

IRAQ: IS THE ESCALATION WORKING?

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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JUNE 27, 2007
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Serial No. 110-87
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Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/>

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

36-423PDF

WASHINGTON : 2007

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
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IRAQ: IS THE ESCALATION WORKING?

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2007

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Thomas Lantos (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman LANTOS. The committee will come to order.

The recent United States troop escalation in Iraq simply is not working. We are now the proverbial man wandering the barren desert desperately in search of an oasis that doesn't exist. The predicament facing our Nation in Iraq became quite clear long before the surge was announced in January. But even after all outside observers pointed out this mirage, the administration refused to stop what retired General Barry McCaffrey has called "a fool's errand."

The administration wanted to make millions of Americans believe that we should wander further into the desert, investing more and more blood and treasure there. This belief, in turn, would reduce the mounting pressure to seek a safe and wise exit, and so it has, at least for some moment.

As a long-time professor of economics, let me tell you, you don't consider sunk costs when making decisions about the future. We need a sober assessment of the troop escalation and the situation in Iraq right now, and we need to stop pretending we can attain plainly delusional goals. We need more wake up calls like we had on Monday when veteran Republican Senator Dick Lugar said on the Senate floor that continuing to pursue the surge strategy would actually damage our national security interests.

This troop escalation has in fact been a categorical and catastrophic failure. The month of May claimed the most United States lives in Iraq in more than 2½ years. One hundred and twenty-seven of our brave servicemen and women were killed. June hasn't been much better, with more than 80 U.S. deaths so far.

According to the widely respected Brookings Institution Iraq Index, the number of daily attacks has increased markedly this year, and the period from March through June has been among the deadliest for Iraqi military personnel and police. Four years into the war these metrics should be decreasing, not increasing. For the people of Iraq, security and stability are illusive mirages too. Insurgents have resorted to the sickening strategy of suicide bombings; just Monday four separate attacks killed at least 40 people. One of these bombings killed six Sunni leaders who had joined with United States forces in the battle for stability in Iraq.

Many prominent Republicans have already stated that unless they see substantial progress by September, they will support the drawdown of U.S. forces, but with typical obstinacy, the administration is already feeding out the line that a little more time and a few more troops will turn things around.

Instead of hoping against hope each day that the mirage will suddenly transform into the oasis of a triumphant United States victory in Iraq, let us figure out how to make Iraq as stable as possible. Let us figure out how to save the lives of our courageous soldiers still there. The bullets and roadside bombs that they face every day are all too real.

As we know, there is a slew of proposals on the table right now that range from full withdrawal to partial withdrawal to regional redeployment. I would like to come away from this hearing, and I think my fellow members would appreciate this too, more informed about the real pros and cons of these plans. I would like us to think with sobriety about the safest and most prudent way out of Iraq.

We will discuss several proposals floating around Washington, some of which are emanating from prominent and respected public figures and military experts.

Two think tanks recently released thoughtful withdrawal proposals that will serve as fodder for today's discussion. The Center for American Progress promotes withdrawing all but 8,000 to 10,000 troops by the end of 2008, with the remaining forces positioned in northern Iraq to prevent and to contain a possible cross-border conflict between the Kurds and Turkey.

The Center for a New American Security suggests slimming down our Iraq force to 60,000 troops by the beginning of 2009. That force would remain for 4 more years largely to train the Iraqi army and work with Iraqi leaders to fight insurgents. Improving Iraq's own security forces and army is an absolute necessity for the long-term sustainability of Iraq, a notion that the Baker-Hamilton report described in great detail. This is now long overdue.

In fact, most rational exit strategies suggest reducing our forces in Iraq to those needed for training Iraqi security forces, fighting identified terrorist cells in hot spots, protecting our Embassy and reconstruction workers, and shielding important Iraqi infrastructure facilities such as Baghdad Airport.

Some analysts have proposed variations on regional redeployment in which the lion's share of our troops would withdraw to bases in nearby countries such as Kuwait. Many of these troops would remain as a quick reaction force to strike if serious flare-ups occurred in Iraq. Others have offered a vision that would include the replacement of our troops with an international stabilization force in Iraq, with many of the troops coming from nearby Middle Eastern and North African countries. Unfortunately, precious few nations have expressed any willingness to commit troops to such a mission so this plan appears to be a non-starter.

Given the abject failure of the escalation, we are no longer debating whether to withdraw. We are discussing how to do it, when to do it, and the number of the remaining force in Iraq. So with our expert witnesses today, I want to discuss what makes the most sense for Iraq, for the region and for American forces. No more illu-

sions. We must banish the mirages and take a clear-eyed view of where we are and where we go from here.

Before turning to my distinguished colleague and good friend from Florida, without objection we shall place Senator Lugar's speech in the record at this point.

[The information referred to follows:]

PRESS RELEASE OF SENATOR LUGAR

LUGAR SENATE FLOOR SPEECH CALLS FOR COURSE CHANGE IN IRAQ
CONNECTING OUR IRAQ STRATEGY TO OUR VITAL INTERESTS

Monday, June 25, 2007

Madam President, I rise today to offer observations on the continuing involvement of the United States in Iraq. In my judgment, our course in Iraq has lost contact with our vital national security interests in the Middle East and beyond. Our continuing absorption with military activities in Iraq is limiting our diplomatic assertiveness there and elsewhere in the world. The prospects that the current "surge" strategy will succeed in the way originally envisioned by the President are very limited within the short period framed by our own domestic political debate. And the strident, polarized nature of that debate increases the risk that our involvement in Iraq will end in a poorly planned withdrawal that undercuts our vital interests in the Middle East. Unless we recalibrate our strategy in Iraq to fit our domestic political conditions and the broader needs of U.S. national security, we risk foreign policy failures that could greatly diminish our influence in the region and the world.

The current debate on Iraq in Washington has not been conducive to a thoughtful revision of our Iraq policy. Our debate is being driven by partisan political calculations and understandable fatigue with bad news—including deaths and injuries to Americans. We have been debating and voting on whether to fund American troops in Iraq and whether to place conditions on such funding. We have contemplated in great detail whether Iraqi success in achieving certain benchmarks should determine whether funding is approved or whether a withdrawal should commence. I would observe that none of this debate addresses our vital interests any more than they are addressed by an unquestioned devotion to an ill-defined strategy of "staying the course" in Iraq.

I speak to my fellow Senators, when I say that the President is not the only American leader who will have to make adjustments to his or her thinking. Each of us should take a step back from the sloganeering rhetoric and political opportunism that has sometimes characterized this debate. The task of securing U.S. interests in the Middle East will be extremely difficult if Iraq policy is formulated on a partisan basis, with the protagonists on both sides ignoring the complexities at the core of our situation.

Commentators frequently suggest that the United States has no good options in Iraq. That may be true from a certain perspective. But I believe that we do have viable options that could strengthen our position in the Middle East, and reduce the prospect of terrorism, regional war, and other calamities. But seizing these opportunities will require the President to downsize the U.S. military's role in Iraq and place much more emphasis on diplomatic and economic options. It will also require members of Congress to be receptive to overtures by the President to construct a new policy outside the binary choice of surge versus withdrawal. We don't owe the President our unquestioning agreement, but we do owe him and the American people our constructive engagement.

Seeking a Sustainable Policy

In my judgment, the costs and risks of continuing down the current path outweigh the potential benefits that might be achieved. Persisting indefinitely with the surge strategy will delay policy adjustments that have a better chance of protecting our vital interests over the long term.

I do not come to this conclusion lightly, particularly given that General Petraeus will deliver a formal report in September on his efforts to improve security. The interim information we have received from General Petraeus and other officials has been helpful and appreciated. I do not doubt the assessments of military commanders that there has been some progress in security. More security improvements in the coming months may be achieved. We should attempt to preserve initiatives that have shown promise, such as engaging Sunni groups that are disaffected with the extreme tactics and agenda of Al Qaeda in Iraq. But three factors—the political fragmentation in Iraq, the growing stress on our military, and the constraints of our

own domestic political process—are converging to make it almost impossible for the United States to engineer a stable, multi-sectarian government in Iraq in a reasonable time frame.

Iraqis Don't Want to Be Iraqis

First, it is very doubtful that the leaders of Iraqi factions are capable of implementing a political settlement in the short run. I see no convincing evidence that Iraqis will make the compromises necessary to solidify a functioning government and society, even if we reduce violence to a point that allows for some political and economic normalcy.

In recent months, we have seen votes in the Iraqi parliament calling for a withdrawal of American forces and condemning security walls in Baghdad that were a reasonable response to neighborhood violence. The Iraqi parliament struggles even to achieve a quorum, because many prominent leaders decline to attend. We have seen overt feuds between members of the Iraqi government, including Prime Minister Maliki and Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, who did not speak to each other for the entire month of April. The Shia-led government is going out of its way to bottle up money budgeted for Sunni provinces. Without strident intervention by our embassy, food rations are not being delivered to Sunni towns. Iraqi leaders have resisted de-Baathification reform, the conclusion of an oil law, and effective measures to prevent oil smuggling and other corrupt practices.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari has told me that various aspects of an oil law and revenue distribution could be passed by September. But he emphasized that Iraqis are attempting to make policy in a difficult environment by broad consensus—not by majority vote. He believes other policy advancements will take considerable time, but that consensus is the safest and most appropriate approach in a fledgling democracy.

This may be true, but Americans want results in months. Meanwhile, various Iraqi factions are willing to wait years to achieve vital objectives. Even if the results of military operations improve in the coming months, there is little reason to assume that this will diminish Sunni ambitions to reclaim political preeminence or Shia plans to dominate Iraq after decades of Saddam's harsh rule. Few Iraqi leaders are willing to make sacrifices or expose themselves to risks on behalf of the type of unified Iraq that the Bush Administration had envisioned. In contrast, there are many Iraqi leaders who are deeply invested in a sectarian or tribal agenda. More often than not, these agendas involve not just the protection of fellow Sunnis, Shites, and Kurds, but the expansion of territorial dominance and economic privileges.

Even if U.S. negotiators found a way to forge a political settlement among selected representatives of the major sectarian factions, these leaders have not shown the ability to control their members at the local level. After an intense year-and-a-half of bloodletting, many sub-factions are thoroughly invested in the violence. We have the worst of both worlds in Iraq—factional leaders who don't believe in our pluralist vision for their country and smaller sub-factions who are pursuing violence on their own regardless of any accommodations by more moderate fellow sectarians. As David Brooks recently observed in the *New York Times*, the fragmentation in Iraq has become so prevalent that Iraq may not even be able to carry out a traditional civil war among cohesive factions.

Few Iraqis have demonstrated that they want to be Iraqis. We may bemoan this, but it is not a surprising phenomenon. The behavior of most Iraqis is governed by calculations related to their history, their personal safety, their basic economic existence, and their tribal or sectarian loyalties. These are primal forces that have constrained the vision of most ordinary Iraqis to the limits of their neighborhoods and villages.

In this context, the possibility that the United States can set meaningful benchmarks that would provide an indication of impending success or failure is remote. Perhaps some benchmarks or agreements will be initially achieved, but most can be undermined or reversed by a contrary edict of the Iraqi government, a decision by a faction to ignore agreements, or the next terrorist attack or waive of sectarian killings. American manpower cannot keep the lid on indefinitely. The anticipation that our training operations could produce an effective Iraqi army loyal to a cohesive central government is still just a hopeful plan for the future.

I suspect that for some Americans, benchmarks are a means of justifying a withdrawal by demonstrating that Iraq is irredeemable. For others, benchmarks represent an attempt to validate our military presence by showing progress against a low fixed standard. But in neither case are benchmark tests addressing our broader national security interests.

Equally unproven is the theory voiced by some supporters of a withdrawal that removing American troops from Iraq would stimulate a grand compromise between

Iraqi factions. Some Iraqi leaders may react this way. But most assume that we will soon begin to withdraw troops, and they are preparing to carry on or accelerate the fight in the absence of American forces. Iraqi militias have shown an ability to adapt to conditions on the ground, expanding or contracting their operations as security imperatives warrant.

American strategy must adjust to the reality that sectarian factionalism will not abate anytime soon and probably cannot be controlled from the top.

Stress on the Military Instrument

The second factor working against our ability to engineer a stable government in Iraq is the fatigue of our military. The window during which we can continue to employ American troops in Iraqi neighborhoods without damaging our military strength or our ability to respond to other national security priorities is closing. Some observers may argue that we cannot put a price on securing Iraq and that our military readiness is not threatened. But this is a naive assessment of our national security resources.

American armed forces are incredibly resilient, but Iraq is taking a toll on recruitment and readiness. In April, the Defense Department announced it would lengthen tours of duty for soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan from 12 to 15 months. Many soldiers are now on their way to a third combat tour.

Last month, for the 27th consecutive year, in a ceremony witnessed by tens of thousands of Hoosiers, I swore in new military recruits on Pit Road at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Over the course of the weekend, I visited with the recruits, with the recruiters, and with military officials. I heard personal stories of the 70-hour work weeks put in by recruiters to meet recruiting goals. I was impressed with each of the 66 young men and women I swore in. They are joining a military at war, and each of them is showing tremendous courage and commitment to our country.

The swearing-in ceremony was preceded by a briefing from Army officials here in Washington who assured me that we are fielding the best equipped, best trained, and most capable force we have ever had. Yet, they also reported that the Army has exhausted its bench. Instead of resting and training for 3 to 12 months, brigades coming out of the field must now be ready almost immediately for redeployment.

Basic recruiting targets are being met, but statistics point to significant declines in the percentage of recruits who have high school diplomas and who score above average on the Army's aptitude test. Meanwhile, the Army has dramatically increased the use of waivers for recruits who have committed felonies, and it has relaxed weight and age standards.

The Army is asking for \$2 billion more this year for recruitment incentives, advertising, and related activities. It needs \$13 to \$14 billion a year to reset the force to acceptable readiness ratings, and they will need that amount for up to three years after the end of the current operations. The Army needs \$52 billion more this year to fill equipment shortages and modernize. These figures do not include the billions of dollars required to implement the planned 65,000 soldier increase in the size of the active force.

Filling expanding ranks will be increasingly difficult given trends in attitudes toward military service. This has been measured by the Joint Advertising Market Research and Studies Program, which produced a "Propensity Update" last September after extensive research. The study found that only 1 in 10 youths has a propensity to serve—the lowest percentage in the history of such surveys. 61 percent of youth respondents report that they will "definitely not serve." This represents a 7 percent increase in less than a year. These numbers are directly attributable to policies in Iraq. When combined with the Army's estimate that only 3 of 10 youths today meet basic physical, behavioral, and academic requirements for military service, the consequences of continuing to stretch the military are dire.

The U.S. military remains the strongest fighting force in the world, but we have to be mindful that it is not indestructible. Before the next conflict, we have much to do to repair this invaluable instrument. This repair cannot begin until we move to a more sustainable Iraq policy.

Constraints of our Domestic Political Timetable

The third factor inhibiting our ability to establish a stable, multi-sectarian government in Iraq is the timetable imposed by our own domestic political process. The President and some of his advisors may be tempted to pursue the surge strategy to the end of his administration, but such a course contains extreme risks for U.S. national security. It would require the President to fight a political rear-guard holding action for more than a year and a half against Congressional attempts to limit,

modify, or end military operations in Iraq. The resulting contentiousness would make cooperation on national security issues nearly impossible. It would greatly increase the chances for a poorly planned withdrawal from Iraq or possibly the broader Middle East region that could damage U.S. interests for decades.

The President and his team must come to grips with the shortened political timeline in this country for military operations in Iraq. Some will argue that political timelines should always be subordinated to military necessity, but that is unrealistic in a democracy. Many political observers contend that voter dissatisfaction in 2006 with Administration policies in Iraq was the major factor in producing new Democratic Party majorities in both Houses of Congress. Domestic politics routinely intrude on diplomatic and military decisions. The key is to manage these intrusions so that we avoid actions that are not in our national interest.

We do not know whether the next President will be a Democrat or a Republican. But it is certain that domestic pressure for withdrawal will continue to be intense. A course change should happen now, while there is still some possibility of constructing a sustainable bipartisan strategy in Iraq. If the President waits until the presidential election campaign is in full swing, the intensity of confrontation on Iraq is likely to limit U.S. options.

I am not implying that debate on Iraq is bad. I am suggesting what most Senate observers understand intuitively: little nuance or bipartisanship will be possible if the Iraq debate plays out during a contentious national election that will determine control of the White House and Congress.

In short, our political timeline will not support a rational course adjustment in Iraq, unless such an adjustment is initiated very soon.

Focusing on Vital Interests

Madam President, in January, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee heard from former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who recalled a half century of U.S. involvement in the Middle East. He argued that this history was not accidental. We have been heavily involved in the region because we have enduring vital interests at stake. We may make tactical decisions about the deployment or withdrawal of forces in Iraq, but we must plan for a strong strategic position in the region for years to come.

This is not just a maxim from diplomatic textbooks. The vitality of the U.S. economy and the economies of much of the world depend on the oil that comes from the Persian Gulf. The safety of the United States depends on how we react to nuclear proliferation in the region and how we combat terrorist cells and ideologies that reside there.

The risk for decision-makers is that after a long struggle in Iraq, accompanied by a contentious political process at home, we begin to see Iraq as a set piece—as an end in itself, distinct from the broader interests that we meant to protect. We risk becoming fixated on artificial notions of achieving victory or avoiding defeat, when these ill-defined concepts have little relevance to our operations in Iraq. What is important is not the precise configuration of the Iraqi government or the achievement of specific benchmarks, but rather how Iraq impacts our geostrategic situation in the Middle East and beyond. The President's troop surge is an early episode in a much broader Middle East realignment that began with our invasion of Iraq and may not end for years. Nations throughout the Middle East are scrambling to find their footing as regional power balances shift in unpredictable ways.

Although the Bush Administration has scaled back its definition of success in Iraq, we are continuing to pour our treasure and manpower into the narrow and uncertain pursuit of creating a stable, democratic, pluralist society in Iraq. This pursuit has been the focal point of the Bush Administration's Middle East policy. Unfortunately, this objective is not one on which our future in the region can rest, especially when far more important goals related to Middle East security are languishing. I am not suggesting that what happens in Iraq is not important, but the Bush Administration must avoid becoming so quixotic in its attempt to achieve its optimum forecasts for Iraq that it misses other opportunities to protect our vital interests in the Middle East.

To determine our future course, we should separate our emotions and frustrations about Iraq from a sober assessment of our fundamental national security goals. In my judgment, we should be concerned with four primary objectives:

First, we have an interest in preventing Iraq or any piece of its territory from being used as a safe haven or training ground for terrorists or as a repository or assembly point for weapons of mass destruction.

Second, we have an interest in preventing the disorder and sectarian violence in Iraq from upsetting wider regional stability. The consequences of turmoil that draws neighboring states into a regional war could be grave. Such turmoil could topple

friendly governments, expand destabilizing refugee flows, close the Persian Gulf to shipping traffic, or destroy key oil production or transportation facilities, thus diminishing the flow of oil from the region with disastrous results for the world economy.

Third, we have an interest in preventing Iranian domination of the region. The fall of Saddam Hussein's Sunni government opened up opportunities for Iran to seek much greater influence in Iraq and in the broader Middle East. An aggressive Iran would pose serious challenges for Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, and other Arab governments. Iran is pressing a broad agenda in the Middle East with uncertain consequences for weapons proliferation, terrorism, the security of Israel, and other U.S. interests. Any course we adopt should consider how it would impact the regional influence of Iran.

Fourth, we have an interest in limiting the loss of U.S. credibility in the region and throughout the world as a result of our Iraq mission. Some loss of confidence in the United States has already occurred, but our subsequent actions in Iraq may determine how we are viewed for a generation.

In my judgment, the current surge strategy is not an effective means of protecting these interests. Its prospects for success are too dependent on the actions of others who do not share our agenda. It relies on military power to achieve goals that it cannot achieve. It distances allies that we will need for any regional diplomatic effort. Its failure, without a careful transition to a back-up policy would intensify our loss of credibility. It uses tremendous amounts of resources that cannot be employed in other ways to secure our objectives. And it lacks domestic support that is necessary to sustain a policy of this type.

A total withdrawal from Iraq also fails to meet our security interests. Such a withdrawal would compound the risks of a wider regional conflict stimulated by Sunni-Shia tensions. It would also be a severe blow to U.S. credibility that would make nations in the region far less likely to cooperate with us on shared interests. It would increase the potential for armed conflict between Turkey and Kurdish forces in Iraq. It would expose Iraqis who have worked with us to retribution, increase the chances of destabilizing refugee flows, and undercut many economic and development projects currently underway in Iraq. It would also be a signal that the United States was abandoning efforts to prevent Iraqi territory from being used as a terrorist base.

Moreover, advocates of an immediate withdrawal have tended to underestimate the requirements and complexities of such an operation. General Barry McCaffrey testified at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on January 18, 2007, that an immediate withdrawal aimed at getting out of Iraq as fast as possible would take six months. A carefully planned withdrawal that sought to preserve as much American equipment as possible, protect Iraqis who have worked with us, continue anti-terrorist operations during the withdrawal period, and minimize negative regional consequences would take months longer.

Shifting to a Sustainable Military Posture

Our security interests call for a downsizing and re-deployment of U.S. military forces to more sustainable positions in Iraq or the Middle East. Numerous locations for temporary or permanent military bases have been suggested, including Kuwait or other nearby states, the Kurdish territories, or defensible locations in Iraq outside of urban areas. All of these options come with problems and limitations. But some level of American military presence in Iraq would improve the odds that we could respond to terrorist threats, protect oil flows, and help deter a regional war. It would also reassure friendly governments that the United States is committed to Middle East security. A re-deployment would allow us to continue training Iraqi troops and delivering economic assistance, but it would end the U.S. attempt to interpose ourselves between Iraqi sectarian factions.

Six months ago, the Iraq Study Group endorsed a gradual downsizing of American forces in Iraq and the evolution of their mission to a support role for the Iraqi army. I do not necessarily agree with every recommendation of the Iraq Study Group, and its analysis requires some updating given the passage of time. But the report provides a useful starting point for the development of a "Plan B" and a template for bipartisan cooperation on our Iraq strategy.

We should understand that if the re-deployment of a downsized force is to be safe and effective, our military planners and diplomats must have as much time as possible to develop and implement the details. We will need the cooperation of the Iraqi government and key states in the region, which will not come automatically. The logistics of a shift in policy toward a residual force will test military planners, who have been consumed with the surge. In 2003, we witnessed the costs that came with insufficient planning for the aftermath of the Iraq invasion. It is absolutely essential

that we not repeat the same mistake. The longer we delay the planning for a re-deployment, the less likely it is to be successful.

Going on the Offensive

The United States has violated some basic national security precepts during our military engagement in Iraq. We have overestimated what the military can achieve, we have set goals that are unrealistic, and we have inadequately factored in the broader regional consequences of our actions. Perhaps most critically, our focus on Iraq has diverted us from opportunities to change the world in directions that strengthen our national security.

Our struggles in Iraq have placed U.S. foreign policy on a defensive footing and drawn resources from other national security endeavors, including Afghanistan. With few exceptions, our diplomatic initiatives are encumbered by negative global and regional attitudes toward our combat presence in Iraq.

In this era, the United States cannot afford to be on a defensive footing indefinitely. It is essential that as we attempt to re-position ourselves from our current military posture in Iraq, we launch a multi-faceted diplomatic offensive that pushes adversarial states and terrorist groups to adjust to us. The best counter to perceptions that we have lost credibility in Iraq would be a sustained and ambitious set of initiatives that repairs alliances and demonstrates our staying power in the Middle East.

The Iraq Study Group report recommended such a diplomatic offensive, stating “all key issues in the Middle East—the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iraq, Iran, the need for political and economic reforms, and extremism and terrorism, are inextricably linked.” The report stressed that diplomacy aimed at solving key regional issues would “help marginalize extremists and terrorists, promote U.S. values and interests, and improve America’s global image.”

A diplomatic offensive is likely to be easier in the context of a tactical drawdown of U.S. troops in Iraq. A drawdown would increase the chances of stimulating greater economic and diplomatic assistance for Iraq from multi-lateral organizations and European allies, who have sought to limit their association with an unpopular war.

A first step is working with like-minded nations to establish a consistent diplomatic forum related to Iraq that is open to all parties in the Middle East. The purpose of the forum would be to improve transparency of national interests so that neighboring states and other actors avoid miscalculations. I believe it would be in the self-interest of every nation in the region to attend such meetings, as well as the United States, EU representatives, or other interested parties. Such a forum could facilitate more regular contact with Syria and Iran with less drama and rhetoric that has accompanied some meetings. The existence of a predictable and regular forum in the region would be especially important for dealing with refugee problems, regulating borders, exploring development initiatives, and preventing conflict between the Kurds and Turks. Just as the Six-Party talks have improved communications in Northeast Asia beyond the issue of North Korea’s nuclear program, stabilizing Iraq could be the occasion for a diplomatic forum that contributes to other Middle East priorities.

Eventually, part of the massive U.S. embassy under construction in Baghdad might be a suitable location for the forum. It is likely that the embassy compound will exceed the evolving needs of the United States. If this is true, we should carefully consider how best to use this asset, which might be suitable for diplomatic, educational, or governmental activities in Iraq.

We should be mindful that the United States does not lack diplomatic assets. Most regional governments are extremely wary of U.S. abandonment of the Middle East. Moderate states are concerned by Iran’s aggressiveness and by the possibility of sectarian conflict beyond Iraq’s borders. They recognize that the United States is an indispensable counterweight to Iran and a source of stability. The United States should continue to organize regional players—Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, the Gulf States, and others—behind a program of containing Iran’s disruptive agenda in the region.

Such a re-alignment has relevance for stabilizing Iraq and bringing security to other areas of conflict, including Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. The United States should make clear to our Arab friends that they have a role in promoting reconciliation within Iraq, preventing oil price spikes, splitting Syria from Iran, and demonstrating a more united front against terrorism.

The Elephants in the Room

A diplomatic offensive centered on Iraq and surrounding countries would help lift American interests in the Middle East. But credibility and sustainability of our actions depend on addressing the two elephants in the room of U.S. Middle East pol-

icy—the Arab-Israeli conflict and U.S. dependence on Persian Gulf oil. These are the two problems that our adversaries, especially Iran, least want us to address. They are the conditions that most constrain our freedom of action and perpetuate vulnerabilities. The implementation of an effective program to remedy these conditions could be as valuable to our long-term security as the achievement of a stable, pro-Western government in Iraq.

The Arab-Israeli conflict will not be easily solved. Recent combat between the Hamas and Fatah Palestinian factions that led to Hamas' military preeminence in the Gaza Strip complicates efforts to put the peace process back on track. But even if a settlement is not an immediate possibility, we have to demonstrate clearly that the United States is committed to helping facilitate a negotiated outcome. Progress in the Arab-Israeli conflict would not end the sectarian conflict in Iraq, but it could restore credibility lost by the United States in the region. It also would undercut terrorist propaganda, slow Iranian influence, and open new possibilities related to Syria.

Clearly, the United States does not have the influence to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict unilaterally. In contrast, our dependence on Persian Gulf oil is largely within our capacity to fix. Do not underestimate the impact on Iran and other nations of a concerted U.S. campaign to reduce our oil consumption. A credible, well-publicized campaign to definitively change the oil import equation would reverberate throughout the Middle East. It would be the equivalent of opening a new front in Middle Eastern policy that does not depend on the good will of any other country.

Many options exist for rapid progress in reducing our Persian Gulf oil dependence, but I would emphasize two. First, President Bush or his successor could establish the national goal of making competitively-priced biofuels available to every motorist in America. Such an accomplishment would transform our transportation sector and cut our oil import bill. It would require multiple elements, including ensuring that virtually every new car sold in America is a flexible fuel vehicle capable of running on an 85 percent ethanol fuel known as E-85; that at least a quarter of American filling stations have E-85 pumps; and that ethanol production from various sources is expanded to as much as 100 billion gallons a year within the next 15 to 20 years. Such a campaign could achieve the replacement of 6.5 million barrels of oil per day by volume—the rough equivalent of one third of the oil used in America and one half of our current oil imports. None of these goals are easy, but they are achievable if Presidential advocacy and the weight of the Federal Government are devoted to their realization. Brazil already has achieved the large scale deployment of ethanol as a national transportation fuel, and its success is a source of public pride in that country.

Second, the President could commit to a radical increase in the miles per gallon of America's auto fleet. The Federal government has numerous tools to make this happen, from direct federal support for research, to government fleet purchasing, to market regulations and incentives.

Incredibly, cars in America today get less mileage per gallon than they did twenty years ago. Meanwhile, hybrids, plug-in hybrids, and fully electric cars are at or nearly at commercialization, yet there is not enough incentive for consumers to buy them or producers to make them on the mass scale necessary. For fiscal year 2008, the Administration requested just \$176 million for new vehicle technology research—an amount that was less than what was requested five years ago.

