the other four countries, especially China, the primary host, in the position of exerting pressure on North Korea while allowing the United States negotiating flexibility to reach an agreement.

I might note that the 1995 Dayton negotiations, which you mentioned earlier, Mr. Chairman, that ended the war in Bosnia were

conducted by a small American team, and Chris Hill was my senior political deputy. He is one of the most outstanding career diplomats this Nation has, and essentially—making allowances for vast differences in substance and structure—Hill followed a similar structure with the Secretary of State and the President's support after an intense internal debate in the administration.

At Dayton, the European Union and the Russians played an important role. So they must do in regard to Iran as these negotiations begin.

Let me turn directly to Iraq itself, and let us start with a simple but critical proposition which Congressman Pence has already referred to. All Americans want success in Iraq. And here, Mr. Chairman, I want to stress something very important about the difference between Iraq and Vietnam. There are many similarities, but there is a critical difference, and I say this because of all the noise that is going on in the public debate, particularly on the cable channels.

In Vietnam, as all of you know and many of you remember personally, the opposition to the war included people who actively took the side of the enemy, the people who were killing Americans. People demonstrated carrying Vietcong flags. They had posters of Ho Chi Minh. This was not the right thing to do while Americans were under combat, and people in their anger against the war went far further than they should have.

But I want to stress particularly to my friends on the minority side of the aisle that this is not the case in Iraq. There is nobody who wants these dreadful people to succeed, al-Qaeda, the Taliban, the Sunni extremists, the Shiite extremists. This is a critical but unnoticed difference, and this is in reference to your comment, Congresswoman, that we are here for—and I agree with you—we are here to discuss practical solutions.

I would also add that the announcement of Secretary Rice yesterday was in fact, and she acknowledges in her hearing yesterday, a response to the very kind of practical suggestions put forward by Baker-Hamilton Commission, by many members of this committee, by many leading American foreign policy experts.

I don't question the patriotism or motives, the motives of those with differing points of view, and I regret the assertion that opponents of the war are aiding and abetting the enemy. That is not true, and as General Pace himself has said, they are exercising the very things we are fighting for.

But the U.S. and President Bush do indeed face the most difficult choices imaginable and we must be honest about them if we are to contribute this morning to their solutions. Perhaps the additional troops being rushed to Iraq can delay a far worse blood bath for awhile, but I believe, and I say this with great regret, that no surge will definitively turn the tide and, as everyone knows, as President Bush himself has said, sooner or later the United States will leave Iraq.

The question therefore is not whether but how and when we redeploy in Iraq. How do we redeploy in a responsible manner—not the irresponsible manner, to use Congressman Pence's exact—and avoid the chaotic end that we saw in Vietnam in 1975? How do we protect our vital national security interests in the rest of the vast

and vital and turbulent region that stretches from Beirut to Bombay, from the Mediterranean to the Himalayan Mountains? How do we deal with the estimated 6,000 al-Qaeda in western Iraq who are there as a result of the war? They weren't there before the war but they are there now, and we can't just say, well, it is our fault they are there. We have to deal with them as a real threat. And if we are going after al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, we can't ignore them in a situation much closer to the European heartland.

The first thing that must be done is to define our vital national interests. This has not been done adequately to my mind. Time does not permit a full review today of what these vital national interests would be, but I suggest you consider additional hearings focused on this precise issue in order to help educate the American people. What is our vital national interest in the region?

The consequences of the administration's mistakes have created a new set of consequences, and al-Qaeda entrenching itself in western Iraq, and Sunnis and Shiites tearing each other apart, with Americans caught in the middle, what should we do? Two of your colleagues, Mr. Chairman, have asked this to be specific. I will try briefly to answer the question posed.

The President's answer was the surge, which I view as a mini-escalation. To my mind, and I believe my distinguished co-witness will disagree with me on this point, I think 21,000 troops is either too many or too few. I don't believe it is the right amount. Now, none of us are going to know until the history books are written. I base my assessments on many years of participating in, studying, and watching guerilla wars.

Twenty-one thousand are not enough to turn the tide, but they significantly deepen our involvement in a war that everyone says cannot be won through military means. American casualties will increase and the escalation increases the risks that the ultimate American exit from Iraq will be precipitous.

At this point, Mr. Chairman, it is clear that all our choices in Iraq are bad. Given these circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that, however difficult and however painful, we should try to manage a careful phased redeployment of American troops rather than face the situation in the future that might force our hand. This is to some extent what the British decided to do with their announcement last week. More British withdrawals are certain in my view once the prime minister changes later this year, and the South Koreans with far less notice are following the same pattern.

Such a redeployment, and please note I used the word "redeployment" very deliberately, would take perhaps a year if done properly, and could start relatively soon if President Bush would consider it and present it, not as a defeat but as an opportunity to salvage something from the wreckage that is now Iraq. The United States could leave some troops behind for specific tasks related directly to our own national security interests—first and above all—pursuit of al-Qaeda and their network in western Iraq. And again I stress, since everyone here is supporting enhanced effort in Afghanistan against the same enemy, we can't go after them in Afghanistan and ignore their growing presence in western Iraq, and I don't think enough attention has been focused on this conun-

drum. Secondly, to help stabilize the situation between Turkey and the Kurds of northern Iraq; third, perhaps training Iraqi forces.

American troops long ago achieved their original objective, the removal of Saddam Hussein, but they should not nor will they be able to stay indefinitely to oversee the creation of a government, in President Bush's words, "of national unity that can defend itself."

If we wish to influence the political future of Iraq, we must seek to do so now while American troops are still there. Time is not on our side, and anti-American feelings are continuing to grow even among those who hold their freedom from a murderous dictator to the bravery and skill and courage of Americans.

Beyond Iraq we must focus on two states—Turkey and Israel, the two democracies and our two close allies in the region. Turkey remains our indispensable NATO ally, the front-line state of the post-Cold War era. Yet it has gone from strongly pro-American 6 years to violently hostile today. This is a long-term disaster for both nations and must be reversed.

As for Israel, the issues are obvious and they lie beyond the scope of today's hearings, but it must be said, Mr. Chairman, that Israel has not benefitted from the Iraq war as some in both the United States and Israel once hoped and once predicted. On the contrary. Iraq has only, in my view, increased the isolation and dangers to Israel.

Another issue closely related is the Kurdish question. In this regard, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit for the record my recent article in the *Washington Post* based on my trip to that area.

Chairman LANTOS. Without objection.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Allow me to close with a few words about Afghanistan. It is inexcusable that this vital front in the war on al-Qaeda was allowed to languish for so long. When I warned of this danger in a column in the *Washington Post* almost a year ago, two of the administration's most senior officials called me and told me I was "too pessimistic." I remember these calls vividly because I was arguing for bipartisanship in Afghanistan, and I was accused of politicizing the very issue I was seeking to encourage bipartisanship on.

But the fact is when I re-read the column in preparation for this testimony today, Mr. Chairman, I was too optimistic. The situation has gotten worse than I expected. Mr. Chairman, we must win the war in Afghanistan or else Osama bin Laden will return in the baggage train of the Taliban and start again to plot attacks on our homeland, not from a cave under pressure on the border, but unpressured inside a vast country.

But Afghanistan will require more troops, more resources, and more support from our NATO allies. That in turn will require effective American leadership internationally to summon the international will, and on-the-ground in Afghanistan where up to now with the exception of our military forces we have not fielded the first team. It will also require bipartisan support for a much later economic assistance program and, Mr. Chairman, I recommend a complete reevaluation of the drug program where the American taxpayers have seen billions of dollar wasted, every cent of it wasted while the number of acres growing poppy seeds and the amount

of opium has grown 40 to 50 percent a year as we have spent $1 billion a year on this program. It has been a total failure.

Mr. Chairman, I believe your committee can play a leadership role at getting Afghanistan right before it is too late, and I thank you enormously for the honor of appearing before you today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Holbrooke follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD C. HOLBROOKE, VICE CHAIRMAN, PERSEUS LLC, FORMER UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr Chairman,

It is a great honor to appear again before this committee, which, as I will never forget, was the very first committee I ever testified to, back in 1977. But the pleasure is far greater today, because your new Chairman is a man who has been a close friend and advisor for many years, not only of me, but of my wife. His career is well-known to all of you, but his influence, often exercised in low-key and subtle ways, is less well understood. While I was at the United Nations, he was by far the most helpful member of the House in dealing with issues of immense complexity, including fixing the arrears problem. His role in deepening understanding of the most vital issues of national security, on a bipartisan basis whenever possible, has been huge.

This has been true on the crises we face in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran. This Committee has an opportunity—indeed, I would suggest, an obligation—to address these issues urgently, and it is with this in mind that I appear before you today, just after a trip to northern Iraq and Turkey.

Let me start with a statement that I never thought I would make: the situation in Iraq today is worse than it ever was in Vietnam. I speak as a veteran of three years of service as a civilian in Vietnam and four more years working on the problem at the Johnson White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, and the 1968–69 Paris Peace Talks. Never, in the years since, did I imagine that anything would, or could, be worse. But Iraq is—and this is compounded by the fact that we are waging a second war, in Afghanistan that is also not going well, although I believe strongly that it is still salvageable and must be turned around. What makes these two wars all the more disastrous for our nation is that the major beneficiary is the country between them, Iran. First we got rid of regimes they despised, the Taliban and Saddam Hussein. Then, even as we got tied down in protracted insurgencies in both countries, Iran fattened its coffers with high-priced oil, backed two dangerous anti-Israeli movements, Hamas and Hezbollah, quietly supported extreme anti-American movements within Iraq, and exported the most virulent brand of anti-Semitism since the Holocaust. And last but certainly not least—they are defying the world and developing a nuclear capability.

But the idea of leading a broadly-based international coalition to negotiate directly with Iran has been rejected by this Administration, even though just such a course has been recommended by almost every foreign policy expert and the Baker-Hamilton Commission. This is doubly remarkable in light of the recent breakthrough by Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill in his talks with the North Koreans. The model he used, with the full backing of President Bush and Secretary Rice, was simple and elegant, and deftly bridged the rather public internal disagreement within the administration: Hill conducted a bi-lateral negotiation within a multi-party forum, the Six-Party Talks. This put the other four countries, especially China, in the position exerting pressure on North Korea while allowing the U.S. the negotiating flexibility to reach an agreement. I might note that the 1995 Dayton negotiations that ended the war in Bosnia, in which Chris Hill was my senior political deputy, followed a similar structure, with the EU and, importantly, the Russians, represented at a high level, but with all the critical discussions being simply between the U.S. and the warring Balkan parties.

The North Korean agreement raises anew the question: why doesn't this administration try a similar approach with Iran? Mr Chairman, I am unable to answer this question with authority, because, like the Baker-Hamilton Commission and countless experts, I am simply baffled. I hope that your Committee will focus in future hearings on this issue. Of course, the other side, the Iranians, might not respond; the internal situation there has become increasingly unclear, and perhaps a power struggle greater than we can see from afar is underway that would make a positive Iranian response unlikely. I am fully prepared for that. But, as the story of Nixon-in-China reminds us, opening a door can sometimes produce results previously unimaginable. The breakthrough in North Korea, so strongly opposed by many people

within and close to the administration, further illustrates that. Finally, let me stress my belief that as long as we are tied down in Iraq, it will be virtually impossible to deal with Tehran, while Iran can continue to raise the price for us in Iraq with relatively low-cost, deniable actions.

Let me turn therefore to Iraq itself. I must start with a simple, but critical, proposition: all Americans want success in Iraq. I do not question the patriotism or motives of those with differing points of view, and I regret the outrageous assertion that opponents of the war are aiding and abetting the enemy. But the United States and President Bush face the most difficult choices imaginable, and we must be honest about these issues if we are to contribute to their solutions. A long term American presence in Iraq is inconceivable, for obvious military and political reasons. Yet most experts believe that a rapid withdrawal is likely to result in an even worse bloodbath than the one already going on, as well as further gains for Iran and al-Qaeda. The United States is perceived in the rest of the Arab world, which is overwhelmingly Sunni, as backing the Shiites, thus increasing our problems with the very Arab nations we have traditionally been closest to. Yet there is no gratitude among Shiites, nor should we expect any. They want everything in Iraq, after having been the suppressed majority for over 400 years. What the United States unleashed, we can no longer control. Perhaps the additional troops being rushed to Iraq can delay a far worse bloodbath for a while, but no surge will turn the tide, and—as everyone knows—sooner or later the United States will leave Iraq.

The question, therefore, is not whether, but how and when we redeploy in Iraq. How do we redeploy in a "responsible" manner, and avoid the chaotic end in Vietnam in 1975? How do we protect our vital national security interests in the rest of the vast and vital region that stretches from the Mediterranean to the Himalayas? How do we deal with the estimated 6,000al-Qaeda now operating in western Iraq, as a result of American politics?

The first thing that must be done is to define our vital national interests—something that has been sorely lacking. Time does not permit a full review today of what these would be, but I suggest that you consider hearings focused on this precise issue in order to help educate the American people. While oil and energy resources are often put at the top of any list, we cannot allow ourselves to be blackmailed because of energy. In any case, remaining in Iraq hardly helps us, or anyone else, on oil. There is plenty of oil there, but it will not flow to the rest of the world in significant quantities until there is peace and stability, and, in any case, American has never been dependent on Iraqi oil.

Nor is promotion of democracy a top priority, at this time, in Iraq or its neighbors. Now, Mr Chairman, you and I have both spent much of our lives supporting democracy and human rights around the world; indeed, it is one of the issues that first brought us together. But the oath we take when we enter government service calls on us to preserve and protect the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. We can deplore the behavior of regimes in nations from Burma to Zimbabwe, and we should use whatever influence we have to call them to account for their treatment of their own people. If the opportunity arises, we should act to promote a peaceful transition to popular rule, as we did in the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, Chile, and Central and Eastern Europe. But we cannot intervene everywhere, and in any case, military action is unlikely to produce the popularly-based governments that we prefer. Those who supported the initial action in Iraq did so because the American people were misled on the issue of Weapons of Mass Destruction, because Saddam was a monster, because we believed that the administration was competent, because they asserted a link between Saddam and 9/11, and because when American troops are in harm's way, our first instinct is to support them. But not—I repeat, not—to impose democracy in a country that had never known it, that was torn by ancient sectarian divisions, and that should never have been created within its present boundaries to begin with.

The consequences of these monumental mistakes have created a new set of consequences. With al-Qaeda now entrenching itself in western Iraq, and Sunnis and Shiites tearing each other apart, with Americans caught in the middle, what should we do?

The president's answer was the surge, which is really a mini-escalation. To my mind, 21,000 more troops are either too few or too many. They are not enough to turn the tide, but they significantly deepen our involvement in a war that cannot be won through military means. American casualties will increase, and the escalation increases the risks that the ultimate American exit from Iraq will be a precipitous one.

At this point, it is clear that all our choices in Iraq are bad. Given these circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that, however difficult and painful, we should try to manage a careful, phased re-deployment of American troops, rather

than face a situation in the not-too-distant future that would force our hand. This is, to some extent, what the British decided to do with their announcement last week; more British withdrawals seem certain once the Prime Minister changes later this year. The South Koreans are following much the same pattern.

Such a re-deployment would take approximately a year, if done properly. It could start relatively soon, if President Bush would consider it—and present it—not as a defeat, but as an opportunity to salvage something from the wreckage that is now Iraq. The United States could leave some troops behind for specific tasks related directly to our own national security—first, pursuit of the al-Qaeda network in western Iraq; second, helping stabilize the situation between Turkey and the Kurds of northern Iraq; third, possibly training Iraqi forces. American troops long ago achieved their original objective—the removal of Saddam Hussein—but they should not, nor will they be able to, stay indefinitely to oversee the creation a government, in President Bush's words, "of national unity . . . that can defend itself." Such a government is, in fact, not possible in Iraq today, except perhaps under another brutal dictatorship. Senator Biden and Les Gelb have proposed a solution to this conundrum that I have supported: an Iraqi version of the Dayton Agreement that would create stronger regional governments within a single federal state. The Kurds already have their own self-administered region in northern Iraq, while SCIRI, the most powerful Shiite political group, wants something similar for the south and east. Yet both the Administration and the Baker-Hamilton Commission opposed Biden-Gelb. Perhaps they did not understand it, or perhaps the open Saudi Arabian opposition prevented it from getting the attention it deserved. But time is running out for the United States to play an important role in this or any other solution. If we wish to influence the political future of Iraq we must seek to do so now, while American troops are still there. Time is not on our side, and anti-American feelings continue to grow, even among those who owe their freedom from a murderous dictator to the bravery and skill of American troops.

