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A THIRD WAY: ALTERNATIVES FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE (PART 1 OF 4)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF HEARINGS

2007

Page

HEARING:

Thursday, July 12, 2007, A Third Way: Alternatives for Iraq's Future (Part 1 of 4) 1

APPENDIX:

Thursday, July 12, 2007 51

THURSDAY, JULY 12, 2007

A THIRD WAY: ALTERNATIVES FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE (PART 1 OF 4)

STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Akin, Hon. W. Todd, a Representative from Missouri, Ranking Member, Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee 2

Snyder, Hon. Vic, a Representative from Arkansas, Chairman, Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee 1

WITNESSES

Boot, Max, Senior Fellow in National Security Studies, The Council on Foreign Relations 6

Clark, Gen. Wesley K., (Ret.), Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, U.S. Army 4

Khan, Dr. Muqtedar, Assistant Professor, Political Science and International Relations, University of Delaware, Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Brookings Institution 9

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENTS:

Akin, Hon. W. Todd 57

Boot, Max 67

Clark, Gen. Wesley K. 61

Snyder, Hon. Vic 55

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:

[There were no Documents submitted.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:

[There were no Questions submitted.]

A THIRD WAY: ALTERNATIVES FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE (PART 1 OF 4)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, Thursday, July 12, 2007.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 3:06 p.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Vic Snyder (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. VIC SNYDER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM ARKANSAS, CHAIRMAN, OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Dr. SNYDER. The hearing will come to order. I think there is a pretty long line outside, so if any of you in the audience go to the restroom, you may lose your seat. Who knows? But we appreciate you all being here.

I want to welcome everyone here today.

This is the first hearing which I have presided over as the subcommittee chairman since Mr. Meehan left. Mr. Akin and I have worked on things together in the past and we are intent on doing that with this subcommittee and look forward to working with him and the rest of the committee members in this new role.

I want to welcome everyone to this first in a series of four hearings we are going to have this month at this subcommittee level on alternative strategies for Iraq.

I was listening to NPR yesterday morning, and they had an interview with troops that were deploying overseas and what service to America means. One woman was briefly interviewed, Staff Sergeant Nicole Walden. She said, "I am Staff Sergeant Nicole Walden. I dropped my kids off one and a half weeks ago because my husband and I are both deploying, so my kids had to go stay with their grandparents." And the interviewer says, "Tell me again their ages? And she says, "Three and one. I wake up in the morning and they are not there and I just—it is unreal."

And she goes on to say that she is not complaining because she gets so much support. But if you think of the tremendous sacrifice that this family, this mother and father are making to leave off those two young toddlers with grandparents, my own view is that we in the Congress owe those men and women everything we can do to have the right strategy of foreign policy and our national security, but particularly with regard to Iraq.

Mr. Akin and I have both been frustrated and have shared our frustrations to each other about the tone of the debate for this first six months of the year in terms of the polarization that has oc-

curred in the Congress. We wanted to have a series of hearings in which we invite smart people, experienced people, who can give us some other ideas. Maybe other ideas are going to be that there are not as many other ideas out there as we would like, but we want to hear from other smart people about what other options are.

We hope to enhance the public debate and inform future full committee deliberations. We have invited retired senior military officers, defense policy experts, and academics who specialize on the Middle East. The full committee under Mr. Skelton's leadership is holding complementary hearings on a broader scope.

Yesterday, I heard witnesses give their views on the global security assessment. Upcoming full committee hearings will address Middle East regional security issues, the interim Iraq report, and General Petraeus' September report on the surge.

We have asked our witnesses both today and the ones coming up in the rest of the month to look forward, rather than backward. We are not intent on rehashing over mistakes that have been made or how we got to where we are. We have asked our witnesses to look ahead and explore options. I think for the written statements we have received, we have got some witnesses today with different views. So we hope that there will be a vigorous discussion among them, too, about what they think of each other's ideas.

Today's hearing will begin with testimony from retired General Wesley Clark, former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO. General Clark appeared before the full committee in both 2002 and 2005.

He will be followed by Mr. Max Boot, who is senior fellow in national security studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

Our final witness will be Dr. Muqtedar Khan, who is the director of Islamic studies at the University of Delaware and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

Gert would get mad at me if I didn't also acknowledge that Wes is my neighbor and she walks past my house every morning on her morning walk. He lives down the street from me, but I see you more here, Wes, than I do back home.

So welcome to all of you.

And now we will hear from Mr. Akin.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Snyder can be found in the Appendix on page 55.]

STATEMENT OF HON. W. TODD AKIN, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI, RANKING MEMBER, OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. AKIN. Let me begin by recognizing our new chairman of the subcommittee, Dr. Snyder.

I look forward to working with you, Doctor, and I know that under your stewardship the committee will continue to work on critical issues facing the Department of Defense in a bipartisan manner. Thank you so much for choosing to be our chairman.

That has been the tone of this committee, and I think it is very positive. I think it is something that the general American public should be pleased with, to see people who are trying to solve problems instead of involve ourselves too much in politics.

Today's hearing is the first of a series aimed at breaking out of that sort of false concept of saying there are only two alternatives in Iraq, either the precipitous withdrawal or to stay the course. Somebody once told me that when somebody wants to put you on the horns of a dilemma, you don't want to choose either/or and it is a poor decision.

We want to know what are the different alternatives and want to try to quantify those. Given the current political environment the President's interim progress report on benchmarks mandated by this Congress and the debate taking place on the floor of the House today, I know that this series of hearings could be challenging.