Given that other developed nations have made great strides in improving fuel economy, this is fertile ground for rapid improvement. In fact, achievements on this front largely would be a matter of generating and sustaining political will that has, thus far, been disappointing.

Conclusion

Madam President, the issue before us is whether we will refocus our policy in Iraq on realistic assessments of what can be achieved, and on a sober review of our vital interests in the Middle East. Given the requirements of military planners, the stress of our combat forces, and our own domestic political timeline, we are running out of time to implement a thoughtful Plan B that attempts to protect our substantial interests in the region, while downsizing our military presence in Iraq.

We need to recast the geo-strategic reference points of our Iraq policy. We need to be preparing for how we will array U.S. forces in the region to target terrorist enclaves, deter adventurism by Iran, provide a buffer against regional sectarian conflict, and generally reassure friendly governments that the United States is committed to Middle East security. Simultaneously, we must be aggressive and creative in pursuing a regional dialogue that is not limited to our friends. We cannot allow fatigue and frustration with our Iraq policy to lead to the abandonment of the tools and relationships we need to defend our vital interests in the Middle East.

If we are to seize opportunities to preserve these interests, the Administration and Congress must suspend what has become almost knee-jerk political combat over Iraq. Those who offer constructive criticism of the surge strategy are not defeatists, any more than those who warn against a precipitous withdrawal are militarists. We need to move Iraq policy beyond the politics of the moment and re-establish a broad consensus on the role of the United States in the Middle East. If we do that, the United States has the diplomatic influence and economic and military power to strengthen mutually beneficial policies that could enhance security and prosperity throughout the region. I pray that the President and the Congress will move swiftly and surely to achieve that goal.

Chairman LANTOS. I now turn to my good friend and distinguished colleague, the ranking member of the committee, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, to make any remarks she would like to make.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, as always, but especially today for calling this important hearing, although I believe that it is premature given that the full scope of the deployment of our forces was only recently completed. Legitimate debate and continued oversight are necessary about mistakes made in Iraq, and it is about the errors made in every war. All of them are legitimate, legitimate debate, legitimate oversight.

But before writing off Iraq as lost, we must ask ourselves what alternative policy is there, and what are the consequences for the safety of our troops and for the United States strategic interests of predetermining defeat.

As the committee members know, my stepson and daughter-in-law served as officers in Iraq. My daughter-in-law is now in Afghanistan, and all of us know that the sacrifice of our military, of all of those who wear our Nation's uniform is long and it is hard sacrifice. We salute all of them, and in that all members of our committee agree, and I thank the chairman for his support for our Nation's finest.

But now what? Well, General Petraeus stated in a recent interview,

“Our assessment is that this is the central front for al-Qaeda. They have a global war of terror and Iraq is the central front. Whether you like it or not, that is something that the leaders of the intelligence community in the West and our Joint Special Operations Commander agree on. It is certainly one very important consideration in looking at Iraq.”

So our forces are now in place, and they are working skillfully to establish order and support and assist in the reconstruction. In the absence of security, many ordinary Iraqis have turned to militias, which has only contributed to the instability and weakened the Iraqi Government. In response, our forces are working to reverse that trend as evidenced by the most recent coalition offensives throughout Baghdad and its surrounding areas.

More United States forces are operating outside of the confinement of their forward operating bases, to include establishing joint security stations and joint combat outposts throughout Baghdad with Iraqi security forces and engaging the local population by conducting joint patrols and operations. Once an area is protected, security forces are remaining in the area so that rebuilding and economic reconstruction can take place.

Improving security in Baghdad is being pursued also as a precursor to the Iraqi Government taking additional political steps to increase its institutional capacity. However, as General Petraeus has said, any current and future strategy toward Iraq must be performance-based and not chronologically-based.

Iraq is a strategic problem that requires a strategic solution, a solution that blends mutually supportive steps on bilateral and multilateral fronts to bring a coordinated and comprehensive response to the challenges that we face there. These objectives can be met and carried out through the establishment of an explicit framework for future cooperation and coordination with Iraqi leaders that include continued United States and international support, political and economic incentives designed to strengthen the government's institutions, and as a means to promote the further development of bilateral relations with Iraq and the effectiveness and efficiency of the United States security and economic assistance to that nation.

The United States must also formalize its relations with the Government of Iraq. Among other actions, this can include the commencement and implementation of bilateral treaties and agreements surrounding the status of United States and coalition forces, and the integration of the Government of Iraq into bilateral and multilateral security counterterrorism and nonproliferation activities and programs.

Mr. Chairman, we must provide the necessary support, assistance, and framework to ensure that the Iraqi Government does indeed succeed. Abandonment would result in threats to U.S. security interest, and those of our allies in the region, and could result in a humanitarian crisis that we will then have to respond to. We must prevent these potential results.

I warmly welcome our distinguished panelists, and I look forward to receiving their remarks. Thank you as always, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Pleased to recognize the gentleman from New York, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are here today to discuss and we are likely to argue about what is blindingly obvious to the vast majority of Americans: The surge hasn't worked. It is currently not working, and it is not going to work. Increasing the number of soldiers and Marines committed to the same futile mission in Iraq has produced exactly what I, among many, predicted—a commensurate increase in casualties with absolutely no additional gains.

The only difference I can see is that having gone in for escalation the administration now appears to be borrowing yet another page from the Vietnam textbook, claiming that all the people we are now killing are from al-Qaeda. Since they don't wear uniforms, carry dog tags or get membership tattoos, I don't know how the administration can be so certain, but apparently we have now discovered a new ability to distinguish al-Qaeda from Iraqi insurgents from Iraqi civilians. I don't know how they are doing it but I certainly hope they are not just lying about body counts.

In January of this year when the President announced his surge policy, our average number of casualties per week was between 14

and 15. In the 4 weeks between May 20 and June 16, the average was between 15 and 16. In January, the Government of Iraq was in shambles, incapable of spending its own resources, administering its own affairs, or achieving a national consensus for reconciliation. In June, things are exactly the same except fewer of us are surprised.

There is a simple reason for this. What ails Iraq cannot be fixed with more American military power. No matter how you try, you can't fix a wrist watch with a sledge hammer. Our military is the wrong tool for this job. You can't use tanks to build a functioning cabinet ministry. You can't use F-15s to build a national consensus. You can't root out corruption with artillery. Even our special operations units, the very best of the best, can't train effective security forces out of people who view the United States as the enemy.

This is not World War II. This is not a war of attrition. This is not a war that can be won by superior technology or more accurate weapons or more American infantrymen. Our troops are giving everything they have but their unwavering devotion, their dauntless courage, their peerless skill, and their matchless patriotism cannot heal Iraq's woes. They cannot make Iraq's political system work. They cannot heal the century's old rift between Shiite and Sunni. They cannot undo the bitterness created by Saddam's tyranny. They are brave beyond belief, but they are being committed to support a strategy that cannot succeed.

No matter how much the threat gets hyped, no matter how many insurgents we kill, no matter how much money we spend, no matter how many soldiers we send, we will not be able to un-burn down this house. Ultimately Iraq's future is going to be decided by Iraqis and most likely by the same Iraqis who have been shooting at us since 2003.

As the President said in January, and I quote him:

“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.”

So said the President.

Been there. Done that. It is time to go.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and I would like to thank you personally, Mr. Chairman, for the responsible way that you have expressed yourself and the responsible way that you have handled this particular issue, and this is an issue where young Americans are dying overseas and does not lend itself to the type of hyperbole that we have heard from too many of our members over the past.

I think it is too late for us to—excuse me. Perhaps we are a bit too premature in declaring the current strategy a failure. We should be giving this strategy the utmost support because it is Iraq and the people of Iraq's last chance. Anybody who can engage politics in the United States of America, and we are as a democracy

ruled by the political system, which is responsive to the will of the people, have to understand that if this fails the Americans will begin a withdrawal from Iraq. It is a fact of life. And those of us who understand the significance of what is going on should be on our knees praying for the success of this operation rather than trying to cast doubts to the world that it will succeed because if it does not succeed, yes, all those who have lost their lives, it wouldn't be for nothing.

I happen to believe that no matter what happens in Iraq we can hold our heads high because we have given the Iraqi people their chance, and if they do not step forward and accept the responsibility and do what is necessary for their own freedom, well, then they have made that decision, but we as Americans, and especially our fighting men and women, will be able to hold their heads high and say we did what was right, but we can't do everything, and Mr. Ackerman is right, if they are unwilling to step up, we can't do it for them.

But this surge, I gave the President all along in this war all the support I could give him, and I pray that this surge will be successful. If there is a failure, we can discuss why we failed later on, but until now I am anxious to hear your long-term analysis of what is going to happen there, and what we can expect in the months ahead.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't have any prepared statement, but just sort of reacting a bit to my friend from California's comments.

The problem is what—your reference to prayers is interesting because for me this is somewhat a tension between my heart and my head, maybe between faith and facts. I want this to work for a whole variety of reasons, and at the same time we have some obligation to make judgments and face the realities of what is going on, and for me the story a couple of days ago, in a political atmosphere in Iraq where the oil law hasn't passed, and the reform and change of the de-Baathification law has not been moved. There is no serious effort to any constitutional change—the political milestones that have been set out for progress in centralizing a government.

The one hopeful development is some of the Sunni tribal leaders deciding al-Qaeda is really the enemy, an effort to create a middle party that crosses sectarian lines, involves Sunnis and The Shiites, that they gather at a hotel in Baghdad, and that somehow between our security and the Iraqi security forces we can't protect that meeting from taking place and that that hotel is bombed and the key participants in that effort at reconciliation are killed and all that is in a way a parable of the frustrations that I think a lot of us are feeling about what is going on. No one event is critical to making a final judgment, but it does tell a story in a sense about, notwithstanding our best intentions, what is happening on the ground.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you.

The gentleman from Colorado, Mr. Tancredo.

Mr. TANCREDO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

After a long and bloody war in 1787, we had a constitutional convention here and Benjamin Franklin at the completion of that convention walked out and was greeted by someone with a question: "Dr. Franklin, what have you given us?" And he said, "A republic if you can keep it." I will be interested to hear from the witnesses today why this is not what we should be telling the Iraqi Government at this point in time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Chairman Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I too would like to commend you for calling this hearing this morning, and I do want to associate myself with the comments our distinguished chairman and also my good friend, the chairman of our Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, the gentleman from New York.

About a week and a half ago, I attended the funeral services of one of my constituents who died in the war in Iraq. This is the thirteenth soldier from my district who died from this terrible conflict that we are faced with. Not a very pleasant experience as I am sure that a lot our colleagues have had to do this, and the families and the loved ones, not a very positive experience.

I do want to say, Mr. Chairman, that I think in the midst of all the debates and the problems that we have, we probably have held more hearings on Iraq the first 6 months that it is than we have in the last 6 years, and I think it is about time, it is long overdue, and I am glad that we are doing this.

I would like to say that the name of General Eric Shinseki, the former Chief of Staff of the Army, should forever be—his name should be forever echoed and associated with one of the great military blunders of our time in preparing and planning that went on before we attach Saddam Hussein and his regime in Iraq.

Years ago, as the Chief of Staff of the Army when General Shinseki was asked in one of the hearings, I believe it was the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, for his professional opinion as to what it would take to take control of Iraq if at some point in time our country and our leaders would decide to wage war against Saddam Hussein, and the man, as a West Point graduate, no political affiliations whatsoever, this leader gave his professional opinion as a soldier, and served with distinction for well over 30 years of his career of General Shinseki, and he just simply said in his professional opinion as a soldier it would require a couple hundred thousand soldiers if we really are serious about taking control of the situation in Iraq.

Immediately he was criticized, victimized in every way and form by the administration, from Secretary Rumsfeld, from Under Secretary Wolfowitz, and all kinds of criticisms suggesting that this soldier did not know what he was talking about.

And what we did we do as a result? We send in only 140,000 soldiers supposedly to complete our military mission as we tried now for the last 5 years. I think this is something that we ought never forget, that here is a professional soldier that gave his professional opinion, and was never, never given serious consideration of what

he was trying to share with the rest of the leadership of our country.

Now, we are all anticipating the September report that General Petraeus is going to give us, and I don't think that any of us here, regardless of your political persuasion, that we are hoping that this will be a success. I might also note that despite the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group our President decided to escalate, send 20,000 more soldiers in addition to the 140,000 that could not do the job, and what should have been at least 200,000 to 300,000.

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses this morning, and I am not finished with that yet. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. My friend from Nebraska, Congressman Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. I am going to forego an opening statement in deference to time constraints and look forward to our hearing. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Any colleague on the Democratic side? Mr. Klein.

Mr. KLEIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing. I am just going to add one other element if the guests can address as well in terms of the prospects and outlook, and the comprehensive view of this, and that is to have you give us your thoughts as well on Iran's influence on what is going on.

We know there have been factual demonstrations of supplies of missiles. There have been questions about an armor-piercing weaponry. The British have given us some of that information. We are aware of some of that, and in understanding where we are at and what influences are not only within the country of Iraq but externally that will have an impact on the outcome short term and long term, if you could share with us your views on the current state of affairs on Iran, its influence and how you see the United States' role in preventing or dealing with that influence.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you.

My good friend from Indiana, Mr. Pence.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing. I must take my characteristically respectful wherever you are concerned, respectful exception to the title of the hearing: Is the escalation working? I find myself wondering aloud which escalation we are talking about. Is it the escalation of the insurgency? Is it an escalation of al-Qaeda in Iraq, or is it that politically charged word used in some political circles to describe what is commonly referred to by the Iraq Study Group and by this administration as the military surge that is underway?

With regard to that, and I assume that is the topic of the hearing, I do find myself interested in the testimony of the witnesses, but I reflect on what General David Petraeus said on the 17th of June, and I quote: "We just recently got the fifth and final army surge brigade."

So a mere 10 days after the surge is put in place in Iraq this committee is going to begin to draw conclusions, as others in the public domain have done so about the efficacy of the surge. I tend

to agree with Professor Cordesman who says in his opening statement that “it may well be unfair to judge progress in Baghdad even in September, much less now.”

So I come to this hearing today with greatly interested in the facts of the case. I share the Iraq fatigue that I think is characteristic of virtually every American. But I also hope that while we examine the effectiveness of the surge I hope we also as a committee will continue to examine the cost of failure and the extraordinary cost of an American defeat or an irresponsible American withdrawal from Iraq, the consequences of which I think would be felt far beyond this Congress and perhaps far beyond this generation of Americans.

So with that, I thank the chairman for calling the hearing and look forward to the testimony with the witnesses.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I, too, am looking forward to this hearing, and I am looking forward to this hearing from the perspective of the American people, and we must put ourselves in the position of the American people, an American people who have been lied to, and American people who feel they have been had, an American people who have sacrificed sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers, very personal this war is, and I think we need to stop and look at it from those who are doing it, who are making the ultimate sacrifice, and without any question our men and women in the military have done an extraordinary job.

My point is how much more? How much more sacrifice is called for? Clearly, this is still open-ended, clearly it is. The definition as we stay there until the job is done. What is that job? A job that has shifted like the shifting sands. 9/11 happened, and the cry from out of the White House immediately was this: “Iraq is going to have to pay for this.” That is the premise that was started down this path, a path that we know about intelligence and all of that that has receded.

So Mr. Chairman, I think that as we look at this there are many who doubt or feel that we may need to wait until September and the report by General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker is released, but this is, to me, a bit like standing on the banks of the river knee-deep and rising water, and keeping your fingers crossed that the weatherman says it will stop raining when we have no plan at all to head for higher ground, we have no plan at all for how to deal with what is essentially the civil war.

I hope that by September this Congress has come to that conclusion, that the wrong thing and the wrong place for us to be and doing is to have our precious young men and women in the midst of a civil war that—

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman’s time has expired.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. My neighbor and distinguished colleague from South Carolina, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is an honor to be here with you and I appreciate the hearing today.

I have visited Iraq seven times, Afghanistan three times. I served 31 years in the National Guard of South Carolina. I have a great appreciation for our military. I have got four sons serving in the military. My oldest son served for a year in Iraq. I am very proud of what the military is doing. I have met with General Petraeus. I was with him Memorial Day, and I sincerely want to let our military change course every day, which is what they are doing, to face an enemy that we must face overseas or indeed we will face them here again in the streets of the United States.

Thank you again for what you will be presenting today.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Costa.

Mr. COSTA. I, too, Mr. Chairman, want to thank you for this continuing effort to ensure that all Members of Congress have an opportunity to weigh in. Obviously, we are not short of any opinions on this matter, but I am looking forward to the witnesses' testimony, and I would like you to focus, I think, on what many of us are questioning regardless of how you feel about the surge, and I told Secretary of State Rice when she testified here several months ago that I was doubtful on the success of the surge, but for all the right reasons wanted it to be successful, and I think we all do.

But my question to her that I would like you to follow up on, the gentleman who are testifying today, is in the event that it falls short of our expectations, what is our Plan B in terms of the geopolitics for the area?

We keep throwing around terms here that I think is lacking for the American public in terms of winning this war. I would like to define success, and I think we need to have a thorough discussion as to what successful stability in the region is as opposed to winning and losing. I mean we all know there is not an army to defeat there; there is not a navy to sink. So how do we define success in the geo-politics of the region in your testimony? That is what I will be looking for, and look forward to the testimony.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you.

My friend from Indiana, Mr. Burton.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to associate myself with the remarks of Mr. Wilson.

You know, Mr. Chairman, General Petraeus, I think we all agree, is a man who is going to shoot from the shoulder and tell us exactly what the situation is. We have given him and our military the money and the charge to make some great progress with the surge by September, and what I can't understand, Mr. Chairman, is why we are having these hearings, which many are using as a vehicle to attack what we are doing over there, before we have had a report from General Petraeus.

Sometimes I wonder if some people are more concerned about politics than about victory. We really need, in my opinion, Mr. Chairman, to give our military and give General Petraeus a little bit of time, as we said we were going to do until September, and then he is going to report to us, and we will know without any doubt whether the surge is working, whether we have made progress or have we not, and at that point I am sure General Petraeus is going to give us some advice and show some leadership in telling us what he thinks needs to be done then. But to be pre-

ceding that with these hearings, which turn into an anti-Iraq policy, I think is counterproductive.

I yield back my time.

Chairman LANTOS. I thank my friend from Indiana. Let me just mention with great respect that I very much doubt that Senator Lugar, the Ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is attempting to undermine this Republican administration. I believe he is proposing what he views as a more rational policy.

The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Sires.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Chairman, I don't have a statement, but I want to thank you for having all these hearings. It certainly is very informative, and I look forward to the statements by the guests today. Thank you very much.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Paul of Texas.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have a prepared statement either, but just one comment.

I do appreciate you holding these hearings. I think it is sort of ironic that there is a question asked: Is the escalation working? I think if you pay attention to the news, I think the evidence is pretty clear, but most of you know that I have opposed that war for a long, long time starting in 1998, pointing out the shortcomings of our foreign policy. So hopefully one day we will wake up and realize that interventionism isn't the best form of foreign policy, and that we consider a pro-American foreign policy where we tend to mind our business a lot more, and not pretend that we can maintain an empire, which is bankrupting this country.

So although I don't expect too many people to listen to my views, and that we will change our policy, but I think soon financially we will not be able to afford the empire that we have developed, and that is what has happened to all empires in the past, that is what has happened recently to the Soviet empire. The collapsed financially. So I think it would be much wiser for us to reconsider the foreign policy that we once held where we were friends with all countries, traded with countries, tried to set standards but not to force our views on other people, and I yield back.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you.

The gentlelady from Texas, Sheila Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Good morning to the witnesses. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for insisting on the responsibilities of this Congress, and that is to have distinctive oversight.

From my perspective, the surge has collapsed in the bloodshed of confusion, and I am grateful, General Batiste, that you are here for the analytical aspect of this question. I am likewise grateful that you have thoughtfully analyzed where we are. I notice that there are words flowing through your testimony "strategic focus."

To my colleagues, I personally believe that we have no option but to review where we are. For some of us, we are now more days overdue of getting out than days staying in. We are at the midnight hour and the clock is ticking. For some in America, the clock has run out tragically, and I think there are ways, as my distinguished from California raised the question, there are ways of asking the question of success, and I would simply say this as I close, refer my colleagues to legislation that I have written, declare a

military success for our soldiers are successful, and begin to announce a diplomatic strategic focus, General Batiste, that will ensure success and bring our soldiers home, and let us do it now.

I thank the distinguished chairman and ranking member, and I yield back.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Barrett of South Carolina.

Mr. BARRETT. No statement.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

We are delighted to have three distinguished witnesses today who are extremely well informed on the war in Iraq. Professor Cordesman is one of our most prominent military analysts. Viewers around the country have seen him on *ABC News*, among many others, analyzing conflicts from the first Gulf War to Kosova to Afghanistan and to the Iraq war. He is senior strategist at the highly-respected Center for Strategic and International Studies, the author of more than 20 significant books. His long career in the service of our country includes work for the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the Department of Energy.

General John Batiste served our country with great distinction as a United States Army officer for over three decades. His brigade supported both Desert Shield and Desert Storm in the first Gulf War. He subsequently commanded a brigade that completed the all-important I Formation in Bosnia in 1995. General Batiste, now retired from active duty, can give us a firsthand view of Iraq where he commanded a division in 2004 and 2005.

Dr. Frederick Kagan is a resident scholar in defense and security policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute. He is the author of a very important book, *Choosing Victory: A Plan for Success in Iraq*, a report by the Iraq Planning Group at the American Enterprise Institute. He was previously professor of military history at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and has written frequently on defense and military policy.

We are delighted to have all three of our distinguished witnesses. Professor Cordesman, we will start with you. The floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF MR. ANTHONY H. CORDESMAN, ARLEIGH A. BURKE CHAIR, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Mr. CORDESMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, members of the committee for the opportunity to testify. I have a formal statement which I would request be written into the record.

Chairman LANTOS. Without objection.

Mr. CORDESMAN. And I have also gone through the latest Department of Defense report on security and stability and provided a detailed critique of that, which I would also ask be included in the record.

Chairman LANTOS. Without objection.

Mr. CORDESMAN. But I am not going to really address either of these formal statements. The committee has made many of its questions clear, and let me just briefly address a few of these.

One of the most important issues, and no amount of partisanship can really alter this fact, is that regardless of what happens in September, if you wish to have success in Iraq, you must have an adaptive, flexible strategy and you must be willing to spend at

least several years into the next administration, and that strategy must have a military dimension, it must continue to have a political dimension, and it must revitalize the economic dimension.

The reality is that in these cases historically, even without a major counterinsurgency campaign, it takes between 10 and 15 years to go from the kind of status we have in Iraq to the kind of stability we would like to see. There are many intermediate definitions of security and stability, and hopefully some of them could be done in 2010, 2012 or beyond. But if people are not willing to accept that, and there are real questions as to whether the American people are, the reality is it will not matter what General Petraeus says in September, and one of the most disturbing aspects of what I have seen throughout our campaign in Iraq is the failure to admit the risks, the time, and the cost involved, and to present credible plans for military, political and economic action.

General Petraeus has made the point, so has Ambassador Crocker, so has everyone else, it will not matter if we succeed in the surge if we do not have political success and success in consensus. The fact is that even in the stability report we have not made significant progress in any area.

The caution I would give is progress is not impossible, but progress will be in Iraqi time and not in American time. I would also say to the committee quite frankly, we did not give the Iraqis an opportunity. We gave them an unworkable electoral system. We gave them a dangerous constitutional exercise which is in many ways has paralyzed consensus, and we have not shown that we can help them fix this structure in workable terms. If we can't, as in Vietnam and other conflicts, tactical victory, even strategic victory over the counterinsurgency, will not produce the results we need.

We have an economic dimension of equal importance. This committee has held testimony on many occasions to look at this. I would ask any member of the committee to check the record. Can they remember one statement from the Corps of Engineers or USAID about progress in Iraq that was ever accurate, honest or reflected the real world metrics of economic progress?

As you pointed out, Mr. Chairman, I have spent a great deal of time in the U.S. Government. I cannot remember in my lifetime a more consistent dishonesty as to how money is being spent and what it is accomplishing than I have seen come out of USAID and the Corps of Engineers. The money, however, is now virtually gone. The supplemental you voted does not provide for a future. If we are to make the economic dimension work, you in the Congress and the American people must be willing to accept the realities and push forward.

On the military dimension in my written statement what I see today is not so far a working strategy. That is not a matter of how many brigades we have. It is simply of the brigades we do have are being dispersed too broadly. We are pushing insurgents around rather than defeating them. We are making uncertain allies. But the truth is that September is too soon.

An honest assessment of the Iraqi police, of the Iraqi army, tells you that if you wish to really make this work, you have to be patient enough to at least test this well into 2008. That may well be unacceptable. If we had an accurate picture of the problems in the

Iraq police, we would realize we do not have the force to hold. We have a force at best to win.

If we look at the Iraqi army, I see very real progress, but it bears no resemblance to the progress in unclassified reporting, which, frankly, is almost nonsensical in much of its content. I would invite you to look at the map in that report of the governorates we have supposedly transferred responsibility to the Iraqis in. In four of those providences in the south, the Iraqi army is not really present except to the extent we have limited battalion elements, and the Iraqi police are not operating effectively in one city. That doesn't mean we can't do this over time, but Iraqi time and real world time are not in any sense the time that people are talking about.

Let me go on to a few of the general questions. People will attempt to predict the outcome in Iraq and say there will be a bloody civil war or there won't if we withdraw precipitously. I would just remember or remind many members of the committee who went through the same history course as I did that no historian has ever shown competence in predicting the outcome of civil war in revolutions.

Carlyle's history of the French Revolution has been a model of the inability of scholars, experts and historians to make those predictions. One of us will be right, but for the same reason people win at roulette, because we are lucky.

The problem is that means we can't have a single plan. You hear about Plan A, you hear about Plan B. We have to react to Plan I, and if Plan I, what the Iraqis do turns into a bloodbath and we have moved out precipitously and recklessly do we go back in? Do we sit and watch at the margins?

We have to, I think, really not look at the kind of document you referenced, Mr. Chairman, earlier on. That requires more than prophecy. It requires translating prophecy into practical detailed plans, something which neither the New or Old Testament reflects in terms of somewhat higher levels of prediction. I would be very, very careful about rushing out, just as I would be very careful about accepting many of the plans we have today.

Two other points in conclusion.

In the case of Iran, I think it is almost inevitable that Iran, which has vast influence over the political parties that dominate a Shiite-dominated government, will play a major role regardless of what happens. If we move out in ways which leave too weak a structure, that remaining government and many of the forces we train today and the police are going to necessarily become dependent on Iran just as the Kurds will become dependent on us, and the Sunnis will become dependent on our neighbors.

We have to have a flexible adaptive way of looking at that. We have to prepare and work with moderate states in this region, not simply concentrate on Iraq.

And as for a last point, I have to say that one of the most dangerous statements I have heard made is that this is the center of al-Qaeda's operations. It is not. Al-Qaeda does not have a center. Al-Qaeda operates in Pakistan. Al-Qaeda operates in Afghanistan. It has distributed networks and affiliates in Algeria. It has ties, awkward as they are, to Hamas. It operates in Lebanon. Whatever happens we have to deal with not only al-Qaeda but the two other

major Islamists, Sunni, Neo-Salafi elements operating in Iraq, and some 30 groups claim to identify themselves there.

We are talking about a network and structure which is international in character which will be a major threat whether we win or lose in Iraq, and above all we need to stop using the term “al-Qaeda.” Most of these groups are affiliated, loosely at best, with al-Qaeda. They are not under its direction. Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia was a Zuqari movement which originated without any ties to al-Qaeda under a leader who never got along with bin Laden until it became politically convenient.

The committee must look beyond the name and it must look beyond Iraq. This is a very real continuing threat, and we need to recognize that the rhetoric about Iraq being the center for al-Qaeda bears no relation whatsoever to the reality on the ground.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cordesman and material submitted for the record follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. ANTHONY H. CORDESMAN, ARLEIGH A. BURKE CHAIR,
CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Mr. Chairman, let me begin by thanking you, the ranking member, and the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. I have prepared a formal review of the Department of Defense’s latest report on the surge and overall progress in Iraq to date, and I request that it be included in the record.

More broadly, there are many elements of the current US campaign in Iraq that are impressive. The US military has steadily shifted from a force oriented towards conventional war to one that can also fight counterinsurgency campaigns. It has greatly improved its tactical, intelligence, and targeting skills to attack dispersed networks of insurgents like the Sunni Islamist extremists that include Al Qaeda’s various affiliates. It has shown it can win tactical battles with a surprisingly low ratio of forces to opponents.

Yet, it is all too clear that the US, its Coalition allies, and the Iraqi government cannot win any form of security and stability if insurgent movements can keep large areas of Iraq unstable and constantly provoke Iraq’s civil conflicts. Tactical success is an important element of victory.

TACTICAL VICTORY OR STRETCHING TOO THIN AND A NEW FORM OF “WHACK A MOLE?”