Beyond Iraq, we must focus first on two states, Turkey and Israel, the two democracies, and our two closest allies, in the region. Turkey remains our indispensable NATO ally, the front-line state of the post-Cold War era. Yet it has gone from strongly pro-American six years ago to violently hostile today. This is a long term disaster for both nations, and must be reversed. As for Israel, the issues are obvious, and lie beyond today's hearings. But it must be said that Israel has not benefited from the Iraq war as some in both the U.S. and Israel once hoped and predicted. On the contrary, Iraq has only increased the isolation and dangers to Israel.

Another issue, closely related, is the Kurdish question. In this regard, Mr Chairman, I would like to submit for the record my recent article in The Washington Post, based on my trip to Turkey and northern Iraq.

I wish to close with a few words about Afghanistan. It is inexcusable that this vital front in the war on al-Qaeda was allowed to languish for so long. When I warned of this danger in a column in The Washington Post almost a year ago, I was called by two of the Administration's most senior officials and told I was "too pessimistic." Today, re-reading it, I think I was rather too optimistic—although I was not optimistic at all. Mr Chairman, we must win this war, or else Osama bin Laden will return and start again to plot attacks on our homeland without the pressure he now faces as he hides in caves on the Pakistan border. This will require more troops, more resources, and more support from our NATO allies. That, in turn, will require effective American leadership, something that has been lacking in recent years. It will also require bipartisan support for much larger economic assistance programs, and a complete re-evaluation of the drug eradication programs, which, despite their enormous cost, have been a colossal failure. Once again, Mr Chairman, I believe your Committee can play a leadership role in getting Afghanistan right—before it is too late. . . . Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Chairman LANTOS. Ambassador Holbrooke, we are deeply grateful for your penetrating tour dar rezone, and we will be questioning you on many points. I would now like to turn to Dr. Kagan.

STATEMENT OF MR. FREDERICK W. KAGAN, RESIDENT SCHOLAR, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

Mr. KAGAN. Mr. Chairman, honorable members, it is a great honor for me to appear before you to talk about this most important topic, the most important challenge I think that the United States faces in the world today, and I do not say that lightly be-

cause I believe that we face a great many very grave challenges around the world, and I am very worried about the shape of the future international environment, and I think it is very important that we talk about Iraq with a full understanding of the likely consequences of various courses of action on that international environment and that we keep it in that larger context of real geo-politics as well as the context of the global war on terror.

I think the global war on terror is extremely important, but I think our interests in the world now are not limited to the pursuit of the global war on terror. In Iraq, I believe that the two issues of geo-politics and our real interests in the world and the global war on terror are closely intertwined and I will speak about that briefly in a moment.

I would like first to say that this is, I believe, my fourth appearance before a congressional committee on this subject, and I have been impressed on every occasion by the civility and the level of discourse that I have seen which contrasts so markedly with a great deal of the rhetoric that we hear in the press, and I salute Congress for working so hard to address these issues in a serious fashion, and for bringing in experts of a variety of perspectives to present their views.

I think the disagreements about what to do in Iraq now really come down to three major headings. Can we succeed in Iraq? Is success still possible? If it isn't possible, can we contain the effects of failure in Iraq and prevent them from undermining or security both from a geo-political standpoint and from the standpoint of global war on terror? And lastly, does it matter to the global on terror whether we succeed in Iraq or is there some way to pursue our interests in the global war on terror on Iraq without actually getting the sectarian violence under control and succeeding as fully as the administration and as I believe we ought to?

I would like to say in response to the first I do believe that we can succeed. I do believe that Iraq is fundamentally different from Vietnam in a great many ways as my distinguished colleague pointed out. I do not agree with his assessment that the situation in Iraq is worse than the situation we faced in Vietnam. From the standpoint of insurgencies, traditional insurgencies, it certainly is not. In Vietnam, there were large mobil forces of the enemy organized into battalion and larger double combat units moving supported directly by the large organized combat forces of one of Vietnam's neighbors.

We have seen nothing like that in Iraq. Most of the energy in Iraq cannot bring to bear larger than squad-sized formations, and we do not have regular units of Iran, Syria or any other state operating against us in Iraq.

Now, the situation is more complicated because we are facing, in addition to an actual insurgency on the part of certain portions of the Sunni Arab community, also widespread sectarian violence, but from the standpoint of traditional insurgency measure I do not agree that Iraq is worse than Vietnam. I think our situation there from that perspective is significantly better.

I think Iraq is different from Vietnam in another important way. We were able at the end of the day to walk away from Vietnam, and the consequences of walking away were relatively confined. It

is true that a number of the states neighboring Vietnam also fell to communism as some had warned that they would, and other states that did not fall nevertheless came under great pressure. It was also true that the net result of that was far less significant than many people thought it would be, and far less significant than many other things that were going on in the world at that time.

I do not believe, in fact, I am convinced that that is not true in Iraq. If you look at the measures, and there is a terrific report that I commend to your attention if you have not already seen it, by Ken Pollack and Dan Bymam called "Things Fall Apart", about the likely consequences of spillover in the region if we allow Iraq to implode completely.

There is every reason to believe that if we withdraw from Iraq without establishing a basic level of security and a basic level of effective governance that the war will turn into a maelstrom that will involve the entire region, and we have already seen Iran directly involved in supporting insurgents, Shiia insurgents, also apparently Sunni insurgents in Iraq. We have seen Syria involved in supporting insurgents in Iraq. The Saudis have made it clear that if this gets out of hand they will intervene. The Turks have threatened to intervene.

I think that a collapse in Iraq is very likely to lead both to regional conflict and also to subsidiary civil wars throughout the Middle East, especially throughout the Arab world, and I do not think that anyone can really say honestly that is in the interests of the American people to have such a thing happen.

So as many people are pessimistic about the possibility of success in Iraq where I think it is possible, I think people are not pessimistic enough about the likely consequences of allowing Iraq to collapse completely, and I think it is worth discussing that in a lot of detail, and I would commend again to the attention of the committee the Pollack and Bymam report, and I would suggest that you might want to address in more detail various scenarios for possible consequences of an American withdrawal from Iraq from a regional perspective.

Does Iraq matter to the global war on terror? Well, Ambassador Holbrooke pointed out that there are thousands of al-Qaeda fighters in Al Anbar province, and he is absolutely right, and there is no question that that question must be dealt with. There are many who would say that the way to deal with that problem is to abandon our efforts to bring sectarian violence under control, and instead focus our efforts in Iraq on somehow preventing those 6,000 al-Qaeda terrorists in Al Anbar province from establishing bases and training camps and so forth, and basically take some sort of approach—I am not even sure exactly what it would look like—to prevent them from gaining a foothold.

The problem is that in my view this is a misreading of the situation in Iraq. Al-Qaeda is not only in Al Anbar. Al-Qaeda operates throughout the belt of cities and villages that surround Baghdad. Its networks run into the heart of Baghdad. It is at the heart of much of the sectarian fighting in Baghdad. The networks run into Diyala providence, into the provincial capital of Bacuba, and all the way out to the Iranian border, and they run up to the north into Ninua province as well.

So dealing with al-Qaeda in Anbar, even if you could do that without dealing with the sectarian violence, would not deal with the al-Qaeda problem in Iraq. But it is also very important to recognize that al-Qaeda and its activities are very closely tied to the sectarian violence.

Kim Kagan is showing in a report that will be released tomorrow called "The Iraq Report"—it will be on the *Weekly Standard* Web site—that there is in fact a very intimate connection between al-Qaeda activities in Iraq and sectarian violence, and it is not simply that al-Qaeda generates the sectarian violence, which was the stated objective of al-Qaeda and Iraq leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in which, unfortunately, he succeeded.

Al-Qaeda works to generate sectarian violence. It then works to bring about sectarian cleaning. It then works to intimate the local people into supporting it and allowing it to establish bases. What we have seen in Diyala province especially is that you cannot actually treat the problem of al-Qaeda in Iraq without addressing the sectarian violence at which al-Qaeda is the root.

So I do not believe that there is any way to fight the global war on terror responsibly without addressing the problem of sectarian violence in Iraq that is so intimately tied to the dangers that al-Qaeda poses.

Now, I would like briefly to make a couple of points about the current operation. The President announced a change in strategy on January 10, and I would like to emphasize here the words "change in strategy." The numbers of troops that are going into Iraq are not by themselves going to be determinant of anything. If the President had not changed his approach to this war, but had continued to pursue the train and transition approach that has been the hallmark of our efforts since 2004, I would not have supported the increase of forces because I do not think that that strategy could succeed.

I think that all along in this effort we have had a fundamentally misguided strategy that did not focus on what to my mind is the first and foremost responsibility of any counter insurgence force or peacekeeping force for that matter, which is establishing security in the population.

The President has now declared that it is our strategy to help the Iraqis establish security. In order to pursue that changed mission the commanders on the ground feel, and I agree with them, that we need additional forces.

It has been 6 weeks, about, since the President made that declaration. So far approximately one additional combat brigade has entered the theater and is operating in Baghdad. Another one is in the process of deploying, but the deployment will not be complete for another 12 weeks or so. We have not yet begun to see the major clear-and-hold operations that are to be the hallmark of this operation. The U.S. military has been conducting operations to prepare for the clear-and-hold to come, but it has not even yet begun what will be the major effort. That will not happen for weeks at the least, in my view.

Nevertheless, we have already seen some very positive developments in Iraq. In Al Anbar province, remarkably, the Sunni sheiks have largely turned against al-Qaeda. We are fortunate in this re-

gard that our enemies are ideological and etilogues and are not very adaptable, and they made the mistake of killing a Sunni sheik last fall, and of committing a variety of other atrocities, including beheading four school girls and leaving their heads in a cooler in front of a government believe, and I believe it was Ramadi, all of which has had the effect of turning the tribal leadership in Al Anbar against them.

Al Anbar is therefore becoming a far less hospitable environment for al-Qaeda. Thousands of Anbar youth have signed up for the police and are now taking to the streets to protect themselves against al-Qaeda. That doesn't mean that the threat from al-Qaeda is eliminated. It means that al-Qaeda is moving, and that is one of the reasons I believe why we are seeing and will continue to see increased al-Qaeda in Diyala, but no one would have imagined a few months ago, in my view, and I certainly didn't imagine that we would have made such progress in Al Anbar.

Even in Baghdad, the situation has changed dramatically in ways that I would not have anticipated in so short a period of time, so briefly into the surge. Muqtada al-Sadr has fled the country to Iran. Now surely he goes back and forth to Iran for a variety of reason, and he may have gone as likely to seek help as to flee, but it was a very bad moment for him politically to do that. It made him look much weaker.

In fleeing, he ordered his fighters not to resist American movements in Baghdad, and they have not. For the first time since 2004, American troops have conducted large-scale sweeps in Shaav and Oor, two Shiite strongholds north of Sadr City, and they just completed a raid into Sadr City. None of those operations were opposed.

Now, this is not clear and hold. They have not cleared those areas. They certainly are not holding them. But I would not have imagined that American forces could operate with so little resistance in Shiite strongholds this early into the operation.

Coalition forces arrested the son of Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, the effective leader of Skiri, and nevertheless Hakim continues to preach in his Friday afternoon sermons that the Shiia should not attack the Sunni, and that sectarian violence is not in Iraq's interest.

The new Iraqi general in charge of operations in Baghdad, General Abboud Gambar, has declared that he will assist Sunni people who have been driven out of their homes in the capital to relocate if they wish, and that he will even remove the Shiia families that have occupied their homes to make that possible.

Now, a declaration isn't action, and we will have to see if they follow through, but it is a dramatic declaration and much more than we have seen from this government.

The passage of the oil law through the Council of Ministers is a very positive step. It is one of the benchmarks that has been repeatedly demanded and of which people have been skeptical. They have moved forward on that.

In other words, I would say that even though we are only a short time into the surge, and we have not even begun the major operation that is to be its hallmark, we have nevertheless seen significant progress, and that does not mean that the progress will continue unabated. I fully expect that at a certain point that Jhi Shal

Madri will begin to fight us when they realize that they really will be eliminated. I fully expect, as we have already seen, that al-Qaeda in Iraq will step up its attacks. I fully expect that Sunni insurgents will continue to resist and fight, and of course the political complexities are enormous.

Nevertheless, at this stage I think the trend lines for the first time in a long time are even if ever so moderately positive, and I think that it is far from time at this point considering how central Iraq is to all of our interests to give up on this effort, and I would exhort Congress and the committee to give General Petreus the time and the resources that he needs to help us to success in Iraq.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kagan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. FREDERICK W. KAGAN, RESIDENT SCHOLAR, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Victory is still an option in Iraq, and it is vital to America's security. Defeat will lead to regional conflict, humanitarian catastrophe, and increased global terrorism.
- Iraq has reached a critical point. The strategy of relying on a political process to eliminate the insurgency has failed. Rising sectarian violence threatens to break America's will to fight, and it will destroy the Iraqi government, armed forces, and people if it is not rapidly controlled.
- We must adopt a new approach to the war and implement it quickly and decisively.
- Three courses of action have been proposed. All will fail.
  - — Withdraw immediately. This approach will lead to immediate defeat. The ISF are entirely dependent upon U.S. support to survive and function. If U.S. forces withdraw now, they will collapse and Iraq will descend into total civil war that will rapidly spread throughout the region.
  - — Engage Iraq's neighbors. This approach will fail. The basic causes of violence and sources of manpower and resources for the warring sides come from within Iraq. Iraq's neighbors are encouraging the violence, but they cannot stop it.
  - — Increase embedded trainers dramatically. This approach cannot succeed rapidly enough to prevent defeat. Removing U.S. forces from patrolling neighborhoods to embed them as trainers will lead to an immediate rise in violence. This rise in violence will destroy America's remaining will to fight, and escalate the cycle of sectarian violence in Iraq beyond anything an Iraqi army could bring under control.
- We must act to restore security and stability to Baghdad, which has been identified as the decisive point.
- There is a way to do this.
  - — We must change our focus from training Iraqi soldiers to securing the Iraqi population and containing the rising violence. Securing the population has never been the primary mission of the U.S. military effort in Iraq, and now it must become the first priority.
  - — We must send more American combat forces into Iraq and especially into Baghdad to support this operation. A surge of seven Army brigades and Marine regiments to support clear-and-hold operations starting in the Spring of 2007 is necessary, possible, and will be sufficient.
  - — These forces, partnered with Iraqi units, will clear critical Sunni and mixed Sunni-Shi'a neighborhoods, primarily on the west side of the city.
  - — After the neighborhoods have been cleared, U.S. soldiers and marines, again partnered with Iraqis, will remain behind to maintain security.
  - — As security is established, reconstruction aid will help to reestablish normal life and, working through Iraqi officials, will strengthen Iraqi local government
- This approach requires a national commitment to victory in Iraq:

— The ground forces must accept longer tours for several years. National Guard units will have to accept increased deployments during this period.

— Equipment shortages must be overcome by transferring equipment from non-deploying active duty, National Guard, and reserve units to those about to deploy. Military industry must be mobilized to provide replacement equipment sets urgently.

— The president must request a dramatic increase in reconstruction aid for Iraq. Responsibility and accountability for reconstruction must be assigned to established agencies. The president must request a substantial increase in ground forces end strength. This increase is vital to sustaining the morale of the combat forces by ensuring that relief is on the way. The president must issue a personal call for young Americans to volunteer to fight.

- Failure in Iraq today will require far greater sacrifices tomorrow in far more desperate circumstances.
- Committing to victory will demonstrate America's strength to our friends and enemies.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much. We will begin the questioning with Mr. Berman of California. Before you begin, Mr. Berman, let me caution all of my colleagues that since I want to give an opportunity for every member to have his time, we are allocating 5 minutes to both the question and the answer. If you use up your time in the question, I will ask our witnesses to supply the answer in writing. Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Holbrooke has outlined an alternative proposal. I am not sure he believes that this administration is going to move to an alternative, and didn't assert that they were likely to. So I would like to focus my questions to you, Dr. Kagan, particularly your last sort of call for the Congress to give this some time to see if it can work.