But I agree with the chairman that the Congress must carve out space. We can focus and wrestle with policy, and not politics. I hope these hearings provide the space for thoughtful, nonpartisan discussion. So I agree this will be a useful exercise, but only if it is done in that format.

The purpose of the hearing is to hear alternatives to the current strategy that truly offer a different plan. Simply critiquing the current approach is not the point of this hearing. It may be helpful, but we need to say what are the alternatives. I ask the witnesses to offer and define an alternative plan and explain how it is different from the plan General Petraeus is currently implementing in Iraq. Let me help begin this exercise by identifying key features of the current strategy.

In 2006, the U.S. began shifting its strategy from having our armed forces pursue al Qaeda and building the Iraqi Security Forces, to a strategy that emphasized having U.S. combat forces go door to door performing counterinsurgency missions aimed at securing and holding Iraqi neighborhoods. Implementing this plan requires roughly 160,000 troops at a cost of about $10 billion a month.

Currently, troop levels also allow the U.S. to train, equip, and advise the Iraqi Security Forces and deter regional actors from destabilizing the democratically elected government of Iraq. There are signs that this plan is working, but according to General Petraeus, the strategy cannot be fully assessed until this September. I offer this broad sketch of the current strategy to emphasize the strategic issues that any alternative plan must address.

Any plan must, at the very least, do the following: first, state the roles and missions of the U.S. forces in Iraq; second, state the personnel levels required to complete these missions; third, state the expected funding requirements to execute the plan; fourth, clarify the U.S. role, if any, in building the Iraqi security forces; and then last, at a minimum, explain how the plan deters regional actors from destabilizing Iraq.

Responding that the current plan doesn't work or fails to adequately address these areas is simply not enough. Again, we are asking you for an alternative, not another critique. I would ask my colleagues on the subcommittee to be vigilant about truly challenging these proposals so we can be sure that what we are talking about are in fact alternatives.

With these parameters in mind, I look forward to hearing out witnesses' statements, and again, thank you so much, Mr. Chair-

man, to agree to work and take the committee, and I am looking forward to today's hearings.

Thank you. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Akin can be found in the Appendix on page 57.]

Dr. SNYDER. I wanted to mention that we have been joined by Ms. Shea-Porter, who is actually not a member of the subcommittee but has been an outstanding member of the full committee and wanted to attend today. We will give her an opportunity to ask questions, too, after the other subcommittee members, if she would like to.

As you know, there is a very vigorous debate going on today on an Iraq resolution by Mr. Skelton. We don't anticipate any votes somewhere between 4:20 and 5, or so, so I think we are going to have plenty of opportunity to get at least through one round of the questioning, if not more, before those votes.

So, General Clark, let's start with you, and then we will go to Mr. Boot and Dr. Khan. We are going to put the five-minute clock on just so you will have a sense of where we are at. If you see that red light go on and you need to say more, you say more.

STATEMENT OF GEN. WESLEY K. CLARK, (RET.), FORMER NATO SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, EUROPE, U.S. ARMY

General CLARK. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have prepared a statement for the record I would just like to have included.

Dr. SNYDER. All statements will be made a part of the record, without objection.

General CLARK. I am very proud to come before you and Representative Akin and the other members of this subcommittee, first to say thank you because all of us who have served in uniform are very grateful for the long support of the House Armed Services Committee, what you do and the seriousness you bring to the task.

It is appropriate that you try to get out of the partisan mode as you look through these things. I want to just summarize a couple of things in my statement, and then talk more about the issues that Representative Akin has raised.

I am not going to talk about every province today. I don't think that is the point. But I do want to put this discussion in perspective because I don't think it is appropriate—I think we have been off-base in the United States for four years in focusing excessively on Iraq to the exclusion of other problems in the region. There is no solution in Iraq without addressing the other problems in the region.

The idea that somehow a solution can deter outside intervention is not going to happen. There is outside intervention. Everybody knows it, and we are dealing with it on a daily basis in Iraq. So we have to take into account the region. We have very strong interests in this region. There is hot competition economically. We are working to provide protection and security for the state of Israel. We are dealing with Iranian expansionism and extremism, and we are dealing with al Qaeda in addition to Iraq.

So these are four long-term enduring interests in the region, none of which is resolved in the on-off switch debate about troop

levels in Iraq, and none of which can be addressed satisfactorily if we just pull the plug and leave Iraq. So we can't use the Vietnam analogy appropriately in this region.

The problem, though, isn't troop levels. That was the problem initially, along with the nation. We always needed more troops in Iraq than what we had. The problem now is, first and foremost, the U.S. national strategy in the region. So here is my alternative: I would like to see a different U.S. national strategy first.

Why? Because General Petraeus, before him General Casey, before him General Abizaid, and everyone of us who have had any military experience, have said you cannot win this war with military power alone. Military is a necessary, but not sufficient, ingredient for the solution. So you have to frame the military activities properly.

The problem is that when we went into Iraq, we began with the assumption that Iraq was the first of a series of dominoes which could be knocked off or overturned or replaced. As many as seven states were in the running as the dominoes, starting with Iraq, then Syria, then Lebanon and Libya, then Somalia, Sudan and Iran.

The word was out in the region that Iraq was just the first. And so those states on the hit list had an incentive to cooperate early to make sure we didn't move to the next domino. Immediately, they began to become involved and take action.