The present campaign in Iraq may be a tactical success, but there are serious issues regarding its strategic value. One key problem was raised during the debate over the surge strategy before President Bush adopted it and announced it in January 2007. It was always clear that an operation in Baghdad would simply lead many insurgents to leave the city and operate elsewhere and that most Sunni militias might simply stand down, let the US-led forces defeat the insurgents, watch a Shi’ite dominated government gain power, and resurface once the US was gone. Baghdad was important. It never made sense to see it as a decisive battlefield or center of gravity.

This is now all too clear even in a narrow military sense. The US is having to expand its counterinsurgency operations broadly outside Baghdad in ways that can steadily disperse limited US and combat-capable Iraqi military forces. Baghdad is still only 30–40% secured, but the fighting not only is dispersing limited US forces into the Baghdad ring cities, but into a troubled zone of provinces ranging from Anbar to Diyala. The US has learned it cannot ignore growing Shi’ite tensions and Iranian pressure in the south, and still faces serious potential problems with Arab-Kurdish tensions in the north.

It is too early to judge what is happening in Baquba, and the use of far more intense combat tactics coupled to broader efforts to seal and secure urban areas after tactical victories may have a more lasting effect. There is, however, an obvious risk that the US will simply end up playing “Whack a mole” on a steadily rising scale.

So far, the claims of success have often been tenuous to meaningless. As of June 23rd, MNF–I claimed that, “at least 55 al-Qaeda operatives have been killed, 23 have been detained, 16 weapons caches have been discovered, 28 improvised explosive devices have been destroyed and 12 booby-trapped structures have been destroyed.” These figures are far too low to matter.

Limited tactical successes really don't matter unless such casualties include substantial cadres of leaders and experts that cannot be easily and rapidly replaced. The insurgents can simply disperse, stand down, and regroup. The domestic political realities in the US also make it clear that unless the US is successfully taking out cadres and structure, the US is now so sensitive to US casualties that tactical victories can be the same kind of political and strategic defeat that occurred in Vietnam.

This risk is all too clear from the recent statements of Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the second-ranking American commander in Iraq. If, as the general said on June 22nd, some 80 percent of the top Qa'ida leaders in the city fled before the American-led offensive began, it is not clear that it matters if "80 percent" of the recruits who were there when the offensive remained in the western half of the city. It also is pointless to call the leaders and cadres who leave "cowards." Iraqis are not foolish and they understand that such actions are an inevitable insurgent reaction to US military superiority and a key element of asymmetric warfare.

Not only have such estimates of "stay behinds" been badly exaggerated in past fighting, along with the capacity to keep them from infiltrating out or hiding, it is all too easy to move on to the next area and city and recruit more, and exploit the hostility following urban combat operations and large-scale detainments. Moreover, no major US-led or Iraqi operation will ever take place without enough signs, leaks, and infiltration to provide leaders and cadres with advanced warning.

THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL CONCILIATION

The tactical problem, and stretching a limited pool of US forces too thin, is also only part of the problem. As both General Petraeus and Secretary Gates have made clear, none of this matters unless the Iraqis can move towards political conciliation—or at least a relatively stable form of coexistence. So far, there is only a limited promise of potential legal action by the government.

If anything, the use of Sunni tribes in the West has created new forms of Sunni vs. Shi'ite polarization, Shi'ite on Shi'ite fighting and feuding has gotten much worse in the south and central government, and the uncertainties over oil and a regional referendum on federalism in the north are increasing Kurdish, Arab, and Turcoman tensions.

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE BRIDGE BETWEEN TACTICAL VICTORY AND LASTING STRATEGIC IMPACT

There also is the problem of creating an effective bridge between tactical victory and lasting strategic impact even if political conciliation does move forward, and so far the Coalition has been virtually silent on progress in Baghdad, much less how such progress can be made in the new fighting outside it. Giving tactical victories lasting meaning requires the following additional elements:

1. *Iraqi Army forces must begin to take over meaning operations without US embeds and US partner units, and dependence on US reinforcement and support.* There does seem to be increasing Iraqi Army capability here, but Coalition reporting does not provide a meaningful picture of progress—merely grossly inflated figures on areas of responsibility and total numbers of battalions in the lead.
2. *Iraqi police and local security forces must establishing a lasting security presence in the areas where tactical victories are won, and do so credibly in ways that give ordinary Iraqis security.* There can be no "win" without "hold." So far, the US has made claim after claim to have secured cities after winning tactical battles to control them, and has never actually established lasting security in even one of them. The most critical problem has been the lack of active, combat-capable police, without corruption and sectarian and ethnic ties. Falluja and Samara are only the most obvious cases of such failures. Coalition reporting so far talks about the number of police posts established or with US embeds. It has not said a word about the ability provide lasting security using Iraqi police in parts of Baghdad or anywhere else. It also has not talked about the ability to support police efforts with an effective local criminal justice and court system or to screen detainees in ways that do not breed local hostility.

The Coalition also needs to start talking about who actually does provide local security, and stop treating militias, local security forces, and police hired locally without Coalition training, as if it was always hostile or did not exist. In the real world, these forces and not the "trained and equipped" police are the real local security force in most of Iraq. There has to be a credible plan to use, absorb, or contain them.

3. *The Iraqi government must follow-up security with a meaningful presence and by providing steady improvements in services.* “Winning hearts and minds” doesn’t come from public information campaigns and propaganda. It comes from providing real security for ordinary Iraqis, and showing the government cares, is present, and can steadily improve services. Once again, promise after promise has been made in past campaigns, and the central government has not yet shown it can follow up in even a single case. If this is happening even in the “secured” areas of Baghdad, no one has yet said so. How it can happen in Diyala or other high threat areas is even unclear.
4. *There must also be effective local government.* The liberation of various areas often has seen the emergence of local leaders willing to work with the Coalition—although often with little faith in, or ties to, the central government. In most cases, however, they have become targets, and the effort has broken down in local faction disputes or because of a lack of effective government support and problems in Coalition civil affairs efforts. Once again, if there is progress in creating stable, survivable, effective local government; none of the details are clear.
5. *There has to be economic aid and progress.* Iraqis have to give priority to physical security and key services, but unemployment, underemployment, and shut or failed businesses affect some 60% or more of Iraqis nationally and the figures are even higher in high threat and combat areas. The strategy President Bush advanced in January 2007 advanced proposals for accomplishing such an effort in Baghdad. Once again, there has been no meaningful Coalition reporting on broad progress in such efforts in the secured areas of Baghdad, and past promises such aid would be provided in “liberated” cities like Samara and Falluja were not kept.
6. *There must be an end to sectarian and ethnic cleansing and displacement.* There is no near and perhaps midterm answer to suicide bombings and atrocities, to attacks on sacred shrines and critical facilities. No mix of security forces can stop even small cadres of extremists from occasional successes. No tactical victory has meaning, however, unless Iraqis can be secure in neighborhoods and areas where they are in the minority, and can reach across ethnic and sectarian lines and barriers in ordinary life.

One of the greatest single failures of the current approach to fighting in Iraq is that it does not track sectarian and ethnic separation and displacement and make ending this on a local and national level at least as important as halting major attacks and killings. It may take years to make Iraqis secure from Islamist extremists and the worst elements of Shi’ite gangs and militias. There can be no meaningful tactical success, however, unless Iraqis can be safe from their own neighbors and begin to lead ordinary lives in their own neighborhoods.

METRICS, BENCHMARKS, AND REAL VICTORY

The late Colonel Harry Sommers summed up the US defeat in Vietnam in a brief exchange he had with a North Vietnamese officer after the war. Sommers pointed out that the US had won virtually every tactical encounter with both the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces. The Vietnamese officer replied, “Yes, but this was irrelevant.”

The new US Army manual on counterinsurgency, which is the result of an effort led by General Petraeus recognizes this reality, and virtually all of the points made above. It also may well be unfair to judge progress in Baghdad even in September, much less now. Historically, any campaign that has had to begin with as weak a foundation as the surge strategy began with took at least a year to seriously take hold and often several years. An Iraq in political turmoil, in local economic collapse, and without security even for senior officials and members of parliament, will not move quickly—especially in a Baghdad summer.

The fact remains, however, that tactical success will remain largely meaningless in Baghdad, Baquba, the other areas covered by Operation Ripper, and in Iraq as a whole unless it can be linked to political conciliation and progress in the other six critical elements of victory listed above. The US team in Iraq and Bush Administration need to show the American people and the Congress that they understand this, are acting on the basis of these realities, have sound plans, and are making real progress. “Spinning” the importance of tactical success does not do this.

At the same time, both the media and outside analysts need to focus far more on the full range of actions it takes to win, and do so with patience and objectivity. *No strategy or campaign could possibly achieve significant success in all of these elements by this fall, or even ensure a successful start.* It is reasonable to demand cred-

ible plans and transparent and meaningful reporting—something that the Administration has not yet provided in a single critical area.

It is not reasonable to demand instant progress or focus solely on the level of US troops in Iraq or casualties in the fighting. It should also be clear from the above list that US military tactical victories are almost certain to be meaningless if the US political system cannot adapt to the reality that broad success—albeit with what may be much lower US troop levels—will require an effort that extends at least several years in to the next Administration and which cannot take place without bipartisan support. The odds are bad enough given the problems in Iraq; they are hopeless if the political environment in the US offers no hope of the necessary time and bipartisanship.

STILL LOSING? THE JUNE 2007 EDITION OF “MEASURING STABILITY IN IRAQ”

ANTHONY H. CORDESMAN

The latest Department of Defense report on “Measuring Stability in Iraq” attempts to put a bad situation in a favorable light. It does not disguise many of the problems involved, but it does attempt to defend the strategy presented by President Bush in January 2007 in ways that sometimes present serious problems. More broadly, it reveals that the President’s strategy is not working in any critical dimension.

FIGHTING THE WRONG WAR IN A NATION OF CIVIL WARS

Part of the problem is that the US is trying to fight the wrong “war.” The US does need to fight a serious counterinsurgency campaign, but this seems to be focused far too narrowly on both Al Qaeda, which is only one Sunni Islamist extremist movement, and on the most radical elements of the Sadr militia. The US does not have an effective strategy or the operational capability to deal with the broader problem of armed nation-building, or with a widening pattern of civil conflicts.

Iraq’s Civil Wars

As Secretary Gates has noted, these include a complex mix of civil conflicts, rather than a conventional civil war:

- Sunni Islamist extremist groups, of which Al Qaeda is the most visible. These groups openly seek to provoke a civil war between Arab Sunni and Shi’ite as part of a broader struggle for Iraq and Islam.
- Sunni versus Sunni struggles, including Sunni tribal elements in Anbar and elsewhere fighting against dominance by Al Qaeda and other Islamist groups, but which do not have any clear alignment with the national government.
- Iraqi Sunnis versus Iraqi Shi’ites, a growing sectarian struggle mixing violence and other forms of sectarian cleansing and displacement. The growth of Shi’ite militias and death squads, their reprisals against Sunni extremist attacks, and the polarization of the government and security forces in ways that have boosted Shi’ite militia power have made these worse. So has the lack of any strong, cohesive Sunni political force with a broad popular following.
- A Kurdish struggle for autonomy and control of the north, displacing Iraqi Arabs, Turcomans, and other minorities, and seeking control of Kirkuk, Iraq’s northern oil resources, and the territory along the ethnic fault line in the north extending westward towards Mosul. Increased violence by displaced Sunni insurgents—including Al Qaeda—against Iraqi Kurdish civilians and politicians, concentrated in Mosul.
- Shi’ite versus Shi’ite power struggles in the south with a sometimes violent power struggle between the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council (SIIC, formerly SCIRI), and the Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS), and clashes between their militias. Clashes between the OMS and the governing Fadilah Party in Basrah increasing intra-Shi’a violence in the south. This struggle is complicated by local efforts to “cleanse” Sunnis and other minorities, struggles for control of shrines, and differences over the possible creation of Shi’ite regional political structures.
- Within these struggles is a nascent political struggle over the role of religion in society, the nature of the rule of law, and the nature of human rights. This already is an additional source of sporadic violence and “cleansing,” largely

in forms that have pushed much of Iraq's professional class out of the country and intimidated or displaced its secular core from power.

- Crime and local violence add another dimension, fueled by desperation. They overlap and interact with the other forms of civil conflict, corrupt the government and security forces, and help block aid and development efforts.

Iraq may not be in a civil war in any classic sense, but it is clearly in a state of civil wars. Public opinion polls by ABC/USAToday, BBC/ARD and ORB show that the vast majority of Iraqis do not regard the central government as effective, and see Coalition forces and Iraqi militias as being as much a threat as the Sunni Islamist extremists.

Moreover, the economic and social impacts of war, sanctions, and/or political repression over the 33 year period from 1970 to 2003, coupled with four years of failed efforts at nation-building by the US and Coalition have left Iraqis without economic development or sound infrastructure, as well as without physical security.

Not Counterinsurgency but Armed Nation-Building

It has long been clear that no amount of military action or tactical victory could substitute for political success and conciliation, effective governance, economic progress and development, and a rule of law. Victory in Iraq requires success in armed nation-building—a process that can extend over a decade or more—not simply the defeat of the most violent elements in an insurgency. In fact, efforts to bring local security in a narrow area like Baghdad have almost certainly done more harm than good. They have focused too many resources on one limited task and created a “center of gravity” that cannot have major importance without a far more effective national government and progress towards national conciliation.

Senior US commanders have repeatedly made these points but Iraq's political leadership has so far failed to react at anything like the pace and depth required to have an impact on the nation's civil conflicts. To the extent that the Coalition has the resources it needs to win, these have been progressively concentrated around the counterinsurgency effort against Al Qa'ida, leaving the other elements of nation-building and civil conflict without the resources needed to succeed. Both the Administration and Congress have sought impossible time scales for success in different ways, without admitting that the US has made critical political and economic mistakes which have greatly exacerbated Iraq's problems, tensions and conflicts.

The US is often the first to call for transparency and integrity in the reporting of other governments. It has never provided transparency or integrity in its reporting on the war in Iraq. It has downplayed the growth of the insurgency and other civil conflicts. It exaggerated progress in the development of Iraqi forces, and has reported meaningless macroeconomic figures claiming “progress” in the face of steadily deteriorating economic conditions for most Iraqis outside the Kurdish security zone, and does so in the face of almost incredible incompetence by USAID and the Corps of Engineers.

A Critical Lack of US Official Transparency and Integrity

Perhaps most significantly, the US government has never openly discussed or analyzed its failures in not planning for stability operations or conflict termination, in creating an electoral process that polarized Iraqi politics around inexperienced sectarian and ethnic leaders and parties, and in creating a constitution that helped divide the nation without resolving any of the key issues it attempted to address. The same is true of US actions that blocked local and regional elections, allowed de-Ba'athification to remove many of the nation's most competent secular and nationalist leaders and professionals from power, and failed to act on plans to disband the militias before transferring power from the CPA.

The US took years to create an effective effort to develop Iraqi military forces, and still lacks convincing plans for the development of national police and criminal justice institutions. It has not developed either effective strategies for aid and economic development, effective ways of carrying out its aid efforts, and has not been able to eliminate constant internal feuding over how to run the aid effort and coordinate Department of Defense programs with those of the Department of State and other agencies.

This does not mean that the June 2007 Edition of “Measuring Stability in Iraq” does not have more transparency and integrity than most of the earlier reporting on developments in Iraq. It does mean that it omits many key problem areas or underplays them. It also “spins” real progress or potential progress in many areas, implying that what will really take years of continued and risky effort is already moving towards success. In particular, it fails to properly address the trends and scale of Iraq's civil conflicts and the nature of its problems in economics and govern-

ance, and still reports almost meaningless metrics on the development of Iraqi Security forces.

It seems likely that, in retrospect, this lack of transparency and integrity will come back to haunt the US. More honesty, objective self-criticism, serious effort to develop credible strategies and operational plans might well have prevented all of Iraq's current civil conflicts and problems from reaching anything like their current scale. In fact, if the US loses in Iraq—as seems all too possible—its primary enemy will not have been Al Qa'ida, but the US government.

What Is In The June 2007 Report

There are enough indicators in the June 2007 report, however, to make it all too clear that the US is not making anything like the overall progress it needs to implement the President's strategy. Moreover, it is all too clear that the most important issue is not the "Plan A" of the Bush Administration, or any "Plan B" from Congress, but the sheer lack of any meaningful Iraqi political development of a "Plan I" for political conciliation. As in Vietnam, the US can win virtually every tactical encounter. As in Vietnam, this is irrelevant without political unity, effective governance, and a nationalist ideology with more real world impact than its extremist, sectarian, and ethnic competition.

Failures in Conciliation and Governance

In broad terms, the June report shows "little progress" towards achieving political conciliation (p.3). Despite US political pressure to effect change, DOD reported that Iraqi reconciliation "remains a serious unfulfilled objective" (p. 4). The report does identify the following key problems that still hinder positive political development:

- No substantive progress in political conciliation, and particularly real world, practical progress that would motivate Iraqis to change their behavior, reduce the level of civil conflict, and ease the strain on US and Iraqi forces. A resolution on an oil/hydrocarbon law has been blocked by Kurds in parliament, the Constitution still does not address fundamental concerns of power and revenue sharing, and progress on a de-Baathification policy remains stalled. A law guiding provincial elections was crafted but remains in the formative stages.
- No serious progress in creating an effective central government, and effective, elected regional and local governments. The central government still cannot function effectively in many key ministries, provides few or no services or presence in much of the country, and has yet to demonstrate that it can spend its budget effectively on economic development and aid.
- Local elections remain an unscheduled subject of debate. In 2006, the government used only 22% of its capital investment budget (in ways on which there is no reporting).
- Institutional weakness in criminal courts, diminishing prospects for an effective rule of law or judicial system or political accountability. Problems of low conviction rates and intimidation of judges were addressed but have yet to be resolved.
- Lack of legitimacy and decreased power of Prime Minister Maliki's government. As governance devolves to the local or militia level, and as rival parliamentary factions assert power, Maliki grows increasingly isolated and ineffective in implementing national reconciliation.
- Systemic corruption across many ministries reinforcing sectarian rather than national politics.

US aid programs are now better focused and improving in many areas affecting good governance, but they remain small in scale relative to the problems involved, are largely in their preliminary stages, and will take years to implement if Iraq can move towards conciliation. It is also critical to understand that passing laws is only a first step towards progress, and will have limited or no impact until Iraqi factions and the Iraqi people see that passing laws means practical action. This is particularly true because of the broad perception that the government is Shi'ite and factionally dominated, as well as corrupt. It is further reinforced by the lack of an effective central government presence in the field, the lack of proper services, the lack of progress in creating effective and legitimate local government, and the lack of a meaningful criminal justice system.

One of the most dangerous aspects of US perceptions of "benchmarks" is that so many perceptions are tied to action in passing laws. Conciliation requires actual sharing of power, money, land and future resources. It requires tangible action to build meaningful trust and the details and honesty of implementation will be crit-

ical. This is going to take more time than many Americans seem to understand or be willing to accept.

Failures in Security

The US focus on securing Baghdad and Al Qa'ida has always had serious problems. So far, it is unclear that this aspect of the surge has done anything other than disperse violence to other areas without offering success in Baghdad. The more critical question is what happens if the US does succeed in Baghdad. Any such victory is of limited tactical value at best without major progress in conciliation and in dealing with the conflicts outside the city.

- Security in Baghdad is making slow, and potentially tenuous, progress. Lt. Gen. Odierno said on June 17 that “40 percent is really very safe on a routine bases,” adding that about 30 percent lacked control and another 30% regularly had a “high level of violence.” According to a post-operation report put out by commanders in Baghdad, at the end of May, 156 neighborhoods in Baghdad were under the “disrupt” category, meaning that it was possible to keep insurgents off balance until full military presence was established. These areas include Sadr City. 155 neighborhoods at that time fell into the “clear” category,” in which the military raided buildings and homes, block by block, to look for weapons and fighters. 128 neighborhoods fell into the “control” phase,” meaning that U.S. and Iraqi forces were able to keep insurgents out and protect the population. Only eighteen neighborhoods fell into the “retain” phase, which relied heavily on Iraqi security forces to ensure that the area remained secure.
- Baghdad has not emerged as a meaningful “center of gravity” where even much broader success would guarantee reductions in the overall national pattern of civil conflict. Saying Coalition-reported murders in Baghdad “dropped 51% as militia activity was disrupted by security operations” ignores the fact that the militias have simply stood aside while Coalition and ISF forces have struck at Sunni extremist groups, and the militias can easily exploit such victories once the Coalition is not present.
- There were signs that the troop surge may have caused a shift in insurgent strategy, without decreasing insurgent activity. The increased presence of security forces in Baghdad made large-scale attacks in public places more difficult to carry out. In late May and early June, a drop in car bombings and mass-casualty explosions in civilian areas coincided with a rise in attacks targeting bridges and security facilities. The number of Iraqi civilians killed in mass-casualty bombings fell from 634 in April to 325 in May, according to the Brookings Institute, while high-profile attacks, specifically targeting bridges, became more prevalent. Attacks on police stations, checkpoints and neighborhood combat outposts also occurred more frequently during this time period. U.S. military spokesman Lt. Col. Christopher Garver said, “The car bombs you see in Baghdad now are at police checkpoints as opposed to the intended targets like markets . . . where there are a lot of people congregating.”
- The report provides little real data on the effectiveness of the Iraqi Army forces deployed to Baghdad other than the fact they deployed, the impact of creating joint security stations, or the role of the retrained National Police Brigades. Reference is made to only two effective National Police battalions. The report notes that the JAM remains in control of Sadr City, and elements have left the city rather than been disbanded. The fact that “AQI maintained the ability to conduct infrequent, high-profile, mass casualty attacks in Baghdad” also indicates that the Baghdad security plan has fallen short of target goals.
- Coalition forces have had to re-clear areas that ISF forces have failed to “hold.” Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl, a spokesman for the U.S military in Baghdad, said, “One of our planning assumptions was that the Iraqi security forces would be able to hold [territory] in all areas, and we are finding that is not always the case . . . We are having to go back in and re-clear some areas.” Iraqi security forces also were slower than expected in making progress in some cases. Most Iraqi battalions came to Baghdad without full manpower. In addition, their effectiveness was compromised by a program that rotates units out of Baghdad and back to their home regions every ninety days.
- The rise of local Sunni opposition to Al Qa'ida in Al Anbar is helpful, but does not mean such tribal groups will work with or support the national government on a sustained basis. The tribal cooperation network that the report mentions is currently unstable at best. Diyala, Ninewa, and “ring” cities

around Baghdad are all growing problems, as is intra-Shi'ite violence and sectarian displacement. The deterioration of the security situation in Mosul, and around it, is also a source of major concern. AQI also is now active in four provinces that effectively divide the country in half—Baghdad, Salah ad-Din, Anbar, and Diyala.

- Statistics that say attacks in Anbar have dropped 34% since December (35 per day to 26 per day), and are at a two-year low in Ramadi, largely reflect the shift in violence to Diyala and in the pattern of attacks to fewer, very large, high-profile bombings. The graphs on page 23 of the report show a slight rise in average weekly attacks since Operation FAQ (Fard Al Qanoon, or “Enforcing the Law”) began in Baghdad, and in attacks targeting Iraqi civilians, Iraqi Security Forces, and Coalition forces. The same is true of the table on trends in total average daily casualties on page 24. These patterns have all grown worse in the weeks following the end of the reporting period. (May 4 2007).
- The report is ambiguous about the security situation in Kurdish areas, the role of the PKK and Ansar al-Sunnah, and avoids any discussion of Kurdish-Arab tensions in the area around Kirkuk and along the “ethnic fault line” between Kurds and Arabs. It also does not address Kurdish displacement due to the increased sectarian violence.
- The report mentions growing intra-Shi'ite tensions, particularly between the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council (SIIC, formerly SCIRI), and the Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS), and clashes between their militias, but does not talk about displacements in Shi'ite areas or the impact of British withdrawals and limits on the role of British forces.
- The decline in sectarian murders and incidents between December 2006 and the spring of 2007 *seems* statistically significant, but the trend may be reversing, and it is far from clear that it ever approached a meaningful national statistic. One report in the L.A. Times says that the number of bodies found in Baghdad dipped in April but then rose again in May. The numbers reported were 542 in March, 440 in April, and 743 in May. The report said that the monthly rate of suicide bombings was nearly double that in January. It also does not include displacements, kidnappings, threats, and intimidation—which are the major factors driving sectarian and ethnic violence in much of the country. Net gains in security were not achieved, as “the aggregate level of violence in Iraq remained relatively unchanged” and “similar to the previous reporting period.” (p.19)
- The approval of a militia demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) program may produce results in the future, but has not produced results to date. A DDR policy has only been verbally agreed to by Prime Minister Maliki and is not close to being executed.
- Slow progress is being made in creating a meaningful court system and some elements of a rule of law, but the efforts remain sharply inadequate and the national government and legal system have limited impact in much of the country.
- A major rise is taking place in detentions—which often serve as a breeding ground for new opponents to government. Detentions are now roughly 20% higher per month than before the surge, and facilities are overcrowded, inadequate, and unregulated. The number of Iraqi detainees nationwide escalated from 7,000 to 37,641 by March 2007. It is not possible to process this scale of detainees on a timely and efficient basis.
- The data on polls showing a temporary rise in Iraqi popular confidence in the government's ability to improve security (p. 25) are meaningless since the trend reversed the following month, reflected only a 2% improvement between December and April, and did not change the fact that no improvement took place in any combat or high risk province (p. 27). The polls also do not reflect local trends, and the polarization of different types of violence and perceptions by sect, ethnic group, and governorate—a problem that the maps on page 26 show is absolutely critical. As usual, the nature of the poll and full data on the poll are not reported, a major credibility problem since the report has cherry picked favorable results or interpretations out of context from past polls. (*US government reporting has no more right to fail to report in credible and well-defined terms than any other reporting.*)

Failures in Transferring Security and Developing Iraqi Forces

The US is making real progress in developing effective Iraqi Army forces, and reforming the National Police. The report, however, continues to grossly exaggerate the nature and scale of that progress:

The data on the transfer of security responsibility disguises the fact such transfers often do not bring security or give control to the central government. British cuts in Maysan Province were driven by local Shi'ite factions, and the other provinces under "Provincial Iraqi Control" are all Shi'ite provinces in the south where the ISF and central government have uncertain authority. The transfer of authority in the three Kurdish-dominated provinces will effectively raise more problems in terms of Kurdish separatism and tension with Iraqi Arabs. (p. 29)

- The fact that the US and other Coalition forces have transferred or closed 61 Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) out of 122 is not a measure of ISF competence, but rather US force cuts and shifts.
- The data on trained and equipped manpower (p. 30) remain a fundamentally dishonest measure of capability. There is no indication of how many such personnel remain in service, or are active in units. It is unclear that more than 65% of the 152,300 men in the MoD forces are actually present on a given day (p. 40), or that the figure is higher than 40–70% for the 194,200 men in the MoI forces (p. 31). Many of those present are not active—particularly in the MoI forces. The fact that estimates of 20% attrition per year in trained and equipped manpower are being reviewed is scarcely reassuring. (p. 31)
- Saying that the army has 100% of its critical equipment needs, and the police have 89%, ignores the fact that the equipment TO&Es are too light to really allow independent operations. Critical problems exist in equipment maintenance and availability in many units, and no reliable system for equipment accountability exists in many units. The report also concedes that combat loss and attrition may have removed a "significant portion" of equipment from the MOI, but does not address the role of corruption in equipment attrition or the inability to determine how much equipment has gone to hostile factions.
- There is no meaningful readiness data for the 101 Iraqi Army battalions in service (the total force now has 10 divisions, 36 brigades, and 112 battalions), and saying that 95 of these 101 battalions "have the lead in counterinsurgency operations in their areas of responsibility" is little short of absurd (p. 30–31). Almost all such truly combat active units are still heavily dependent on US embeds, Coalition partner units, outside supply, and outside artillery, armor, or air support in an emergency. Many have serious officer, NCO, and sectarian or ethnic problems. These problems were openly addressed in unclassified reporting down to the battalion level early in the postwar period, but have never been addressed since. The US has also abandoned its previous detailed readiness reporting in four different unclassified categories, and the report ignores the Transitional Readiness Assessments which the Department refuses to de-classify or even share with Congress.

The data on total Army force readiness, which includes strategic infrastructure battalions shows 89 battalions in the lead with Coalition enablers or fully independent, with no breakdown of which are of actual quality, combat experience, or readiness. A total of 27 more units are said to be capable of fighting side by side with Coalition Forces with no breakout of which units actually have fought or their readiness. A total of 43 battalions are said to be unready, with no indication of what units are involved. There is no explanation of why these data on page 41 differ from those on pages 30–31.