The other side of that coin is a notion that if this doesn't work, if the funding comes, if the surge is allowed to play out, if sees and hold and rebuild is given the opportunity to work, that we will achieve some of the benchmarks that the President has referred to regarding a substantial reduction in sectarian violence, a political actions in Baghdad in terms of an oil law, in terms of the Iraqi militaries being utilized to bring peace and stability and not be part of the sectarian conflict, a variety of the other issues.

At that particular point what would your reaction be to a notion that essentially Congress take up your plea? We codify those benchmarks. We give time to see if those benchmarks can be achieved, but we create a process by expedited approval where we, if the President finds that those have been achieved and Congress disagrees that they haven't been achieved, we are allowed to offer without being buried in committee with votes certain guaranteed in both houses, resolutions of disapproval, the passage of which would have the effect of essentially tieing the appropriations to the redeployment out of the non-Kurdish areas of Iraq with exceptions for protecting diplomatic missions, perhaps some training, and specific small-scale operations to deal with al-Qaeda bases and training camps.

In other words, something that has Congress assert its role in both funding and an oversight, accepting that this surge is going to take place, codifying the goals of that, because at some point the American people, yes, they want us to succeed, but if we can't succeed, they do want us to get out. And based on what has gone on

until now, the rather hapless performance and the conduct of this effort they are more and more skeptical about our changes of success.

Chairman LANTOS. Dr. Kagan, you have 2 minutes in which to answer.

Mr. KAGAN. Thank you. Congressman, I would certainly welcome Congress's statement that it was going to give this a chance, and I do agree that there will come a point where we will have to evaluate whether this strategy is working or not and whether the strategy has in fact succeeded or not. I don't actually think it will be very difficult to tell, frankly. I think that, you know, months after the surge is complete and we have conducted the clear-and-hold operations we will have a pretty good idea about where we are standing, and I don't think we are going to have to have a lot of debate, frankly, about whether it is working or not. I don't think it is going to be that finely balanced.

I do believe that it will work.

Mr. BERMAN. And if it doesn't?

Mr. KAGAN. And if it doesn't, then we are going to have to come up with another approach to dealing with the problem.

I am uncomfortable about two aspects of the proposal that you have laid out, which I am not familiar in that much detail, but if you are actually going to set a date on it, the problem is that war is not predictable, and I don't need to tell anyone sitting in this room that politics is not predictable. And so trying to set a specific time line for military and political success is, in my view, very problematic.

The other thing is that, although I am not trying to hold open the option to doubling down or double down and continuing to throw forces at this strategy if it doesn't work with the forces that we have, I do think that it will be very complicated to figure out what exactly is the right strategy for dealing with the consequences of failure, and I would encourage Congress not to prejudge that, because you can say now that what we will need to is maintain forces in Kurdistan and Baghdad and maybe special forces running around, but the situation at the time may require more than that.

So I think Congress absolutely does have the power and the right to rein in this war when it decides that the operation has not succeeded, but I think that it should give itself the flexibility to make recommendations that will be appropriate when the moment actually comes to make that decision.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Pence of Indiana.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the witnesses for their provocative testimony both before the committee today as well as in print. I availed myself of your written remarks, and listened intently from the side room to your comments today.

Ambassador Holbrooke, I hold you in the highest rest. I was particularly struck by your observation of your first appearance before this committee. I was at that point appearing before the senior class at Columbus North High School, which I know since my hair is grayer than yours is probably not a comfort to either one of us. But I admire your career. I admire your career, and frankly, I admire your candor today before the committee with regard to all

Americans want success in Iraq. I believe that to be true and said so myself, and your call for redeployment but still a redeployment in a responsible manner, your words, to avoid the chaotic end in Vietnam in 1975.

Let me ask you very specifically if I can. We might say the battle of Baghdad is underway. Troop surges beginning, and is having, it seems, some good effect in recent days. Let me ask you very specifically. I know you can comment on this.

Do you oppose efforts to eliminate or reduce funding to troops on the ground in Iraq? And could you answer that?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I do. I oppose it.

Mr. PENCE. Would you elaborate on that? Why?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I think that if the commander in chief has deployed the troops, the ultimate weapon of denying them the resources to carry out their mission only puts them in harms way, greater harms way. I would go further, Congressman, and thank you for reminding me how old I am, by the way, but not as old as our chairman. [Laughter.]

I would remind you that we cannot cut off the troop funding, but I must state in that context with the deepest anger that I can muster that I cannot understand how American troops have been sent to Iraq without adequate armor, up-armored Humvees, enough kevlar, and other matters. I know this is not the subject of the hearing, but not only should you not de-fund the troops, they should get more support, and the veterans should get more support. They have made the ultimate sacrifice. That is not what we are here for. I want to go to the other point that is in your question.

Professor Kagan, whom I greatly admire for his conviction and articulate commitment, has put forward a simple thesis—let General Petreus try to succeed. Let me make clear that I don't believe he will succeed, but I would be delighted if I was wrong. If his success is possible, his success is for the Nation. He is a very smart commander, and I don't believe there is anyone in this room or any American, certainly no Member of Congress, who doesn't want Petreus to succeed.

But when Congressman Berman a moment ago asked Dr. Kagan what to do if he doesn't succeed, Dr. Kagan said we have got to come up with a new plan. That is exactly the criticism that your side, as put to some of us. I was an original supporter of the resolution in September 2002, when four witnesses along with Kissinger, Colan Powell, Madelyn Albright, before the Foreign Relations Committees they heard that critical piece of legislation. I supported the legislation on the assumption there was weapons of mass destruction, that the President of the United States as commander in chief deserved our support, that Saddam was worse than Milosevic, one of the worst tyrants in modern times, but I never dreamed there wouldn't be a post-war plan, and I never dreamed there wouldn't be an adequate process.

Therefore, I think this time around we need an answer to the question Congressman Berman put to Professor Kagan, and all he said was we will know if it works. I would dispute that remark, Mr. Chairman, because I believe on the basis of 40 years of watching guerrilla wars that you will be having hearing in which some

people will say it is working, we will give it a B minus, let us give them more resources, and other will say it is failing, give them a D-minus, and I do not share—Fred, I simply don't share your optimism that you will know success when you see it. That is not the history of a hotly disputed war.

But more important, Congressman Berman's question. So again, I want Petreus to succeed. In a sense, the Nation has put all its eggs in David Petreus's basket, and he must succeed. It is for that reason that I say that the President either gave Petreus too many troops or too few. My instinct, and all of us are flying blind here, Mr. Congressman, my instinct is 21,000 is not the right number. I watched Robert McNamara make mistakes like this time and time again, and I am surprised that the Joint Chiefs accepted this enormous mission with such a finite number of troops. And I put to you finally, Mr. Chairman, what will happen if we are in this gray area in 6 months or 4 months, and things have gotten a little calmer because the enemy retreated in the face of the American presence, but we all know that withdrawal and turn over to the Iraqis won't work?

Fred talked about clear and hold. There is a third word here. It is clear, hold and turn over, and it is the turnover phase to the Iraqis that determines what happens if they come back and say to the President we want just a few more troops. What do we do then?

So, Mr. Chairman, I think what we are hearing here is an honest difference of opinion on where we are, where we are going, but the crisis is deep, very deep.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from New York, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much.

Why do 20,000 troops make a difference if they are going to be doing what 130,000 troops were already doing, or so we believe them to be doing? And how does this happen? And if it doesn't happen, then the question is going to be how many more troops make it work?

When I was a young State senator some 30 years ago, I called the police based on citizen complaints about a bunch of drug dealers hanging out on the corner, and they cleared them away, and I called up the captain, thanked him very much, and he says, don't thank me, I didn't fix the problem. I just moved it to a different corner. It is like a balloon.

And with terrorists, the answer is you are just going to move them to another corner unless for some reason you think 20,000 more troops in addition to the 130 are going to kill them all, and I don't think that there is any indication that that is the case.

As an old math teacher, I think the only thing that we are learning here is that if the yield of 130,000 troops is 3,100 dead Americans, that extrapolates from an additional 20,000 troops another 477 dead Americans. Is it then time to make a decision?

When my dear middle child, my son Corey was 4½ years old he decided he wanted to be a dinosaur when he grew up, and we love him, and we gave him all the encouragement we could give him. No matter how much encouragement we gave him we were a little bit skeptical. He later switched to wanting to be an allegator,

wound up as a lawyer, so I guess there was a pattern there. [Laughter.]

But the point is at one time no matter how nice your good, naive intentions might be when you decide that the plan is not attainable you have to come up with a different plan, and the plan isn't you should go to school for another 4 more years and study harder to be a dinosaur, some plans don't work out. Not every story has a happy ending. Not every life is filled with happiness and joy.

I think that we don't learn from those kinds of experiences and face realities and find a different kind of solution and a different kind of approach we wind up mucked down in the mire, we are mired down in the muck, anyway you want to have it.

I don't know how adding 20,000 troops fixes this problem. If it were 400,000 troops, I think a lot of people could say, well, maybe that can work and figure out things, but 20,000 troops is just going to cite the math that I have already put before you.

Dr. Kagan first.

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, I don't believe that I have ever been called a dinosaur before. I also wanted to be a dinosaur when I was young and that didn't work out so well for me.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. That I am not so sure of.

Mr. KAGAN. Thank you very much, Ambassador. I thought you were a diplomat. [Laughter.]

Congressman, to answer your question, the 130,000, and we have had as many as 160 some thousand troops in Iraq in the past, were not doing what the force in Iraq is now being called upon to do. They did not have it as their mission to provide security for the Iraqi people. They had it as their mission to train Iraqis and hand over responsibility.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Well, then let me ask this, Dr. Kagan, because our time is short, if they are not doing what has to be done, why don't we take 20,000 of the 130,000 and have them do what should be done with the new 20,000 and send 110,000 home?

Mr. KAGAN. Because when you look at the force requirements, we are actually accomplishing the mission of providing security, especially in Baghdad, and this was not a question of instinct or what we thought would work. We pulled together a team of experienced military planners with many years taken together of experience in Iraq, fighting situation, and we asked them given this mission, which is to try to establish security in the critical areas in Baghdad, what forces would be necessary. That is how we generated what our force——

Mr. ACKERMAN. So you are saying it is 150. It is not the 20 doing something new, it is 150.

Mr. KAGAN. All of the forces in Iraq are doing new things. This is not just a question of 20,000 establishing security and the others doing the same thing. This is a fundamental change in strategy.

Mr. ACKERMAN. And how is that working out?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, we haven't really begun yet, but so far, as I indicated in my opening remarks, the trend lines are positive, in fact, surprisingly so.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Well, not for a couple of funerals that I have been to recently.

Ambassador Holbrooke?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Well, I agree with your premise, and I wish to strike from the record my comment that Fred is a dinosaur.

You are expressing in more pithy terms my own concern, but above all we are embarked on what you might call the Petreus surge. We all want it to succeed. You and Congressman Berman have asked the key question. No one is arguing against it—well, you have expressed your view that it shouldn't have happened, but it is going to happen anyway, and we want it to succeed, and if we are wrong, great, but no one is addressing, while some people are charging us who have questioned it with not having a plan, the truth is that the people who are proposing it have no fallback plan, and I think your questions and those of Congressman Berman, and Congressmen Pence have highlighted that dilemma.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, and Mr. Ambassador, I certainly share your admiration for Chairman Lantos. Did I pronounce that right?

Chairman LANTOS. No, you didn't. It is Lantos.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Lantos, okay. [Laughter.]

Well, thank you very much for that and thanks for bringing that information to us.

And I appreciate both of your testimony today, but Mr. Ambassador, let me just note, and I agree that there has been some intimations by Republicans at times that is not justified and it is certainly not the right thing to do to suggest someone is not loyal in their criticism of our policies in Iraq, but disloyalty, I don't think, is what the description that concerned me.

What has concerned me has been not disloyalty but defeatism, and I will have to suggest that even in your testimony today there is a certain degree of defeatism. Your suggestion that basically if you look at what you were saying you are talking about a goal of avoiding a chaotic end.

I understand you were in Vietnam, and saw that debacle. I spent a little time there, and saw debacle as well, and I remember there were sectarian forces at play there too. If you remember, you had the Buddhists versus the Catholic undercurrent that was going on the entire war as well as the Vietnam QDD party, and the Kow Dai, and the rest of these sects that were around that were just part of that, and of course, this is magnified by ten in Iraq.

But that defeatism that I sense is not necessarily based on an in depth analysis as you possess, although I can see that the figure of the American troops and the refugees streaming to the Embassy roof top and taking off in the helicopter and the helicopter has been thrown off the aircraft carriers that have been emblazoned in your mind as well as in some of my colleagues' mind, I don't think we can let that image hamper us in doing what is necessary to create the kind of world that we need to create in order for America to be safe, and I think that has had a lot to do with this attitude of defeatism on the other side of this issue not just this last night, not just these few months, but since we got involved in the first place.

I remember right off the bat they were talking about a sandstorm, I remember during the sandstorm there was criticism, well,

aren't we getting bogged down already, and that was 5 days into the operation. Anyway, I think that attitude has a lot to do with it. Let me ask you some specifics.

I agree with you that there is a competency problem here. There was no plan, post-Saddam plan, and I would agree with my colleagues with their criticism of this administration, not on its goal, but on the competency that it has had in terms of actually administering this really important goal and project they set in motion.

When we are trying now to come to a way to manage the situation regionally, would you think that—wouldn't you think that it would be better for the President to call a summit of regional leaders and go there with them from Saudi Arabia, and from Qatar, and Kuwait, as well as Syria and Iran, and Turkey? Wouldn't that be better than just trying to open up a series of private negotiations with the various countries like Syria and Iran?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Thank you, Congressman.

Before I answer that question, please allow me a word on your use of the word "defeatism."

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I have served my country on and off for 45 years this year. I believe in the country. I don't believe we will ever be defeated in the sense that you mean. We have difficulties from time to time. Vietnam most notably, and now Iraq. Those are the bookends. Those will probably be the bookends of my own career.

But I have never been imprisoned by the Vietnam ghosts anymore than you have. You were there. I was there. Some people were traumatized forever, but we have to learn from history, not be imprisoned by it.

In regard to the use of military force, I am quite willing to use it or threaten to use it when necessary, and as you know, did so repeatedly during the Clinton years when necessary in the Balkans over, I might add, the skepticism and opposition of two-thirds of the House which voted thee to one against what President Clinton did in Bosnia, and many people of both parties said force wouldn't work in the Balkans, and, as I said earlier, I supported the resolution in September 2002.

So I think the use of the word "defeatism" is exactly what I am trying to avoid. I have stressed in my comments here and in all the things I have written, as has Chairman Lantos, that what we are looking for is a solution that protects our vital national security interests. And again, if Petreus succeeds, I will be delighted. But the question has been asked by Congressman Berman and Congressman Ackerman what happens if they don't, and that has to be addressed.

Now, on your specific question, speaking just as a person who has practiced diplomatic arts, if President Bush were to ask my advice, which by the way he won't, I would not recommend he call for a regional summit conference. First of all, others wouldn't come, and it would just further weaken America's leadership role in the region and the world.

Secondly, summits should be carefully prepared. You don't just get on a boat like Woodrow Wilson did and spend 6 months in Paris and come up with a "solution," which 80 years later gives us

Yugoslavia and Iraq, Iraq came a couple of years later, but the seeds were set at Versailles. Summits must be prepared.

I am perfectly comfortable with the initial contacts at a lower level—who will represent the United States at this conference, what that person's instructions will be, and above all, will the Iranians be willing to engage our critical factors. But the proposition I want to put again to you today because it has been ignored in our discussion is this.

I don't believe, Congressman, that stability in Iraq is possible without the participation of the Iranians and the Syrians. This puts, and this is also true of Afghanistan vis-a-vis Iran, this puts the administration in a hellish difficult position. On one hand, Iran is the most destabilizing force in the region. On the other hand, their participation in the search for a solution in Iraq is unavoidable. How do you square that circle? That is why so many people, including Baker-Hamilton, recommended engaging Iran, but it has to be done with full understanding that they are not our friends, but there may be some common interests, and I think Fred Kagan suggested this. The Iranians may not want a full-scale civil war next door. But how do you deal with that factor?

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Sherman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If 2 years from now Iraq is peaceful and stable, and Iran has nuclear weapons, I think America will be far worse off from its national security perspective than we are today. Ironically, Bush will be far better off politically if that were to come to pass. All of America is focused on Iraq. The President grasps at straws to tell us why the future of Iraq is more than a modest importance to our own national security. The press is focused on Iraq because we are there. The President says we must be there because we are already there. He also tells us that if Iraq were to fall into hostile hands then terrorists would have a place to meet and discuss how to plot against us as if they have no place to meet today when bin Laden is in north Waziristan and of course the 9/11 hijackers met and plotted in an apartment in Hamburg, for example. I don't think we are ever going to deny the terrorist a conference room.