We have been very careful publicly in trying to not overplay their role, and certainly there is an insurgency going on internally in Iraq. But the point is that there has always been outside regional involvement. So what I would like to see the U.S. strategy include is a full diplomatic and political, as well as military, component. To do that, we have to start with a different mindset in the region strategically.

So here is my alternative. I would like us to renounce our aim of regime change, just renounce it. We are not interested in changing regimes in the region. We are not interested in overturning governments. We already have our hands full trying to deal with Iraq and Afghanistan. We don't need to try to simultaneously redo governments in three or four other countries. It is just not there in terms of what we can afford to do.

We need to engage in sustained diplomatic dialogue with these states in the region even if we disagree with their policies, even if, as some say, they are in a state of war against us. From their perspective, we are probably in a state of war against them. That is not an issue. We can still talk and we can still find common interests, and we should be talking to Syria and Iran. We should be listening to our friends in the region like Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Emirates and Qatar.

We have to understand that the work with Israel and the Palestinian issue is part of this problem, because it has to deal with Iranian reach. We have to find an alternative to the isolation of Hamas in Gaza, because we are going to end up with another destabilizing humanitarian catastrophe on our hands there that further aggravates the U.S. strategic position if we don't. Then we have to link these regional efforts to political efforts on the ground to deal with people.

Now, those are the principles, and that is the change that I believe we need. In terms of how that interfaces with the troop strategy, well, the troop strategy is great. I mean, we are sitting on an insurgency right now and the more troops you put out, the harder it is for insurgents to move and fight and organize and intimidate people. So sure, I am happy to have the troops there, but I think we have overcommitted ourselves.

So what I am recommending to the committee is this: I think we need over a six-month period to pull a couple of brigades out so we have the possibility there of a strategic reserve in the United States. There are no magic solutions on creating more brigades, and the Army is having trouble recruiting now. I think that Congress needs to demand of the Administration a suitable strategy for the region, a realistic strategy.

The idea that we can continue to bludgeon away in Iraq with the blood and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, while inviting the clear occupation of Iraq in an adverse way by Iran and Syria and other regional actors is counterproductive. It is not going to lead to the conclusions we are looking for. To be honest with you, we have to raise this debate above the troop levels to have the kind of impact on the outcome of the mission that the American people seek.

So I am delighted to be here. I look forward to participating in the dialogue, Mr. Chairman, but I hope this committee will do its duty in helping to raise the dialogue above troop strength and into the fundamental aims and purposes of U.S. engagement in the region.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Clark can be found in the Appendix on page 61.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, General Clark.

Mr. Boot, I am not entirely sure the red light is going to come on. We seem to be having little clock problems, but Max, try not to be longer than that anyway.

STATEMENT OF MAX BOOT, SENIOR FELLOW, NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES, THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BOOT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me to testify. I am glad that you are holding this hearing to look seriously at third-way options and what we can do in the future in Iraq.

I will talk about that in a minute, but first let me just caution you against too precipitous a pullout or draw-down of U.S. troops in the pursuit of a third way option. That runs a very real risk of disaster. Let me quote to you one prediction of what will happen from a rather surprising source.

Americans must be clear that Iraq and the region around it could be even bloodier and more chaotic after Americans leave. There could be reprisals against those who worked with American forces, further ethnic cleansing, even genocide. Potentially destabilizing refugee flows could hit Jordan and Syria. Iran and Turkey could be tempted to make power grabs. Perhaps most importantly, the invasion has created a new stronghold from which terrorist activity could proliferate.

Now, that quote is not from some supporter of the surge. It is not from some Administration apologist. That quote was from last Sunday's editorial in the New York Times, called "The Road Home," which advocates withdrawal. But the Times was an honest advocate of withdrawal, and I give them credit for that because its editorial board admits the terrible consequences that would follow if we were to pull U.S. troops out.

The Times favors withdrawal all the same, because it doesn't think our forces are doing any good at the moment. I can certainly see how they reached that conclusion reading their own reporting. But that is not my finding after spending a couple of weeks in Iraq in April, and it is not the view of many of our servers on the ground with whom I speak.

If I could just read briefly quotes from an e-mail that I got a couple of days ago from a field-grade officer, a friend of mine who is currently serving in Baghdad. He wrote to me: "Max, I show some positive results of the surge strategy to date. I am sure you have the negatives down pat from all the media reports.

"Deaths caused by sectarian violence here in Iraq are down 75 percent from January to June. V-bads, car bombs and suicide attacks have been cut in half from March to June. V-bads are at the lowest level since August 2006. Casualties from V-bads are cut in half from February to June.

"Attacks on al Anbar are cut by 80 percent since February. The Iraqi security forces killed in action are two to three times the level of coalition KIA. The Iraqis are fighting and dying for their country. Tribes are rejecting al Qaeda in al Anbar, Salah ad-Din, and Diyala provinces.

"Al Qaeda in Iraq is on the defensive and slowly dying," he writes, "but we need time to finish the job."

He goes on to say, "The big negative, of course, is lack of political reconciliation at the national level, but this is a lagging indicator. Progress has been made at the local level, and I believe that national leaders will follow in due course once the trend is clear."

Now, I agree with my necessarily anonymous friend in Baghdad, and I would urge Congress to stick with the surge as long as possible. On present trends, the surge can be maintained through at least March of 2008. Then we can take out one brigade combat team a month to get down to the pre-surge level of about 15 brigades, or about 140,000 troops by August of 2008.