- The sectarian and ethnic divisions in the military are not addressed, nor are the risks of splits within the forces if civil conflicts divide the country. Efforts to strengthen the role of Sunnis and create more balanced and truly national forces are not addressed in any meaningful way and seem to have failed. This failure to address sectarian, ethnic, tribal, and local differences applies to the entire analysis of the ISF, and is particularly disturbing when the real-world meaning of transfer of responsibility is to create sectarian and ethnic power centers with little or uncertain allegiance to the central government.
- Real progress does seem to be taking place in the reform of the National Police but saying that 27 National Police battalions are operational, and seven can lead operations with Coalition support, but "none is assigned the lead in a specific AOR" is a polite way of saying these units still have uncertain reliability and are still a potential source of Shi'ite death squads and abuses.

There is no clear plan or schedule for creating a fully effective National Police force.

- The data on police readiness says nothing about capability assessments or the result of PTT monitoring efforts and does not provide a meaningful assessment of progress to date even for the surge effort in Baghdad. (p. 33)
- There are no data on how many police are in service who are not Coalition-trained or equipped, or the areas where the police are or are not effective and/or loyal to the central government. The report does note that, militia infiltration remains a significant problem, so does collusion with criminal gangs. “Even when the police are not affiliated with a militia or organized crime, there is often mistrust between the police and judiciary, each viewing the other as corrupt.” (p. 34)
- There is no discussion of any overall plan for police development, for dealing with the problems created by local police and security forces, for dealing with the problems created by ethnic and sectarian ties and links to militias, for problems with ties to criminal elements, or for tying police activity to an effective court and criminal justice system. The need to define the paramilitary functions of various police elements is never addressed, nor is their critical function in following a “win” by Coalition and Iraqi Army forces with the ability to “hold” secure areas. The so-called “year of the police” in 2006 seems to have been followed by the year of no plans or well-defined goals.
- The progress reporting on creating a major Directorate of Border Enforcement and Directorate of Ports Entry only discusses force size and the number of forts. There is no assessment of the effectiveness of such forces, although they now total over 29,660 and operate some 420 forts and facilities (p. 35). The report does not address reports that the border forts are extremely poorly equipped. These problems are particularly troubling because of the long history of ineffective efforts to create border controls throughout the Middle East, endemic smuggling, corrupt and inactive border and custom officials, and forces that end in having ties to local militias or insurgents—or which can be bribed or intimidated by them. There seems to be a serious risk that this effort will have little or no meaning, particularly in dealing with Shi’ite infiltration and arms smuggling from Iran.
- There seems to be no progress in actually reforming the 98,000 men in the various elements of the Facilities Protection Service: “Without a new law or clear directive from the Prime Minister, most Ministries remain resistant to this initiative Because the FPS is not part of the Coalition’s programmed train and equip requirements, metrics such as numbers of personnel or equipping status are not included in the overall data (p. 36). Acute problems with spending on ineffective or ghost forces, corruption, ties to insurgents and militias, and a resulting lack of meaningful protection of critical facilities are not addressed. There are consistent allegations that many elements of the FPS are corrupt or extensions of the various militias.
- The reporting largely dodges around the severe sectarian and ethnic problems and divisions within the government affecting the creation of the National Information and Investigation Agency. (p. 36)
- The June 2007 report makes no mention of allegations that Iraq’s intelligence service has split into an official American/CIA-funded Iraqi National Intelligence Service, and an unofficial pro-Shiite intelligence agency run through the office of the Minister of State for National Security.
- The major problems in creating Iraqi intelligence capabilities, distrust of the CIA funded and advised force, and the need to create a viable military, police, and civil mix of intelligence and IS&R capabilities to replace the advanced programs and capabilities now provided by the US and Coalition forces is never addressed
- The sections on Ministry Capacity Development (pp. 31–33 and 37–39) essentially repeat past statements without any indication of serious progress in addressing the problems involved. The activities listed seem useful, but their effectiveness and timing remain almost completely unclear.
- If there is a plan to create Iraqi military forces capable of actually defending the country once the US and its Coalition allies leave, no mention is made anywhere in the report. A planned increase in the Army from 10 to 12 divisions seems designed solely to improve counterinsurgency and internal security capabilities (p. 40). The report does say that developing Navy readiness

will take until 2010 (p. 42). There are no estimates of when the air force will make its existing aircraft operational, or acquire combat aircraft. (pp. 42–43)

Failures in Economic Security, Development, and Aid

The report talks about largely meaningless national economic growth statistics, and cutting inflation from unbearable to unacceptable. The detailed text, however, reflects the steady deterioration of economic conditions and employment in most of the country, including Baghdad.

- The broad economic growth and reduction in inflation described in the report are essentially meaningless in moving the country towards stability. The Central Statistical Organization's estimate of 17.6% unemployment plus 38.1% underemployment grossly understates the problem because this national average includes more stable areas like the Kurdish zones. Unemployment and sharply underemployment probably now average a combined total of over 60% in troubled and combat areas—which now include much of the country.
- US aid resources are now 95% obligated and the authority for the Department of State's Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO), and Department of the Army Project and Contracting Office (PCO) expired on May 10th. Some \$38 billion in US and Iraqi funds has been spent in ways where public opinion polls show over 90% of Iraqis see no activity or no benefits. No major US economic aid funds will be available, and the Iraqi government has not demonstrated the ability to act effectively on its own.
- The inability to recruit effective US aid personnel in ways that have forced nearly 90% of the new personnel supporting the US aid effort called for in President Bush's strategy to come from the Department of the Defense. So far only 100 such personnel seem to have come from any source in the effort to raise the PRT manning from 290 to over 600—for a nation of 27 million people.
- The lack of progress in the oil sector—the one major source of Iraqi government revenue. The government spent only 3% of its oil sector investment budget in 2006. Crude oil production only averaged 1.97 MMBD in January–April 2007, and exports averaged 1.4 MMBD versus a government goal of 1.65 MMBD.
- The lack of meaningful progress in improving key services such as electricity, water, education, and healthcare for most Iraqis, especially in combat and troubled areas. Electricity still averages 14.5 hours a day nationally, and 8.4 hours in Baghdad, in spite of the expenditure of some \$4 billion in aid funds. Improvements in national water and sewer capacity do not mean improvements in actual services to most Iraqis.
- Continuing debt problems resulting from the actions of the Saddam Hussein government. Some \$72 billion of \$135–140 billion in debt is held by non-Paris Club members, and even the Paris Club has so far pledged only \$30 billion of relief.

Failures in International Diplomacy and Dealing with the Impact of Regional Tensions

Good intentions about dialogue with Iran, and having Iraq's neighbors play a major role in bringing stability have proved futile. This goes far beyond the issue of debt relief. The report cannot disguise the fact the "neighbors conference" accomplished exactly nothing, and regional diplomacy has failed to achieve significant results that aid Iraq in security and stability.

In practice, only Syria is reported to have made some progress in reducing support for external threats. The Iranian threat is reported to have increased significantly, and it is clear that the Iranian government is becoming progressively more hard-line, opportunistic, and repressive. Kurdish-Turkish tensions are described as a growing problem, and the report ignores sharply growing Sunni Arab resentment of US actions that are felt to support Iraqi Arab Shi'ites at the expense of Arab Sunnis and to favor the Kurds at the expense of Arabs. The flow of private money to Sunni factions from nations like the UAE is ignored.

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The danger in this critique is to assume that the limits to the present US strategy and operational plan mean that the US cannot take more effective steps to deal with the evolving situation in Iraq, or that progress cannot be made on a more realistic level over time. The June 2007 report may "spin" a level of success that does not exist, and understate many problems and challenges, but a detailed reading also

highlights many efforts that can have considerable impact over time if Iraqi political conciliation takes place, if the US is more realistic about the time-scale and resources needed for effective action, and if the Congress and American people are given more reason to trust the reporting, strategy, plans, and program execution required from the US government.

The most critical single dimension—and the one where effective US action will be crippled or impossible without more rapid success—is obviously Iraqi progress in conciliation and governance. Without conciliation, US military victories have no strategic or grand meaning, and the difference between Baghdad and Washington time-scales cannot extend into years.

At the same time, the US needs to be far more tolerant of the problems the Iraqi government faces in making rapid progress and far more conscious of its own blame in creating today's problems. As Secretary Powell once warned, "If you break it, you own it." The US did much of the breaking. At present, the US Administration and Congress are accelerating the clock for very different partisan reasons in ways that are putting impossible demands on both the Iraqi government and US country team in Iraq.

On the other hand, the Iraqi government and political process often seem to be ignoring the clock entirely. US "time" may be too fast, but Iraqi government "time" risks being fatally slow. The government's failure to act to date is compounded by the fact that legislative and executive action in passing laws and decrees will not bring conciliation. This can only come when Iraqis see such laws and decrees as being effective and having real meaning.

If conciliation does move forward, the US will need a long-term strategy, operational plan, and budget tailored to Iraq's real-world needs. It will need to treat the conflict in Iraq as what it is: armed nation-building and not a counterinsurgency campaign. In practice, the US government must also provide reporting that has the transparency and integrity to build both bipartisan trust in the Congress and give the next Administration time in which to make its own choices and take effective action.

This is an unpopular and perhaps politically untenable reality of the situation in Iraq. The US cannot bring security and stability within the life of the Bush Administration. It can only create a hollow and crumbling façade or withdraw. One key message that emerges from both the content and flaws in the June 2007 report is that success will be limited, uncertain, and take time. When it comes to effective US action in each of the major areas listed above, the time-scale is 2010–2015 and not 2008.

This does not mean that the US will need to keep its current troop presence, or anything like it, during most of this period. The fact remains, however, that the real world progress in creating the ISF is simply not going to be great enough to assure that the US can make major force cuts early in 2008, even if Iraqi political conciliation does take place. Moreover, the grindingly slow and so-far ineffective efforts to create civil partners from the State Department and other US government departments and agencies will become even more important the moment any form of conciliation takes place and the security situation eases. The US faces the need for a significant civil and mid-term stability operation to provide help in developing Iraq's governance and economy.

Finally, the June 2007 report may not openly say so, or try to deny the fact, but the US is now losing in Iraq. The pace of this defeat can easily be accelerated over the next six months by continued Iraqi failures at conciliation and growing unwillingness to sustain the war by the US Congress and American people. The facts on the ground can change to the point where the US may be forced into a rushed withdrawal, have to try to ameliorate displacement and separation and/or sectarian and ethnic cleansing, or deal with a level of humanitarian disaster it can now say it will ignore but not be able to ignore if it actually occurs.

The US can influence, but not control, events in Iraq and the region. It must develop contingency plans to reposition itself in Iraq to deal with a variety of contingencies. It must have similar plans to reposition itself in the region, to rebuild trust with its regional friends, and contain the threat from potentially hostile states. Above all, it would be an unforgivable failure on the part of the Bush Administration to only plan for success, and on the part of Congress to simply plan for withdrawal. The US needs to prepare for the fact that if conciliation fails, it cannot predict how much it may have to stay or intervene on humanitarian grounds or out of strategic necessity, or how much it may have to rush out of Iraq. Once again, "Plan I"—Iraqi politics, infighting, and decisions—are going to trump "Plan A" and "Plan B."

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you, Professor Cordesman.

General Batiste.

STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL JOHN BATISTE, USA, RETIRED, PRESIDENT, KLEIN STEEL SERVICES, INCORPORATED

General BATISTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I, too, applaud Senators Lugar and Voinovich this week for their incredible leadership. There is no military solution in Iraq; rather it is a solution grounded in diplomacy and the hard work politically and economically to make the change that we desperately need. If Members of Congress had been asking the tough questions in holding our Executive Branch accountable, providing the oversight that our constitution mandates, I, indeed, would still be on active duty today.

I am motivated by what is important for our country, what is right for this great country, and what is right for our military and their families.

Our national strategy for the global war on terror lacks strategic focus. Our army and Marine Corps today are at a breaking point, little to show for it. It is serious. The current surge in Iraq is too little too late. The Government of Iraq is incapable of stepping up to its responsibilities. Our Nation has yet to mobilize to defeat a very serious threat which has little to do with Iraq, and it is past time to refocus our national strategy and begin a deliberate withdrawal of United States forces.

Indeed, it is time to place America's vital interests first. Our troops are mired in the complexity of a brutal civil war, and we have lost sight of the broader objective of defeating worldwide Islamic extremism. Iraq and Afghanistan are but the first two chapters in a very long book and I believe we are off to a terrible start.

Iraq is embroiled in a civil war and the situation is getting further out of control with each passing day. Factions in Iraq will continue killing each other whether or not we are in their country. As many as 3,000 Iraqis are murdered every month and the violence has produced up to 4 million refugees. The various factions of the insurgency continue to regenerate their numbers at an alarming rate despite staggering losses. The insurgency goes well beyond the influence of al-Qaeda. It includes a complex mosaic of Shiia and Sunni Islam, Arab and Kurd centuries-old animosity, tribal infighting, and large number of criminal Mafia-style gangs.

To further complicate the situation, Iraq's neighbors in the region all have different objectives and agendas. The situation is most alarming because Iraq is distracting the United States from the main effort of defeating worldwide Islamic extremism while draining our national treasure in blood and dollars.

The Bush administration's strategy lacks focus. General John Sheehan may have said it best when he recently was quoted:

"There is no agreed upon strategic view of the Iraq problem or the region. The current Washington decision-making process lacks a linkage to a broader view of the region and how the parts fit together strategically. Our current Iraqi measures of effectiveness delve deep into the details of Iraq's national reconciliation and de-Baathification. These measures are incred-

ibly important for Iraq but may matter little to U.S. strategic interests and defeating al-Qaeda.”

When and how will we complete the work in Afghanistan and root out the terror networks in other parts of the world such as northwestern Pakistan? Indeed, Iraq is a side show that is diluting our focus.

What America desperately needs, and I will say this very slowly now, is a political framework defined by an ever-expanding global alliance of equals, disciplined diplomacy based on a vision that is focused on long-term objectives. The security implications are staggering and Americans expect our government, both the Executive Branch and the Congress, to address our real enemies—Islamic extremist groups—to include al-Qaeda-type organizations and the nation states that support them. The enemy is worldwide, respects no national boundaries, and is concentrated in areas well outside of Iraq.

Unfortunately, the current administration’s near-sighted strategy remains focused on Iraq and is all but dependent on the military component.

Diplomacy and the critical political and economic components of a successful strategy are dangerously lacking. Clausewitz cautioned us that war is the extension of policy by other means. In other words, America doesn’t commit its sons and daughters in the battle until we have exhausted all the other means of diplomacy and political and economic hard work. The current administration ignored this sage advice and we are paying a heavy price.

Our army and Marine Corps are at a breaking point in a time in history when we need a strong military the most. The cycle of diplomats is staggering. American formations continue to lose a battalion’s worth of dead and wounded every month with little to show for it. The current recruiting system falls drastically short of long-term requirements and an all-volunteer force cannot sustain the current tempo for much longer.

The military is spending over 1 billion—with a “B”—dollars a year in incentives in the last-ditch effort to keep the force together. Young officers and non-commissioned officers are leaving the serve at an alarming rate. Equipment is in dismal shape, requiring hundreds of billions of dollars to refit the force to pre-invasion conditions. Active duty companies preparing for deployment to Iraq within the next 6 months are at less than 50 percent strength, are commanded by young, inexperienced lieutenants, and are lacking the equipment they need for training.

We are setting the conditions for the next Task Force Smith at a time in our history when we are facing a serious worldwide threat.

The current surge in Iraq, I believe, is too little too late. The so-called surge really amounts to nothing more than a minor reinforcement, a number which represents all that our military could muster at the time. Our counterinsurgency doctrine requires 20 soldiers for every 1,000 in the indigent population. Assuming that there are 6 million or 7 million people in Baghdad, the requirement to properly secure the city as a precursor to establishing the rule of law would be over 120,000 combat troops. There aren’t that many combat troops in all of Iraq today even when the surge.

What we are seeing is the myth of Sisyphus being played out over and over again. Today's battles and places like Baghdad and Baqubah are not new. We have done this before. We have taken this ground many times, but lack the number of coalition and competent Iraqi security forces to not only clear but more importantly, to hold and to build. The number of combat troops matter, and we have always lacked the right numbers.

Further, our counterinsurgency doctrine recognizes that fighting an insurgency is very different than combat operations and requires soldiers and Marines at every echelon to possess a daunting set of traits. Among them, a clear nuanced and empathetic appreciation of the essential nature of the conflict, an understanding of the motivation, strengths and weaknesses of the insurgent, and a knowledge of the local culture.

I could not agree with this more based on my experience in Bosnia, Kosova, and now Iraq. Success in the counterinsurgency is more about relationship, improving the peoples' quality of life, and the incredibly hard work to change peoples' attitudes to give them alternatives to the insurgency, and it is less about the application of lethal force.

Numbers mattered in March 2003, and they matter today. The current administration drove this Nation to war without the military planning and capability required to be successful. The Government of Iraq is incapable of stepping up to their responsibilities. Our current administration's notion of freedom and democracy in the Middle East is certainly noble, but it is completely unrealistic. The Iraqi Government is dominated by Shiia. It is all but ineffective, and will most likely accomplish few, if any, of the benchmarks established by the legislation passed in this Congress last month.

The expectation of a mid-September report to the President all but empowers the insurgency with a time line they need, and at the end of the day we all know what the results will be.

With respect to the Government of Iraq's responsibility to increase the number of Iraqi security force units capable of operating independently, this ignores the reality that historically armed forces in the region have been perpetually ineffective due to the social factors deeply rooted in Arab culture, to include secrecy and paranoia, pride, enormous class differences—it is a caste system—an inability to coordinate, and no individual freedom of action or initiative.

Why would we think our efforts in the twenty-first century would be any different than other nations' efforts in past centuries? Further, the world has committed inadequate resources to build an effective Iraqi security force. The Iraqi army and police would require heavy weapons, helicopters, light-armored vehicles, and radar-assisted counter battery artillery to control the insurgency. The Iraqi security forces have taken horrendous casualties, but do not have the tools to replace United States combat formations.

When we can trust these Iraqi formations, quite frankly, is another question. Our experience over the past 4 years is that most Iraqi—certainly not all—formations will either not show up for the fight or will not hold their ground in the face of the insurgent for a myriad of reasons. We have ignored the lessons of history.

Our Nation has yet to mobilize to defeat the threat of worldwide Islamic extremism which has little to do, I believe, with Iraq. Iraq is distracting this country from what should be our focus of main effort. Our leaders have a responsibility to galvanize the American people for what might very well be a decade's long struggle.

Americans want to be told the truth. What are we facing? What will it take to win? How long will it take? And what are the consequences of failure? Americans want to be part of the solution. We want to properly fund this war with war bonds or taxes, programs that don't mortgage our children's futures. We want to properly resource our great military to include beginning the debate on national service. We want to mobilize industry to get behind this effort.

Why is the military competing with golf club manufacturers for specialty metals? Why does it take years to replace a helicopter destroyed in Iraq or Afghanistan? Why do we have the huge backlog of broken military equipment in our military depots? Why is our veterans' medical care still broken? Why are we not serious about immigration reform and homeland security? Why is America still dependent on foreign oil?

I think the time for half measures is over. It is also time for our Congress to provide the constitutionally mandated oversight over the Executive Branch.

It is critical that we think our national strategy through and begin the deliberate withdrawal of United States forces from Iraq. It is in America's best interest to rethink our strategy, deliberately disengaged from Iraq, refit and rearm our military, get serious about homeland security, and prepare to win the next phase of the struggle against worldwide Islamic extremism.

Bottom line, we have put our strategic interests in the hands of an incompetent government in Iraq, and we are waiting to see if the Iraqis can settle their differences. This is unacceptable. Our plan for withdrawal must be exponentially better than the plan to invade Iraq. Such a deliberate withdrawal will take up to a year or more to complete.

With respect to the deliberate withdrawal from Iraq, the administration must establish a time line for withdrawal, put the onus for success squarely on the backs of the Iraqi Government, and launch into a new national strategy which must include serious diplomatic surges with friends, allies, and enemies, to include countries in the region with a vested interest in the future of Iraq.

There may or may not be a long-term mission in Iraq, but that must be driven by our strategic interest in the region. I believe our two vital interests are the Iraq cannot become a launching pad for worldwide Islamic extremism or become a source of regional instability. Secondary interests are that our withdrawal cannot create a humanitarian disaster or an Iraq dominated by other states in the region. This may require a residual force of up to tens of thousands of U.S. troops for decades to protect the United States mission, to train and advise the Iraqi security forces, provide a counter-balance to unintended consequences of Iran, and a greater Kurdistan, and take direct action against residual al-Qaeda-affiliated organizations in Iraq. We can't walk away from our strategic interests.

It didn't have to be this way but we are where we are and we have got to move forward.

Thank you, and I would be happy to take your questions later.
[The prepared statement of General Batiste follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL JOHN BATISTE, USA, RETIRED,
PRESIDENT, KLEIN STEEL SERVICES, INCORPORATED

Our national strategy for the global war on terror lacks strategic focus; our Army and Marine Corps are at a breaking point with little to show for it; the current "surge" in Iraq is too little, too late; the Government of Iraq is incapable of stepping up to their responsibilities; our nation has yet to mobilize to defeat a very serious threat which has little to do with Iraq; and it is past time to refocus our national strategy and begin the deliberate withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. Indeed, it is time to place America's vital interests first. Our troops are mired in the complexity of a brutal civil war and we have lost sight of the broader objective of defeating world-wide Islamic extremism. The following testimony will address the current situation and recommend a way-ahead. Iraq and Afghanistan are the first two chapters in a very long book and we are off to a terrible start.

Iraq is embroiled in a civil war and the situation is getting further out of control with each passing day. Factions in Iraq will continue killing each other whether or not we are in their country. As many as 3,000 Iraqis are murdered every month and the violence has produced nearly 4 million refugees. The various factions of the insurgency continue to regenerate their numbers at an alarming rate despite staggering losses. The insurgency goes well beyond the influence of Al Qaeda and includes a complex mosaic of Shia and Sunni Islam, Arab and Kurd centuries old animosity, tribal infighting, and a large number of criminal mafia style gangs. To further complicate the situation, Iraq's neighbors in the region all have different objectives and agendas. The situation is most alarming because Iraq is distracting the United States from the main effort of defeating world-wide Islamic extremism while draining our national treasure in blood and dollars.

The Bush administration's strategy lacks strategic focus. General John Sheehan may have said it best when he recently said, "there is no agreed-upon strategic view of the Iraq problem or the region . . . the current Washington decision-making process lacks a linkage to a broader view of the region and how the parts fit together strategically." Our current Iraqi measures of effectiveness delve deep into the details of Iraq's national reconciliation and de-Ba'athification. These measures are incredibly important for Iraq, but may matter little to US strategic interests and defeating Al Qaeda. When and how will we complete the work in Afghanistan and root out the terror networks in other parts of the world, such as northwestern Pakistan? Indeed, Iraq is a side-show that is diluting our focus. Through most of this century, we will face expanding Islamic extremism, asymmetric demographics, competition for decreasing energy resources, the effects of the "haves and have nots" driven by globalization, global climate change, and unstable population migration. What American desperately needs now is a political framework defined by an ever expanding global alliance of equals—disciplined diplomacy based on a vision that is focused on long-term objectives. The security implications are staggering and American's expect our government, both the executive branch and the Congress, to address our real enemies—Islamic extremist groups to include Al Qaeda type organizations, and the nation states that support them. This enemy is world-wide, respects no national boundaries, and is concentrated in areas well outside of Iraq. Unfortunately, the current administration's near sighted strategy remains focused on Iraq and is all but dependent on the military component of strategy. Diplomacy and the critical political and economic components of a successful strategy are dangerously lacking. Clausewitz cautioned us that war is the extension of policy by other means. In other words, America should commit our young men and women into battle only when all other means are exhausted. The administration ignored this sage advice and we are paying a heavy price.

Our Army and Marine Corps are at a breaking point at a time in history when we need a strong military the most. The cycle of deployments is staggering. American formations continue to lose a battalion's worth of dead and wounded every month with little to show for it. The current recruiting system falls drastically short of long-term requirements and our all-volunteer force can not sustain the current tempo for much longer. The military is spending over \$1 billion a year in incentives in a last ditch effort to keep the force together. Young officers and noncommissioned officers are leaving the service at an alarming rate. Equipment is in dismal shape, requiring hundreds of billions of dollars to refit the force to pre-invasion conditions.

Active duty companies preparing for deployment to Iraq within the next six months are at less than 50 percent strength, are commanded by young and inexperienced lieutenants, and are lacking the equipment needed for training. We are setting the conditions for the next "Task Force Smith" disaster at a time in our history when we are facing a serious world-wide threat.

The current "surge" in Iraq is too little, too late. The so-called surge really amounts to nothing more than a minor reinforcement, a number which represents all that our military could muster. Our counter insurgency doctrine requires 20 soldiers for every 1,000 in the indigent population. Assuming there are 6 or 7 million people in Baghdad, the requirement to properly secure the city as a precursor to the rule of law would be over 120,000 "combat" troops. There are less than 80,000 "combat" troops in Iraq today, even with the surge. What we are seeing is the myth of Sisyphus being played out over and over again. Today's battles in places like Baghdad and Ba'qubah are not new—we have been down this road before, but lacked the number of coalition and competent Iraqi forces to clear, hold, and build. The number of "combat" troops matter and we have always lacked the right numbers. Further, our counter insurgency doctrine recognizes that fighting an insurgency is very different from combat operations and that successful operations "require Soldiers and Marines at every echelon to possess a daunting set of traits, among them a clear, nuanced, and empathetic appreciation of the essential nature of the conflict . . . an understanding of the motivation, strengths, and weaknesses of the insurgent, and a knowledge of the local culture." I could not agree with this more. Success in a counter insurgency is more about relationships, improving the people's quality of life, and the incredibly hard work to change people's attitudes to give them alternatives to the insurgency, and less about the application of lethal force. Numbers mattered in March 2003 and they matter today. The current administration drove this nation to war without the military planning and capability required to be successful in this kind of war. The administration set our great military up for failure and is putting our nation at risk.

The Government of Iraq is incapable of stepping up to their responsibilities. Our current administration's notion of freedom and democracy in the Middle East is certainly noble, but completely unrealistic. Democracy is inconsistent with the tribal and religious culture in the region. The Maliki government is dominated by Shia, is all but ineffective, and will most likely accomplish few if any of the benchmarks established by the legislation passed by the US Congress last month. These benchmarks include tough milestones dependent on reconciliation, to include completing a constitutional review, enacting and implementing legislation on de-Ba'athification, enacting and implementing legislation to ensure the equitable distribution of hydrocarbon resources of the people of Iraq without regard to the sect or ethnicity of recipients, and much, much more. The expectation of a mid-September report to the President all but empowers the insurgency with the timeline they need and at the end of the day, we all know what the results will be. With respect to the Government of Iraq's responsibility to increase the number of Iraqi security force units capable of operating independently ignores the reality that historically, armed forces in the region have been perpetually ineffective due to social factors deeply rooted in Arab culture, to include secrecy and paranoia, pride, enormous class differences, an inability to coordinate, and no individual freedom of action or initiative. Why would we think our efforts in the 21st century would be any different than other nation's efforts in past centuries? Further, the world has committed inadequate resources to build effective Iraqi security forces. The Iraqi army and police require heavy weapons, helicopters, light armored vehicles, and radar assisted counter-battery artillery to control the insurgency. The Iraqi security forces have taken horrendous casualties and do not have the tools to replace US combat formations. Whether we can trust these Iraqi formations is another question. Our experience over the past four years is that most Iraqi formations will either not show up for the fight or will not hold their ground in the face of the insurgent for a myriad of reasons. America has ignored the lessons of history.

Our nation has yet to mobilize to defeat the threat of world-wide Islamic extremism which has little to do with Iraq. Iraq is distracting America from what should be our focus of main effort. Our leaders have a responsibility to galvanize the American people for what might very well be a decade's long struggle. Americans want to be told the truth—what are we facing, what will it take to win, how long will it take, and what are the consequences for failure? Americans want to be part of the solution. We want to properly fund the war with war bonds or taxes—programs that do not mortgage our children's futures. We want to properly resource our great military, to include beginning the debate on national service. We want to mobilize industry to get behind this effort. Why is the military competing with golf club manufactures for specialty metals? Why does it take years to replace a helicopter de-

stroyed in Iraq or Afghanistan? Why do we have the huge backlog of broken military equipment in our military depots? Why is veteran medical care still broken? Why are we not serious about immigration reform and homeland security? Why is America still dependent on foreign oil? The time for half-measures is over. It is also past time for our Congress to provide constitutionally mandated oversight over the executive branch.