So I will ask our witnesses. Let us say we have this conference that the administration has agreed to, and Iran offers a truly enticing package of all-out help toward stability and peace in Iraq. The throw in Syria as well who says they will help too in every way we can think of and beyond what we thought of. All we have to do is acquiesce in Iran's nuclear program. Is that a good deal?

Mr. KAGAN. I don't think it is a good deal, and I would not propose accepting it. I agree with you that the danger of an Iranian nuclear weapon is great. I see Iran as pursuing hegemonic designs in the region. I am very concerned about where that is headed and I am very concerned about the Iranian nuclear program.

But the main reason why I would not want to take that deal is that I do not believe that the Iranians could deliver. Whatever they promised in Iraq, the Iranians do not control Sadr. They do not control Hakim. Still less do they control the fighters of the Ji Shal Makti. To a slightly greater degree, they have influence with the fighters of the Badr Corps, but the Iranian rite I do not believe ex-

tends to being able to order Shiia factions in Iraq to stop fighting as long as there continues to be a danger to the Shiia community.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Ambassador Holbrooke?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I suspect that is correct, but I want to underscore our dilemma. We don't actually know. Not even the greatest experts in American and Iran understand fully the relationship between the Shiites of Iraq and the Shiites of Iran. The Arab Persian difference is rather critical here as well, and I don't think we should base our policies therefore on thinking we can understand and micro manage these things which we will never understand fully.

The fact is that while we don't know the exact relationships between these people we do know that Hakim, the very man who called on the President in the oval office a few weeks ago, spent—I don't know—something like 20 years in Iran, and el Sadra may not like the Iranians, but Fred believes he is in Iran now, and whether he is or not he has certainly been getting supplies, including lethal things used against Americans from Iran. So let us not overanalyze the situation.

Mr. SHERMAN. Ambassador, if I could follow up. Why all this attention toward the need to talk to Syria in Iran when I put forward the question, what if they delivered everything we could possibly ask for, and both you and your fellow witness says that would have perhaps only a modest impact on what goes on in Iraq?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. No, that is not what I believe. I truly don't know where a dialogue with Iran would take us. I don't even know if the Iranians would agree to such a dialogue at this point, although there is a lot of evidence they wanted one right after the Bonn negotiations that led to the Karzi government with Iranian support, nor did Richard Nixon know what would happen when he went to China. He didn't know what he was setting out for, but once the door opened amazing things happened.

I see no down sides if you proceed carefully with the iranians on the issue of Iraq while making clear to them that we remain intensely concerned about Hamas, Hezbollah, and their nuclear program, and their support of terrorism.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Royce of California.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Holbrooke, I too want to express my appreciation for your service to this country. We had an opportunity to work on issues affecting the African crisis, but I think that your perseverance as special envoy during the Balkan's war will be recorded by history. Your effectiveness in that position was very, very impressive.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Thank you.

Mr. ROYCE. I wanted to ask you because you brought up the oped that you penned about a year ago on Afghanistan, and former Ambassador Peter Thompson, who you and I know.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Galbraith.

Mr. ROYCE. Pardon?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I am sorry.

Mr. ROYCE. Thompson.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Sorry. Peter Thompson. Oh, yes.

Mr. ROYCE. Peter Thompson.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I know him well.

Mr. ROYCE. And myself, as a matter of fact, have been arguing for several years now about the magnitude of the crisis and challenge with respect to Afghanistan, and especially since this last fall when we have seen something of a tripling of attacks across the border from the federally-administrated areas in western Pakistan.

It is clear to many, I think, that the non-aggression pact essentially that was formed, the security pact between the central government and that area has in some ways loosened Pakistan's initiative in controlling the movement of the Taliban on that border. So you have, one, all the governance issues, which you are familiar with in Afghanistan, and two, now you have basically large-scale attacks being mounted across the border.

One of the questions I was going to ask you specifically is given the last 25 years' history of Pakistani meddling, is there any reason to believe that Pakistan has an interest in a stable Afghanistan? And if that concern is valid, then what steps could we take to ratchet up the pressure on Islamabad to combat the Taliban using its territory to launch these attacks against the Karzi government?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Thank you very much. I recall our days in Africa, you and Congressman Payne, and others with—I won't say nostalgia, but great respect and you played a huge role in creating a positive bipartisan relationship with Africa, and I am delighted to see Congressman Payne here today, and you have now taken the African subcommittee again, and I think that all goes well for these issues.

On Pakistan, I have seen only a handful of issues in the time I have been involved in these affairs where the intelligence community and the general assessments were in greater dispute than on the issue of—to put it bluntly—is Musharraf doing everything he could. That is why Vice President Cheney was in Islamabad a few days ago. And I know President Musharraf personally, and I have talked to him about this. And you know, Congressman, I still don't know what is going on.

The best I have heard, perhaps Professor Kagan has a more informed view, the best I have been able to glean from talking to American diplomats and President Karzi, President Musharraf and others is that the Pakistan Government in Islamabad doesn't fully control the tribal areas, that Musharraf doesn't fully control his own people.

On the other hand, as you well know, there are many people who think this is all a charade, and that ethic considerations that cross that border because of the huge Pustian population transcend everything else. And here again, and this goes back to the last question which raised the issue of Iraq and Iran, I need to stress this. We will never know more than 2 percent of the data we need to know and yet we have to make decisions of the greatest importance to our national security.

So what is our national interest? Our national interest is that the Taliban and al-Qaeda are on that border and in Waziristan,

and now Balochistan is getting very restive, and that is a direct threat to our national security, even though it is one of the most remote spots on the face of the earth. So the administration is correct to now put more pressure on Musharraf as Vice President Cheney did the other day. They were not correct not to do this much earlier.

They should also deal with the Karzi side of the equation. Karzi blames it on Musharraf. Musharraf blames it on Karzi. Obviously, there is corruption and mess in Afghanistan. There are corrupt police chiefs in many of the provinces, corrupt provincial governors, and this combination is creating a kind of a mini-Afghanistan right on the border, an intolerable situation which gives rise directly to the strength of the Taliban. We must do something about this.

Several people, including Senator Clinton, have proposed a special envoy to negotiate that regional issue. I believe the administration has now begun to consider that favorably. They have one for Turkey Kurdistan, General Joe Ralston who is a superb envoy. They have one for Kosovo, Ambassador Wisner who is a terrific envoy. This strikes me, Mr. Chairman, as something that you may wish to spend more time on.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Ambassador Holbrooke.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Wexler.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Holbrooke, I think if we took nothing from this hearing except your very wise highlighting of the fact that 6,000 al-Qaeda remain in Iraq, and that at a minimum our position should be unified in eradicating that direct threat to the United States, I think we will have done our country a great service.

I would like to follow with a point I think Mr. Ackerman started with, and that is the Seemore Hearsh article in the *New Yorker* over the weekend which the essence is—it is a long, terrific article, but the essence of it, if I understand it correctly, is that there has been a dramatic new strategy or program that the administration is now implementing in concert with our Saudi allies and possibly others that we will now directly aid Sunni extremist groups with the hope that these Sunni extremist groups will counterbalance the growing influence of Hezbollah and other Shiite extremist groups even though the Sunni extremist groups are either directly connected to al-Qaeda or are indirectly connected to al-Qaeda at the same time back to your what I think is most pressing point, that 6,000 Sunni, al-Qaeda-related, Iraq insurgents have killed many, many American troops in Iraq.

So I am trying to make sense out of a policy which in some ways seems to resemble what has occurred in the past in the terms of Iran contra, because if this is true the administration is doing this, spending hordes of money probably doing it, and if I understand it correctly, this Congress has not been consulted, this Congress has not appropriated a single dollar in that regard, and this administration may as we sit here be engaging in overt operations, spending an enormous sum of American money supporting Sunni extremist groups in one country when those very same Sunni extremist groups next door threaten us and our troops directly.

Ambassador Holbrooke, Dr. Kagan, can you comment or do you care to comment on Mr. Hearsh's article, but more importantly, the premise of the policy?

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, I haven't gone into that article in a great deal of detail, and I am not familiar with what the administration is doing. What I would say is I find it extraordinarily unlikely that the administration is conducting any such policy, and I certainly agree entirely with you that it would be terrifically misguided for us to directly to fund Sunni extremists with the notion of arming them in some way to help fight Shiia extremists, and I certainly would hope that we are not doing that.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, gentlemen.

We are all dealing with having to make judgments based upon probabilities and it is a very difficult business, and I thank you for your insights.

Given the difficulties that we have experienced in Iraq and obviously we hold out hope for a stabilized future in the near term that leads to a stabilized long-term future. Given a possible scenario as you both have painted of a larger confilgration that engulfs the entire region, is it compelling other responsible members of the international community and the Arab world, the Egyptians, the Jordanians, the Saudis, in addition to them the Turks, to begin some conversations, and pursue potential outcomes using their leverage to control the forces of chaos that are either currently in Iraq or could spill over in other areas?

In your work, have you seen any movement in this regard because it is, frankly, a potentially positive outcome given the current difficulties?

Mr. KAGAN. I am glad that you asked the question, Congressman, and I think it is a very important issue, and I would like to start by saying—first of all, I would like to take exception to the notion that Ambassador Holbrooke has put out that we are at fault in some way for not laying out what will happen if this plan fails. We have laid out a plan to deal with the current crisis.

We can certainly talk about a variety of options for dealing with the complete catastrophe that will ensue if we actually fail there. They are all bad, and I think that is what emerges from the study that Ken Pollack has already done that shows there really aren't very many good options. I am happy to lay out a variety of options. What I am concerned about is the immediate situation and what happens if we fail right now.

It is certainly going to be necessary to persuade our Sunni Arab allies in the region to convince the Sunni Arabs in Iraq that they are not simply the tip of a spear behind which is the full weight of the Sunni Arab community because that sense can embolden them to continue an insurgency with the aim of regaining control of Iraq.

So the Sunni Arab states play an important role in the message that they send to the Sunni Arab community within Iraq, and we

definitely have to be engaging them, and I do think that we have begun to reach out to them in a variety of ways.

The trouble is that what we are not going to persuade them to do, in my view, is to stand aside while a Shiia government, if this were to occur, were to begin to conduct genocide operations against the Sunni Arab in Iraq, and the problem is that because we have not been focusing on providing security to the Iraqi population, and we have not been adequately defending the Sunni Arab, particularly in Baghdad, from Shiia attacks, that there is nervousness in the region about how this might escalate if we don't change what we are doing.

And what I am hearing a lot of back channel is that there is a lot of enthusiasm among our allies in the region for what we are trying to do in a sense, that we really have to get this under control. But I believe, I am really confident about this, that the only way that you are going to persuade the Sunni Arab states in the Middle East to make it clear to their Sunni Arab brothern in Iraq that they do not have support for continued insurgency is to make it simultaneously clear that they will be protected, that they will be safe, and we need to play a very important role in that process.

Chairman LANTOS. Ambassador Holbrooke.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Mr. Chairman, Fred's comment in response to your question, the first part, raises an apse critical point which transcends everything else, and I think kind of frames it.

I don't believe that the United States can stay in Iraq simply not to lose. That is a recipe for a stay which is unlimited in scope and duration. We must have a clear achievable goal. The President of the United States has stated what his goal is repeatedly—a democratic Iraq which can defend itself and sustain itself. That is a clear goal, but I believe it is one that will take much more resources and much more time than is available.

If the goal as set out by Dr. Kagan, which is a much more realistic goal than the one the administration has set forward, is not achieved, we must reevaluate. That I think is the core of it. So neither of us are defeatists. I am just trying to suggest that we have to be more realistic about where we are and prepare for more than one possible scenario going forward. That to me is prudent policy planning.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Before turning to my next colleague, let me just emphasize what a strong and important point you just made. Iraq is not the only arena of engagement for the United States, and while I certainly don't think a person of your sophistication, Dr. Kagan, would take such a position, as I listen to some spokesmen it seems that the rest of the world is ignored as if in fact the United States could engage its human and material resources ad infinitum in Iraq as if the rest of the world did not exist, and I believe at this stage our other responsibilities are among the most pressing arguments for moving toward an orderly redeployment of American forces.

The gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I will move to Mr. Meek's table here.

As a segue to the observation by Mr. Lantos, I think it is important, and I want to direct my question to Ambassador Holbrooke, I think it is very important to be precise in our language, and I

think we have failed to really define what our vital national interest is, and what are the real threats.

Recently, there was a hearing in the Senate, and a question was asked to the Director of Intelligence, Mr. McConnell, about the probability that al-Qaeda members in Pakistan or Iraq are organizing an attack on the United States. And he replied to this effect: That an attack would most likely emerge from Pakistan while he described Iraq as a "cause celebre for the Jihadists in creating forces."

I think what has happened is that we confuse, if you will, the threats to the United States with the war in Iraq. You know, we hear the numbers of 6,000 al-Qaeda members or affiliates currently in Iraq when obviously prior to the invasion it was my understanding that there was some 150 members of Ansar al-Islam in northern Iraq under the protection, ironically, of the no fly zone. We see al-Qaeda elements emerging all over Africa, elsewhere.

My own sense is that we have made a mistake in the confusion between the war on terror and our presence in Iraq. I would just like to get your comment, Mr. Holbrooke, but before I do I would like to make an observation.

I agree with you wholeheartedly that we can't predict and we don't know what the future is, and I found it interesting your exchange with Mr. Rohrabacher about Vietnam and the symbolism of that helicopter, and Vietnamese streaming toward the American Embassy at the end of the war, and it really provoked in my mind the image of some 30 years later President Bush in Vietnam signing a trade agreement with the Vietnamese, and I think it was a portrait, it might have been a bust in the background looming over his shoulder of Ho Chi Minh. So while we can gain, if you will, the expectations of our withdrawal, we really don't know. Ambassador Holbrooke.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I was struck by that picture too and the extraordinary irony of it. I am not sure exactly what you want me to address.

Mr. DELAHUNT. What I would like you to do is to define what you believe our national interests are in Iraq.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Our national interest in Iraq are to—I tried to address this in more detail in the prepared statement, much of which I didn't read. Our national interest in Iraq are al-Qaeda, a point we have already discussed. Maybe they weren't there before 9/11. They weren't there before 9/11, but we all agree that they are there now and we can't be fighting them in Afghanistan and ignore them in Iraq, and that is a very important point that I would urge this committee and all Members of Congress to keep in mind as they discuss these so-called dates for total withdrawal. It is a very complicated issue, made more complicated by domestic politics.

Number two, stability in Iraq. A civil war may not be avoidable, but if it isn't, then we must protect our vital interests in the region. They start for me with Turkey, our indispensable NATO ally and front-line stage; Israel, which has been put under greater danger by what has happened; dealing with the Iranians; dealing with the Saudis. Oil is a factor but I do not think American foreign policy should be determined by oil, and then Afghanistan, and then finally, Congressman, a larger point, America's image in the world,

particularly among the one billion Muslims in the world. That it suffered grievously in the last 5 years is self-evident. The administration does not appear to have a public diplomacy plan in hand that works. Here is another great issue for this committee to highlight and make suggestions on.

We need the kind of leadership that Edward R. Murrow provided during the Kennedy administration at the height of the cold war, an inspirational message that tells the world what we really stand for, and then a sophisticated delivery systems that take into account modern technologies and ancient cultures. None of that, Mr. Chairman, is in place today.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Before yielding to my friend from Arizona, I ask unanimous consent that the transcripts of the committee briefing and ties with Iraq held on January 17, and the committee briefing and ties with the Baker-Hamilton Commission report held on January 19 be made part of the record of this hearing.

[The information referred to precedes this hearing.]

Chairman LANTOS. I am delighted to yield to my friend from Arizona, Mr. Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank the chairman for yielding, and thank him for scheduling this hearing. Ambassador Holbrooke, I have also been a student of yours in school as well for awhile and admired your work.

You mentioned in your testimony the need to—well, this is what I have flushed out a little—be less involved in Iraq in order for dialogue with Iran and Syria to have any potential.