That, in turn, could be sustained through 2009, assuming that we maintain troops on their current 15-month tours, or we could possibly do shorter tours if we are willing to call up more brigade combat teams from the National Guard. Of course, we can downsize further if General Petraeus so recommends.

Now, I think we all basically, all the serious participants in this debate agree on what the eventual end-state should be—that we should have a smaller American force focused on advising and special operations designed to standup the ISF and to disrupt al Qaeda operations. That is the crux of the Iraq Study Group (ISG) recommendations that are being championed by Congressman Skelton and Senators Levin and Reed. I think even the Administration would generally agree that that is the long-term game plan.

But there is disagreement on how fast to draw-down troops and how many we need to leave behind. The Center for New American Security, a Democratic think-tank here in town, has outlined a credible model for an advisor-centric approach along the lines of the ISG recommendations, but I think it is low-balling troop estimates.

The Center for New American Security says its recommendations will require 60,000 troops. Based on my conversations with military strategists, I think the troop figure might be more along the lines of 80,000 to 100,000 troops or maybe even a little more once you factor in the need for force protection, logistics and other demands to maintain our advisors and special forces in Iraq. That is the long-term end state that I think we ought to try aiming for.

I think withdrawing all of our combat forces by April 2008 would be a very big mistake and would have very grave consequences. A lot of suggestions have been made to cushion the shock. For example, there are calls for diplomatic offenses, for diplomatic moves that we can make, including some that General Clark just outlined.

Now, in theory I think these are all good ideas to pursue, but I don't think any of them have much chance of working in the short term if we are losing the battle on the ground. I outlined the plusses and minuses of a lot of those options in my written testimony at much greater length.

I also don't think that concentrating solely on advisory and special forces missions right now, which would require a radically stripped-down force presence, could work in today's climate. That would be essentially repeating the mistake of 2005 and 2006. As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down. We know that didn't work.

Just look at what happened in Baqubah where jihadists set up their own Islamic state, while we were moving troops out. That happened at the Joint Special Operations Command stationed only a few miles away at Balad. Our special operators couldn't prevent the emergence of an Islamic state under their noses. What would they have if they were stationed in the Kurdish region or in Kuwait many miles away?

Our conventional troops, however, have managed to clean out al Qaeda strongholds in Baqubah, just as they have previously done in Fallujah, Ramadi, Tall'afar and other cities. In the past, we didn't have enough troops to consolidate those gains. Now, we may finally have enough troops to do all phases of a classic counterinsurgency campaign. But that takes time.

There is no good alternative, unfortunately, unless we are willing to accept the disastrous consequences described by the New York Times editorial. The longer you allow the surge to run, the greater the likelihood that the advisor-centric approach will work down the road.

Now, I realize patience is running out here in Washington and across the country. But keep in mind, we are not staying with the same old failed strategy right now, a strategy that I strongly criticized last year. We are trying a new approach that has not been tried before. The surge is plan B. The surge is the third way, and it has just started.

General Petraeus deserves a chance to succeed or fail with his carefully thought-out plans, without being second-guessed from

thousands of miles away. If he succeeds, that will make possible the responsible draw-down of U.S. forces without risking the collapse of the government of Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces. But if we draw down right now, I think that the consequences would be very negative, not only for Iraq and the region, but also for America's national security interests.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Boot can be found in the Appendix on page 67.]

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Khan.

STATEMENT OF DR. MUQTEDAR KHAN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE, NON-RESIDENT SENIOR FELLOW, SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Dr. KHAN. Dr. Snyder, I am deeply honored to be addressing this committee. I want to thank you and Representative Akin for not only holding this important hearing, but also for the diversity of opinion that you are soliciting.

I would like to open with two general observations, which I think are necessary to provide a context. In the past four years, we have been fighting three hot wars: one in Iraq, against the Taliban in Afghanistan, and against al Qaeda globally. We have been fighting one cold war against Iran, and two proxy wars against Hezbollah and Hamas, and all of this only in the Muslim world.

The scorecard is not exactly comforting. We have enjoyed partial success against the Taliban in five and a half years. We have failed and are failing in Iraq. Al Qaeda is back to pre-9/11 strength. It will be a long time before the U.S. will be back to pre-9/11 strength. Iran, on the other hand, is far from it. Iran has consistently out-maneuvered us in the cold war, and our proxies did not exactly distinguish themselves against either Hezbollah or Hamas.

So the question that we ask as we seek alternative strategies is how do we factor the monumental incompetence of the current Administration? Even if you have a good third alternative, will that good third alternative be effectively and efficiently implemented? This is another question I think the Congress should consider. It is not enough to have a good idea. Can we trust the current Administration to execute that good idea effectively is another important question.

I think that we all know why we need to withdraw from Iraq, but I believe that if we were to withdraw immediately, it will not only lead to a humanitarian crisis of genocidal proportions, but a tiny or mini-al Qaeda state will emerge in the Anbar Province. Al Qaeda is planning to use European citizens as their actors, and I think that the war against the West that al Qaeda is waging will be much, much tougher.

I think the conditions in Iraq would grow so bad that the very public today that is demanding that the U.S. troops come back, there will be pressure both at home and worldwide for the United States to return to Iraq to fix the mess that it created. The world will blame the United States for the mess in Iraq if we withdraw, because before we went to Iraq, Iraq was a tyranny, but it was sta-

ble. The population of Iraq was growing. After we brought democracy to Iraq, Iraq's population is diminishing. It is in chaos. Nothing works there.