It is critical that we rethink our national strategy and begin the deliberate withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. It is in America's best interest to rethink our national strategy, deliberately disengage from Iraq, refit and rearm our military, get serious about homeland security, and prepare to win the next phase of the struggle against world-wide Islamic extremism. Bottom line, we have put our strategic interests in the hands of an incompetent government in Iraq and we are "waiting to see if the Iraqis can settle their differences." This is unacceptable. Our plan for withdrawal must be exponentially better than the plan to invade Iraq. Such a deliberate withdrawal will take up to a year or more to complete. With respect to the deliberate withdrawal from Iraq, the administration must establish a timeline for a withdrawal, put the onus for success squarely on the backs of the Iraqi government, and launch into a new national strategy which must include a serious diplomatic surge with friends, allies, and enemies, to include countries in the region with a vested interest in the future of Iraq. There may or may not be a long-term mission in Iraq, but that must be driven by our strategic interests in the region. Our two vital interests are that Iraq can not become a launching pad for world-wide Islamic extremism or become a source of regional instability. Secondary interests are that our withdrawal can not create a humanitarian disaster or an Iraq dominated by another state(s) in the region. This may require a residual force of up to 30,000 US troops for decades to protect the US mission, train and advise the Iraqi security forces, provide a counter balance to unintended consequences of Iran and a greater "Kurdistan," and take direct action against residual Al Qaeda in Iraq. We cannot walk away from our strategic interests. It did not have to be this way, but due to the failures of the current administration, we are where we are.

In conclusion, America's national strategy for the global war on terror lacks strategic focus. Our Army and Marine Corps are at a breaking point with little to show for it; the current "surge" in Iraq is too little, too late; the Government of Iraq is incapable of stepping up to their responsibilities; our nation has yet to mobilize to defeat a very serious threat which has little to do with Iraq; and it is past time to refocus our national strategy and begin the deliberate withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. The way-ahead is uncertain at best, but it is time to put America's vital interests first. From this point forward, America's strategy must focus on the mission to defeat world-wide Islamic extremism.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much, General Batiste.
Dr. Kagan.

**STATEMENT OF MR. FREDERICK W. KAGAN, RESIDENT
SCHOLAR, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE**

Mr. KAGAN. Chairman Lantos, members of the committee, it is a great honor to come before this committee once again. I salute the determination with which this committee and Congress in general is addressing this important issue, is attempting to understand what is going on in this complicated struggle, is paying great attention to what I believe is the greatest national security challenge we have faced in a great many years.

American military forces in Iraq are now entering the second phase of their kinetic operations even as political efforts continue on a separate but linked track. Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus are in the midst of a multi-faceted program that will not proceed in a linear way and will not generate clear and consistent metrics in all of its phases. The early signs are positive in a number of respects, although difficulties and challenges clearly remain, but it is too soon to evaluate the outcome of an operation that is just moving into the first of several phases in-

tended to produce significant positive change in the situation overall.

It is now beyond question that the Bush administration pursued a flawed strategy to the war in Iraq from 2003 to 2007, an approach which I criticized even from before it began. That approach relied on keeping the American troop presence in Iraq as small as possible, pushing unprepared Iraqi security forces into the lead too rapidly, and using political progress as the principal means of bringing the violence under control.

In other words, it is an approach similar to the one proposed by the Iraq Study Group and by some who are now pushing for political benchmarks and the rapid drawdown of American forces is the keys to success in this war. It is no more likely to work now than it was then.

Political progress is something that follows the establishment of security, not something that causes it. The sorts of political compromises that Iraq parties must make are extraordinarily difficult, one might even say impossible in the context of uncontrolled terrorism and sectarian violence, and the Iraqi security forces, although significantly better than they were this time last year, are still too small and insufficiently capable to establish security on their own, or even to maintain it in difficult and contested areas without significant continuing coalition support.

For all of these reasons, the President changed his strategy profoundly in January 2007, and appointed a new commander in General Petraeus and a new Ambassador in Ryan Crocker to oversee the new approach. This new approach focuses on establishing security in Baghdad and its immediate environs as the prerequisite for political progress. It is important to note here a point that is sometimes lost in this discussion. This is the Baghdad security plan. It is not the Iraq security plan. The purpose of this plan was not to bring stability to the entire country, something that is manifestly impossible to do all at once, certainly with the forces that are available. The purpose of this plan was to bring stability to the Iraqi capital as a first step toward making political progress feasible and toward creating a stable base from which to expand security outward.

This plan recognizes that American forces must be in the lead in many but not all areas, and that they will have to remain in areas that have been cleared for some time in order to ensure that security becomes permanent. The aim of the security strategy is to buy space and time for the political process in Iraq to work, and for the Iraqi security forces to mature and grow to the point where they can maintain the dramatically improved security situation our forces will have helped them to establish.

The scale of the problem required an increase in American combat forces in Iraq, which the President ordered in January, of around 40 percent from the equivalent of 15 brigade combat teams to more than 21. It also required a multi-phased approach on both the military and the political side of the equation, which has been begun.

The first phase began on January 10 with the announcement of the new strategy and the beginning of the movement of the five additional army brigades and marine elements into the theater. That

deployment process was only completed at the beginning of this month. In fact, critical enablers for those combat forces are still arriving in theater.

As the new units entered Iraq, United States military commanders began pushing those that were already in the theater forward from their operating bases into joint security stations and combat outposts in key neighborhood in Baghdad and elsewhere. The purpose of these movements was not to clear and hold. The units present in theater were not sufficient in numbers to conduct such operations. The purpose was instead to establish positions within those key areas and to develop both intelligence about the enemy and trust relationships with the local communities that would make possible decisive, clear and hold operations subsequently.

During this phase of the operation, additional Iraqi security forces deployed to Baghdad in accord with the plan developed jointly by the United States and Iraqi military commands. All of the requested units appeared in the first Iraqi army rotation, and the Iraqi military has just completed its second rotation of units into Baghdad, again all designated units arrived and their fill levels were generally higher than in the first rotation.

Generals Petraeus and Odierno did not allocate the majority of the new combat power they received to Baghdad. Only two of the additional army brigades went into the city. The other three army brigades and the equipment of a marine regiment were deployed into the areas around Baghdad that our Generals call the “Baghdad belts,” including Baqubah, in Diyala province.

The purpose of this deployment was not to clear and hold those areas, but to make possible the second phase of the operation that began on June 15. The purpose of this operation—Phantom Thunder—is to disrupt terrorist and militia networks in bases outside of Baghdad that have been feeding the violence within the city. Most of the car bomb and suicide bomb networks that have been supporting the al-Qaeda surge since January are based in these belt areas, and American commanders have rightly recognized that they cannot establish stable security in the capital without disrupting these networks and their bases.

But even this operation—the largest coordinated combat operation the U.S. has undertaken since the invasion in 2003—is not the decisive phase of the current strategy. It is an operation designed to set the preconditions for a successful clear and hold operation that will probably begin in late July or early August within Baghdad itself. That is the operation that is designed to bring security to Iraq’s capital in a lasting way that will create the space for political progress that we all desire.

The U.S. has not undertaken a multi-phased operation on such a scale since 2003, and it is not surprising therefore that many commentators have become confused about how to evaluate what is going on and how to report it.

Sectarian deaths in Baghdad dropped significantly as soon as the new strategy was announced in January and remain at less than half their former levels. Spectacular attacks rose as al-Qaeda conducted a counter-surge of its own, but have recently begun falling again. Violence is down tremendously in Anbar province where the

Sunni tribes have turned against al-Qaeda and are actively cooperating with U.S. forces for the first time.

This process has spread from Anbar into Babil, Salah-ad-Din, and even Diyala provinces, and echoes of it have even spread into one of the worst neighborhoods in Baghdad—Ameriyah, formerly an al-Qaeda stronghold. Violence has risen naturally in areas that the enemy had long controlled but in which U.S. forces are now actively fighting for the first time in many years, and the downward spiral in Diyala that began in mid-2006 continued, which is not surprising since the Baghdad security plan does not aim to establish security in Diyala as a first order of business.

These trends are positive. The growing skill and determination of the Iraqi units fighting alongside Americans is also positive. Some Iraqi police units have also fought well. Others have displayed sectarian tendencies and participated in sectarian actions.

Political progress has been very slow, something that has clearly disappointed many who hoped for an immediate turnaround, but that is not surprising for those who always believed that it would follow, not precede or accompany the establishment of security, at least in Baghdad. And negative sectarian actors within the Iraqi Government continue to resist making necessary compromises with former foes. Overall, the basic trends are rather better than could have been expected of the operation so far, primarily because of the unanticipated stunning success in Anbar and its spread, a success, I might add, which I do not believe will be undermined by the recent assassination of the Sheik in the Monsur Hotel. Al-Qaeda has assassinated a number of sheiks previously who were participating in the Anbar awakening one way or another, and it appears so far only to have strengthened the determination of remaining leaders in that movement to continue their cooperation with us.

But it remains far too early to offer any meaningful evaluation of the progress of an operation whose decisive phases are only beginning. To say that the current plan has failed is simply incorrect. It might fail, of course, as any military and political plan might fail. Indications on the military side strongly suggest that success in the form of dramatically reduced violence by the end of this year is quite likely. Indications on the political side are more mixed, but are also less meaningful at this early stage before security has been established.

Great commanders in history have understood two critical truths: The situation in war is constantly changing, and decisions must take that into account—and, therefore, that it is best to delay decisions until the last possible moment to ensure that they are made on the basis of the most recent and accurate understanding of the situation rather than on preconceptions formed in different circumstances.

The situation in Iraq is very different today from what it was in January 2007—to say nothing of November 2006. It will be very different in September and still more different in December of this year. It would be a great error to attempt to decide now upon the strategy to pursue when the current plan has actually been implemented because we cannot now predict what the situation will be then with any confidence or accuracy, and it would be a very grave error indeed to rush now to abandon the first strategy that offers

some real prospect for success in favor of a return to an approach that has already failed repeatedly.

I thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kagan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. FREDERICK W. KAGAN, RESIDENT SCHOLAR, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

American military forces in Iraq are now entering the second phase of their kinetic operations even as political efforts continue on a separate but linked track. Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus are in the midst of a multifaceted program that will not proceed in a linear way and will not generate clear and consistent metrics in all of its phases. The early signs are positive in a number of respects, although difficulties and challenges clearly remain. But it is too soon to evaluate the outcome of an operation that is just moving into the first of several phases intended to produce significant positive change in the situation overall.

It is now beyond question that the Bush Administration pursued a flawed approach to the war in Iraq from 2003 to 2007. That approach relied on keeping the American troop presence in Iraq as small as possible, pushing unprepared Iraqi Security Forces into the lead too rapidly, and using political progress as the principal means of bringing the violence under control. In other words, it is an approach similar to the one proposed by the ISG and by some who are now pushing for political benchmarks and the rapid drawdown of American forces as the keys to success in the war. It is no more likely to work now than it was then. Political progress is something that follows the establishment of security, not something that causes it. The sorts of political compromises that Iraq's parties must make are extraordinarily difficult—one might even say impossible—in the context of uncontrolled terrorism and sectarian violence. And the Iraqi Security Forces, although significantly better than they were this time last year, are still too small and insufficiently capable to *establish* security on their own or even to maintain it in difficult and contested areas without significant continuing coalition support.

For all of these reasons, the president changed his strategy profoundly in January 2007, and appointed a new commander in General Petraeus and a new Ambassador in Ryan Crocker to oversee the new approach. This new approach focuses on establishing security in Baghdad and its immediate environs as the prerequisite for political progress. It recognizes that American forces must be in the lead in many (but not all) areas, and that they will have to remain in areas that have been cleared for some time in order to ensure that security becomes permanent. The aim of the security strategy is to buy space and time for the political process in Iraq to work, and for the Iraqi Security Forces to mature and grow to the point where they can maintain the dramatically improved security situation our forces will have helped them to establish.

The scale of the problem required an increase in American forces in Iraq, which the president ordered in January, of around 40% (from the equivalent of 15 brigade combat teams to more than 21). It also required a multi-phased approach on both the military and the political side of the equation, which has been begun.

The first phase began on January 10th with the announcement of the new strategy and the beginning of the movement of the 5 additional Army brigades and Marine elements into the theater. That deployment process was only completed at the beginning of this month—in fact, critical enablers for those combat forces are still arriving in theater. As the new units entered Iraq, the U.S. military commanders began pushing those that were already in the theater forward from their operating bases into Joint Security Stations and Combat Outposts in key neighborhoods in Baghdad and elsewhere. The purpose of these movements was not to clear-and-hold—the units present in theater were not sufficient in numbers to conduct such operations. The purpose was instead to establish positions within those key areas and to develop both intelligence about the enemy and trust relationships with the local communities that would make possible decisive clear-and-hold operations subsequently. During this phase of the operation, additional Iraqi Security Forces deployed to Baghdad in accord with a plan developed jointly by the U.S. and Iraqi military commands. All of the requested units appeared in the first Iraqi Army rotation, and the Iraqi military has just completed its second rotation of units into Baghdad—again, all designated units arrived, and their fill levels were generally higher than in the first rotation.

Generals Petraeus and Odierno did not allocate the majority of the new combat power they received to Baghdad. Only 2 of the additional Army brigades went into the city. The other 3 Army brigades and the equivalent of a Marine regiment were

deployed into the areas around Baghdad that our generals call the “Baghdad belts,” including Baqubah in Diyala province. The purpose of this deployment was not to clear-and-hold those areas, but to make possible the second phase of the operation that began on June 15. The purpose of this operation—Phantom Thunder—is to disrupt terrorist and militia networks and bases outside of Baghdad that have been feeding the violence within the city. Most of the car bomb and suicide bomb networks that have been supporting the al Qaeda surge since January are based in these belt areas, and American commanders have rightly recognized that they cannot establish stable security in the capital without disrupting these networks and their bases.

But even this operation—the largest coordinated combat operation the U.S. has undertaken since the invasion in 2003—is not the decisive phase of the current strategy. It is an operation designed to set the preconditions for a successful clear-and-hold operation that will probably begin in late July or early August within Baghdad itself. That is the operation that is designed to bring security to Iraq’s capital in a lasting way that will create the space for political progress that we all desire.

The U.S. has not undertaken a multi-phased operation on such a large scale since 2003, and it is not surprising therefore that many commentators have become confused about how to evaluate what is going on and how to report it. Sectarian deaths in Baghdad dropped significantly as soon as the new strategy was announced in January, and remain at less than half their former levels. Spectacular attacks rose as al Qaeda conducted a counter-surge of its own, but have recently begun falling again. Violence is down tremendously in Anbar province, where the Sunni tribes have turned against al Qaeda and are actively cooperating with U.S. forces for the first time. This process has spread from Anbar into Babil, Salah-ad-Din, and even Diyala provinces, and echoes of it have even spread into one of the worst neighborhoods in Baghdad—Ameriyah, formerly an al Qaeda stronghold. Violence has risen naturally in areas that the enemy had long controlled but in which U.S. forces are now actively fighting for the first time in many years, and the downward spiral in Diyala that began in mid-2006 continued (which is not surprising, since the Baghdad Security Plan does not aim to establish security in Diyala).

All of these trends are positive. The growing skill and determination of the Iraqi Army units fighting alongside Americans is also positive. Some Iraqi Police units have also fought well. Others have displayed sectarian tendencies and participated in sectarian actions. Political progress has been very slow—something that has clearly disappointed many who hoped for an immediate turnaround, but that is not surprising for those who always believed that it would follow, not precede or accompany, the establishment of security at least in Baghdad. And negative sectarian actors within the Iraqi Government continue to resist making necessary compromises with former foes. Overall, the basic trends are rather better than could have been expected of the operation so far, primarily because of the unanticipated stunning success in Anbar and its spread. But it remains far too early to offer any meaningful evaluation of the progress of an operation whose decisive phases are only just beginning.

To say that the current plan has failed is simply incorrect. It might fail, of course, as any military/political plan might fail. Indications on the military side strongly suggest that success—in the form of dramatically reduced violence by the end of this year—is quite likely. Indications on the political side are more mixed, but are also less meaningful at this early stage before security has been established.

Great commanders in history have understood two critical truths: the situation in war is constantly changing, and decisions must take that change into account—and, therefore, that it is best to delay decisions until the last possible moment to ensure that they are made on the basis of the most recent and accurate understanding of the situation, rather than on preconceptions formed in different circumstances. The situation in Iraq is very different today from what it was in January 2007, to say nothing of November 2006. It will be very different in September, and still more different in December of this year. It would be a great error to attempt to decide now upon the strategy to pursue when the current plan has actually been implemented, because we cannot now predict what the situation will be then with any confidence or accuracy. And it would be a very grave error indeed to rush now to abandon the first strategy that offers some real prospect for success in favor of a return to an approach that has already failed repeatedly.

Chairman LANTOS. I want to express my thanks to our three extraordinary witnesses, and I would like to begin by quoting a very small portion of Senator Lugar’s statement on the Senate floor a

couple of days ago. Let me first say that I think many misunderstand the impact of Senator Lugar's statement because what in fact Dick Lugar has done was to attempt to take the Iraq debate out of the partisan political arena, and this is an enormous public service.

A divided country, and this certainly is a divided country and a divided Congress, is very unlikely to find very effective long-term solutions. Not too many months ago those of us who were critical of the administration's policy were accused of advocating a policy of cut and run. I do not believe the administration will accuse Dick Lugar of a policy of cut and run. So we have gained minimally a platform for a rational discussion and debate.

The second very important thing that Dick Lugar has done, which several of our distinguished witnesses have touched upon, is that the United States at the moment, understandably, seems to be pathologically preoccupied with Iraq as if in fact as the one remaining global superpower all of our attention and resources should be devoted to this one arena.

General Batiste, you spoke eloquently of the damage done to our military, and I believe it would be useful if I might ask the witnesses' indulgence if you would listen closely to a couple of paragraphs of Dick Lugar's statement and I would like to ask each of you to comment on them. This is what Dick Lugar said Monday evening:

"Mr. President, I rise today to offer observations on the continuing involvement of the United States in Iraq. In my judgment, our course in Iraq has lost contact with our vital national security interests in the Middle East and beyond. Our continuing absorption with military activities in Iraq is limiting our diplomatic assertiveness there and elsewhere in the world. The prospects that the current surge strategy will succeed in the way originally envisioned by the President are very limited within the short period framed by our own domestic political debate, and the strident polarized nature of that debate increases the risk that our involvement in Iraq will end in a poorly planned withdrawal that undercuts our vital interests in the Middle East. Unless we recalibrate our strategy in Iraq to fit our domestic political conditions and the broader needs of United States national security, we risk foreign policy failures that could greatly diminish our influence in the region and in the world."

And his concluding statement is as follows:

"Mr. President, the issue before us is whether we will refocus our policy in Iraq on realistic assessments of what can be achieved, and on a sober review of our vital interests in the Middle East. Given the requirements of military planners, the stress of our combat forces, and our domestic political time line, we are running out of time to implement a thoughtful Plan B that attempts to protect our substantial interests in the region while downsizing our military presence in Iraq. We need to recast the geo-strategic reference points of our Iraq policy. We need to be preparing for how we will array U.S. forces in the region to target terrorist enclaves, deter adventurism by

Iran, provide a buffer against regional sectarian conflict, and generally reassure friendly governments that the United States is committed to Middle East security. Simultaneously we must be aggressive and creative in pursuing a regional dialogue that is not limited to our friends.

“I wish the administration had listened to this before attacking the Speaker of the House of Representatives for opening a dialogue with the President of Syria. We cannot allow fatigue and frustration with our Iraq policy to lead to the abandonment of the tools and relationships we need to defend our vital interests in the Middle East. If we are to seize opportunity to preserve these interests, the administration and Congress must suspend what has become almost natural political combat over Iraq. Those who offer constructive criticism of the surge strategy are not defeatists anymore than those who warned against the precipitous withdrawal are militarists. We need to move Iraq policy beyond the politics of the moment and reestablish a broad consensus under all of the United States and the Middle East. If we do that, the United States has the diplomatic influence and economic and military power to strengthen mutually beneficial policies that could enhance security and prosperity throughout the region. I pray that the President and the Congress will move swiftly and surely to achieve that goal.”

Professor Cordesman, what is your comment on the substance of Dick Lugar’s statement?

Mr. CORDESMAN. Well, I think Senator Lugar has raised the practical issue for all of us of how we deal with this situation. What I am not in a position to comment on is the phrase “domestic politics.” I know that more and more of the people who are involved in trying to plan this have almost the feeling that strategic planning and operational planning may be losing meaning because domestic politics are moving so quickly toward trying to reach a decisive, quick withdrawal that that kind of effort could lose meaning.

I think Senator Lugar has raised an issue in terms of partisanship which requires very close attention. But looking at the other aspects of what he says, I think it is, unfortunately, true that in some ways we have lost contact with the realities in the region. I think that is true in Iraq.

I do not agree with Dr. Kagan that you can have security first. I think the political issues are inherently deeply divisive and they may make the kind of security we are trying to win the equivalent of trying to win the battle of Ulster for the British Army between Catholic and Protestant without having any broader strategic meaning.

I don’t see that we are providing security and I think the measures we have lost contact because they are focused only on the insurgency, not displacements, not Shiite on Shiite violence where we are now having to fight in the south, not growing Kurdish and Arab engagement in areas like Mosul where the intensity is rising, not on the displacement of Sunni and Shiite on a local level which is going on almost regardless of the insurgent campaign.

More broadly, if I look internationally, important as Iraq is, I do see that we are not giving sufficient attention to Afghanistan and

Pakistan. I do not believe that we have focused enough or know what to do in terms of Iran. We are pursuing a diplomatic option, which I think is valuable, but I don't know if we have a broader option. I think all of us watch what is happening in the Arab-Israeli states and Lebanon, and see the problem is growing without any clear answers and perhaps without the attention and effort that is needed there.

Again, I will go back in terms of the broader war on terrorism. We look at this far too often as something directed at us. What I see is an ongoing problem in stability in virtually every country in the Middle East, driven by a deep debate over the future of Islam, demographic pressures, and economic pressures where we have no clear strategy, no aid programs, no strong country teams and a public diplomacy which I think virtually everyone here would recognize as almost completely ineffective. These are problems which we do need to have contact with, and we have to have contact with them on a much better level regardless of what we do in Iraq.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

General Batiste.

General BATISTE. Mr. Chairman, I agree with Senator Lugar. I am certainly not a defeatist. I am not anti-war. I am a career army officer, two-time combat veteran, and when we go to war, we win. There is the American way of war. And part of that is developing a strategy that is hitting on all cylinders—diplomatically, politically, economically and militarily. But it is my view that this administration took us to war with a flawed plan and has been firing on only one cylinder largely for over 6 years. We cannot win this effort in Iraq, however we define that, with the military component of strategy alone.

I also believe that we cannot attribute all the violence in Iraq to al-Qaeda or al-Qaeda-affiliated organizations, as has been said previously. There is a tendency now to lump it all together, call it al-Qaeda. Be very careful of that. This is a very complex region. Al-Qaeda is certainly a component but there are larger components. Al-Qaeda is a worldwide organization that recognizes no national boundaries, and it is in areas where we ought to be focused.

I believe our current strategy is destroying our military with little to show for it at a point in time in our history when none of us ought to sleep well at night thinking about that. We have a failure in diplomacy. What is our Middle East Strategy? How does Iraq fit into all of that?

In one sense, I keep asking myself the question: Why are the borders with Iran and Syria porous and unsecured today as they were in March 2003? How in the world are we ever going to be successful in a counterinsurgency when we haven't isolated the problem, but continue to allow extremists from the East and extremists from the West to influence what is happening in Iraq? It is a failure in diplomacy.

I know there are friends and neighbors in that region with a vested interest in the future of Iraq who would work with us if we made the case properly. We have the best military in the world. No question about it. We can all be enormously proud of it. But the current policy that we are on now is, frankly, letting down every American serving today, and again, the solution in Iraq cannot be

purely military, and that is where we are putting all of our eggs into one basket, and the hard work diplomatically, politically and economically is lagging, has been since we went into this conflict.

Chairman LANTOS. Dr. Kagan.

Mr. KAGAN. Mr. Chairman, I read Senator Lugar's speech with great interest, of course. I was intrigued by his emphasis on the importance of the domestic time line as the limiting factor here. It seemed to me reading carefully, and I was remiss in not bringing my own quotations from the speech, that he was implying that he thought it was possible that the surge, the new strategy would be able to improve security but not in a time frame that he thought domestic will would support.

I would submit that that is not a fixed quantity necessarily, and it is something over which the people in this room and the people in this area in general have some influence, and I would say that if it were decided, and clearly this is not the consensus of the people in this room or in this town, but if it were decided that what was important was creating time for the new strategy to succeed, I believe that more could be done along those lines.

As I have said, I have been a critic of the Bush administration and the way that it has conducted this strategy from 2003, even before 2003, to January 2007, and I have also been critical of the administration's failure to accompany the military surge with non-military efforts, and I laid out as a result of a significant planning effort a proposal for precisely such non-military efforts to accompany the surge in a report that AEI released at the end of April, shortly before my second trip to Iraq.

The Iraq Planning Group was from the outset not designed to produce a purely military solution, and I do think that it is very important to stand up these other elements of national power and use them properly. But the fact that we have not done that does not mean necessarily that the right thing to do is to wind down the military component. One might say that if you think that the priority is on non-military instruments of power, then the priority of our efforts here perhaps should be to focus on driving the administration to using the non-military efforts of power more effectively in tandem with a military strategy that I believe is an essential accompaniment, if nothing else, to that approach.

As for Plan B, you have quoted Senator Lugar, offering a number of critical requirements that he believes it needs to be able to fulfill, and I would like to just address those very briefly.

The first is that he believes that we need to continue to assist the Iraqi security forces, and that we will have to put the burden for establishing and maintaining such security as will exist in Iraq on the Iraqi security forces. He believes that we will need to continue to target terrorism in Iraq and prevent Iraq from becoming a safe haven for terrorists. He believes that we will need to deter Iran, something with which I very much agree, and he believes that we must reassure or allies in the region.

He sees somehow the redeployment of significant numbers of American combat forces out of Iraq as leading to these goals. I find it hard to follow that logic entirely.

As Professor Cordesman has testified, as we have all testified in fact, it is very clear that the Iraqi security forces are not now capa-

ble of establishing or maintaining security in the country, will not be capable of doing so for some time on their own. If we pull out and if we cease to provide security or attempt to provide security, then who will provide security? Who will provide order in Iraq? What will prevent Iraq from descending into complete chaos, full-scale civil war, and possibly genocide?

It is very hard for me to imagine in such a context the Iraqi Government, which would probably, in my view, at that point decide to complete a genocide in order to solve the Sunni problem using the old hoof and mouth disease solution, would continue to tolerate our presence in Iraq. It is not clear to me what purpose they would see us serving if we were not actually attempting to help them stabilize their country, and it is rather clear to me that the security forces would collapse in the face of such a challenge. I don't believe we would continue to be training them.

I don't see how we would target terrorism without continuing to be present in the country and conducting the sorts of operations that we are conducting right now. The intelligence that we are using to identify and attack al-Qaeda targets, and I fully agree that there is a great deal of violence going on in Iraq that is not attributable to al-Qaeda, but General Petraeus has testified that there are 40 to 60 foreign fighters a year who travel into Iraq; that foreign fighters comprise some 90 percent of suicide attacks in Iraq. Almost all of these are filtered through the al-Qaeda network, and they generate a disproportionate percentage of the casualties, and almost all of the spectacular attacks.

I do not see how we will be able to continue to target these people who have adopted as their deliberate strategy fermenting civil war, sectarian conflicts so that they establish their bases in areas that are then racked by violence. I don't see how we can continue to target terrorists if we withdraw or dramatically reduce our presence there.

I don't see how we would deter Iran by pulling out, allowing the situation to collapse, and allowing Shiia militias, which are not backed heavily by Iran, particularly Mugtada Al-Sadr's Jajal Mechte, to cease control. I think that Iran would be greatly strengthened, and I very much fear an Iranian bid for Hajemini that would result from our withdrawal. I don't see how Iran would be in any way deterred by the removal of our forces.

Lastly, I don't see how it would reassure our allies to abandon to its fate an ally that we already have now in Baghdad, and this is something that concerns me very greatly because America's future credibility is very much on the line here. For good or ill, we have helped establish this government. We pledged to defend it. We have sacrificed much blood and treasure to do so. We have not done it in the best possible way. We have made many mistakes. We are now trying to correct them.

But if we simply abandon this government to its fate and allow it to collapse, why should anyone in the region trust us again? Why should anyone want to rely on our support? How could anyone be reassured by the notion that as soon as things become difficult we will leave and abandon to their fate the people that we have helped to establish a democracy? That concerns me greatly.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Ms. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. These days you are quoting Senator Lugar, we are quoting Senator Lieberman. Suddenly these two Senators are even more brilliant than before, as long as they agree with our positions. But in the interest of time because Mr. Burton has to get to another hearing, I would like yield him my time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Burton, please.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, and I really appreciate that.

I think we need to make sure that all the facts as we see them are on the table. There is an organization called Vote Vets, which is a political action committee that is designed to elect Democrat Congressmen and Senators, and General Batiste appeared in a commercial for them. They are going to spend \$500,000 across the country in a TV ad campaign targeting—let us see—Senator Collins; let me get all of them here. Well, all of the Senators that are being targeted are Republicans. This is a Democrat PAC. So you know, I think we ought to let it be known that Mr. Batiste has that position. He is there to elect Democrats, and this is a partisan issue.