How far do you think we need to go in removing ourselves from Iraq or changing the composition of our forces there, or what needs to happen in order for those, and I share your view that we don't know where those negotiations or that dialogue might go, but I have long been in favor of that dialogue? But where will it have most effect?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. There may have been a slight misunderstanding, Congressman. I don't see a linkage between our force levels and a dialogue that involves Iran. We don't need to withdraw troops to have a discussion with the Iranians.

On the contrary, what I am trying to suggest and this is a very key point that Dr. Kagan and I are gently disagreeing on, since I—I said in my testimony that an ultimate American withdrawal from Iraq is a given. We are not going to stay there as we did in Vietnam for well over a decade. We don't have the resources, the commitment, the American support, and our military is stretched much too thin.

What I am suggesting is that our negotiating position will be stronger if we manage a redeployment, but I am not saying that that is linked directly to discussions with Iran. There is obviously an interconnection.

Mr. FLAKE. Good. Dr. Kagan, do you see any utility in moving forward with dialogue with Iran and Syria?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, I certainly have no objection to the administration's recent proposal to discussing the issue with them. As I said before, I am very skeptical about what they are actually capable of

delivering in Iraq, less in Afghanistan where Iran is playing a role but with a much larger role of being played by Pakistan.

So we can talk to them, but I am concerned that what they will demand, and this will remain to be seen, but what they will demand is the Iranians will want a pass on their nuclear program, which I don't think we should give them, and the Syrians will want a pass on controlling Lebanon, which I don't think we should give them, and I think we could make both of those deals and still not have a significant impact on the conflict in Iraq which I think right now being driven largely by internal dynamics.

So I am not opposed to talking with them, but I am very skeptical of the likely outcome of such negotiations based on what I perceive to be their interests.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Congressman Flake, I need to underscore because of what Fred just said a key point, and perhaps a difference.

There are some people in the government and outside the government who think that talking to your adversaries is in an of itself a sign of weakness, but I think the bulk of professional opinion is on the other side. But there is another point of view. It is what has constrained us with the Iranians for many years in addition to the Iranians own behavior.

There is a difference between state actors like Iran and non-state actors as well, and I want to stress that in talking to bad people does not in itself mean a concession or a sign of weakness, and President Reagan illustrated that most dramatically when he talked to the very people he called an evil empire. President Bush has made clear his view of the Iranians, a view I think most of us share.

But it is a serious and significant tactical disagreement here, and I am glad that this step was taken yesterday. Wherever it leads we can always terminate it at any time. We are the United States. We are not risking our national security by getting back in a room with the Iranians. We have done it before.

Mr. FLAKE. I agree with you, and I have argued for a long time we should take that further with countries like Cuba as well.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. The next witness this afternoon, I am obviously somewhat prejudiced here since he is a very close friend, is Exhibit A of the fact that you can talk to a member of the evil empire and come up with a step forward while protecting our national interests.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

I am particularly delighted to call on my colleague from Texas who is making his first appearance as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Congressman Green. We are delighted to have you, and you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask that my statement be placed into the record. I ask unanimous consent that my statement be placed in the record.

Chairman LANTOS. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Green follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE GENE GREEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. Chairman, let me first say it is an honor to join you on this committee, and for my first time sitting with the committee, we could not be addressing a more urgent issue.

While we may disagree on how to get there, at the end of the day every member of Congress wants to see a functioning and stable government in Iraq.

We know what countries like Iran and Syria want to see in Iraq, and the current situation in Iraq is exactly what they want to see.

So the Administration and Congress must assess how we can move forward, provide the conditions for a stable situation in Iraq and allow the Iraqis to take over their own country.

I don't think what remains to be done can be done militarily—we need to get the Iraqis and our allies on board to come up with solutions to power-sharing in the government, a fair division of Iraq's petroleum revenues and other problems driving a wedge between the different factions in Iraq.

Today's testimony should be insightful and beneficial, and we are fortunate to have Ambassador Holbrooke, who has experience resolving civil conflicts, to give his take on the situation in Iraq.

I want to thank Ambassador Holbrooke and Dr. Kagan for being here today and I look forward to their testimony.

Mr. GREEN. Ambassador Holbrooke and Dr. Kagan, most of my colleagues have asked questions, so I have got a couple of my own.

Ambassador, in your statement on page 2 where you, and I think this is so true but I want to read it:

> "The United States is perceived in the rest of the Arab world, which is overwhelmingly Sunni, as backing the Shiites, thus increasing our problems with the very Arab nations we have traditionally been closest to. Yet there is no gratitude among Shiites, nor should we expect any. They want everything in Iraq, after having been the suppressed majority for over 400 years. What the United States unleashed, we can no longer control."

I know there is some empowering we have to do both with the majority and with the minorities, the Sunnis and the Kurds, and I know, I have been keeping up basically just through the news media with one of the issues is the distribution of the oil resources, and I know there has been a bill that has passed through some of their—I don't know if it is finished—their Parliament. But if not their——

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Excuse me for interrupting. They have announced they have reached an agreement in the last 2 days. It has not been approved by the Parliament.

Mr. GREEN. From what you know of that legislation or that agreement, because that is one of the linchpins I think we need to do is to make sure that whether you are in an oil-producing area to keep the country together, the folks who may not have it need to have those resources guaranteed by Iraqi law. Do you think that is a starting point, a good starting point, because this is the first time——

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I am hesitant to talk about oil to a representative from Texas, but I will try to answer your question.

Mr. GREEN. We do a lot of oil.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I was in Arabell in northern Iraq when the negotiations reached a breaking point 3 weeks ago, and they actually had broken off unsuccessfully. In the last few days they have reached an agreement. The details are highly technical. None of us

know all the details. But I would just be very brutal about it, again speaking simply as an American from our national security interest.

It doesn't matter to me what that oil agreement is. What matters to me is that it be acceptable to all three elements in Iraq, and the key factor here are the Kurds who when I was in Arabell was refusing to make the agreement, and I would draw your attention to one other very important point which nobody has focused on yet. It turns out that there is a lot of oil in the Sunni areas, and people have a pretty good idea where it is, but they can't develop it in conditions of insecurity. That may be a long-term factor which could ease the problem because up to now we have all believed that all the oil was in the Kurdish areas and the Shiite areas.

Having said that, I close again where I started. Whatever agreement is acceptable to the three factions, that it shares the revenue and helps keep the country together is fine with me.

Mr. GREEN. And I think that is something we ought to as a country encourage because if we can at least get them to talk to each other and share the resources they will know that one region won't be impoverished. And I have heard the same thing about the Sunni area, that there is great potential, but typically when you hear reported the production is in the Kurdish area, or the Shiia area, and not in the Sunni, but to have stability they could actually be.

Again, even from Texas, you know. Just so that oil gets in the world market I will be happy with that, and you know, you are going to have to come to Houston because we have the folks that can get that oil out of the ground wherever it is at, and be that as it may.

Dr. Kagan, I didn't want to leave you out because I enjoyed your testimony too.

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, if I could just respond——

Mr. GREEN. Please.

Mr. KAGAN [continuing]. Briefly to Ambassador Holbrooke's comments.

The issue of the Sunni oil is not just an issue of security. There are many places in the world where you have a lot of insecurity and you nevertheless have international investment, and you nevertheless have people working oil fields. The security is an important problem, and as I said, I think we have seen a lot of progress on that. But the oil law actually really is critical to that because I think we have been looking at the oil law as a way of bringing Iraq together and solving the sectarian differences, and I am not convinced, you know, what it is going to do for that.

Mr. GREEN. It is not the panacea.

Mr. KAGAN. Right. But what it will do is create the legal basis that is the absolute essential precondition for having foreign investment in Iraq, and one of the big problems we have seen so far is that because there has not been agreement about this, and specifically agreement about to what extent the regions in Iraq are empowered to make agreements and so forth, it has been a hostile climate for foreign investment.

Now, this isn't going to be a panacea in that regard either because there is a question of security as well, but I think from the

standpoint of developing that oil, actually getting this law through the Parliament really is very important.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

I am delighted to call on my friend from South Carolina, Mr. Inglis.

Mr. INGLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Kagan, Ambassador Holbrooke described what the American national security interest is now. How would you answer that question Mr. Delahunt asked earlier?

Mr. KAGAN. I think America has a number of vital national security interests that are tied up in Iraq. I think the fight against al-Qaeda is very high on the list, and again I want to reiterate, this is not just a problem of Anbar. This is a problem of all of Iraq. Wherever there are Sunni in Iraq there is the potential for this.

I have been a little bit puzzled, frankly, by part of this discussion because I am not sure why people are convinced that the al-Qaeda that are in Afghanistan and Pakistan are more dangerous to us than the al-Qaeda that are in Iraq. If you look at the history of the development of the Mujahadeen movement, you will see in the 1980s that the Mujahadeen were engaged very actively in fighting the Soviet Union, and they did not pose a threat largely to people who were outside of that particular conflict.

Once that threat ended you had a lot of trained Mujahadeen fighters who had been victorious who then spread out and created the—conquered Afghanistan ultimately, and created the preconditions for the al-Qaeda attacks on September 11. If we allow Iraq to collapse, then the likelihood that you will see a similar phenomenon. They may not take over Iraq, but they will be come dangerous beyond Iraq in a way that they are not at the moment because they are so engaged in finding what is right now looking for them like an increasingly losing battle. So I think it is very important not to underestimate the actual al-Qaeda danger.

I also find parenthetically a little bit odd this trade-off between the question of focus on Iraq and focus on al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda does not have large-scale training bases in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda has bases in Pakistan. Are we proposing to send troops into Pakistan? Is the problem that we want to invade Waziristan and Balochistan in order to deal with this?

I am a little bit puzzled about why these two things, which are rather different in terms of what we can do and what we should do, are being conflated.

But beyond the question of the global war on terror and beyond the danger that al-Qaeda in Iraq may pose down the road is the very imminent danger, in my view, of a full-scale regional war that will pit Sunni versus Shiia, that will destabilize the regimes that are Iraq's neighbors, and it is important to remember that with the exception of Jordan none of those regimes are homogeneous in terms of ethnicity or sect. Persians make up about 51 percent of Iran. There is a significant Baluchi minority which is already very restive. Saudi Arabia has a significant Shiia minority. Kuwait has a significant Shiia minority. The Shiia minority that is ruling Syria is 11 percent of the population.

All of the preconditions are there for an explosion of the region which will have devastating consequences because, again going

back to the Pollack and Byman report, what you see is that when you have these spin-off civil wars and they happen in many, many cases—the exception being the one in which Ambassador Holbrooke played such a critical role in the Balkans where we actually managed to get violence under control—when you don't do that then you have civil wars and the civil wars tend to spawn even more terrorist groups, and this is a common phenomenon. So I think those are vital interests that we have right now.

Mr. INGLIS. Speaking of this question of civil war, what percent of the trouble in Iraq right now do you think is an insurgency, and what percent is internal?

Mr. KAGAN. I think most of what we are seeing in Iraq is internal. I think we are seeing Sunni Arab insurgency that is continuing, but that is, frankly, losing force. We are having continued attacks by al-Qaeda on United States targets, also on Shiia targets in an effort to stoke the civil war, and increasingly on Sunni Arab targets because the Sunni Arab's leadership in Anbar has turned against them.

So you have a lot of civil war going on. The Sunni Arab insurgency is a part of that. But I believe that the process is very largely internal to Iraq right now in terms of where it is drawing its support and what is driving it.

Mr. INGLIS. And if it is internal, why not focus on the political causes? In other words, why not put them on a schedule like we had them on for elections, for the adoption of an oil law, for the fixing of the Ba'ath problem and announce that publicly?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, the problem is we have been trying all along to find a political solution to this problem, and the difficulty is that if the population doesn't have a basic level of security, where people don't have to worry in the morning if they are going to live to see the end of the day, then trying to get political processes to solve that is very unlikely to be successful. It is very important to establish security first as a precondition, and then to move forward with this political process.

I am astonished at the degree of successes we are already seeing in the political process given that we have not yet established security. But I believe that as we establish security our leverage to press them to find political solutions will increase dramatically.

Mr. INGLIS. But can you——

Chairman LANTOS. I am sorry. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I was here, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I was here.

Chairman LANTOS. Yes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the chairman very much, and the witnesses.

Let me indicate my belief that Iraq is worse than Vietnam, but I think the lesson that comes from Vietnam really is that a leaving did not generate a collapse of the values and the existence of America or its foreign policy.

I think another example is the 20 years that Russia spent in Afghanistan left, certainly unsuccessfully, but there is no documentation that would suggest their staying would have accomplished their goals.

I also associate myself with the remarks of Chairman Lantos, and hope that some voices are listening in Iran to issue our chairman a visa, but also the recognition of Members of Congress who might be vital in their opportunities for visits to Iran as well. So I would like to pointedly ask Ambassador Holbrooke and Dr. Kagan thank you very much for your testimony as well.

I have a bill that combines the recognition that the military I believe has already accomplished victory. It is called the Military Success Act of 2007, and the surge or plus-up diplomacy of 2007, capturing the Baker diplomacy aspects as part of it.

I believe that the war should end. I believe the troops should be redeployed. I have given them time up until October 2007. I actually put a time in, but I also respect, if you will, staged redeployment, because I think the security comes from not allowing our troops to be the lightening rod, if you will, for antagonism, and I don't believe that we must continue to be the scapegoats of violence for those who want to use us as a target.

So let me pose this question, Ambassador, and I will also raise another point of success in the Bush administration that might be a study for how you could collaborate and use foreign policy or diplomacy to actually solve problems in Iraq.

There is this constant threat that redeployment generates collapse and the constant refrain of the administration, they will fight us there or fight us here, so we are the baby-sitters of al-Qaeda. I think there are many other places where we can fight al-Qaeda, the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan, in Afghanistan where the real war on terror is.

How do you respond to that as opposed to a real plus-up of diplomacy which would include what we have begun? And I applaud Secretary Rice, Iran and Syria, some of us have been crying in the darkness for so long for that kind of engagement. We see what happened in North Korea.

Then, too, the success story of PEPFAR, the AIDS effort, isn't that a good example of how you could use diplomacy—certainly an odd example in this hearing—but how you could use diplomacy and sort of be the Pied Piper and bring other countries along? We failed in Iraq so badly, which really brings us to where we are today.

I welcome your thoughts, but I must finish by saying bring the troops home now. I really believe that Vietnam is a lesson of that. We didn't lose statute, we didn't lose position. In fact, we are now engaged in both South Vietnam and North Vietnam.

Chairman LANTOS. You gentlemen have a combined total of 55 seconds to answer the lady, so Ambassador Holbrooke.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Since the time is very short, Congresswoman Jackson Lee, and you and I have worked many years on the AIDS problem, let me just address that.

PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief, is, in my view, the most successful foreign policy program of this administration. As president and chief executive officer of the Global Business Coalition Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which is something I spend a lot of time on, we have strongly worked with the White House, with Mrs. Bush, we have worked with this committee under its previous chairman and with the Senate side to get the appropriations.

I know many of you in this room are ambivalent about certain aspects of this, abstinence versus condoms and all these issues, but the fact is that President Bush showed worldwide leadership on this issue, pushed other countries to do something, and the result was, and I have seen this personally, lives saved. On World's AIDS Day, I was in western Kenya, in fact, in the home area of Senator Obala on World's AIDS Day, and I saw people whose lives have been extended by American drugs delivered directly through PEPFAR.

I asked them, incidently, where the drugs came from. You will be amused at the answer. Walter Reed. I said, well, because the drug said on them Walter Reed Hospital. I said, no, it is the American people, the handclasp is missing, and that goes, Mr. Chairman, to the earlier point.

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, who I have worked with a great deal on this issue, has talked about the success of diplomacy. We have talked about the failure of public diplomacy. We are not getting enough credit for the $2.5 billion that on a bipartisan basis this House appropriates for this program because if the people think it is Walter Reed, no, it is the United States.

So this was a bipartisan effort. I wish there were more of them, and thank you for the opportunity to raise this issue.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

I would like to call on my friend from Georgia, Congressman Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to get right to this.

I just returned from an excellent trip abroad with the NATA Parliamentary Assembly, which I am a voting member, and from that trip I want to get three responses to. One of those stops was at Landstuhl Air Base Hospital in Germany where I went in and had one of the most extraordinary experiences of our trip. That is to visit these soldiers.

I believe in this whole debate. We often forget about the soldiers, almost like we are playing some game here. These are lives and deaths of soldiers. There is an extraordinary threat to our national interest, I believe, in the over-strain we are placing on our military, and particularly these soldiers.