So it is important for us to realize that we are in a predicament where we cannot stay in Iraq and we cannot withdraw from Iraq. We need to find a third way. That is, we need to find a way to have troops in Iraq without having American troops there. We must remember that we have more than 250,000 troops there—150,000 to 160,000 U.S. troops and nearly 100,000 mercenaries, who are unable with nearly a quarter-million forces to stabilize Iraq.

How do we replace this? I think this is where we have to call in the chips. In the Arab and Muslim world, we have so-called "allies"—Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. We have been spending billions of dollars over the past few decades supporting these regimes. This year alone, we are paying Egypt $1.8 billion in military and economic aid; $468 million to Jordan in economic and security aid; $370 million to Pakistan in military assistance; nearly $100 million to Indonesia. We should demand that these allies of ours replace the surgers that we will withdraw. They need to put troops on the ground.

We need nearly 300,000 to 400,000 troops to patrol Iraq, to squeeze the insurgency out. If we were to withdraw, not only will the insurgency escalate into a civil war, but al Qaeda will become a prominent player in that region. It is not in the interest of Iran or Egypt or Saudi Arabia to have a destabilizing force in the heart of the Middle East.

The countries in the Middle East are delighted that the U.S. is failing, but are horrified at what is happening in Iraq. Their delight at U.S. failure trumps their horror at what is happening in Iraq. They believe that if the U.S. is successful in Iraq, then the U.S. would go after them. So it is essential for most countries in the region that the U.S. fail.

And so what it really means is there has to be not just a tactical change in Iraq, but a fundamental change in American security and foreign policy in the region. We have to say that we are not a global check to the Muslim world. We want to work with the Muslim world to stabilize the Muslim world.

If the threat, or perception of threat that Saudi Arabia, that Syria, that Iran, that Egypt perceive from this whole strategy of democracy promotion in the Middle East diminishes, then they will be more willing to address the horror in Iraq. If we provide logistics, if we provide financial support, then I think we could compel these countries to put troops on the ground. They don't have a choice. Either they work with the U.S. now to stabilize Iraq, or get involved in a regional conflict if the U.S. were to withdraw immediately.

On the issue, it is most important for us to re-think our strategies toward Iran and Syria. Iran is essential to the stability of Iraq now and after our withdrawal from Iraq. If we need a strong Iran to stabilize Iraq, bombing Iran or weakening Iran as we pull out of Iraq will essentially lead to chaos in the region. We will be creating a power vacuum. We have to determine who is going to fill the power vacuum.

I think it is important for the Muslim world to stop just criticizing the U.S. and step up to the plate and dealing with the mess that exists in the Muslim world. I think it is important for us to call upon our allies to help us. We have helped them for decades. We are in need, and it is time for our friends to step up.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you all for your comments.

We will begin the round of questioning. We are having some clock problems. The timer works, but the lights don't work, so when you hear a gavel come down, that will be about your five minutes and it will give you a chance to wind up.

Mr. Akin and I are going to put ourselves on the five-minute clock so that we won't ramble on, I guess, is the bottom line. We want to give everybody a chance.

So go ahead and start the clock there.

I have always enjoyed a good bar fight, and so my first question is, I would like to give each of you an opportunity to comment on anything that you heard from the other two.

General Clark.

General CLARK. You know, I am all in favor of great work by the military. Most of these guys have worked with me or for me, and we have all been to the same schools. I admire our leadership, our military leadership. Both Petraeus and Odierno worked for me at times.

I understand, I think, what their motivations are and where they are headed. Of course, they want more time. Of course, other people in the chain of command below them see the progress. It is inevitable that when you put more troops in, you sit on an insurgency. It is harder for them to move; harder for them to resupply; harder for them to organize; harder for them to intimidate.

There is no question that you gain when you put troops on the ground. The question is, what is resolved? The plan behind the surge was that the presence of the troops, the sitting on the insurgency, would lead to a political outcome that ended the conflict and ended the motivation for the fighting. That is what hasn't happened.

Now, is it a lagging indicator? My guess is it isn't. The motivation behind the surge was that people are fighting because they are afraid, and once you stop the killing, they won't be afraid. I don't think that is the sum of the motivations inside Iraq. Instead, it is a combination of an opportunity to grab power. It is personal ambition. It is regional incentivization with contacts with outside powers. Without a diplomatic strategy for the region, those motivations will not be addressed.

So I don't think it is adequate simply to say, let's defer any strategic discussion, support the surge, and then we will see what happens. This Congress needs to be heard that this Administration needs a regional, diplomatic strategy different than the current diplomatic strategy.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Boot.

Mr. BOOT. Well, I certainly agree that we need a regional diplomatic strategy, and we can always use more effective diplomacy. But I think it would be a mistake to oversell what diplomacy can do when our troops are not seen as winning on the ground. In fact, the perception is that they are being defeated and are on their way

home. That does not create great incentives for those countries in the region, those players in the region who don't like us, to negotiate with us.

When you look at things from the standpoint of Iran and Syria, why would they want to cut a deal with us right now? They have us exactly where they want us. They are bleeding us slowly. Their proxies are expanding their spheres of control within Iraq. They have no reason to compromise.

The Iraq Study Group suggested they have a theoretical interest in the stability of Iraq. That may be the case or that may not be the case, but they have a greater interest in expanding their sphere of influence, which they are doing at the expense of the stability of Iraq, and they have an interest in keeping the United States tied down and fighting us by proxy. That is what they are doing very effectively.