[Applause.]

Mr. BURTON. Mr. Chairman, who did that?

Gary, I don't do that when you make a crazy statement, so I hope that you won't when I make a logical statement which is true. I hope you won't interfere. Now, let me go on with the rest of the time that we have, okay?

I think it is real important that a lot of the things that are being said here prior to us getting a report from General Petraeus in September could be a self-fulfilling prophecy because you are beating up on this program before it has even had a chance to work. It is just starting. We are talking about July and August. Why in the world we can't wait for 60 days after all of this to at least get a report from General Petraeus just eludes me.

But no, we have got to get out right now. We have got to make a big change right now because it can't work. Well, you don't know that it can't work until you get a report, until you see the facts.

Now, let me just talk a little bit about history because a lot of the witnesses testified about history, and I am very impressed with history.

George Washington was undermined by four or five of his Generals during the Revolutionary War because he hadn't won any battles. Congressman Lee and the Continental Congress led the fight to get Washington removed, and it wasn't until he crossed the Delaware and attacked the Hessians at Trenton that things started to turn around, but there was a tremendous opposition to him because he couldn't get the job done. The Congress was criticizing him left and right as were his Generals that were supposed to be supporting him.

Abraham Lincoln had a General he put in charge named McClellon. McClellon said, hey, Lincoln isn't handling this war right. We ought to start negotiating with the South to solve this problem, possibly setting up a separate country, and Lincoln was sure to be defeated when McClellon ran against him on this plat-

form, and it wasn't until military progress was made when Sherman took Atlanta and Grant took Richmond that things turned around. Once again, there was a hue and cry across this country to the Congress, and with the military saying that Lincoln was wrong.

Adams had a heck of a deal when he negotiated with France, and Jefferson and everybody said we were caving in to France, and yet Adams was right, and what he did led to ultimately the purchase of Louisiana, the Louisiana Purchase which ended up with a country becoming coast to coast. That wouldn't have happened if Adams had listened to his adversaries in Congress, like Jefferson, who became a President of ours.

Now, the point I am trying to make is there always are people in the Congress when a war goes on and it is not going well that want to undermine the commander in chief and start making the decisions themselves. We have 535 Members of Congress, and it seems to me that for all of us to get together and make a coherent decision on how we ought to conduct our foreign policy and our war is almost impossible, and that is why we elect a President who has the ability as commander in chief to make decisions.

Now, that is not to say that President Bush has not made mistakes. There is no question a lot of mistakes have been made.

In World War II, General Eisenhower, the commander of our forces, they sent 800 men in full combat gear in a mock exercise off the coast of England, and they all drowned. Had that been publicized, we probably would not have had the Invasion of Normandy which led to the free of Europe and an end to the war.

I guess the point I am trying to make is let us give General Petraeus a chance. I know that the two gentlemen who oppose what is going on and think we ought to change things right now, I understand that you are great seers of the future, that you can see into the future with your crystal ball and you know exactly what is going to happen, but I don't. This may be a terrible mistake. It may not work. I don't know. But I know that Congress appropriated money through September, and we charged General Petraeus to come back and give us a report in September on the progress, and that is when we should start making decisions on the future, not now, not before we have all the facts, and I appreciate you gentlemen's position.

General Batiste, I appreciate your position. I know you are making commercials for the opposition. Well, that is all right, but it should be made known before everybody that is televising this thing today.

And I want to say, Dr. Kagan, you are very thoughtful. I agree with what you have said, and I think it is the right approach.

And all I would like to say is that I hope that the people of this country and the Members of Congress will stay with General Petraeus until September, get a report, and then make a decision on what should be done in the future. These gentlemen may be right. I don't know. I don't have a crystal ball, but I know one thing. We need to give this surge at least a chance, give General Petraeus, the man that is in charge, a chance, and then get a report from him.

I thank the—

Mr. WU. Will the gentlelady yield?

Mr. BURTON. I don't have any more time, but I will tell you, you are going to have plenty—

Mr. WU. I was asking the ranking member whose time this is.

Mr. BURTON. It was the gentlelady's time.

Mr. WU. Yes.

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman will be recognized on his own time.

Mr. WU. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. I will now give the floor to General Batiste because his name was raised by my colleague, Mr. Burton.

General BATISTE. Mr. Burton, if I were elected to this Congress, I would be sitting on the aisle on your side probably next to you. I am a Republican. I voted for our President twice. I joined Vote Vets as a member of their board because I believe in what they are doing. It is all about what is right for this country. It is all about what is right for our military. With my joining the organization, it is now bipartisan in every respect.

I believe in the same concepts, sir, you believe in. I am a die-hard Republican. Sir, this is not about partisan politics. That is the whole point. That is why we are here today. This is about what is good for America.

I support General David Petraeus, my West Point classmate. I know he will render an accurate report in September, but this goes way beyond him. He needs help. He needs a nation mobilized. He needs a national strategy that makes sense; that is firing on all cylinders, diplomatically, politically, and economically. He needs an interagency process in Washington that is not dysfunctional.

This Nation has some serious problems and we need to address them head on, Republicans, Democrats, it doesn't matter. We are Americans, and we are in trouble. Our military today is in trouble. Our army and Marine Corps are at a breaking point. That doesn't sit well with me.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chairman, if I could reclaim my time for just a minute.

Chairman LANTOS. Of course.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And I know that the other gentlemen will want to say, but General Batiste, thank you for your service. Thank you for your brave sacrifice, 31 years in the United States Army. That is truly amazing.

But I am wondering if you really think in your heart of hearts—I am sorry, the bells are going off here for a vote—that the folks that you are targeting in this political organization that you are involved with, I wonder if the ones who are going to run against those targeted Republicans, and they are only Republicans that are being targeted, if you think that they are really going to join you in this calling that you have of focusing our mission, and your quote is “to defeat worldwide Islamic extremists,” I wish you much success with that, General, because I don't believe that for a minute.

I believe that the people that you are targeting are the ones who will want to help you in this worldwide fight against Islamic extremists, and the folks that you are working to defeat will be substituted by people who will use brave Generals like you as a shield

and as sort of a front to make them look like they are pro-military when in fact they will be always against any war at any time in any place. My humble opinion.

I love everybody being involved in democracy. In my homeland, in Cuba, we don't have democracy. So I like parties and I like PACs and I like people running ads and targeting and advocating for policies, no problem. But I believe, General, that maybe you might getting used and these people who you are targeting for defeat and the ones who will take their place will in any way, shape or form help you in fighting what I believe is a noble mission, which is focusing on Islamic radical extremists, but that is my point of view.

But thank you for your service, and thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Would you care to comment, General Batiste?

General BATISTE. Ma'am, only to say that when I vote now, I am very careful, as I think all Americans are, to study who the candidates are, to understand their positions, to make a judgment on their intelligence and their moral courage to do the right thing, and my vote in the last election went Republican in some cases, and Democratic in the other. We have to use our good intelligence to make these decisions.

I think our founding fathers intended us to elect people to go to Washington to represent the people, and over time, over the last decade somehow we, the people, have abrogated these responsibilities, and send people to Washington to be our leaders. I believe that is a big mistake. It is not what our founding fathers intended. We elect people to go to Washington to represent the people, and we have stepped away from that. And my support for these ads was nothing more than a wake-up call to some Republicans that I don't think understand the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Do you think that they are——

General BATISTE. Perhaps they are clouded.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. General, do you think that there are some Democrats who might not understand? I mean, I am just so puzzled that——

General BATISTE. Sure, and I won't——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [continuing]. A wonderful Republican like you would only be involved——

General BATISTE. And I won't vote for those——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [continuing]. In ads targeting Republicans. It is puzzling.

General BATISTE. I wouldn't vote for those Democrats.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes, but the ads are only focusing on Republicans. I just find that interesting.

Mr. Chairman, I am done. You can go back to your line of questions.

Chairman LANTOS. Professor Cordesman, do you want to comment on Mr. Burton's observations?

Mr. CORDESMAN. Mr. Chairman, I don't have any partisan links or ties, but what bothers me, not about what Congressman Burton said, but about the whole process of what has happened here over the years since 2003, is we have never had a coherent plan or

strategy. We have never had honest metrics of the progress we are or are not making.

The report on the surge will be very important. I think we have all said regardless of what happens, it can't be decisive as early as September, but what really bothers me more than anything else and where the Congress should play, I think, a critical role is insisting that the administration has a credible political plan, a credible plan for tying in economic aid, a credible plan to look beyond what happens in Baghdad, and a credible plan to deal with what happens in the region, whether we succeed or fail.

What bothers me, having lived through Vietnam, and lived through a President Lyndon Johnson, who could not cope with these realities, is we cannot afford to repeat that experience, and that, to me, is the horrifying parallel that I see. If that plan exists, it needs to be presented honestly, objectively, and in ways that can win the support of the American people and provide enduring support for success. If it can't, we should not remain there.

Chairman LANTOS. Dr. Kagan, do you have a comment?

Mr. KAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to make just one simple point in this discussion. You can't say that you support General Petraeus and say that you oppose this strategy. This is his strategy. This is not a strategy that was foisted upon him by anyone. This is a strategy that he developed and his staff with the active assistance of General Odierno and his staff over the course of months that he is now implementing.

He has said repeatedly that he believes that this strategy is the only way to proceed, that it is the right way to proceed.

I won't waste the committee's time reading the various quotations that I could offer from him, but I am happy to provide them. But he has made it very clear that this is what he thinks is necessary to do to succeed in Iraq, and so I do take issue with the notion that it is possible to parse your support for General Petraeus and say, yes, he is a very great commander, yes, he understands the situation very well, yes, I support him, but I also believe that we should overrule him and we should compel him to execute a plan that is very different from the one that he developed and that he believes will work.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for your service. I don't think you need to be lectured by anybody about your patriotism. I thank you—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If the gentleman would yield. Who lectured the General on patriotism?

Mr. ACKERMAN. It certainly was not you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Oh.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I think, General, what you have experienced a little bit earlier is what a lot of us have experienced over the past several years. Thank you, not just for your participation and your service to our country and the military, but for participating in our democracy in an active way and having an active mind, and open to viewing situations and evaluating them in an intelligent way, and that you are criticized for that and taken to task because you have a political view that might be different from someone else's,

I think, is not really why you have risked your life and fought so bravely for our country, and for someone who thinks that they can bully you out of doing the things that you are doing was quite a misjudgment.

You are a General who served twice, two active tours of duty. Imagine the intimidation that is felt by people who are not in the military, who are not Generals, who have their patriotism challenged because they dare to speak up in this democracy that we all profess to cherish so much.

So thank you for doing and thank you for speaking out. I think that is equally important in your civilian role. And I might say that even as you are a confessed Republican, if you were sitting on that side of the aisle in this Congress, I suspect you might be voting with us on an awful lot of issues.

Let me ask a question of Dr. Kagan, if I may. First, I am glad so many have found it appropriate to be critical of the administration and the way they have executed their policies and conducted the war. But I am listening to this almost like I listen to the weather reports where the weatherman keeps warning everybody there is a 30 percent chance of rain, 30 percent chance of rain, thunder showers, 30 percent chance, and everybody brings their umbrella, and the next day after ruining everybody's day and canceling their picnic, he said, see, I told you there was a 70 percent chance it wasn't going to rain. It depends where you put the emphasis.

Your criticism of the administration, and I know indeed you are modest and didn't indicate that indeed you helped formulate General Petraeus and the President's strategy, but did call for a surge of an exponential factor of 20, and I think the reports were maybe a surge of 400,000 troops, or whatever the number was, but it was certainly a much bigger number than 20,000. But let me ask you this.

Insomuch as you have indicated that there was a flawed execution of this war, and that is the basis of your criticism, which I thought was the intent of what you were saying, in your gut do you think the administration is capable of conceiving and carrying out a strategy without all of the "if this happens" and "maybe that happens," but just general gut reaction?

Can the people there with the thinking they have without any outside influence carry this thing off to whatever your concept of victory is?

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, I place a tremendous amount of confidence in General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, and in the excellent staffs that we have in Iraq who have been responsible for developing these plans which they did without my input certainly, and on the basis of the situation as they saw it, which they are executing, and they are aggressively reaching back to Washington, to the administration for the assistance that they need.

I believe that they are in the best position to understand the situation in Iraq and to develop the plans. I know General Petraeus has—

Mr. ACKERMAN. I know they are in the best positions because they are the guys with their hands on the throttle, but that wasn't

my question. It wasn't: Who is driving the train?, but: Are they going to drive it into the wall?, is my question.

Mr. KAGAN. I believe that the administration is capable of supporting General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker with—

Mr. ACKERMAN. That is not my question. We are all capable of support. We all love General Petraeus, everybody. Raise your right hand. We love General Petraeus.

Is this administration—maybe I will go on to somebody else because I don't think you are going to answer the question.

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time—

Mr. ACKERMAN. Could the rest of the panel answer the question, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman LANTOS. Very briefly.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I don't honestly know. I think we have a much better secretary of defense. It will be an interesting historical question as to who is the worst secretary of defense in our history, whether it was Secretary McNamara or Secretary Rumsfeld. I think we can all write an interesting comment on that. Whether Secretary Gates can tie this structure together, I simply do not know.

Essentially to watch the National Security Council abdicate its existence, and appoint what I think is a competent General without any clear structure under him that we yet understand at this point in time is deeply disturbing. I think the Secretary of State has made progress but this can't be run by General Petraeus or Ambassador Crocker. It has to be a coherent national effort led by an administration that has leaders that can formulate plans and capabilities that go far beyond what happens in September.

If that capability exists, it has not yet been demonstrated, and that is the key to winning, I think, any kind of broader or popular and enduring support. To me, it is deeply frightening in a way that we are this far along in a war and we still don't have a meaningful structure within the administration to plan, manage, and conduct it.

General BATISTE. I believe what is lacking is an over-arching national strategy. In support of whom? In support of our troops in Iraq. No strategic focus in the Middle East, that is a national problem. A nation not mobilized, that is a national problem. A crisis in leadership above the Generals and the ambassador in Iraq, a military in trouble.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Can this administration do it?

General BATISTE. I don't know. God help us if they can't.

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for having to run back and forth here. I have a markup in another one of my committees.

Let me just note again, as I mentioned earlier, that I am dismayed by premature declarations of failure, and let me just note Dan Burton in no way questioned this General's patriotism. I sat here and listened to that. It is one thing to suggest that someone is involved in politics and it is another thing to question one's patriotism.

General, we would be very happy to have you hear in Congress with us, and that would be a wonderful thing, and I am not so sure I disagree with the comments that you have made today. In fact, what I see is that the surge, which I have supported and have supported the President since the very beginning, is the last chance the Iraqi people, and if they do not step up after this, we will withdraw. We will begin withdrawing because that is the nature of our system. We are responding to the will of the people, and it will not be a defeat for our soldiers and those people who have defended it. If that happens, it will be a defeat for this President because, Professor, I think some of the points that you have made criticizing this administration, I am not sure, I am going to have to read your remarks, General, were totally justified.

This administration, I may disagree with the analysis that we shouldn't—oh, if we had only put more troops on the ground, well, a lot of Generals, who are politically naive, I might add, may only think in terms of how many troops you have on the ground. It appears to me that this administration, this President did not make the strategic political decisions that were necessary to create some kind of stability in Iraq because it is not the military that is losing there, it is the fact that we have not been able to put the forces, the political forces at play together in a way that would create some sort of stability.

I think it was worth certainly us giving the Iraqi people a chance to be free, just as I think that we should be working with all people who struggle for freedom against tyrants throughout the world.

But let us note, Mr. Chairman, nine out of 10 suicide bombers in Iraq to this day are foreigners. Who is supplying that? Who started that? Who was involved in financing and creating the insurgency in the very beginning? It wasn't because we didn't have enough troops there. It is because we did not pay attention and call our friends, the Saudis and other Sunnis in the Gulf to task for their support in the creation of an insurgency that was murdering Americans as well as Iraqis.

The President didn't do that, and he has not done that to this day, and if we fail, it will not be a failure of our troops. It will be a failure of our President not being willing to call friendly Islamic countries to task for supporting the insurgency that was killing our troops in Iraq.

So Mr. Kagan, all I have to say is that I hope we do win. I hope this surge—because we are not winning it; it is the people of Iraq who will be winning their freedom. I would think that, however, the American people, while I accept the arguments that there is a downside to it, but if we don't have a President that is willing to call to task the people who are financing the Sunni insurgency against us to begin with, that is going to follow us home anyway.

What happened in 9/11, there weren't any Afghans for 9/11, they were all Saudis. Fourteen of the nineteen hijackers were Saudis, and the financing, and the panel please correct me if I am wrong, that the Saudis have been financing a great deal of the insurgency, the Sunni insurgency that has plagued us and plagued the people of Iraq, and this President hasn't done anything about it.

Go right ahead, Professor.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I think, frankly, Congressman, two things. One can only be address and really would require a closed session. We are identifying people as foreign suicide bombers publicly. I think, as a former director of intelligence assessment, the basis for doing that is extraordinarily dubious, and often politically convenient. It often simply isn't clear who is there and what is happening.

I think there is a massive problem with private capital in the Arab world. It is steadily increasing. You have some \$500 billion worth of assets outside the Arab world. The truth is that people are learning now to move money by courier and privately. The governments involved, I think, have made major progress but simply cannot control it.

But when you look at the insurgency inside Iraq, the Zaquari movement was certainly not funded by the Saudis or people in the Gulf. It began with very few resources, to the extent that I think you can trace the flow of money, a lot of it was private, a lot of it came through sources that might have known better, which were sources that I think should be left, again, to closed session.

But the truth of the matter is it takes very little money to run these efforts. You can tax the local population. You have some 400 arms depots. We still have not secured all of the weapons and munitions left over from the Saddam Hussein regime. And when you look at where the in-flow of these foreign volunteers are coming from, they are not coming across the Saudi border or the Jordanian border. They are coming from Syria; there may be some through northern Iran.

So I think that we need to be very, very careful about assuming that you can solve any of these problems by putting pressure on outside states. Unfortunately, you can sell finance far too much of this, and you can privately finance it in ways which all of the progress we have made in counterterrorism is not yet ready to control.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you, Professor. And I think that we have a little bit of a disagreement as to what influence, but I do think there is some truth in what you are saying, of course. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Congressman Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the members of our panel for their most insightful testimony.

I note with interest that General Batiste first received his commission as an officer in 1974, as a graduate of the military academy at West Point. I also note with interest that General Batiste not only has had a most distinguished record as an officer, as a soldier, and that he could have had a most brilliant military career if he had decided to stay on. You probably would have been a Four-Star General by now if you had stayed on.

But it appears to me that you made a conscious decision in terms of some of some of the things that you felt very strongly about this country, and I want to commend and thank you for your most eloquent statement that you made before this committee.

I want to ask all you three gentleman, I alluded earlier in my testimony about the observations made by Former Chief of Staff, Army Former Chief of Staff General Shinseki, was General Shinseki off the mark when he made that remark that he was se-

verely criticized by Secretary Rumsfeld under Secretary Wolfowitz that we had to have hundreds of thousands of soldiers if we are serious about taking control in Iraq. Was he wrong in that assessment? Comments?

General BATISTE. No, sir, he was not wrong. As I recall his answer, it was several hundred thousand. He had read the plan developed by U.S. Central Command. The sad truth is that we went to work in Iraq with a plan that was fatally flawed. It is all water under the bridge but you asked the question.

The planning to build the peace after the fall of the regime was really never done, and General Garner was handed this problem set weeks out at a point in time, in April 2003, there should have been a net call to all commanders in the field to say change in mission. We are now transitioning from attacking in zone to building the peace. A new set of requirements, new set of tasks, new sets of capabilities that you need, people like myself with experience in the Balkans understand what that means, but the problem was it was never planned for, it was never resourced, and it was never rehearsed—an incredible failure, violations of principles of war and ignoring the lessons of history.

At that point in time we had a window of opportunity to do this right, but the capability was not there, and this insurgency took root for a number of reasons in its infancy and continued to grow and grow and grow, and our great brigades and divisions continue to attack in zone and create more enemies than there were insurgents geometrically. And when we finally figured it out, it was too late. That is what happened.

Mr. FALCOMVAEGA. Professor Cordesman.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Congressman, I think that General Shinseki would probably be the first to say that the number he quoted was a number that he had to improvise under the pressure of repeated questions, but the basic principal did we need more troops, I think the answer to that is yes.

As General Batiste has said, and I think Dr. Kagan has said, the problem went far beyond that. There simply was a reluctance to believe you had serious problems potentially between Sunni and Shiite. There was a lack of understanding of the degree to which the exiles we were working with were dependent on Iran, had religious ties and were essentially non-secular. We paid little attention to the Kurdish issue. We paid almost no attention to economic aid.

There is a great deal of criticism of Ambassador Bremer, but understand that Ambassador Bremer came to the CPA with no aid plan, no aid money, and no effort at that side of stability, and we had no political plan of any kind until the CPA was formed.

So I think that we are looking at a much broader set of issues and the warning for all of us is that nations building and stability operations can't be improvised, and that was a warning I heard many in the Interagency Forum give back in 2002. Decisions were made to ignore that advice, but I think the interagency record and the State Department planning and coordinating body would make it very clear that very many people provided detailed warning on all of these issues, including senior members of the State Department and the intelligence community.

Chairman LANTOS. Dr. Kagan.

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, I have not only publicly agreed with that premise, again not specifically about the specific numbers, but about the principle, and even gone so far as to try to identify the intellectual roots of the way of thinking that got us there, because I think that we do need to address it, and do more than address it in the context of the failures of the specific war.

I argued that a similar problem, that is, the difficulties in Afghanistan as well, which I thought was far less successful than was being painted at the time, and in this regard I have, unfortunately, been a true prophet.

But I would just like to make two brief points. The basic point that General Shinseki was trying to make is that nation building and counterinsurgency, although he wasn't really thinking of that, I think, at that moment, are troop-intensive occupations. They require significant presence of American forces.

I think if you look at the situation today you will find that that is no less true, and you will find that the notion that the situation as it is now could be improved by reducing the number of forces will be once again to lose the lesson that General Shinseki was trying to make.

It is an argument that is based on the premise that we had our shot and lost it, and I would like to simply say my study of military history tells me that that is not the way wars work. American military history is actually full of wars which began with catastrophic mistakes and catastrophic defeats. There was a whole book written about this in the mid-1980s called *America's First Battles*, making the point that we had lost the first battle of every war we fought until 1965, and that is a questionable victory in my view as well.

I do not believe that it is necessarily the case that you get one shot in war, and if you blow it, that is it. If that had been the case, the North would have lost the Civil War. Washington would have lost the revolution. We would have lost a great many of the wars, especially World War II, which, after all, also began with a catastrophic intelligence failure leading to a catastrophic initial defeat.

Granted insurgency is different. Every case is unique and so on, but I do not believe that there is historical precedent for saying that because we made the mistake in 2003, that I think we all agree was a disastrous mistake and should have been avoided and could have been avoided, that therefore the conclusion is that we should simply give this up as a bad job and recognize that it is hopeless.

Mr. FALCOMA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I don't want to rehash old questions during my time but to say this. Some Members of Congress have chosen to speak very aggressively on this front, on these hard and difficult questions. All of us carry the deep, deep burden in our hearts about the nature of the conflict, and I can assure you that there is a significant undercurrent in this Congress that has worked for a very long time to look for the responsible way forward that will reduce our casualties, leave the possibility of a stabilized Iraq, with some potential hope for a future, and begin a drawdown process.

I think that is the question before us, and this generally is defined in terms of a three-legged stool—the political, economic, and security confluence that needs to take place in order for that potential reality to happen.

There is one component though of this that I would like you all to address that is sometimes overlooked. I believe, Professor Cordesman, you did touch upon it. Perhaps, General, you did as well. It is the international component. It is the necessity that the neighborhood, if you will, be aggressively engaged in trying minimally to provide a backstop should there be a collapse of the security situation in Iraq so that this does not spill over into a larger conflagration into the Middle East and further empower the geopolitical angst of Iran.

As I have talked to Middle Eastern leaders about this, on the one hand there is our difficulties in Iraq have given rise to the collective idea that I have never seen before, that some cooperation, particularly between the Sunni Arab countries and in some degree joined by the Turks as well as the Pakistanis, is necessary to meet that challenge of providing of backstop, and I think that is a positive movement. It is forcing the Arab community, perhaps more moderate elements as you have alluded to, to think collectively about the regional security.

How do we continue to compel those countries which seem to be acting, if they act independently, do not possess either the resources or the political strength to effect such a change, not only to prevent larger conflagration but also to assist us in those three goals that I laid out earlier—a stabilized Iraq that gives a chance for a potential future there, and hastens a drawdown of our own troops?

Mr. CORDESMAN. Congressman, if I may reply. I wish we could, but I hear the idea that somehow we should have a group of regional allies do this, sometimes it is NATO. The reality is this: You can influence these countries bilaterally to act in their own interest. I think it is very clear that today virtually all of these countries see this as our war, started for our reasons, and our problem. They are willing to act in terms of their own defense, their own borders, but until very recently, and indeed one of the side effects of what has happened in Anbar, most of the Sunni states were beginning to think the United States was creating a Shiite-dominated regime inside Iraq, which was one reason why the King of Saudi Arabia stated that our occupation was illegitimate.

Can we get them to put in a meaningful security presence? No. Would that security presence replace ours with any hope of stability? No. They will be Sunnis. They will be operating in a Shiite and Kurdish-dominated country. They have no power projection capability, no training in these missions, and they simply are not willing to do it. They will basically strengthen their own borders, deal with their own security problems, try to block refugees.

So I think what can you do? Patient diplomacy might get help in economic areas like debt relief. Engagement might improve security of borders, but the two leaky borders are essentially Syria and Iran.

I served in Iran. I have often advocated talking to them. I think the idea that engagement with Iran will help our position in Iraq

is, frankly, ridiculous, not under this regime and not in time to matter.

So the honest answer is in the elements that matter most, the most we can do talking to Turkey, talking to the neighbors, is to minimize what could be interference, support of given factions, reinforce the Arab League's interest in creating a national rather than a Sunni solution, work as closely with the Turks as possible to prevent a blow up on the Kurdish problem, deter Iran as best as we can, but understand that win, lose or draw gets up, not Iraq's neighbors, that is going to determine the outcome in any favorable sense.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Scott of Georgia.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you.

Let me start with, first of all, General Batiste, may I just say to you that I admired the way that you handled the confrontation. I thought it was a class act, and I am proud of you. I think this is a situation of going forward now. There is all kind of blame; we know mistakes, the lies that have been done, the deceit, how we got into this mess in the first place. But here is where it is for me. Whatever strategy we move going forward has got to be on two constants.

Number one constant is the will of the American people. We can have all kinds of elaborate schemes about going forward, but if the will of the American people is not here, so it seems to me the first order of business is what is it that the American people want us to do now.

This Congress and this President are at its lowest ebb. Congress now hovers around 19 or 20 percent approval, lower even than the President, and the number one reason is our failure to find a solution and get us out of Iraq.

So it is clear to me that the issue that we ought to be addressing here, number one, is: How quickly, how safely can we get our troops out of this Iraqi situation? The foremost part of that situation to me that the American people are upset with is in the midst of not just a civil war but multi-layers of civil wars. This isn't what we were designed to do.

When we gave the charge in Congress, I wasn't here, but the order was we give the President charge to use the force he needs to secure and make sure Iraq does not have weapons of mass destruction. There was no mention about toppling a regime. There was no mention about setting up a democracy here. All of this was made up on the way in. That is what got us into this situation. We are there under false premises. So there is no way we can even win going forward. We have won on what the American people are saying.

Second to the American will is our resources. We don't have the resources to do this anymore. Our military is broken down. We have young men and women who are over there on not just their second or third tours of duty, but their fourth, some their fifth. We have equipment breaking down. Where are we going to get these soldiers from? We are not meeting recruiting goals. We have a backlog on veterans, and we are treating our veterans and the health care of them in a dismal manner. Just look at Walter Reed.

There are all kinds of issues. These, to me, are the two issues that the American people want us to deal with—how to get us out of this and cut down on reduction of loss of life of our troops.

It seems to me that initially the policy we had going into Iraq and dealing with Iraq was a policy that I think we need to revisit and possibly do, and that is an area of containment. I don't think now we can just abandon this area, but we certainly can get our young men and women and cut down on the losses of our resources, and start to rebuild our military back up, and respond to the will of the American people and begin to redeploy the troops out. This is the pattern in which I think that we ought to be going and be going very quickly.

I believe this, and I will get your comment on this, that this September vote, I believe we are going to finally see this Congress stand up and do exactly what the American people want us to do because no more supplemental emergency funding for this war will that be, and September will be the vote for the year's appropriation, and I do not believe that this Congress will appropriate a continuation of this.

So I think we need to move forward on those two points, and I would glad to hear your responses to it.

Chairman LANTOS. The responses will have to come in writing because you have used up your time, Mr. Scott.

Mr. Tancredo.

Mr. TANCREDO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two questions.