Two questions came to mind and I want to put to you. I asked, and he said he doesn't believe democracy is going to work here from their experience, and I want to ask each of you do you think that democracy can work in this region, especially when we are fighting a situation that has been going on since Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Ishmail, and Esau, and Muhammad and all of this? And how can we make that work?

The other point is to address the concerns of these soldiers in terms of one said, a soldier, his fellow soldier didn't even have body armor on. He talked about a Frag Humvee that is not undergirded.

My whole question here is where is the concern for the military, and are not we over-straining? And then can democracy work?

But the other part of my question I wanted to ask is the concern that we are losing strength of our allies because of our association in Iraq and the damage it is having to our NATO efforts especially in Afghanistan? I particularly have reference to Italy, that while

we are over there their government came apart on two issues. One was an air base up in the northern part of Italy that we are opposed to, and they want to get their involvement of Afghanistan because they see it associated with Iraq.

I know I have touched a lot there but I wish you could respond with candor you feel democracy can work. When are we going to respond to our soldiers and give them what they want, and the strain that this operation in Iraq is placing upon our allies and wanting them to pull out of Afghanistan, especially Britain, Italy, and France?

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, I would like to begin by addressing your second question. I will address the others. But I am terribly concerned about our military. I spent 10 years teaching at West Point, and I have got something like 1,000 former cadets who are serving in these forces, many of them close friends, many of them now deployed, and my best friends come from that time. Many of them are over in Iraq right now. I am deeply concerned about our soldiers.

I am very concerned about an issue which is similar to the one that Ambassador Holbrooke has raised on a number of occasions, although I disagree with him about how it would play out. What I am concerned about is that if we withdraw right now we will inflict a searing defeat on our soldiers because we have seen this before as we have pulled out prematurely of many areas in Iraq. The people, the local people that our soldiers have come to know who have trusted our soldiers to be there to help them will be rounded up by the enemy, tortured and killed. This happens repeatedly. i am very, very concerned about what the effects will be on our army of watching that.

We speak about our image in the world. I can assure you that there will be images endlessly repeated on Al Jazeera of atrocities being committed by Iraqi police and other elements in Iraq with our forces stacking arms in the background preparing to leave, and it will be a disastrous defeat for us in the eyes of public opinion, and I am very concerned about that as well.

To the question is democracy in Iraq possible, we frequently hear that Iraq is a country with no democratic tradition and therefore democracy is unlikely. I would put it to this committee that with the exception of our own there have been virtually no states in the world that have become democracies that did not previously have no democratic tradition. This happens commonly. This is how almost all democracies come into being is in places that don't have a democratic tradition.

What the Iraqis need in the first instance is the peace that is essential for democracy to flourish. I believe that we can provide that peace. I recognize that there is disagreement about whether or not we can succeed in that, but I am absolutely confident that if we don't provide that peace then there is no prospect for democracy, stability or peace in the region.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

I will now have to tell my colleagues—we have two more colleagues who have questions. Delighted to call on my friend from California, Ambassador Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I remember the President standing on a battleship saying, "Mission accomplished," so I am confused about what it is that we supposedly accomplished several years ago, and we have had more American personnel killed since then.

We don't appear to know who our enemy is, that we are fighting ghosts. We are using conventional warfare and they are using IEDs. Our vision is clouded by the sand that our heads are found in. We are looking at a culture that we don't quite understand. The Sunnis and the Shiites are warring. And so I think that our intelligence has been quite faulty.

So Dr. Kagan, do you believe that we have adequate intelligent resources on the ground in Iraq to enable our troops to tell the difference between Sunni insurgents, Shiite death squads, and the Iraqi civilian population? If so, why haven't they been able to stem the tide of sectarian warfare in Iraq? And if not, how can we expect pouring troops into Baghdad to pacify warring groups in the Iraqi capital when they don't wear uniforms, we do, and we can't identify who they are? So can you respond, please?

Mr. KAGAN. I would be happy to. It is a very good question and the answer is that the best sources of information that we have in Iraq are our soldiers on the ground interacting with the population. One of the problems that we faced is that they have spent 3 years largely confined to forward operating bases with the mission of training Iraqi forces, transitioning and trying to stay out of contact with local Iraqi people.

What I have heard over and over again from soldiers at every level of command is that when they move out into the population, when they co-locate with Iraqi units in small groups, as they are doing now in this plan which is a new departure for us, we have not tried this on a large scale in Iraq before, when they actually work to provide security to the population, then they begin to receive a tremendous amount of intelligence from the population.

In fact, the people that I have spoken to who have been over there engaged in this say you start to get useful information about 2 weeks after you begin to establish yourself in the neighborhood, and about in a month you start to get tremendously valuable intelligence, and our soldiers on the ground are capable of distinguishing between insurgents and innocent people when they are in a neighborhood long enough to understand who belongs there and who doesn't.

So we really have a misunderstanding, I think, of what the nature of the intelligence problem is. We do have also sorts of difficulties within intelligence agencies and don't get me wrong. There is all kinds of problems with our intelligence. But when you talk about the intelligence to know how to conduct ourselves in this fight.

And I would like to take exception to the notion that we are fighting IEDs with conventional tactics either. We most certainly are not. We are fighting IEDs with counter-insurgency tactics that have long tradition, and that are based very heavily, especially in this strategy, on exactly an evaluation of what has worked in previous counter-insurgency operations and avoiding what has failed.

But the single most important intelligence asset that we have is the American soldier embedded with Iraqis, within the Iraqi popu-

lation building trust relationships so that the Iraqis will provide the intelligence that we need to conduct our operations.

That is why I believe that increasing not only the number of troops in Baghdad but also getting the troops that have already been there off the forward operating basis and into the city will actually increase their security. The most dangerous thing that an American soldier can do is get into a Humvee on a fob, drive into an area that he doesn't know very well, drive around for awhile patrolling where he has no local contacts and no real reference for understanding who is on what side, and where he hasn't laid the groundwork so he doesn't know where the IEDs are and so forth, and then try to return to base.

Ms. WATSON. Okay, our time is just about running out but I just want to say this. I am confused by the President saying mission accomplished. Now, we are escalating this war. I am confused that you tell us that we can do something about the IEDs when our troops are getting killed and maimed every day because of not only the IEDs but the suicide bombers, and I am confused that we think we can solve the problem between two warring factions, and these problems go back to biblical times, 6,000 to 7,000 years.

I am confused to think that sending more troops in who don't know the language and don't really understand, and we are not training them to do guerilla warfare, we are training them conventionally, that we can be optimistic about success. I don't think we find success in 20 years.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. I know it has been a long hearing and many of us pop in and out, so I appreciate having an opportunity just to, first of all, commend both of you for your excellent testimony, and I have to say that I was one that did not support, giving the President the preempt to strike authority. I thought that there was still opportunity, I wasn't sure whether there were weapons of mass destruction.

However, I recall that Saddam Hussein finally, even though he violated U.N. resolutions throughout his time, he did finally say that the U.N. had the right to go anywhere they wanted to go, and I think that that was the point that he finally admitted that his game was over, because, as we found, there were no weapons of mass destruction. He had done a great bluff game. He had confused our intelligence people.

I think that the biggest mistake was that our President did not, did not take that opportunity and ordered Hans Blix and the inspectors out in 48 hours, and then the preemptive strike began, and for that I think we have made a terrible mistake.

I totally support the Afghanistan and if our resources were deployed there, by now we would have at least finally done away with al-Qaeda as we know it. Difficult to rein, but if we put the resources into that, we had all of the support of the entire world. Countries were calling us. They sympathized with us. We were attached. None of them, practically none of them felt that to have innocent people just killed in our World Trade Center and in the

Pentagon and so forth, that that was a dastardly, cowardly act, and we had all of that going, which we have blown now.

The whole manner of warfare is changing so drastically that you just have one person who can take out 40 or 50 people and with the religious fervor that some of them have we are going to continually have these suicide bombings.

When I was in Afghanistan 2 years ago, they were proud of the fact that they said we don't do suicide bombing. That is not our thing. That is some foreign thing. And now it has gotten there and these people are trained, and they are doing the same thing in Afghanistan that was happening in other places. So our might becomes equalized by these dastardly acts.

So I don't know how you win a war like that. I mean, Korea was—we just talked about Vietnam withdrawing. Well, Korea was also, the line was drawn, and I think there is overwhelming superiority that we have in these megaweapons and these $6 billion to $7 billion aircraft carriers are equalized by some 500 guys willing, waiting in line to blow themselves up.

So I wonder, you know, my good friend Ambassador Holbrooke who I agree probably one of the most dignified diplomats that I have know. You know, you just put him in a place and he comes up with solutions. Usually people are experts in one area. He is just an expert in the whole world. You know, give me the country, and I will give you the answer. And so I have a lot of admiration for him.

But you know, when he says that—Ambassador, that you feel we should almost stay the course, you don't want to defund our troops, nor do we, and your question was right. You said is 20,000, you think it is either too many or too much. Of course, no one knows. And I missed most of the discussion, but what would you advise at this point when it is a civil war?

They are in a college one day blowing up people. They are in a marketplace the next day. They go into mosque the next day. They are in another city the day after that. Now they have got some new chlorine they are trying out. I mean, every day it is some other Draconian type of situation. How do our men and women stay in the middle of that when they almost have nothing to do with what is going on?

Chairman LANTOS. Ambassador Holbrooke, you have 25 seconds in which to answer.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Twenty-two according to this clock.

Congressmen Payne, we discussed this at great length. I want to stress, I don't think we ought to defund the troops. I think that is not right to the troops themselves. I think, in fact, we ought to give them the armor and so on they need.

Secondly, there appear to be 6,000 or so al-Qaeda, mainly in the west. If we are going to fight them in Afghanistan, and I know you support that effort, we also have to deal with them in western Iraq.

Where Dr. Kagan and I differ is over the possibility, probability, chances of success in Baghdad itself. When you were out of the room I said that I hope General Petreus succeeds, but I am more skeptical by a large amount than Dr. Kagan is, and therefore I think we need to look at the possibility—indeed, I would advocate

it—of redeploying troops to deal with al-Qaeda and deal with Afghanistan, and disengage from the civil war.

It is a risky strategy but I don't think the current one will succeed. I am willing to give it a try because we have no choice. The President has deployed the troops. They are on their way. He can do that under his authority, but we should be prepared for alternatives if it fails.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Finally, I am happy to yield the microphone to my friend from New York, Congressman Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and it is great to see you again, Ambassador Holbrooke and Dr. Kagan.

Since I am the last questioner and a lot has been asked about Iraq, I am not going to go into the specifics, but one of the things, Ambassador Holbrooke, you obviously have been, you were right there at the Dayton Accords. They wouldn't have happened without you. One of the things that has been said falsely about the United States is that we somehow are anti-Islam; that we somehow don't—instead of being the protector of all nations, we somehow take our foreign policy and we turn against Islam.

That is, of course, a lie. Nothing can be further from the truth. You know better than most how we helped Muslims in Bosnia, how we salved Kuwait from being swallowed up by Saddam Hussein. In Albania, of which you and I have worked closely together, there is no more pro-American country than Albania, a Muslim country. And we are now debating independence for Kosovo, a mostly Muslim country.

I am wondering if you could just give us your thoughts about Marti Ahtissari's plan for Kosovo, and debunk, along with me, this absurd notion that somehow the United States is hostile to Islamic majority country.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Thank you for the opportunity to address Kosovo.

Briefly, I pay tribute to your personal efforts and those of Chairman Lantos on this issue. I like Marti Ahtissari's plan given where we are. The fact is in the first term of this administration they should have dealt with the problem when Ginghich was alive. It would have been much easier to when Solonovich was foreign minister. He was from Pech. Something could have been done. It is much tougher now.

Having said that, let us get on with it. The Etisari Plan is a clear guide path to independence even if the "I" word is not in his report. It needs to be embedded in a Security Council resolution. The Bush administration has appointed a brilliant American envoy whom I know you know, and I know that the chairman knows, Frank Wisner, on a pro bono basis to support that. He has just been in Moscow. I believe this is a key issue in United States-Russian relations.

I want to be clear on this. The Russians have said at the Putin level they will not support something that the Serbs oppose in Belgrade. If that means they will veto the Security Council resolution, which will come to a vote in either March or April, if they Russians veto it, the Russians will unleash upon all of us in the middle of

Europe another high-risk situation which could lead to a renewal of ethnic tensions in an area where we don't need it.

I know that Ambassador Wisner has made this point, as has Marti Ahtisaari to the Russians. I hope that the Secretary of State and the President are also making this point because this last question, Mr. Chairman, may turn out to be the first question of another hearing if the Russians act to veto this resolution.

As for the Albanians, your friends, you probably are widely regarded as Albania's best friend in the House, they must agree to protect the minority rights, and you can play a big role in this Congressman Engel. And as for Belgrade, they have to choose between the future which lies toward Brussels and the past with lives in the deep myths and legends of things that did or did not happen in the year 1389. This is a big issue and I thank you for giving me an opportunity to comment on it.

One last point in the 46 seconds remaining. Bosnia, this administration has been not aggressive enough in implementing a successful outcome in Bosnia, and now the United States, the Europeans and the Russians are all diverging on how to extend the office of the high representative. The U.S. has lost a lot of leverage by withdrawing all its troops prematurely. We should have left some.

Having said that, I think we need to focus again on Bosnia to make sure that the current forces to not disintegrate what has been 11 years of peace and American commitment without a single American troop in either Bosnia or Kosovo killed or wounded in over a decade because we went in heavy, unlike Iraq, and we enforced it by shooting first and asking questions later.

Thank you, Congressman.

Chairman LANTOS. Well, I want to thank our two witnesses on behalf of all of my colleagues for an extraordinarily valuable and educational and significant hearing. I want to thank my colleagues.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:40 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE SHEILA JACKSON LEE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

JANUARY 17, 2007

I thank the Mr. Chairman for yielding. More importantly, I thank Chairman Lantos and Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen for holding this hearing. Welcome Secretary Albright. Your service to our country as Ambassador to the United Nations and as Secretary of State in the Clinton Administration was historic and is much appreciated and respected by every member of this committee and all Americans who understand how important it is for the United States to use its superpower status and its enormous assets—diplomatic, economic, political, military, and moral—in the cause of global leadership for peace, justice, and security. I look forward to your testimony and having the opportunity to probe your views in depth. Thank you again for being here.

Mr. Chairman, there is no more important subject on the nation's agenda today than the situation in Iraq. While I am new to this Committee, like all of us—and all Americans—I am not new to the issue of what to do about Iraq. Like you, Mr. Chairman, most members of Congress have been grappling with this question since before October 2002, when the Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF) was approved by the Congress.

Mr. Chairman, this past Monday we celebrated for the 21st time the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. That is, of course, fitting and proper given all that Dr. King did to bring about equality and understanding here in this country and around the world. But it also well to remember during these difficult days when the United States is bogged down in the misguided and mismanaged war in Iraq, which has claimed the lives of too many of our brave young service men and women, that the Dr. King was, above all, a person who was always willing to speak truth to power. There is perhaps no better example of Dr. King's moral integrity and consistency than his criticism of the Vietnam War being waged by the Johnson Administration, an administration that was otherwise a friend and champion of civil and human rights.

Speaking at the historic Riverside Church in New York City on April 4, 1967, Dr. King stated:

> *I am as deeply concerned about our own troops there as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting them to in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where armies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved. Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy, and the secure, while we create a hell for the poor.*
>
> *Somehow this madness must cease. We must stop now. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam. . . .* I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as one who loves America, to the leaders of our own nation: The great initiative in this war is ours; the initiative to stop it must be ours.

Mr. Chairman, these words were spoken by Dr. King one year to the day before his death. Thus it is that nearly 40 years after his death, Dr. King continues to teach us all.

Forty years later, the United States finds itself again bogged down in another misguided, mismanaged, and unpopular war. And once again, it is time to speak truth to power. Although I am proud to have been one of the 126 Democrats in the House who voted against the October 2002 Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF) in Iraq, I remain saddened that our voices and votes were not powerful or persuasive enough to steer our country away from the iceberg that is the Iraq War. Given the loss of the more than 3,000 brave servicemen and women, the 23,000 American casualties, the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis killed and wounded, and the nearly $400 billion of taxpayer dollars expended on this misadventure, it is small consolation to know, as the Washington Post finally recognized in an article by Walter Pincus published December 4, 2006, the 126 House Democrats who spoke out and voted against the Iraq War resolution have turned out to be correct in their warnings about the problems a war would create.