Unless they see that their strategy is not going to work, I don't see any reason why they should become any more accommodating with us. There are also major concessions that would be required in order to win Syrian or Iranian cooperation that don't generally get mentioned by groups like the Iraq Study Group or others.

For example, what about the Iranian nuclear program? Are we going to allow them to go nuclear? Is that going to be the price of some help that they might give us in Iraq? What about Syria? Are we going to allow them to dominate the democratic state of Lebanon? That is what they want. Are we going to allow that as the price of some Syrian help in the case of Iraq?

Those are very, very hard compromises to make. In fact, the Iraq Study Group shied away from making those very compromises because they know how unpalatable they would be to most Americans, when you think seriously about what is the price of cooperation.

Dr. Khan also raised the issue of getting cooperation from some of our so-called moderate Muslim allies in the region. I am all in favor of it. If we could convince the Egyptians, Saudis, Indonesians and somebody else to send hundreds of thousands of troops into Iraq to take up what our troops are currently doing, God bless them. I am in favor of it. That would be a wonderful idea.

However, I think the odds of that actually happening are basically a snowball's chance in hell. We tried to get those troops when we initially invaded, which looked like a much easier proposition than what we are asking them to undertake right now. There is no chance that those countries are going to willingly send their troops to face the kind of challenges that our troops would face.

Even if they did send them, you have to think about the political repercussions of that. Would the majority Shiite population of Iraq welcome primarily Sunni troops coming from countries that have expressed their fear and abhorrence of Shiite control of Iraq—countries that basically want to help the Sunni minority? That is very unlikely. Would the Sunni minority in Iraq favor troops coming in from Shi'ite countries like Iran? That is very unlikely, too.

So I don't think that there is an easy way out of this where we can say some other troops will come in, or some kind of diplomatic offensive. We have to face the harsh reality, which is that we have

to win or lose this war on the ground, and no amount of diplomacy can make up for that hard military reality.

Dr. SNYDER. Let's give Dr. Khan time to make any comments he wants to make, and then we will go to Mr. Akin.

Dr. KHAN. Thank you. Time to take the gloves off. [Laughter.]

Dr. SNYDER. We call these "vigorous discussions."

Dr. KHAN. Let me put it very bluntly as to what the U.S. presence in Iraq today is. What the jihadists and insurgents have accomplished in Iraq is amazing. They have contained the United States in Baqubah and in Anbar province. These are a bunch of fighters. They have held a superpower and completely contained and boxed the United States in Iraq for four years.

They are providing a public good for all these rogue regimes and all these regimes that we don't like by creating conditions where the U.S. is unable to do anything to any of these regimes—the dreams of reforming Syria, the dreams of containing Iraq, the dreams of transforming Saudi Arabia and Egypt—all of those are now down the drain.

The only thing that the U.S. now wants is to get out of Iraq with its pride and not lose people. This is what these people have accomplished, and this strategy of continuing with the surge, with the United States unilaterally, with the rest of the world hating us, and unwilling to cooperate with us, is, as I have said, a disaster for the region as well as for the U.S.

So there has to be a fundamental change. Yes, we have to manage to keep stability in Iraq, but we have to recognize that our strategies, our stated goals, have created more enemies in the region than allies. The reason why Egypt, the reason why all these countries do not want to cooperate with us in 2003 was because we were telling the rest of the world that you are next.

Look at the Pew study report. We created an environment of fear in the rest of the Arab world that we were going to come after all of them. That is why they didn't cooperate in 2002 and 2003. Now, they are laughing at us because we are not even able to go after and democratize Anbar province.

So we need to be able to come out and say that these goals have changed, and we are real. I would call for a new America with a new strategy. And then people will work with us. Nobody wants a nuclear Iran in that region. Nobody wants al Qaeda dominant in the world.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Akin, for five minutes.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I thought your question was great.

I guess the thing we were hoping to do was to say, are there alternatives? It seemed like Dr. Khan, you got pretty close to it by saying we are just doing to replace the troops with the troops in these other countries.

I have to share with Mr. Boot, you probably have a lot more knowledge of the area than I do, but I am a little skeptical whether or not all these countries are going to send troops in to replace ours, or whether they could be as effective as ours, but it is at least an alternative. I think it is good.

We are here first of all to define some distinctly different things. None of you talked about a three-nation Iraq. Is that even an alter-

native? Or is that something that is not an alternative? I thought of a completely wacky idea, but I think this is a place where we throw out some ideas and talk about them and say, what I have been encouraging this committee to do, if it were up to me, and I am not in charge, but if it were up to me, I would have a list of different possibilities and then I would test those in terms of what is the proposed success; what is our goal; and what it is going to cost us, and all of that.

So we basically weigh a series of alternatives. We don't have to pick on here. That is not the job of this committee, but it would be helpful if we had some of them defined. Is a three-nation Iraq even a possibility or not?

Here is the wacky idea: What happens if you change the capital of Iraq? Baghdad is a big pain in the rear. Why don't you move the government to some other place, and then let Baghdad, if they want to just fight among themselves, at least it is not the center of government. You can at least let government functions go on without terrorism of Baghdad falling into it. I don't know, maybe that doesn't make sense, but we need some innovative kinds of solutions.

General Clark, your proposal in terms of standing back from the forest to getting a little further back and defining what our overall strategy is, that is fine. It still doesn't really answer a whole lot. You are saying we are still going to have to take on the chin that we have to beat the insurgents on the ground, even if we have a little different strategy, we still have to fight on the ground.