First, that the President stated in December in that speech he made with regard to the war, that was quoted, I think it was quoted, part of it was quoted anyway by the chairman. He said, "I am going to establish November as a benchmark, and by November." He said, "the Iraqi Government will be in control of all 18 provinces of Iraq."

I guess my question to Mr. Kagan is: What do you think will happen if that is not the case? And don't you think also that he would have only made that statement if there had been a Plan B?

I mean, I can't understand why he would have said such a thing because the next question anybody would ask: Well, what if it isn't that way by November? So that is one, and that is more, I guess, from a geo-political standpoint.

But on a very much more basic tactical level, we have had a lot of information provided to us by the military in regard to exactly how many Iraqi troops are competent and can be deployed and can be relied upon, and I wonder—and the last time, I may be wrong in this, but it sticks in my mind that 120,000 were identified as being in that category. If that is true, then can anybody on the panel tell me why of the 120,000, or if it is fewer than that, why those troops are not the ones in the Humvees that are actually patrolling the streets of Baghdad? And I guess the first question would be to, part of it would be to Mr. Kagan.

Mr. KAGAN. Well, Congressman, with all respect, I would prefer to answer the second question first if I might.

Mr. TANCREDO. Of course.

Mr. KAGAN. The Iraqi troops are in Humvees. They are patrolling. They are not all in Baghdad because they are working on providing security throughout Iraq. The providence of Ninamo is held

right now by about 18,000 Iraqi army soldiers and 20,000 Iraqi police with less than a brigade's worth of American combat power. There is an Iraqi division in Diwania which just conducted a large clearing operation against Shiia militias, I might add, it is Shiia division with relatively little assistance from the coalition. There is another Iraqi division which has been working on conducting clearing operations in Nasawia to the south as well.

Mr. TANCREDO. Let me ask you this then. Why aren't they the ones that are in harm's way to the extent that apparently we are and our military are being harmed, our military are being killed in those Humvees? Why aren't they the ones in those Humvees? That is what I want to know. The places where Americans are present every day we hear about another bomb going off, another group of Americans being killed on patrol, and I just don't understand why those Iraqis aren't in those Humvees.

Mr. KAGAN. Well, Congressman, first of all, the Iraqi army is losing soldiers at a rate of about three times the rate that American forces are losing soldiers. They are out there fighting every day. They are taking casualties. They are coming back and they are continuing to fight.

The question you are asking is sort of the deployment of Iraqi forces within Iraq that deployed three brigades into Baghdad. They are concerned about the risk of denuding the rest of the country of Iraqi forces which are essential to providing security, but the troops in Diwania, the Iraqi troops in Diwania have been in great danger, have been in serious fire fights. Iraqi troops in Anbar have been in serious fire fights, and Iraqi troops in Baghdad, whom I met with, have also been in serious fire fights.

The Iraqi army is fighting. It is fighting at various levels of competency, the various levels of skill and determination, but it is engaged in combat, and I think that the Iraqi command and the American military command have tried to make their best evaluation of how to deploy those forces in order to maintain stability where there is a basic stability and work to improve it where there isn't. But I don't think that it is fair to say that the Iraqi army is not taking risks and is not taking its share of losses in this war.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Congressman, one of the problems we have here is at the battalion level there are effective Iraqi units which do not have artillery, do not have armor, which don't have the intelligence assets to operate as yet. They are often fighting at the battalion level well. There are probably between 10 and 14 battalions that do that. There are no divisions or brigades that are as yet operating as large-scale units with all of the elements of support and officers they need.

These forces are dependent for mobility, long-range supply, air support on us. That is 14 battalions out of 92 which if you carefully read the literature are said to be in the lead but in the lead includes those units fighting closely with U.S. units.

We heard when the brigades deployed to Baghdad, at first it was they deployed, then it was 75 percent manning, then it was reduced to 60 to 65 percent manning, and unless I am mistaken the latest Department of Defense figure was 50 percent manning. That didn't mean they were ineffective, but these are new forces without the supply, without the elements they need.

You tied manpower to the units. The United States has never issued a document since 2004 on the actual manning of the Iraqi army. It is a number of people we trained and equipped. The latest report from the Department of Defense says 60 to 65 percent of those people are there. That will hopefully improve, but we are attempting to create 49 new battalions, 25 of them in 2008 to fill out that structure, plus find fill-in manpower.

Out of the police—what is referred to generally are the national police—we have no idea how many people of the trained and equipped police are there. There are maps of where these police are active. You quoted 18 providences. The police do not operate effectively as yet in any city in Iraq throughout the entire city. Out of the 12 major cities in Iraq, the police are largely ineffective as regular police in nine, and if you go beyond the sort of generalizations being made in these reports and get down to the specifics, you get a different picture.

Does that make it hopeless? No. But are they anything like ready to replace us? No, they don't come close.

Chairman LANTOS. General Batiste.

General BATISTE. I would only add I thought that was a great answer. You have to consider the complexities of the Arab culture. I am thinking of the challenges that my soldiers and I had in building these formations and training them. You have to consider that these formations don't have the equipment they need to stand even on equal footing with the insurgency with respect to heavy weapons, machine guns, things like that; communications, and certainly they need helicopters and armored vehicles. Very few of them are riding around in armored vehicles. So there is a huge difference.

I trained 15 Iraqi battalions; we trained them hard for a year. Out of those 15, two are competent, that would stand and fight in the face of the enemy.

I saw a e-mail just a couple of days ago, very dedicated decorated army captain commanding a company on a forward operating base, co-located with his partner, Iraqi army company. And orders are coming soon for that United States company to pull off of that forward operating base and leave, leave it in control of the Iraqi company, and this young man's response is, "Are you kidding me? As soon as we get the order, they are going to beat us off this place. They won't fight without us."

Chairman LANTOS. Congressman Sires.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Our efforts to train and improve and to make an army out of these groups, are we maybe shooting ourselves in the foot in the future? Because the alignments and the loyalties, I don't know if they are there with us if they ever show—if it ever shows that they can turn against us. Are you concerned about that, General? I mean, our efforts, if we train these people, I mean, down the line. They want us out now.

General BATISTE. The majority of the Iraqi people do, and you are never quite sure about the loyalties in the police for sure, and oftentimes even in the Iraqi army companies and battalions you are not quite sure, and you really don't know until that point in time when you commit them into a fight. Sometimes they perform

magnificently. I would go to battle with these people any day of the week, but more often than not that is not the case.

This society is so complex with tribal loyalties, religious royalities, Shia-Sunni, Arab-Kurd; it is a mosaic that is so much more complex than what I encountered in the Balkans in 1995 and 1996. This is hard, and I am not sure we are ever going to get it right.

Mr. SIRES. So our efforts to train, they could very well be used against us in the future.

General BATISTE. That is a very real possibility and that is probably one of the reasons why we haven't equipped a lot of these formations with the heavy weapons that technically they need to face the insurgent, at least on equal ground.

Mr. SIRES. It seems like the Balkans, we had a plan, we had our mission. In Iraq, it just seems to be helter-skelter.

General BATISTE. What we had in the Balkans was a coalition of the willing in serious numbers. I worked for a British Three-Star General as a brigade commander, and there were NATO and non-NATO contributing nations that contributed serious amounts of soldiers, battalions and larger, and we worked together. A campaign plan, a strategy that brought us all together.

In Operation Iraq Freedom, it is easy to say there are 34 or 35 countries supporting this thing, but when you peel back the onion, these countries are supplying a handful of soldiers, and they are not there to fight, and as you know, there is a chance we will lose our allies from the U.K. as well.

So we have lost the lessons that we learned in the first Gulf War. I well remember that great coalition, a French division on my right that we coordinated with all the way up in the Hail Mary axes, and a lot of other Arab countries that supported that well in serious formations, and of course, in Bosnia and Kosova, the same thing, where we had the foresight to engage diplomacy to pull this thing together, so we had a serious coalition of nations all dedicated to making it happen.

Mr. SIRES. Well, I don't get any hope at all from any of these hearings that we have that we are ever going to make any progress. I mean, I think this surge; everybody has put so much emphasis on this surge. What happens if he come back that the surge is no good? There is no real progress. I haven't heard—I have been sitting on these hearings now, we have had so many hearings, and I leave here as bewildered as I came here.

What are we doing there? Are we training the army of the future to go against us? Are we making any progress? I mean, our—

General BATISTE. Sir, this is why I started speaking out 15 months ago.

Mr. SIRES. People hate us in the region. Our world—just let me get it off my chest because I have been trying to get this off awhile. I mean, these people are not like Mets fans, you know. Even though they lose, they stick with you. [Laughter.]

Mr. CORDESMAN. Congressman, if I may make two points.

One, when we look at public opinion polls in Iraq, we find a lot of this polarization that is driven by extreme groups within. There are many Iraqis who really see Iraq as a nation, who want unity, who don't want sectarian or ethnic division. These are not something you can say, well, this unit is nationalist, this unit is sec-

tarian, this unit is ethnic. We can say there still are a lot of units whose alignments are too sectarian and too ethnic. But a lot of this depends on the political dimension.

If you get conciliation, you won't see these units split along the lines of sect or tribe or ethnicity. If you can solve the political issues, which are so critical, I think you are not going to have to worry about them suddenly taking sides.

If you can't make that, we had in Lebanon, in 1983, and I think some members of the committee may remember the briefings then, briefing after briefing from the United States Army about the Unified Lebanese Army we were creating that would hold together and be the underlying security force for Lebanon. In reality, they all split along congressional lines later or simply became inactive because we couldn't solve the political dimension.

But I don't think we should give us on the Iraqi army or the Iraqi security services simply because of the problems they have today. We just need to understand their future is tied to whether or not you have political conciliation, and this is a point which Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus has made repeatedly. You can't separate progress in the military dimension from progress in the political dimension at any level.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Manzullo.

Mr. MANZULLO. Thank you very much.

I had an opportunity to review the testimony of the witnesses, and General, if I could ask you a couple of questions. In reading your statement, I am quoting here, it says, "The enemy is worldwide, respects no national boundaries, has concentrated in areas well outside of Iraq." Then you cite Clausewitz that, "War is the extension of policy by other means."

Deeper into your testimony you point out the problem but also the goal of this administration and of every Member of Congress, and actually of every person with whom I have discussed this issue in my congressional district, and that is where you say, "Our two vital interest are that Iraq cannot become a launching pad for worldwide Islamic extremism, or become a source of regional instability, and that withdrawal cannot create a humanitarian disaster of an Iraq dominated by another state in the region."

You really pinpoint the problem, and yet we have never had an enemy like this before that is linked not by military command but by theology. Al-Qaeda is in over 90 countries, and you recognize this enemy.

My first question is: If Clausewitz is right that war is the extension of policy, and since you have stated that there was no policy, why go to war? But you move beyond that to the real question: How do we withdraw from Iraq and then not have Iraq become that launching pad of worldwide extremism or that the withdrawal cannot create a humanitarian disaster? Just a minor question.

General BATISTE. No, it is a great question, and let me just move to the second part right away. You are right, al-Qaeda is very decentralized. The organization doesn't depend on centralized control. It has the initiative. In Iraq, it has the initiative. In the whole world, it has the initiative.

Our interests in the region are significant, and it is for that reason I don't advocate a quick withdrawal. We just can't pick up and

leave. We have responsibilities. Our national strategy needs to be rethought from soup to nuts. The interagency process needs some significant rehauling so it is not dysfunctional, otherwise we will continue to not support the commander in the field with the critical things that he needs, and we need to think through what we leave behind in Iraq to do what.

There are destabilizing factors that are enormous. Kurdistan, that greater dream is one of them. The influence from Iran is another. The diplomacy that needs to kick in right now. I too lived in Iran as a young teenager, and I remember those people. They are wonderful, and I bet right now 99 percent of them can't stand the regime that they are living under. There is potential in this region that we haven't even begun to tap.

There is also potential in the American people that we haven't begun to tap because we haven't mobilized them. We haven't convinced anybody that this is serious business, that we are facing worldwide Islamic extremism, and I am convinced we are, and we better get going. The people that I talk to in upstate New York are frustrated, and I am talking Republicans and Democrats alike, it doesn't matter. They want to know what can I do, how can I contribute and be part of the solution. We have got opportunity that we have got to tap right now in this country to solve these incredible problems.

I am not sure I answered your question.

Mr. MANZULLO. Well, I don't think the question is capable of being answered because we have never faced an enemy like this before.

General BATISTE. Yes.

Mr. MANZULLO. That is why I appreciate what your statement says about the realities of what is going on. I don't know what more the American people can do, but I do agree with you that I don't believe the American people realize the extent of the al-Qaeda threat to the stability of this country. They are the ones that attacked us, and whether we went into Iraq correctly, I think everybody agrees now, at least there has been a consensus that a good portion of the enemy that we are fighting there are al-Qaeda or al-Qaeda-driven.

So now we have met the face to face, but I don't have time to ask the other people the question, but General, I would like to buy you a cup of coffee sometime and discuss this when you are in town next.

General BATISTE. Sure.

Mr. MANZULLO. I appreciate you and the other witnesses. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN [presiding]. Ms. Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you so very much. I want to thank the panel. I feel this is the beginning of a breath of fresh air with a couple of you.

We need straightforward talk. We need a reality check. Of course, I come from a bias. I don't believe in wars. I believe in defense, and so I come from that bias, and I think, General, this is the first time someone who has been on the field lays it out with the reality view. Professor, thank you for your courage in speaking out, and Mr. Kagan, a question to you.

I seem to detect that you think we ought to stay in for the long haul. I come from an area, Los Angeles, California, and my people are on me every day, we put you Democrats in the majority, get us out of Iraq. I get that constantly. I don't know how to respond because it is not a will in this Congress to raise taxes. I don't know how we are going to fund. I listened very closely to General Batiste, and we have short-changed our troops and the people of Iraq. We don't have what we need. If we are going to stay in this for the long run into, I guess, the year 2010 or 2020, how do you suggest we do it?

There are too many people in Congress that feel that we need to make permanent tax cuts. We don't have that pool of money to continue to support even our own troops, their care while they are there, and when they come home, and we don't have that pool of money to do a Marshall Plan for Iraq.

So Dr. Kagan, how would you suggest that we stay in for the long haul that I think it is going to take if we are going to stabilize Iraq?

I just want to end with this. Last year I met with the President of Egypt, and he said he warned this President against going into Iraq, and he said to me, you will never institute democracy in Iraq because the thinking of the people, the beliefs of the people, the culture and the history go in a completely different direction.

So how do we institute democracy, and how do we stand for the long haul, and how do we fund the continuation of this war?

Mr. KAGAN. Congresswoman, I am not an economist and I am not going to suggest to Congress which specific measures should be used to fund the war, but I have also been on record for a long time as indicating that I think that we need to have a significant increase in the defense budget and that we need to have a significant increase in the amount of aid that we provide to Iraq and so forth. And I will not sit here before you and tell you that tax cuts are a priority over those things.

I believe that ensuring the defense of this Nation is the number one priority, and if the correct way to fund that, and I can't take a position on this seriously not being an economist and preferring not to opine outside of my area, if the correct way to fund that is through tax increases, then I think that is what we have to do. I believe that the security of this country is the number one priority, and I fully share your concern and the concerns expressed on this panel with the lack of support that the military has received both simply in terms of funding and equipment and troops and so forth, which it clearly needs, and in terms of the additional support from the U.S. Government which is required for success in this endeavor.

So in that regard I am in agreement with you about the priority here.

As for the statement of the President of Egypt, I would note that it is a slightly self-serving statement. The President of Egypt feels himself, I believe, rather threatened by the prospect of the spread of democracy in the Middle East, and I am not sure that I would be prepared to take his word for it about what is or is not possible in an Arab state in this regard.

Can we establish democracy in Iraq? We shall see. So far we have established the rudiments of a democracy, which is now under attack.

Ms. WATSON. Okay, because my time is short, it is my belief and my feeling, and the fact that I have traveled through the area, that we will never have a Western style democracy in Iraq because we don't understand Islam. We don't understand how people think. We don't understand the history of this area. It used to be Mesopotamia-Iraq.

And in this country, we want everyone to speak English. As I understand, there were only nine, and you can correct me, nine people in our Embassy in the Green Zone that spoke the language, Karsi, Hebrew, whatever, I understand, and we don't necessarily push learning these languages.

I am out of time so if General Batiste wants to respond or the Professor.

General BATISTE. I agree. My conclusion after spending a fair amount of time there is that democracy—the notion of freedom and democracy is noble, but democracy is not consistent with the Arab culture, the tribal structure, and the religious realities in the region. We ought not to be using that as our in-state. Rather, it is some form of representative government that nobody in this room would recognize, that takes into account the tribal-sheik structure.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Just a quick comment. I think we need to be very careful here. We don't live in a democracy. We live in a republic. We have checks and balances, a rule of law, controls between the Executive Branch and the Legislature. Moreover, we have been lucky enough to evolve political parties which are moderate, concerned with the nation as well as local and domestic interests.

A lot of what went wrong in Iraq had nothing to do with Arab culture or Arab values. We have blocked local elections. We ran national elections where parties on the basis of about 6 weeks had to name at least 100 candidates, and then run nationwide without regard to local voting. Nobody knew what they stood for. The context was almost universally. The parties we knew were the sectarian or ethnic parties. We pushed people into a constitution without a representative government because the Sunnis had stood aside, and the constitution was drafted with 50 areas missing that exposed the entire new political process to a level of controversy over every issue that could divide Iraqis.

So before we write off democracy on cultural lines, I think that one thing we have to remember. This government's failures are certainly partly Iraqi, but many of this government's failures are the direct result of our incompetence and our approach to nation building, and the problems they have in conciliation were inflicted in many ways on them by us.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Just to complete the record, President Mubarak's advice certainly was not to go into Iraq, but he seems to be even more emphatic against our pulling out. I think that is where we are.

Mr. Boozman.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, you were pretty critical of Congress as far as oversight, and I don't disagree with you at all. I think we need to do a much better job in that regard.

I think one thing though that is really frustrating to me, and I am not alluding to you in this regard, but it is very frustrating—I have been to Iraq five times, I have been to Afghanistan, I have been to Kosova—to go over and talk to general officers, you know, general officers, whatever, get briefed, and then in a very bipartisan group, you know, ask the tough questions, and it is kind of, oh, we are doing fine, you know, this and that, and then again to see several of these guys a year later on television lambasting what has gone on, and I don't know what we do about that. I don't know if you—it is not appropriate to go over there and put guys under oath, you know, as you do these things, but that is a real frustration, and all of you know that that happens.

The thing—and I will let you comment, and again, I am not directing that to you by any means, and that is not a question of patriotism by any mean. My dad was in the air force for 20 years, was a master sergeant. I understand these things, but it is frustrating.

One of the things that has been very divisive in Congress has been the fact that this thing of the time line. In visiting, again as I visit with people in uniform, people in the military that are in Iraq, people anywhere, I have not found anybody in uniform that is serving over there that feels like setting a time line, telling the enemy what you are going to do ahead of time is helpful, and many of them feel that actually that puts them in greater danger. Who wants to be there the last 4 months in danger when it doesn't mean anything?

So I guess I would like for you to all to comment. I think we have got the problem of the precedent that it sets, you know, when again you arbitrarily do this without visiting with the military, whatever, against the will of the commander in chief, even if you feel like he has done a good job or a bad job, but I would really like to you—alls comments regarding that, and if you feel like that that would be helpful in the situation.

Now, I don't have any problem with the President and our military leadership looking the Iraqi leadership in the eye and say, do this, do this, shape up or we are out of there, but again that doesn't need to be broadcast to the world, and I don't see how you have any position of authority to negotiate if you saying that. Yes, sir.

General BATISTE. Let me very quickly start with the second part of that question. At the end of the day, at some point there is going to be the beginning of a deliberate withdrawal. I would come back at you and say basically I agree. The date of the September 15 report to Congress is nothing more than a huge red line on the calendar for the enemies in Iraq. We have given them the time line. They are emboldened already. They want to create as much mischief as they can, and remember they have got the initiative in Iraq right now, and they are going to continue to stir it up until the 15th of September, and then beyond. There will be other time lines after that, but at some point there won't be a point a calendar when we will begin that deliberate withdrawal.

Ms. WATSON. But as the general officer, again, if I were talking to you in Iraq, and I said, look, General, you know, are you for Congress setting a time line without consulting with any of you guys, saying we are out of here on August 15, or whatever, would you be in favor of that?

General BATISTE. I would look at you and say, my soldiers are smart. They understand there is no strategic focus in what we are doing. They are concerned. They would like to see Congress start providing oversight on the Executive Branch and at some point there will be a time line. By definition, we are not staying there forever.

My concern is where is the strategic focus? Our soldiers and Marines aren't stupid. They understand this. They understand that we are playing "whack a mole" all day after day after day.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Congressman, I think we face two problems here. One is to understand the government we are trying to set time lines with. It is a very weak government with a compromised prime minister with no experience, from the weakest of the Shiite parties caught up in intra-Shiite political fighting, where the assembly can't meet or legislate on virtually any issue, where the speaker has just been removed for striking people on the floor, and we are asking them to respond to benchmarks and time lines.

Well, you can legislate the repeal the laws of gravity as well, and I suspect, quite honestly, the results are going to be equally impractical.

More than that, one of the problems here with time lines is it is one thing to put constructive pressure on, and that I think is what we would all like to see, but as General Batiste says, we are already in some ways in a Vietnam climate. Everyone out there who is hostile to us already sees a time line. The time line is every time they take a hostile act they expand the amount of domestic resistance to our stay.

There also is one fact I hope the Congress understands about benchmarks. I think here there is the comforting feeling that if you pass a law, it matters. In Iraq, you could pass every bit of that conciliation tomorrow, and no one would believe it was a benchmark until they saw the oil money actually being distributed, the annexes actually out there. They wouldn't believe in de-Baathification until it happened, and that is one of the fundamental misunderstandings here about the way we are trying to deal with time.

Their schedule, their perception of time is not going to be mandated by anybody here. We can influence it and we should do everything possible to, but legislating it is a disaster.

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, may I respond?

Mr. BOOZMAN. Dr. Kagan.

Mr. KAGAN. Thank you.

I would like to take emphatic issue with General Batiste's assertion that the enemy has the initiative. I do not believe at this point that the enemy has the initiative. I believe that General Petraeus and General Odierno have put together a very skillful operation that is also very different from previous operations that one might call "whack a mole."

One of the things that differentiates this operation is that it is a concerted effort to attack primarily al-Qaeda sanctuaries and safe

havens just about everywhere they are in Iraq all at once. That is not something we have ever done before, and it amounts to whacking all the mole holes at the same time.

Now, will it succeed? Will it fail? I don't know, but I do know that it is a very different approach from what we have taken before, and it is not "whack a mole." But it has also given us the initiative. We are choosing very much where to fight. We are fighting in neighborhoods that the enemy has long held and that the enemy did not expect to be contested. When they realized that we were coming after them, they rigged them very heavily for defense, and that is one of the main reasons why U.S. casualties have increased.

If you look at past operations where we have conducted similar operations on a smaller scale without the coherency that this operation has, you also saw an initial surge in U.S. casualties as we went into areas that had been prepared, and then you saw a decline, often dramatic decline in U.S. casualties as the clearing operation proceeded.

I predict that you will see a similar effect here, but I think that it is really inappropriate to characterize this as a situation where the enemy has the initiative or to characterize it as "whack a mole" and more of the same when it is a very different operation.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Could you just clarify the "whacking all the moles" at the same time?

I thought before you were the whacking the moles in Baghdad, and they were going to pop up everywhere else?

General BATISTE. Why don't I take a stab at that—you know, when I was in Iraq in 2004–2005, on five occasions I had the opportunity to pull a battalion or a brigade out of contact with the enemy and move them 150 miles north or south to reengage with the enemy in an area where there was a more pressing requirement, a larger threat in somebody's mind, and of course, we did that after some discussion with senior commanders, heated as you can imagine that would be, because when I would do that I would pull Dana Petard and his wonderful brigade out of Baqubah in contact with the enemy, losing soldiers, buildings being destroyed as we spoke, asking him to pull out, move south as only the American army can do, and continue to attack in zone into a place like Diwania or Nasawia or maybe north to Talafar, who knows, whatever we were doing on that day.

The problem is as soon as we left that region, call it Baqubah, the enemy took over and killed everybody that was working with us, murdered them, unbelievably.

We finished the mission wherever we went, of course. The American army makes this happen. We are successful. But at some point we left, and all the good work we did there was replaced by the insurgent, and we found that when we moved back into Baqubah we had to retake ground that we used to own, IEDs along the route, and this cycle repeats itself over and over and over.

I take exception, very respectfully, with what Dr. Kagan said. The enemy absolutely has the initiative in Iraq. We can't predict the time and place of the next truck bomb IED that is going to kill 50 people. Are you kidding me? And this goes on and on. We don't have the troops in Iraq to properly deny the enemy sanctuary.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chairman, if I could have Dr. Kagan respond to your “whack a mole” because he was the one who said “whack a mole” at the same time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Yes, we are doing moles now.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thanks.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Kagan.

Mr. KAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

With respect, the situation is different now from what it was when General Batiste was in command in 2004 and 2005, and the operation is different. Generals Petraeus and Odierno have deployed additional surge brigades into areas that they regard as high threat insurgent bases, and they have not attacked those bases by pulling forces out of other areas where they were already in contact and fighting the enemy.

And the point of this operation is not to clear and leave immediately, and turn the area back over to the insurgency. In fact, General Odierno has been very explicit about this on a number of occasions, and he has made it very clear that he understands that problem and that the current plan is designed to avoid that problem by ensuring that we have sufficient force to remain in the areas that we are actually clearing, and see to it that they are cleared.

But it is important—

Mr. ACKERMAN. Could you explain what “clear” means?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, clear means—yes, it is a good question.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Does that mean kill? Does that mean kill or chase?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, it means different things in different places. But primarily what it means is capture or kill enemies in these insurgence safe havens right now has been our focus, but above all, to drive them out of safe havens and ensure that they have no safe havens, and that is what we have been engaged in right now in operations around the Baghdad belts and into Diwania providence.

When we move into Baghdad, clear means going house to house and ensuring that you are actually establishing stable security, and then leaving forces behind to ensure that it lasts.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Is this like—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chairman, if I may inquire on whose time you are doing these questions?

Mr. ACKERMAN. We are in between members, and we are about to go to Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. That would be great. If we could recognize Ms. Jackson Lee—

Mr. ACKERMAN. But I wanted an answer about—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Well, because I wanted to interrupt you, with all due respect, Mr. Chairman. Let us get back to regular order.

Mr. ACKERMAN. You have been successful.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much to the witnesses for their testimony, and for the committee for holding this important hearing. Let me just lay a premise.

I think that there are certain responsibilities that the Congress does have—a vigorous oversight; General Batiste listening to mili-

tary leadership and respecting their knowledge; Dr. Kagan acknowledging that, as you have indicated, that they are technically, if you will, well informed; that they have the ability to formulate military initiatives, I grant you that. I believe that General Petraeus has come in as a breath of fresh air.

But I also think that we have an enormous responsibility to the bloodletting that has occurred in the midst of our military, the depletion, as General Batiste has articulately indicated, of the army and the Marines. In fact, having gone to Iraq and Afghanistan at least once a year from the time that this ill-fated mission started, I have watched the Marines, which General Batiste can correct me, I understand that they are front-liners as one would call. They go in on the initial surge or initial combat, initial onslaught, not necessarily military terms, but they are there, and the army is there for the long term.

What we have seen is an incessant and continuous bloodshed. Surge aside, we have provided surprise. General Petraeus' strategy, I assume, as you have indicated, we are in neighborhood where others have thought—that they put up a sign, “No visitors welcome.” Great news.

But the question becomes whether or not when we have to leave that neighborhood, whether or not the sign goes up again, “No visitors allowed,” and the same reckless havoc continues.

I appreciate the position Dr. Kagan has taken because I think if you extend it, what you are suggesting is you fight your terrorists, friends fight terrorists, collaborators fight terrorists on that soil or here. That is a broken and fractured reason for most Americans now because there is not a one of us that would not link arms to fight the war on terror and are prepared to fight the war on terror, but question whether or not that battle really keeps terrorists away.

So I want to quickly ask General Batiste, and I thank Dr. Cordesman as well, and Dr. Kagan, I just want to acknowledge if I have time, but I respect what you are doing. I expect to have town hall meetings or town hall meeting on Iraq to shore up the position that I am formulating, which is to not again—that is the correct English—ever again vote for an appropriations for this war no matter what form it comes in. I have yielded to various debates and advocacies, we must do this, or troops are in jeopardy, which is to marginalize members, to frighten members, to categorize us as anti-patriotic. I think there is a point where the sacrifice takes charge over any accusations that can be made.

General Batiste, what you have said in your closing paragraph is somewhat disturbing when you say, “It is past time to refocus our national strategy and begin the deliberate withdrawal.” Would you answer that question?