We Democrats spoke truth to power. We predicted before the war that "the outcome after the conflict is actually going to be the hardest part, and it is far less certain." We made the point that it was essential for the Administration to develop "a plan for rebuilding of the Iraqi government and society, if the worst comes to pass and armed conflict is necessary." As my colleague, Mr. Skelton, now the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee wrote to President Bush, "I have no doubt that our military would decisively defeat Iraq's forces and remove Saddam. But like the proverbial dog chasing the car down the road, we must consider what we would do after we caught it."

We warned of the "postwar challenges," particularly the fact that "there is no history of democratic government in Iraq," that its "economy and infrastructure is in ruins after years of war and sanctions" and that rebuilding would take "a great deal of money." We warned against sending American soldiers to war in Iraq without adequate protection against biological weapons.

Mr. Chairman, I am also reminded how General Eric Shinseki told the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2003 that the Defense Department's estimate of troops needed for occupying Iraq is too low and that several hundred thousand soldiers would be needed. Then Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, appearing before Congress two days later, testified that Gen. Shinseki's estimate was "wildly off the mark" and that it is "hard to conceive that it would take more forces to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq than it would take to conduct the war itself and to secure the surrender of Saddam's security forces and his Army. Hard to imagine."

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld named Gen. Shinseki's successor one year before the end of his term, making him a lame duck and an example to the rest of the military. Three months after Gen. Shinseki's comments, former Army secretary Thomas White admitted he was right. Dr. King would applaud the general's courage.

Mr. Chairman, to date, the war in Iraq has claimed the lives of 3,020 brave servicemen and women (115 in December and 20 in the first 14 days of this month). More than 22,000 Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries. American taxpayers have paid nearly $400 billion to sustain this misadventure. The war is also exacting a terrible toll on the Iraqi people as well. Conservative estimates place the number of dead and wounded in the hundreds of thousands. The latest tragedy, yesterday's bombing of a university in Baghdad took the lives of more than 70 innocent persons. All told, more than 108 Iraqis were killed yesterday in Baghdad.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly opposed the proposal announced by President Bush last week. It is clear that President Bush has not offered a new strategy for success in Iraq, just an increase in force levels of 20,000 American troops. The president's proposal will not provide lasting security for Iraqis. It is not what the American people have asked for, nor what the American military needs. It will impose excessive and unwarranted burdens on military personnel and their families.

Mr. Chairman, the architects of the fiasco in Iraq would have us believe that "surging" at least 20,000 more soldiers into Baghdad and nearby Anbar province is a change in military strategy that America must embrace or face future terrorist attacks on American soil. Nothing could be further from the truth, as we learned last year when the "surge" idea first surfaced among neoconservatives.

Mr. Chairman, the troop surge the President announced is not new and, judging from history, will not work. It will only succeed in putting more American troops in harm's way for no good reason and without any strategic advantage. The armed forces of the United States are not to be used to respond to 911 calls from governments like Iraq's that have done all they can to take responsibility for the security of their country and safety of their own people. The United States cannot do for Iraq what Iraqis are not willing to do for themselves.

Troop surges have been tried several times in the past. The success of these surges has, to put it charitably, been underwhelming. Let's briefly review the record:

1. Operation Together Forward, (June–October 2006):

In June the Bush administration announced a new plan for securing Baghdad by increasing the presence of Iraqi Security Forces. That plan failed, so in July the White House announced that additional American troops would be sent into Baghdad. By October, a U.S. military spokesman, Gen. William Caldwell, acknowledged that the operation and troop increase was a failure and had "not met our overall expectations of sustaining a reduction in the levels of violence." [CNN, *12/19/06*. Washington Post, *7/26/06*. Brookings Institution, *12/21/06*.]

2. Elections and Constitutional Referendum (September–December 2005):

In the fall of 2005 the Bush administration increased troop levels by 22,000, making a total of 160,000 American troops in Iraq around the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections. While the elections went off without major violence these escalations had little long-term impact on quelling sectarian violence or attacks on American troops. [Brookings Institution, *12/21/06. www.icasualties.org*]

3. Constitutional Elections and Fallujah (November 2004–March 2005):

As part of an effort to improve counterinsurgency operations after the Fallujah offensive in November 2004 and to increase security before the January 2005 constitutional elections U.S. forces were increased by 12,000 to 150,000. Again there was no long-term security impact. [Brookings Institution, *12/21/06*. New York Times, *12/2/04*.]

4. Massive Troop Rotations (December 2003–April 2004):

As part of a massive rotation of 250,000 troops in the winter and spring of 2004, troop levels in Iraq were raised from 122,000 to 137,000. Yet, the increase did nothing to prevent Muqtada al-Sadr's Najaf uprising and April of 2004 was the second deadliest month for American forces. [Brookings, *12/21/06; www.icasualties.org*. USA Today, *3/4/04*]

Mr. Chairman, stemming the chaos in Iraq, however, requires more than opposition to military escalation. It requires us to make hard choices. Our domestic national security, in fact, rests on redeploying our military forces from Iraq in order to build a more secure Middle East and continue to fight against global terrorist networks elsewhere in the world. Strategic redeployment of our armed forces in order to rebuild our nation's fighting capabilities and renew our critical fight in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al-Qaeda is not just an alternative strategy. It's a strategic imperative.

Mr. Chairman, it is past time for a NEW DIRECTION that can lead to success in Iraq. We cannot wait any longer. Too many Americans and Iraqis are dying who could otherwise be saved.

I believe the time has come to debate, adopt, and implement a plan of strategic redeployment. I am not talking about "immediate withdrawal," "cutting and running," or surrendering to terrorists, as the architects of the failed Administration Iraq policy like to claim. And I certainly am not talking about staying in Iraq forever or the foreseeable future.

I am talking about a strategic redeployment of troops that:

- Reduces U.S. troops in Iraq to less 60,000 within six months, and to zero by the end of 2007, while redeploying troops to Afghanistan, Kuwait, and the Persian Gulf.
- Engages in diplomacy to resolve the conflict within Iraq by convening a Geneva Peace Conference modeled on the Dayton Accords.
- Establishes a Gulf Security initiative to deal with the aftermath of U.S. redeployment from Iraq and the growing nuclear capabilities of Iran.
- Puts Iraq's reconstruction back on track with targeted international funds.
- Counters extremist Islamic ideology around the globe through long-term efforts to support the creation of democratic institutions and press freedoms.

As the Center for American Progress documents in its last quarterly report (October 24, 2006), the benefits of strategic redeployment are significant:

- Restore the strength of U.S. ground troops.
- Exercise a strategic shift to meet global threats from Islamic extremists.
- Prevent U.S. troops from being caught in the middle of a civil war in Iraq.
- Avert mass sectarian and ethnic cleansing in Iraq.

- Provide time for Iraq's elected leaders to strike a power-sharing agreement.
- Empower Iraq's security forces to take control.
- Get Iraqis fighting to end the occupation to lay down their arms.
- Motivate the U.N., global, and regional powers to become more involved in Iraq.
- Give the U.S. the moral, political, and military power to deal with Iran's attempt to develop nuclear weapons.
- Prevent an outbreak of isolationism in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, rather than surging militarily for the third time in a year, the United States needs to surge diplomatically. A further military escalation would simply mean repeating a failed strategy. A diplomatic surge would involve appointing an individual with the stature of a former secretary of state, such as Colin Powell or Madeleine Albright, as a special envoy. This person would be charged with getting all six of Iraq's neighbors—Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait—involved more constructively in stabilizing Iraq. These countries are already involved in a bilateral, self-interested and disorganized way.

While their interests and ours are not identical, none of these countries wants to live with an Iraq that, after our redeployment, becomes a failed state or a humanitarian catastrophe that could become a haven for terrorists or a hemorrhage of millions more refugees streaming into their countries.

The high-profile envoy would also address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the role of Hezbollah and Syria in Lebanon, and Iran's rising influence in the region. The aim would not be necessarily to solve these problems, but to prevent them from getting worse and to show the Arab and Muslim world that we share their concerns about the problems in this region.

Mr. Chairman, the President's plan has not worked. Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is, as we all know, a definition of insanity. It is time to try something new. It is time for change. It is time for a NEW DIRECTION.

I look forward to hearing from Secretary Albright and considering her thoughtful responses to the Committee's questions.

Thank you. I yield the balance of my time.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE TED POE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

JANUARY 17, 2007

In 1999 then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who we now have the privilege to speak with today, warned Congress not to make up a "'half-baked deal' to end the conflict" in Kosovo. The "struggle may be long," she warned, but the U.S. must remain committed to the region. Her reasons? The consequences would be "serious" if the conflict continued and ultimately spread. She said, ". . . we must not falter and we cannot fail." Well, we cannot fail in Iraq, either. The president understands the stakes of our operation in Iraq, and so do the American people. If we lose in Iraq, so does democracy. And if democracy loses, the terrorists win.

Hardly anyone would disagree with President Bush's statement last week that the primary concern in Iraq right now is security, especially in Baghdad. It is inconceivable that Iraq could be more secure if our troop levels remained the same, not to mention if they began to withdraw. We need more boots on the ground in Baghdad. We need our troops to work as much as possible with Iraqis to quash sectarian violence. The president's plan to send approximately 21,000 new troops to Iraq and to further integrate civilian and military personnel is a step in the right direction. With additional U.S. military support, we can give the Iraqis what they need to take the reins of their own security, and we can leave when the time is right and ripe for a fully-functioning and *stable* democratic Iraqi government.

Our top priority, bottom line, should be accomplishing our goals and winning the war in Iraq. We can only accomplish our goals by increasing U.S. troop levels in Baghdad.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE JANUARY 17, 2007, BRIEFING RECORD BY THE HONORABLE J. GRESHAM BARRETT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

DOCTRINE OF PREEMPTION

Thank you for joining us today Madame Secretary and for your thoughtful testimony. I only have a few questions for you this morning:

Question:

In one of your statements, you said the way to a stable Iraq is through a "democratic solution." We all agree that a military solution alone will not bring us victory, but my question to you is—is it realistic to think we can help the Iraqi government find a political solution without first gaining control over Baghdad?

Response:

Stability in Baghdad is vital to a democratic Iraq. The question is whether stability in Baghdad can be achieved by military means.

Question:

Does it hurt the "democratic solution" or goal we desire to achieve if we say an increase in troop levels will not work, even if General Petraeus advocates such a plan?

Response::

U.S. policy in Iraq cannot help but benefit from a free and open debate. Few things have hurt our policy—or our trips—more than misguided optimism about what could be achieved in the absence of political progress.

IRAN'S MEDDLING IN IRAQ

Question:

Given your knowledge of the region, do you believe that other countries are working inside Iraq currently?

Response::

Of course.

Question:

If so, which countries and how do we deal with them?

Response::

The United States has 140,000 troops and an extensive civilian diplomatic presence in Iraq. Coalition troops are also still active. Investors and contractors from a host of nations are working inside the country. Iran has long time ties with many Iraqis, including members of the government and Shiite religious leaders. Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan have informal ties to other groups inside Iraq.

Question:

If Iran and Syria and their known terrorist associates have been found to be working inside Iraq to destabilize the country, would you consider this an act of war?

Response::

This is a hypothetical question. It seems obvious; however, that it would be for the Iraqi government to decide whether attacks aimed at de-stabilizing it should be considered acts of war.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ALBIO SIRES, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

- Madame Secretary, I want to thank you so much for coming to testify before the committee and we appreciate your time this morning.
- When Secretary Rice was here last week, I asked her what it would take for Saudi Arabia to become a more active player in the stabilizing of Iraq. Secretary Rice stated that the Saudis could start by canceling the Iraqi debt owed to the government and private institutions. In previous statements, she has also stated that the proper role for Saudi Arabia and any other country in the region would be to help the Iraqis, and not to critique them.

- I do not understand the current Administration's inability to use diplomacy as a means to engage key allies in the stabilization of Iraq.
- According to the Iraq Study Group Report, Iraq's neighbors must be more engaged in order to achieve stability in Iraq. Saudi Arabia has been mostly disengaged from the current situation in Iraq. They have declined to provide debt relief or substantial economic assistance to the Iraqi government. Iraqi Sunni Arab politicians have also complained that Saudi Arabia hasn't even provided political support for their fellow Sunnis in Iraq.
- Up to this point, Saudi Arabia has not agreed to give assistance to Sunni Arab's in Iraq, although there has been mounting pressure from influential Saudi figures and religious scholars to provide direct political and security assistance. There are private individuals within Saudi Arabia that are presently financing Iraqi insurgents to confront what they perceive as Iranian-led Shiite ascendance in the region.
- As a neighbor of Iraq, it is in the best interest of Saudi Arabia to have stability in Iraq. The Saudis could also use their Islamic credentials by helping to reconcile differences between Iraqi factions, along with helping to eliminate al-Qaeda in Iraq. This could also lead to greater support in the Islamic world for a stabilization agreement.

WRITTEN RESPONSE FROM THE HONORABLE MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE, TO QUESTION SUBMITTED FOR THE JANUARY 17, 2007, BRIEFING RECORD BY THE HONORABLE ALBIO SIRES, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Question:

What, in your opinion, do we need to do to bring Saudi Arabia into a more active and positive role?

Response:

I appreciate the question and agree that it is important that Saudi Arabia play a constructive role in promoting stability in Iraq, although I am not familiar with recent discussions between Saudi leaders and U.S. officials on this subject. It is not hard, however, to identify a dilemma—the Saudis worry about the rise of a second powerful Shiite Muslim state in the region; they also worry about being accused of aiding terrorists if they openly support the Sunni factions, few of which are entirely untainted by the violence. This is one more reason why I believe it is important to organize a comprehensive diplomatic support group for Iraq. Only through a regional diplomatic approach will countries be able to agree on a common strategy, in which nations are able to help Iraq without being accused of contributing to the sectarian violence.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE SHEILA JACKSON LEE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

JANUARY 19, 2007

I thank Chairman Lantos for convening this critical meeting on the issue of paramount importance to our nation's foreign policy regarding Iraq. It is a pleasure to welcome my good friend and former Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Lee Hamilton. Your distinguished service to our country continues today long after your 34 year tenure in the United States House of Representatives. One of the highlights of my career in Congress is the opportunity I had to serve with you in the 104th Congress.

Your honorable service to our country has continued after your retirement from Congress and includes your tenure as Co-Chair of the 9/11 Commission, your membership on the Hart-Rudman Commission, and your most recent contribution as Co-Chair of the Iraq Study Group ("Baker Hamilton Commission" or "ISG"). This report provides convincing evidence that immediate action must be taken to enable the "*United States to begin to move its combat forces out of Iraq responsibly*." I agree with the findings of the Iraq Study Group (ISG) and with the American people that the Bush Administration's Iraq policy has failed and the time to change course is long overdue.

This war has long been a disaster and President Bush must remedy the situation he has created by taking to heart the assessments and recommendations of this comprehensive report. I, along with my democratic colleagues have been offering the

President constructive advice and criticism on the war in Iraq since 2003—criticism and advice which the President has repeatedly rejected, but which the Iraq Study Group has now embraced.

The cost of ignoring sound advice has been great and the American people have felt the loss. More than 3,000 Americans have died and 22,000 Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries in Iraq. American taxpayers have paid nearly $400 billion to sustain this misadventure. The war is also exacting a terrible toll on the Iraqi people as well. Reasonable estimates place the number of Iraqi dead and wounded in the hundreds of thousands. We have sadly found ourselves in a quagmire indeed.

I am grateful for the Iraq Study Group report by the Baker-Hamilton Commission, which if heeded could help the Bush Administration find its way out of this grave and deteriorating situation. The challenges in Iraq are complex with violence increasing in scope and lethality daily. Among the 79 listed recommendations are:

> (22) The president should state that the U.S. does not seek permanent military bases in Iraq;
>
> (23) The President should restate that the U.S. does not seek to control Iraq's oil;
>
> (32) Minorities. The rights of women and the rights of all minority communities in Iraq, including Turkmen, Chaldeans, Assyrains, Yazidis, Sabeans, and Armenians, must be protected.