I think I am hearing Mr. Boot, you are saying the same thing, that there is really no getting away from that. You just have to beat these guys on the ground, and if you have enough troops and given some time, we will succeed in that.

I think Dr. Khan, you are saying, I don't think you are ever going to do that; you have to get the other nations in the region more involved so that they have some buy-in.

So I just wanted you to respond to that. Give me some alternatives and some differences.

General CLARK. First of all, let me respond in reverse order, if I could. Yes, you must succeed in creating an impression of progress on the ground. That is important for a whole host of reasons. But I disagree that you have to hold up on the dialogue and diplomacy with Iran and Syria until you have completed the surge.

The truth is, we have the greatest leverage that we could possibly have. We are the United States of America. We are the most powerful country in the world. We are the most legitimate country in the world. We dominate every global institution. What Iran wants, even more than a nuclear weapon, is the blessing of the United States of America and the West and the world system, of their civilization and their economic opportunities and political opportunities in the future.

I know the statements of Ahmadinejad, but Ahmadinejad is not the only guy in Iran. We have plenty of negotiating leverage. What I continue to hear from some people associated with the Administration is that there is not enough leverage, if they could just get more leverage on Iran, they would be happy to talk to them. I think it is the wrong approach.

I know I am taking up this time to explain this, but it is an odd thing that you have a retired general who is an advocate of diplomacy, and I am sitting next to a representative from the Council on Foreign Relations, which is a specialist in diplomacy, who is an expert on combat.

What I am trying to suggest is that if you are going to use diplomacy, use it now, while there is some hope of progress on the ground, while you can save a few more lives, and prevent a little more heartbreak. But you cannot do it, as Dr. Khan says, unless you sincerely change the U.S. strategy.

From Iran's perspective, they think we are at war with them, and determined to destroy their regime. They don't think we can do it. Ahmadinejad would like us to try, because we strengthen him when we do that. What we need to do is undercut him the same way we undercut these east European communists in the 1970's and 1980's, through a host of other political measures. If you do that, the strength of the resistance on the ground will slacken. The diplomacy will enhance our ability to cope with the insurgency and with al Qaeda. It is mutually reinforcing.

I think the idea of splitting Iraq in to three nations, it is a gimmick. I cannot support it in good conscience. I have seen what partition does in the Balkans. Yes, we divided Bosnia, but it was already divided. The pain of that ethnic cleansing was enormous, and for us to propose it in Iraq, I know it is happening, but for us to be the sponsor of it and the author of it, and to own the consequences, and to have Iraqis 30 years and 60 years from now saying, Mr. Bush gave away my home in Baghdad. Why take that on ourselves? It is not going to bring a solution to the violence. It is just a recipe for another blame-America thing.

As far as the moving of the capital is concerned, it is another effort. I don't think there are any short-cut answers on this. We have a mistaken strategy in the region. It has caused us the problem in Iraq. Until we go to the heart of that strategy, all the political gimmicks we try and all the military tactics we enhance are only marginal to a solution.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Akin, do you want to hear from Mr. Boot and Dr. Khan?

Mr. BOOT. I would be happy to weigh in and support with complete agreement with General Clark that I don't think that partition offers the way out of Iraq. It is impractical for a variety of reasons, including the fact that the population is so intermixed, especially in major metropolises like Baghdad and Mosul and others.

Baghdad is the capital. The population would still be there, and you have to figure out what to do with that. If you tried to separate it, as General Clark said, the result would be mass suffering on a terrible scale.

The only way it would really work I think is if it were implemented the way it was in Bosnia, where you had an accord among all the different sides, which was then enforced by a heavy outside troop presence, which in the case of Iraq would probably mean 400,000 to 500,000 troops. But that is a recipe for keeping more American and foreign troops in Iraq, and not getting them out.

So I don't think that would really accomplish the objective that we are trying to achieve with partition in any case. It is not a real-

istic solution right now because most Iraqis themselves oppose partition. You don't have a situation as you had in Bosnia where all the parties were exhausted by the conflict and therefore were willing to come to the table and agree on partition. That is not the case in Iraq today, so I don't think that offers a very workable solution.

Let me, since you do want a full and frank exchange of views here, while I am agreeing with General Clark in one area, let me disagree with him on another, which is that while I completely agree on the general importance of diplomacy, I don't know that it really offers a way out of this.

What General Clark is basically suggesting is that—and what Dr. Khan is also suggesting—is that we renounce goals of regime change, and we basically say that we are happy with the status quo in the Middle East; that we will work with the existing regimes, and therefore this, in turn, will lead them to work with us.

I am not sure it would be that easy. Keep in mind that this is the strategy we were more or less pursuing prior to 9/11. There is a reason why we changed strategy after 9/11 because what we had seen prior to 9/11 was that we were in bed with the dysfunctional status quo in the Middle East; that we were backing these despotic regimes that were hated by their own people. As a result of that, many of their own people hated the United States.

Now, today it is true that we are at odds with the regime in Tehran, but keep in mind that by all evidence, the United States is very popular with the people of Iran, precisely because we are at odds with the regime in Tehran, because they know that we stand for liberty and against the oppression, which they hate, which emanates from their own regime.