And Professor Cordesman, with your excellent paper, would you answer the question of the conflict, the ethnic conflict would ever be solved, and where does internationalism come in, meaning bringing friends into the mix of trying to solve this ethnic schism? When does that ever come to move us toward the issue of diplomacy fix versus surge and military fix?

General Batiste, this question of too late.

General BATISTE. Well, there is no question that our Generals are not coordinating an incredible skillful campaign. There is no question. They are. We have got the best military in the world.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. We agree on that.

General BATISTE. And we have the best Generals over there. If anybody can figure this out, they can.

The problem is that they are not properly supported by this administration. They are being asked to do something with insufficient troops by a factor of over three. Now, that could be Americans, it could be coalition troops, it could be competent Iraqi security troops, but frankly, they are not there in the numbers that we need to deny the insurgents sanctuary in this country, to close the borders with Iran and Syria, to stop the extremist Shiia and the extremist Sunnis from having unfettered access to this problem. It is going to continue to boil.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And does that mean that we cannot or can withdraw?

General BATISTE. Well, my opinion is that we must withdraw deliberately. We have responsibility—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Effectively and deliberately, not precipitously.

General BATISTE. It will take a year or more to pull this off.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. That is all.

General BATISTE. But we have got to get straight on our strategic focus. We need to mobilize this country behind our great military. We are putting the burden of this on our military.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I celebrate you, General Batiste.

Professor, could you conclude? My time has ended.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Surely. I think there are four areas we have to understand about the international situation. We already have an Arab League effort, and it has been a reasonably effective one within Iraq to try to push for national rather than Sunni solutions. It is absolutely critical to try to encourage that and keep it going forward to minimize any kind of Sunni state support for the Sunnis at the expense of the Shiites.

We have a massive problem in terms of Turkey, the Kurds and the Arabs. That is accelerating in the area around Mosul. It is getting worse in the area around Kurkik and along the entire fault line in terms of Arab-Kurdish tension.

Our key effort in terms of international cooperation is really to keep Turkish incursions against the PKK to a minimum, which is going to be extremely difficult, and it certainly isn't going to be done by bringing lots of other countries into discuss it.

We can't deal with the Iranian problem, and with all due respect, you are never going to see the Iranian border. With 2 million troops on each side during the Iran-Iraq War, you never secured the Iranian border for either side anywhere along the border. So that problem will continue and it can't be dealt with.

If there is any country out there you may be able to influence, it is probably Syria, but it is not clear we are willing to talk or make the kind of deal, which would be rather unpleasant. So that is international cooperation in the real world.

One other comment about this whole "whack a mole" issue. I do have to say I think it is "whack a mole" because I don't think we

have enough people to implement a simultaneous strategy. I have seen the map of Iraq. We are not implementing it now. But I do think we are doing far better, and in that sense I agree with what Dr. Kagan has said.

What bothers me, and this is what we really need to wait on, as General Odierno has said, for example, that 80 percent of the al-Qaeda leadership in Baqubah left and was warned before we entered the city. It also bothers me that we may be able to get the Iraqi police to operate in part of Baghdad. If we do, it is going to be because we have U.S. troops embedded in every post, but the other side of this is supposed to be that there are A-teams coming in that are going to operate there.

Anybody who knows who is in the PRTs today knows that many of these people are dedicated, they are young, and in many ways totally unqualified, and so far out of the 90 percent of the people that we have been able to recruit to strengthen them are being drawn from the U.S. military because we can't deploy civilians.

Now, these are not arguments for failure, but they are arguments for patience, and I think this is the dilemma for you and for any Member of Congress. The time line in the real world for success is deep into 2008, and that is the problem for everyone because if we say we can report on success in September, we can't.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Inglis.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I yield back.

Mr. INGLIS. Very different perspective, Mr. Chairman, from up here as opposed to down there. It is really quite a different perspective.

Dr. Kagan, I was interested in your comments about supporting General Petraeus, and I would suggest to you that I think it is quite possible to have full confidence in General Petraeus but yet ask questions about the plan. In fact, it is sort of like the corporation that hires a CEO, the board does not attend to the CEO, and say, whatever you want to do. In fact, the board says, we hired you, sir or madam, because we think you are really good, but we want to ask questions all along the way as you implement the strategy that got you the CEO job. That is the way a board works. I think it is an analogous concept for here in Congress and for the administration.

So I think we all want the surge to be successful at this point. We are in a situation where we have committed to it, we are doing it, we want to see success in Iraq. My most significant concern about the surge centered on the commitment and the willingness of the Iraqi Government to take advantage of United States sacrifices in an effective manner.

Now that it is in full force I think that it is more important than ever to make sure that we take steps to ensure the success of this surge strategy. In Phase 2, "Report of Choosing Victory: A plan for Success in Iraq," I think you correctly identified the need for metrics to guide success, and you, for example, said that we need metrics to assess the government operations, economy, security, and the rule of law.

What is your assessment of the U.S. Government's current progress in developing and implementing improved metrics? And

what steps do you think Congress should be taking now to ensure that we are using the best possible metrics?

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, first of all, I would like to say that I never suggested that one shouldn't question General Petraeus' strategy; simply that it is hard for me to imagine how you could support the General and also say that you want to prevent him from executing the strategy that he thinks is the right strategy.

Certainly, of course, you should question him. That is your job. I have been doing everything in my power to contribute to the discussion, not to kill it, so I fully agree with you that it is appropriate to question him.

As for metrics, I could be coy and say I only released the report on April 25, and the government doesn't work that fast, even if they were going to adopt all of my suggestions, and of course, I am not privy to all of the metrics that the government has been using. I know that MNFI and the State Department keep a lot of metrics. I am not sure.

The point of that section in our report was to say that we need to measure the right things, not that we need to have metrics, that we don't. We do have lots of metrics, but that we need to be measuring outputs. We need to be measuring effects, and that we need to not be measuring inputs, something that I am sure that Professor Cordesman would agree with me on because the question of how many trained—you know, how many Iraqi soldiers we have trained at the end of the day is not the important metric. The question of how many Iraqi soldiers are actually out there doing their job is an important metric.

The question of how much money we put into the electricity industry is not a decisive metric, but the question of how many people are actually connected to the national grid and how much power they are getting is.

So what we were trying to do is to refocus the entire discussion on metrics that actually measure effects that we are generating within the Iraqi population. I think that MNFI has been working on that. Ambassador Crocker has been in charge of the mission only for a few months, and I think that he is taking steps in the direction of establishing new metrics and new ways of evaluating the situation.

In this case, they really are the people that have to do that. You can only measure what is going on if you are over there. That is not something that you can do from here, but I do believe that initiatives are underway to move in this direction, but I don't know what their status is formally.

Mr. INGLIS. And my concern for our military is that—I agree with you—we should be testing outcomes rather than inputs. The question that I have got is that when we set these up, are we asking the military to do that which may in some cases be impossible. If you set up metrics for them that are outcomes that they simply can't deliver on, then you run the risk of declaring them to be failure when in fact they have succeeded in doing everything asked of them, but they can't control the outcome, particularly when it comes to Iraqi political decisions. The General may want to comment on that.

General BATISTE. I would first say that General Petraeus is executing his piece of the strategy, and he is doing it very, very well, no question about it.

The issue I have is that there is an over-arching national strategy that falls far short of supporting our military in the field. I have zero confidence that our interagency process can come up with metrics to measure success well outside the boundaries of Iraq, believe me. The focus on a Middle East strategy needs to be set right now and we need to establish the metrics at a national level to allow General Petraeus to be successful.

So make no mistake about it, he is executing his piece of the strategy, and knowing what I know about David Petraeus, he is doing it damn well. Nobody could do it better. But you know what? He and his troops, soldiers, Marines, airmen, sailors, families back home are being let down by this national strategy that has no strategic focus, an interagency process that is all but dysfunctional.

Mr. INGLIS. My time has expired. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I thank the chairman.

If I can translate into my own word what you just said, General Batiste, is that General Petraeus is being asked to bail out a bankrupt policy, and that is where I disagree with Dr. Kagan. I mean, I think we do support General Petraeus in his effort, but the over-arching policy was bankrupt from the beginning, from the beginning.

As I sit here and muse, you are an excellent panel, all three of you, if we had had this kind of discourse 5 years ago, I doubt we would embarked on this odyssey that has turned into a disaster. But having said that let me direct a question to Professor Cordesman.

You indicated that predictions are difficult, and usually they are wrong. That provoked in my mind a picture I just saw recently of President Bush in Vietnam signing a bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam, and behind him was looming the statute of Ho Chi Minh, and that brought me back to my youth and remembering the same doomsday predictions that were made relative to our departure from Vietnam, and I continue to hear it is going to be a disaster. The consequences are unpredictable.

Of course, they are unpredictable, but I don't necessarily ascribe to the "Armageddeon" view of our withdrawal from Iraq, and the metrics ought not to be about Iraq, General Batiste, but it is our success against worldwide terrorism. We have made Iraq the subject and the focus when the reality is: How do we deal with this terrorism?

Let me pose a question of Professor Cordesman. You made a reference to, and we hear it constantly from some quarters, Iraq is the central front in the war against terrorism. Why is it the central front in the war against terrorism, Professor?

Mr. CORDESMAN. Well, the answer very simply is it isn't.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is the point.

Mr. CORDESMAN. And I think the problem we have here is, first, al-Qaeda has succeeded in franchising the name without establishing control. Many of the movements now affiliated with al-Qaeda don't depend on it for money, for command or proposals.

There are a large number of Islamist movements whose ties to al-Qaeda, for example, in Iraq are through this strange Islamic Republic umbrella organization, which doesn't stop them from fighting each other on occasion.

If we captured bin Laden tomorrow and secured Iraq, there would still be a massive ongoing problem with neo-Slavi Islamic extremism and violence in the region and in the United States. We have triggered new problems in terms of potential Sunni and Shiite conflicts which go on at a religious level, and there is fighting already in places like Yeman on this level that we are going to have to deal with on a regional basis.

I think what is absolutely critical to understanding is that if we win in Iraq, it is not going to be so positive, and this has, I think, been said by both General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, that there is any near-term prospect of eliminating some elements of al-Qaeda inside Iraq. And if we withdraw from Iraq, a lot of the tensions we see today are going to be directed against al-Qaeda as well as against every other faction, so it is not going to be some sort of easy sanctuary for al-Qaeda as well.

And there, Congressman, I think you raise a key point. We do need to really consider the risk of a major new civil conflict or a bloodbath which could be localized on lines we don't expect, Kurd versus Arab, Shiite versus Shiia rather than Shiite versus Sunni. We can't predict it. We can't assure you it is going to happen.

Earlier in this hearing, in fact at the start, someone asked how you define victory in Iraq. Whatever happens in Iraq virtually every problem in the Middle East that exists today is going to be there regardless of the outcome. Victory in Iraq is finding somehow the least bad uncertainty in terms of our strategic interests, which is a hell of a definition of victory, but the one I can absolutely promise you we are going to have to live through.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you, Professor.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much and I appreciate your fortitude in being with us today, and some of us have been running between different markups, but again I am very grateful for the comments of some of my colleagues on the other side who have stated that they are hopeful for the success of General Petraeus.

I just am really very frustrated, as I have detected from you, the partisanship that is evident here, but I do share the view of the *Washington Post*, which is a paper identified more as Democratic than anything else, and the *Washington Post* has editorialized that we need to be success in Iraq, whatever the definition may be, and indeed that has been speculation too, what does success mean. But we must be successful in Iraq is my view, or we will be facing a circumstance of cataclysmic deaths in that country that would just be so horrific, it just would be something that has got to be avoided.

Additionally, my concern all along has been the circumstance of ungoverned areas, countries that support terrorism, and the *Washington Post* has editorialized that the second consequence of lack of success would be terrorist training camps being established in Iraq to attack the United States and to attack our allies, and I just see that as something that has just go to be faced.

Then if that is not horrific enough, several of you have alluded to a potential for a regional conflict. And so all three of these, to me, give me a purpose to the reinforcement strategy, and I want to see success, whatever the definition is, to protect the American people, and indeed, Dr. Kagan, you have referenced it. In Anbar province, every time I have been there has been more or less identified as a hopeless circumstance, but yet now United States and Iraqi forces are allied with a group of Sunni Arab clans the Anbar Salvation Front to drive out insurgents and al-Qaeda and Iraq terrorists who have alienated the local tribes with their radical bills and their despicable and murderous tactics.

Do you believe that the Anbar counterinsurgency strategies can be cited as a model for other areas of Iraq?

Mr. KAGAN. I think it has been a remarkable success story, and it is a cautionary tale against deciding that success is impossible in advance because as late as last August the principal marine intelligence officer in Anbar had written the providence off, and said he thought there was no chance that we were going to success. We were never going to get anywhere with it, and in fact, even as he wrote that and it was reported in the *Washington Post* by Tom Ricks, the movement was already afoot that led to this dramatic turnaround, which led to just 2 days ago John Burns, who has not been a noted campaigner for this strategy, returned from a visit to Ramadi and said it has gone from being the most dangerous area in Iraq to being one of the safest areas in Iraq.

Is it a model? Well, it is not a template. Anbar is a unique situation. You have an entirely Sunni area. You have a tribal structure which you could work on in a particular way. The thing to do with the Anbar model is to adapt it appropriately to circumstances in different areas. This has happened. There has been the formation of basically equivalence with appropriate changes to the Anbar Salvation Council in Salah-ad-Din province to the north of Baghdad, and Babil province to the south, and even in Diwania province we have been engaged in negotiations, and I believe that we did get an agreement with two tribes to work along these lines.

Most particularly and what surprised me was that we saw the export of a version of this model into Baghdad, which I did not expect, because there is no tribal structure in the same way in Baghdad, but the citizens of Amarea, which was a neighborhood that had been a very, very strong al-Qaeda stronghold, because finally fed up with the fact that they couldn't live normal lives, turned against al-Qaeda, and began fighting al-Qaeda in fact, and requested our assistance.

So there clearly is something in Anbar that can be extended as long as we do it in a complicated, sophisticated way, which is what the command in Iraq is working on.

Mr. WILSON. In fact, you have jumped ahead when you mentioned about Baghdad. On my most recent visit there visited a joint security site to see the young people of our country attempting to provide security, but I was startled to find out that there are tribal divisions within Baghdad too. I thought they were sectarian divisions.

But whatever the case is I want to thank you for being here today, but I am just so proud and grateful for the troops that understand that we need to stop the terrorists overseas. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Wu.

Mr. WU. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Major General Batiste, first of all, on my own behalf I would like to apologize to you for any inference that might have been drawn from comments made earlier by another member of the committee about your participation in the public life of our Nation. I think that the time for swift voting is long past, and we should honor all those who have served flag and country. Thank you very much for your service.

We have also heard a lot of rhetoric over the last several years about this being one of the truly dire times in our history and the dire physical threat to our Nation. I would just like to go from my right to my left for the three witnesses. Is this time more dire than when the British burned this set of buildings in 1814? Dr. Kagan?

Mr. KAGAN. Is it more dire? Well, let us say the direness is a little bit less imminent because obviously the battles are not taking place on our soil.

Mr. WU. Thank you. Mr. Cordesman?

Mr. CORDESMAN. No, it definitely is not—

Mr. WU. Major General?

General BATISTE. We got an incredibly more resilient country.

Mr. WU. Is this more dire than in 1863, when you could hear the guns of the Confederate armies from this building? Dr. Kagan?

Mr. KAGAN. No, Congressman, it is not.

Mr. WU. Mr. Cordesman?

Mr. CORDESMAN. I know you want a one-word answer, but Congressman, having lived in the Cold War with some 10,000 thermal nuclear weapons targeted—

Mr. WU. I will get there.

Mr. CORDESMAN [continuing]. On the U.S., that is what my standard of dire.

Mr. WU. But let us just work through the time column, if you will.

1836, Mr. Cordesman?

Mr. CORDESMAN. I am not that old, Congressman. [Laughter.]

Mr. WU. But you teach. In your estimation, yes or no.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Obviously the Civil War was more dire.

Mr. WU. Major General?

General BATISTE. More dire.

Mr. WU. Dr. Kagan, when there were, as Mr. Cordesman said, 10,000 at least, in my estimation several thousand thermal nuclear weapons, some of them 15 minutes launch time from the water, from Russian submarines off our coast, is this time more dire than during shall we say the height of the Cold War, Dr. Kagan?

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, may I ask for clarification on what the height of the Cold War is?

Mr. WU. Well, let us call it from 1965 to 1975.

Mr. KAGAN. I would be hard-pressed to give you a one-word answer. I think that the situation now is—

Mr. WU. Please try.

Mr. KAGAN. I—

Mr. WU. Okay, choose an easier time to give a one-word answer.

Mr. KAGAN. I think that the situation now is in many respects as dire as it was in 1946 or 1947. Less dire probably than it was in 1975.

Mr. WU. Thank you.

Mr. Cordesman?

Mr. CORDESMAN. Congressman, I am not quite sure what you are reaching for. I think this is considerably less dire having seen the consequences of a Soviet nuclear strike on the United States in models.

Does that mean it isn't dire or serious? No.

Mr. WU. No. Thank you.

Major General?

General BATISTE. Less.

Mr. WU. Thank you very much.

I just see a lot of loose talk about this being the most dire point in American history, and I at least wanted some corroboration from someone other than my own reading of history that this may not be the darkest moment in American history.

Dr. Kagan, in March or April of this year, we had a hearing with Ambassador Holbrooke, and prior to the hearing I was talking with Ambassador Holbrooke, and you joined us in the room just off this hearing room, and as I recall Ambassador Holbrooke's comment to you after describing his service in Vietnam and his efforts for 7 years afterwards to get us out of Vietnam, he said that based on his counterinsurgency experience that your proposals for the surge was sending exact the wrong number of troops to Iraq.

What was your answer to Ambassador Holbrooke?

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, I don't recall my answer to Ambassador Holbrooke.

Mr. WU. How would you answer Ambassador Holbrooke today?

Mr. KAGAN. That I respectfully disagree with him; that my proposal was based on a careful analysis of the situation conducted by officers with considerable experience, very recent experience in Iraq, based on the very excellent intelligence we obtained through open sources; that it was our best estimate of what was required to success; and that I believed that it would work.

Mr. WU. And your estimate of the probability of success, military success within the next 6 to 12 months?

Mr. KAGAN. Military success defined as the surge plan defines it, which is increasing security in Baghdad and its immediate environs; I would say the probability of success is very high.

Mr. WU. In Baghdad?

Mr. KAGAN. In Baghdad and its immediate environs, which was the purpose of the Baghdad security plan.

Mr. WU. And you make no assertions as to the rest of the country?

Mr. KAGAN. We were always explicit in our report that it was not a plan for the entire country.

Mr. WU. Thank you. Thank you very much.

I see that my time has expired. I ask unanimous consent that my time be extended for 2 minutes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. The gentleman can have an additional minute.

Mr. WU. I thank the chairman.

I would like the Major General and Professor Cordesman to comment on assuming that we have total success in Baghdad, what is, in your estimation, the likely payout as we go forward in time after having, within the next 6 to 12 months, established completed security in the capital of Iraq?

General BATISTE. Very quickly. There will not be success in Baghdad unless we deny the insurgent sanctuary elsewhere in Iraq. The surge is insignificant.

Mr. WU. Thank you.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I think that the real issue is if we can achieve even significant success in Baghdad, if we can add to that moves toward political conciliation, and if you can revitalize the kind of aid program that offers people some kind of hope and stability, then you have at least the beginnings of a meaningful program.

But as Harry Sommers said, and I quoted him in my testimony, in his discussions with the North Vietnamese officer, "If all you have is military victory, it is irrelevant."

Mr. WU. Dr. Kagan, would you care to comment?

Mr. KAGAN. I don't think that anyone out there imagines that we will kill our way to success in this war. General Petraeus has been very clear about that and we have been very clear about that in our proposals as well. Clearly there will have to be a political component. The question is timing.

If you believe, as people believed for years before this in an erroneous strategy, that the political process would solve the violence problem by itself, I don't think that will happen. If you believe that, as Professor Cordesman said, you establish a basic level of security and you also move forward on a political track, then the prospect of success is there, and that is what we proposed and that is what General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker are working on.

Mr. WU. I thank the chairman. I thank the witnesses, and Major General Batiste, there were many of us who are speaking out before the war. Unfortunately, there weren't very many people listening, and I thank the chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Wu.

Wrap up questions briefly. Before our incursion in Iraq, did Iraq pose a terrorist threat to the United States, Professor?

Mr. CORDESMAN. Not in any serious way, and we have never surfaced any meaningful evidence that it was a serious threat compared to any of the other then existing al-Qaeda operations.

Mr. ACKERMAN. General?

General BATISTE. No threat and no connection between 9/11 and Saddam Hussein.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Kagan? Briefly.

Mr. KAGAN. I have not looked very hard at that question. I don't actually know. I can't speak authoritatively to that question.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Was there a significant presence? And I know, Professor, you have wisely questioned us of the nature of al-Qaeda. Was there any al-Qaeda-type or al-Qaeda-connected presence of any significance in Iraq during the time of Saddam Hussein?

Mr. CORDESMAN. We have never established that there was.

Mr. ACKERMAN. General?

General BATISTE. No.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Kagan?

Mr. KAGAN. I am aware of reports that say that Zaquari was present in Iraq in 2002 and also that Abu al-Nastri was present in Iraq.

Mr. ACKERMAN. When you say "present," that means there was a sighting?

Mr. KAGAN. No, that they were known to be in Iraq.

Mr. ACKERMAN. That they were staying there?

Mr. KAGAN. Yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. What is the relative strength of al-Qaeda forces or al-Qaeda-type forces in Iraq compared to what we would traditionally call insurgents? The question is who are we fighting Iraq, and I know it is both and I know the consequences of leaving. But the enemy in Iraq, is it the insurgents or is it al-Qaeda right now?

And the same question is, did al-Qaeda mouse-trap us to get into Iraq or did we mouse-trap and draw them in? If we could do that briefly, because there is another hearing here.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Very quickly, Congressman, I don't think that al-Qaeda mouse-trapped us into this. For example, Zaquari was not in any way affiliated with al-Qaeda at the point we went into Iraq.

I think when it comes down to numbers, what number do you want? The number of people who loosely are affiliated with the insurgency, the cadres, al-Qaeda cadres are generally estimated to be very small. When you talk to intelligence officers, they sort of wince and say, we will give you a number if you force us to, but we don't have a basis for putting out quantified estimates. I think the core cadres of al-Qaeda are probably relatively limited to several thousand, but that doesn't mean they are not very significant or can't establish a broader.

If you ask what is the total size of the Islamist insurgent group, then it is hard to believe that they are below 10,000, but many of those are people who are again not key cadres, and you are talking not simply al-Qaeda but two other major groups in this Islamic republic alone.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Did we draw them into Iraq?

Mr. CORDESMAN. No, sir.

Mr. ACKERMAN. And they did not draw us into Iraq?

Mr. CORDESMAN. No. They did not exist at the time we went into Iraq.

Mr. ACKERMAN. General?

General BATISTE. We are embroiled in a civil war that is defined by an incredibly complex insurgency. Al-Qaeda is a portion of it, probably less than we think. There are more than 23 Shiia militias alone. They fight each other. They fight Sunnis, they fight tribes, they fight whoever they want for reasons that we can't comprehend. There are criminal gangs in Iraq that are very Mafia in their approach, and there is tribal in-fighting. Arabs hate Kurds. Very complex.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Let me thank the panel for your thoughtful responses. Congress is trying its best these days, at last, to exercise congressional oversight, and we thank you all for participating that.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:53 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE SHEILA JACKSON LEE, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening today's hearing. Perhaps no issue will define this Congress more than how we handle the ongoing conflict in Iraq. May I take this opportunity to thank the Ranking Member, and to welcome our distinguished witnesses, Major General John Batiste, President of Klein Steel Services, Incorporated; Mr. Anthony H. Cordesman, Arleigh A. Burke Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies; and Mr. Frederick W. Kagan, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute. I look forward to your informative testimony.

Four years ago, President Bush stood under a banner that proclaimed "Mission Accomplished." If that mission was to place our troops in harms way at the hands of insurgents and sectarian violence, then I too say "mission accomplished." So I ask, nearly \$400 billion dollars, and over 3,500 American lives later, what have we really accomplished, and where are we headed? I will not support a war that has no clear direction, does not meet the benchmarks that the President set, and has no visible target.

Mr. Chairman, last November the American people made clear their views on ongoing U.S. military involvement in Iraq. The American people went to the polls and elected a new Democratic congress, and in doing so they gave us a clear mandate to scale back U.S. military involvement. I am proud to be a member of the Congressional class that listens and adheres to the will of the American people, as we did when both houses of Congress approved Iraq Supplemental bills that instituted a timetable for U.S. withdrawal. We need a new direction, and we owe it to our brave, fighting men and women. Washington made a mistake in going to war. It is time for politicians to admit that mistake and fix it before any more lives are lost. This was a war that I opposed to day one, and I have continued to oppose recent efforts to escalate U.S. involvement.

Despite the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, violence has remained endemic in Iraq. A Sunni insurgency, fueled by resentment, and Sunni-Shiite violence that, according to a January 2007 national intelligence estimate, has key elements of a "civil war," has not been curbed, despite ever increasing U.S. investment of American lives, resources, and dollars.

President Bush's "New Way Forward" strategy, announced in January, calls for the deployment of over 20,000 additional U.S. combat forces, to be used to stabilize Baghdad and the Anbar Province. This is coming at a time when, according to an NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll, 59% of Americans believe we should be *reducing* the number of troops in Iraq.

The Iraq war has already cost over 3500 American lives. Some 25,000 Americans have been injured. Thousands of U.S. personnel have lost limbs or suffered debilitating mental and physical injuries. Yet as casualties rise, the Bush administration pushes for the escalation of American soldiers into the most hostile communities in Iraq. In addition to the enormous expenditure of lives, American taxpayers have paid nearly \$400 billion to sustain this misadventure.

Americans are not the only ones to have suffered as a result of Bush's Iraq policy. Conservative estimates place the number of Iraqis dead and wounded in the course of their "liberation" in the hundreds of thousands. Iraqi civilians die in the midst of anti-insurgency raids and millions have fled their country to avoid further death and injury.

According to senior U.S. military leaders, the 2007 Baghdad security plan has failed to reduce violence throughout Iraq, though it has helped reduce sectarian violence. The Iraq Study Group expressed its clear believe that the United States

should be working to end its combat involvement, an involvement that I continue to believe, as I did in 2003, was ill-conceived and unadvisable.

I am proud that we, in Congress, passed an FY2007 supplemental appropriation bill that would have set an outside deadline of March 31, 2008 for U.S. combat withdrawal if the President did not certify Iraqi progress on certain "benchmarks" of political progress. After the President vetoed this legislation, I was proud to vote against the legislation that removed this crucial timetable for withdrawal. I believe the American people gave this Congress a clear mandate by voting out the Republican congress that approved of this war, and I believe we must continue to work to end the war.

Mr. Chairman, the Framers of the Constitution of our country understood that the entire nation feels the burden of war. They didn't have to speak to the mothers of fallen soldiers, or to talk with those who suffer horrific injuries on the fields of battle, to know the immense suffering of a nation at war. That is why the Framers lodged the power to declare war in the Congress, the branch of government closest to the people. They knew that the decision to go to war was too important to be left to the whim of a single person, no matter how wise or well-informed he or she might be.

Four years after our ill-advised invasion, the evidence is clear and irrefutable: the invasion of Iraq, while a spectacularly executed military operation, was a strategic blunder without parallel in the history of American foreign policy. This is what can happen when the Congress allows itself to be stampeded into authorizing a president to launch a preemptive war of choice. It is time to rethink our strategy in Iraq, to encourage and engage in diplomacy, and to sit down with the various players in the Middle East and make real strides towards securing Iraq, the Iraqi people, and most importantly our most precious resource the troops we love so dearly.

This is why I introduced H.R. 930, the "Military Success in Iraq and Diplomatic Surge for National and Political Reconciliation in Iraq Act of 2007." This legislation would make diplomacy and statecraft tools of the first, rather the last, resort as has been the case for the past four years. It declares that the objectives for which military force in Iraq was authorized have been achieved, and therefore the authority to use this force has expired.

Despite the clearly expressed will of the American people, the President has followed a plan calling for an infusion of an additional 28,700 U.S. forces to Iraq. Preliminary reports offered in the June 2007 Department of Defense "Measuring Stability" report have shown very mixed results. Additionally, reports on whether the surge has succeeded in facilitating political reconstruction, including those of General Petraeus and U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker, report progress has been far slower than anticipated. Perhaps even more disturbing, even as sectarian and Sunni insurgent violence continues, splits between the ruling elite appear to be widening.

Mr. Chairman, these are not signs of success. Over 3,500 American soldiers have died; it is far past time for responsible policy-making. All Americans share the goal of bringing about peace and stability in Iraq, and that will require a more diplomatic approach and less military involvement.

Thank you, and I yield back the balance of my time.