I especially concur with the ISG recommendations that the President promise not to seek permanent military bases or control of Iraqi oil. This would give the American and Iraqi people some hope and faith in the American government and our intentions in the midst of this disaster—that this is not a war fought for profit with the blood of their friends and families. Also, as we aid their government with reforms, I agree that the rights of women and other minorities in Iraq must be recognized, or else our initial promise of "freedom" is denied to too many, and we leave them with a nation as welcoming of oppression as before. The United States must make it clear to the Iraqi government that the United States will carry out its plans, including planned redeployments, even if Iraq does not implement its planned changes. America's other security needs and the future of our military cannot be made hostage to the actions or inactions of the Iraqi government. Our countries brave soldiers and our foreign policy should not be hijacked by the sectarian sentiments of the Iraqi people and the failures of the Iraqi government.

Mr. Chairman, there is no more important subject on the nation's agenda today than the situation in Iraq. Given the loss of the more than 3,000 brave servicemen and women, the 23,000 American casualties, the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis killed and wounded, and the nearly $400 billion of taxpayer dollars expended on this misadventure, the ISG recommendation to withdraw combat brigades is a tacit admission that the time has come for the United States to implement a plan of strategic redeployment. We Democrats spoke truth to power. We predicted before the war that "the outcome after the conflict is actually going to be the hardest part, and it is far less certain." We made the point that it was essential for the Administration to develop "a plan for rebuilding of the Iraqi government and society, if the worst comes to pass and armed conflict is necessary." It is now clear to all but the most neoconservative, die-hard supporters of the President that the time has come for a strategic redeployment that:

- Reduces U.S. troops to 60,000 by the end of 2007, and to zero by the end of 2008, while redeploying troops to Afghanistan, Kuwait, and the Persian Gulf.
- Engages in diplomacy to resolve the conflict within Iraq by convening a Geneva Peace Conference modeled on the Dayton Accords.
- Establishes a Gulf Security initiative to deal with the aftermath of U.S. redeployment from Iraq and the growing nuclear capabilities of Iran.
- Puts Iraq's reconstruction back on track with targeted international funds.
- Counters extremist Islamic ideology around the globe through long-term efforts to support the creation of democratic institutions and press freedoms.

Democrats also warned of the "postwar challenges," particularly the fact that "there is no history of democratic government in Iraq," that its "economy and infrastructure are in ruins after years of war and sanctions" and that rebuilding would take "a great deal of money."

Mr. Chairman, I strongly opposed the proposal announced by President Bush last week. It is clear that President Bush has not offered a new strategy for success in Iraq, just an increase in force levels of 20,000 American troops. The president's proposal will not provide lasting security for Iraqis. It is not what the American people

have asked for, nor what the American military needs. It will impose excessive and unwarranted burdens on military personnel and their families.

Mr. Chairman, the architects of the debacle in Iraq would have us believe that "surging" at least 20,000 more soldiers into Baghdad and nearby Anbar province is a change in military strategy that America must embrace or face future terrorist attacks on American soil. Nothing could be further from the truth, as we learned last year when the "surge" idea first surfaced among neoconservatives.

Mr. Chairman, the troop surge the President announced is not new and, judging from history, will not work. It will only succeed in putting more American troops in harm's way for no good reason and without any strategic advantage. *The armed forces of the United States are not to be used to respond to 9/11 calls from governments like Iraq's that have not done all they can to take responsibility for the security of their country and safety of their own people. The United States cannot do for Iraq what Iraqis are not willing to do for themselves.*

Troop surges have been tried several times in the past. The success of these surges has, to put it charitably, been underwhelming. From Operation Together Forward in 2006, the Elections and Constitutional Referendum in 2005, the Constitutional Elections and Fallujah in 2004–2005 and lastly massive troop rotations in 2003–2004.

Mr. Chairman, the ISG Report gets it right: *rather than surging militarily for the third time in a year, the United States needs to surge diplomatically*. A further military escalation would simply mean repeating a failed strategy. A diplomatic surge would involve appointing an individual with the stature of a former Secretary of State, such as Colin Powell or Madeleine Albright, as a special envoy. This person would be charged with getting all six of Iraq's neighbors—Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait—involved more constructively in stabilizing Iraq. These countries are already involved in a bilateral, self-interested and disorganized way.

Mr. Chairman, the President's plan has not worked. Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is, as we all know, the definition of insanity. It is time to try something new. It is time for change. It is time for a NEW DIRECTION.

I look forward to hearing from Chairman Hamilton and considering his thoughtful responses to the Committee's questions.

Thank you. I yield the balance of my time.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE LEE HAMILTON, CO-CHAIR OF THE IRAQ STUDY GROUP (BAKER-HAMILTON COMMISSION), TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE JANUARY 19, 2007, BRIEFING RECORD BY THE HONORABLE SHEILA JACKSON LEE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Question:

Many of the recommendations in the ISG report echo the potential value of a concerted and collected effort by the U.S. between the Iraqi government and Iraq's neighbors, including Iran and Syria. How do we begin to initiate dialogue to seek this potential support from Iraq's neighbors?

Response:

The Study Group recommended that the United States, working with the Iraqi government, should launch the comprehensive New Diplomatic Offensive to deal with the problems of Iraq and the region. The Study Group recommended that this step take by December 31, 2006.

As an instrument of this diplomatic offensive, the Study Group recommended the organization of an Iraq International Support Group. The membership of this Support Group should include Iraq and all states bordering Iraq, including Iran and Syria; key regional states, including Egypt and the Gulf States; the five permanent Members of the UN Security Council, and the European Union.

The Study Group further recommended the participation of the office of the United Nations Secretary-General.

While the United States needs to be a driving force in helping to organize and start this diplomatic initiative, the UN Secretary-General or the UN Security Council could be the formal chair of the Support Group and could initiate the multilateral diplomatic dialogue.

The United States should also initiate a direct, bilateral dialogue with each of Iraq's neighbors.

Question:

Now that Iran is the most important nation in the region, it seems as if our approach of isolating Iran has backfired. How do we keep our values intact while having dialogue with Iran on issues of mutual concern ranging from Iraq to Iran's energy and nuclear policies?

Response:

We have tried to isolate Iran for years. Where has it gotten us? Because of its strong ties to Shiite militias and political leaders, Iran may have as much influence in Iraq as the United States. It is also a rising regional power, and continues to develop its nuclear program.

Talking to Iran is not appeasement. Conversation is not capitulation. The United States need not sacrifice its interests or its values to talk. Do we really think that the United States is too weak to negotiate? Do we think that American diplomats will immediately begin making concessions if they simply sit down at the table with Syrian or Iranian diplomats?

You cannot conduct diplomacy if you only talk to your friends. Certainly, we would like to see a different government in Iran. Yet we also have to deal with reality. If we can get Iran to take even modest steps to enhance stability in Iraq, both the United States and Iraq will be better off.

Talking is worthwhile even if we do not reach agreement. There are many reasons to negotiate: to build trust, explain our policies, probe intentions, collect intelligence, dispel misunderstandings, deter bad actions, and to reduce the chance of inadvertent escalation

Question:

Mr. Hamilton, as you know, sectarian violence causes the largest number of Iraqi civilian casualties and sectarian cleansing is taking place in Baghdad. How will a surge in our troops combat sectarian violence and more actively pursue national reconciliation?

Response:

Much of the attention right now is on the troop surge. To some degree, that is understandable. We are all concerned when more of our young men and women are put in harm's way.

The political, diplomatic, and economic pieces of our policy are just as important as the military piece. The Study Group was explicit on the importance of a comprehensive approach. All elements of our policy should be pursued at the same time:

- Training as the primary U.S. military mission in Iraq;
- Engaging Iraq's neighbors—and the international community—on behalf of stability in Iraq and the region;
- Building the capacity of the Iraqi government and focusing on job creation as part of a robust economic program; and
- Holding the Iraqi government to performance benchmarks, particularly on national reconciliation.

National reconciliation cannot wait. Make no mistake: The violence in Baghdad will not end without national reconciliation. The violence will not end unless Iraq's leaders step up and make difficult decisions about the future of their country.

Question:

Is the size of our troop surge too small to have a widespread and substantive impact to put pressure on the Iraqi government to seek national reconciliation?

Response:

The Study Group did not have a judgment on the number of troops necessary to provide security in a sprawling urban area of more than 6 million.

The Study Group agrees with the President that only the Iraqis can end the sectarian violence. The violence will not end unless Iraq's leaders step up and make difficult decisions about the future of their country.

A military response is only part of a policy response in Iraq. A comprehensive, political, military, economic and diplomatic response is necessary. All elements of policy must be pursued at the same time.

Question:

Isn't a diplomatic surge coupled with economic incentives such as creating jobs and bolstering reconstruction programs a better strategy to achieve national reconciliation?

Wouldn't a diplomatic and economic surge be better at improving the standard of living of the Iraqi people by creating jobs and increasing reconstruction efforts; and bolstering civil society such as human rights groups, the press, NGOs and advocates of minority, women and children's rights?

Response:

The Study Group places very strong emphasis on diplomatic and economic measures. Both diplomatic and economic measures are essential in support of the goal of a national reconciliation. Only Iraq's leaders can make the difficult and necessary decisions in support of national reconciliation. In the absence of national reconciliation, the violence in Iraq will not end.

The measures referenced in the question certainly could help improve the standard of living in Iraq and bolster civil society. Recommendations number 32 and 33 of the Iraq Study Group report address the protection of minority rights in Iraq, and the protection of civil society. The rights of all minority communities must be protected. The process of registering non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must not be used as a tool for politicizing or stopping NGO activity.

Question:

In 2006, while estimates of U.S. reconstruction assistance dwindled to $750 million, we have spent a total of more than $400 billion on our military efforts. How can we better balance this disparity so that we can win the confidence of the Iraqi people by illustrating more clearly our interest and investment in their standard of living and by bolstering the capacity of our reconstructive efforts?

Response:

The Study Group agrees with the premise of the question.

Building the capacity of the Iraqi government should be at the heart of U.S. reconstruction efforts, and capacity building demands additional U.S. resources.

Progress in providing essential government services is necessary to sustain any progress on the political or security front. Job creation is also essential.

For these reasons, the Study Group recommended that U.S. economic assistance to Iraq should be increased to a level of $5 billion per year rather than be permitted to decline. We need better balance and integration in the use of U.S. power.

Question:

Prudently, the ISG report mentions many reasons to oppose a precipitous withdrawal (pp.37–38). Do you believe that conditions will improve significantly in Iraq over the next year?

Does it not make sense to begin a phased withdrawal and thereby save hundreds if not thousands of American lives?

Response:

The Study Group found the situation in Iraq grave and deteriorating.

Violence is increasing in scope, complexity, and lethality.

Key players within the government too often act in their sectarian interest.

Iraq's tremendous growth potential is hobbled by insecurity, corruption, lack of investment, dilapidated infrastructure, and uncertainty.

Iraq's neighbors are doing too little to help it, and some are undercutting its stability.

Absent significant action, particularly on national reconciliation, the Study Group believes these conditions and trends will continue. If current trends continue, the potential consequences are severe.

With respect to the U.S. military mission, the Study Group stated: "The primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq should evolve to one of supporting the Iraqi Army, which would take over primary responsibility for combat operations."

The Study Group stated further: "While these (training and equipping) efforts are building up, and as additional Iraqi brigades are being deployed, U.S. combat brigades could begin to move out of Iraq. By the first quarter of 2008, subject to unexpected developments in the security situation on the ground, all combat brigades not necessary for force protection could be out of Iraq."

Question:

The ISG report states: "the United States has both a national and a moral interest in doing what it can to give Iraqis an opportunity to avert anarchy" (p.2). At what point, would you say, we have paid our moral debt for having created the circumstances that led to the current situation? At what point does the withdrawal of our military become a higher national-interest priority than is the effort to limit instability in Iraq?

Response:

The Study Group did not give an opinion as to when the United States would have paid its moral debt or fulfilled its responsibility for events in Iraq.

The Study Group recommended that the United States should not make an open-ended commitment to keep large numbers of American troops deployed in Iraq.

Further, the Study Group recommended that the United States must make it clear to the Iraqi government that the United States could carry out its plans, including planned redeployments, even if Iraq does not implement its planned changes. America's other security needs and the future of our military cannot be held hostage to the actions or inactions of the Iraqi government.

The Study Group believes our leaders must build a bipartisan approach to bring a responsible conclusion to what is now a lengthy and costly war.

SUBMITTED FOR THE FEBRUARY 28, 2007, HEARING RECORD BY THE HONORABLE RICHARD C. HOLBROOKE, VICE CHAIRMAN, PERSEUS LLC, FORMER UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

OPPORTUNITY FOR TURKS AND KURDS?

By Richard Holbrooke
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IRBIL, Iraqi Kurdistan—Whatever happens in Iraq, we must try to limit the terrible fallout from the war. The place to start should be with our indispensable NATO ally Turkey, the front-line state of the post-Cold War era, whose relations with the United States have deteriorated dramatically in the past six years.

The immediate issue is raids by Kurdish terrorists across Turkey's border with Iraq, which divides an area inhabited on both sides by Kurds who have long felt that they deserve their own country. Despite centuries of enmity, rapprochement is in the long-term interests of both Turkey and the Kurds of northern Iraq. But such an effort would be controversial and could be undertaken only with strong American encouragement.

First, some essential background from Irbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, which I am visiting after talks with Turkish leaders in Ankara. This peaceful city is disorienting: Am I in war-torn Iraq or booming Kurdistan? Will Irbil eventually become the capital (or part) of an independent Kurdistan? Or will this region become a battleground for another war, this one between Kurds and Turks?

You can call this place Kurdistan, as its citizens do, or northern Iraq, as the Turks do. But either way, the overwhelming majority (98 percent in a 2005 referendum) of its 4 million people do not want to remain part of Iraq. Who can blame them? Nothing here feels like the Middle East. The Iraqi national flag is banned; only the Kurdistan flag flies. And although the Kurds are sending some of their famously fierce warriors to Baghdad to support the Americans, they fear that Gen. David Petraeus's plan to turn the tide in Baghdad will not succeed.

Ever since a nation called Iraq was carved out of the debris of the Ottoman Empire by Winston Churchill and Gertrude Bell at the Cairo Conference of 1921, Turkey and Iran have opposed independence for the Kurds of northern Iraq because both fear that an independent Kurdistan on their borders would encourage existing separatist movements among their large Kurdish populations.

This symmetry of fears has led to semi-secret discussions and even some cooperation between our NATO ally and that charter member of the "axis of evil" on dealing with the PKK, a terrorist group that has conducted raids against both Turkey and Iran from bases just inside northern Iraq for many years. I would not rule out limited Turkish military action against some of those bases—especially since Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is under enormous political pressure to show strong nationalist credentials against hawkish rivals in an election year.

After years of mishandling relations with Turkey, last year the administration appointed retired Gen. Joe Ralston, the universally respected former NATO commander, as special envoy for the PKK problem. Ralston's intervention helped avoid a Turkish attack in Iraq last summer, and he is accelerating his efforts to get Irbil to rein in the PKK.

But there is a larger issue: the final status of Kirkuk, the multiethnic city that sits in the middle of a huge oil field and lies just outside the official boundaries of Iraqi Kurdistan. The new Iraqi constitution calls for a referendum this year on whether Kirkuk is to be incorporated into the Kurdistan region. The Turks—who refer repeatedly to the dangers to the Turkmen, their ethnic cousins who live in Kirkuk—have said that they will not accept such an event. Avoiding a full-blown

crisis will require intense mediation by the United States; unfortunately, Ralston's current mandate does not include Kirkuk.

Despite their history, Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan need each other. Kurdistan could become a buffer between Turkey and the chaos to the south, while Turkey could become the protector of a Kurdistan that, though still technically part of Iraq, is effectively cut loose from a Baghdad government that may no longer function. In addition, Turkey has a major economic opportunity in northern Iraq; already, more than 300 Turkish companies and substantial investment are a primary engine of Kurdish growth.

Rapprochement would require major undertakings by both sides. The legendary Kurdish leader who is now president of the Kurdish regional government, Massoud Barzani, needs to rein in the PKK and pledge not to interfere in Turkey's internal affairs. A compromise that took into account legitimate Turkish concerns would be necessary on Kirkuk; while this would be difficult, especially for the Turkish military, I believe it needs to be attempted, with strong American encouragement.

History and myth make a Turkish-Kurdish deal extremely difficult. It takes visionary leaders to alter the stream of history. Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer did it for France and Germany. Nelson Mandela did it in South Africa. But such people are very, very rare. Still, the crisis in Iraq requires Turks and Kurds to think of their common interest. Having just talked to the impressive leaders of both sides, I believe they understand that they face not just a crisis but an opportunity.

Richard Holbrooke, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, writes a monthly column for The Post.