Even if we wanted to, I am not even sure we could cut a deal on any acceptable terms with the regime in Tehran. Those who say that we ought to reach out to them think that they want to reach out to us. That is not the evidence that we see. When our ambassador and the Iranian ambassador held talks in Baghdad on May 28, what did the Iranian regime do at that very same time? It was grabbing four Iranian-Americans and jailing them on trumped-up charges of espionage, which was basically a giant "up yours" to the United States. And that is what they think of diplomacy. That is what they think of political negotiations. They are going to take these hostages.

And certainly the statements that you hear from President Ahmadinejad are not those that would be conducive to a real dialogue. In fact, I am not an expert on Iran, but a lot of Iranian experts will tell you that the Iranian regime basically depends upon keeping the great Satan as this bogeyman. They don't want to establish relations because that would undermine the rationale for their dictatorship.

So I don't think that the short-term prospects of reaching a deal with Iran are very good. In any case, I go back to a point where I think General Clark and I agree, that if you are to have any chance whatsoever of reaching any kind of deal, you have to improve the status on the ground in Iraq. You have to stabilize the situation and negotiate from a position of strength, not of weakness.

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Khan, I will give you a chance to respond. I think we are going to need to pay a little more attention to our time. We have seven more members that all will have questions.

Dr. Khan.

Dr. KHAN. I don't disagree with anything that General Clark had to say. On the three-nation Iraq idea, I want to just point out that the struggle in Iraq is not about territory, so a territorial separation will not solve the problem. The struggle is for power and resources.

So for the first time in 500 years, the Shiites have an opportunity to dominate Baghdad. The Ottomans kept them away for 500 years. For the Muslim world, this is not a small thing. This is a major shift in power, with psychological implications for the Arabs, as well as for Muslims in general. So it is not a territorial issue that can be resolved through territorial separation. That is the first thing to keep in mind.

Second, we do not want to become the new Great Britain, the inheritor of the colonial and imperial legacy of Britain. That is important for us to keep in mind. Even though I am from Senator Biden's state, I disagree on this issue very strongly.

And finally, on the relocating of the capital, where would you relocate it to? Basra? It will further underscore the idea that we are trying to hand the whole of Iraq to the Shiites. So to think of alternative capitals, quickly you realize that that it is not a very good idea.

As far as the insurgency is concerned, we must realize that we do not think very clearly about insurgency. There are three or four kinds of things that are going on there: one, those who oppose U.S. occupation; two, those who oppose Shiite domination; and then those who are against the West in general, that is al Qaeda. We have to separate all the three dimensions of that insurgency and how we do it.

If we withdraw, then the insurgents who oppose U.S. occupation will diminish, but there will be an escalation in those who oppose Shiite domination. So we need a political solution so that the Sunnis realize that they not going to live in a Shiite-dominated Iraq after we withdraw, and that will eliminate all forms of insurgency, and that will only leave al Qaeda, and that we have to deal with, and we would have a major ally in Iraq.

One, I just want to make this point, that Iran is out to get us. Iran wants to bait us. So it is really very important for us to remember Iran wants us as a friend, as an ally. They want to go out with us. They want to be seen with us in the U.N., et cetera, et cetera. The reason why Ahmadinejad says all those things is very simple. We have made more concessions to Ahmadinejad than we ever made to the moderate Khatemi, who did great things which are pro-democracy.

So apparently, playing the bad boy seems to be getting more rewards for Iran than playing the good guy, and of course, but also partly moderated by our diminished position as a result of what is happening in Iraq.

Dr. SNYDER. We will now go to Ms. Sanchez for five minutes, and hopefully we will be rededicating ourselves to the five-minute rule. Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. I love how you call up the five-minute rule after you are done.

Dr. SNYDER. I know it. [Laughter.]

Mr. Akin and I, we are done, so go ahead. [Laughter.]

Ms. SANCHEZ. Anyway, gentlemen, thank you for being before us.

I want to thank the new chairman of this committee. I have had the pleasure of serving with you on personnel as my chairman of the Armed Services Committee. I think you do a great job, so I am real excited to have you head this.

And welcome to all of you, especially General Clark. Good to see you before us again today.

Oh, gosh. You know, I think our troops are doing what they have been asked to do. I think they are doing a great job for what they have to do. I think from a military standpoint, this really isn't about the military anymore. Unfortunately, Mr. Boot, when you said they are bleeding us slowly, that is what they are doing to us militarily out there.

So I really come back to what do we do about the economy out there, and what do we do with this government, and what kind of government do we have there. What do we need to see from these people? I go back to in March, I led a delegation over to Iraq, and Ms. Shea-Porter was with me.

Because we were all women, we sat down with some of the parliamentarians of Iraq who were women. It was really interesting to be in that room, because these three women—one a Christian, one a Shiite, one a Sunni—was like they had stolen each other's boyfriends. They weren't looking at each other. They weren't talking to each other. We certainly couldn't get anything done in a 435-member body if we couldn't stand each other in the same room. I mean, we still have to move forward.

It was very interesting, because if you listened to each of them, each had a different interpretation of what was going on in their country. The Shia woman thought everything was wonderful. Of course, because that is really who is controlling that government. And before, when we were under Saddam, you know, her people were at the receiving end of something not very nice. So for her the world was wonderful, and wasn't it wonderful? And we were all women and it is all wonderful, and Ms. Pelosi got elected. The list went on.

And then we talked to the Sunni woman from Anbar province. She said, "My people are starving. You want to do something for us? Feed us. You took the troops out. We can't get convoys through. My children are starving out there. Everybody is starving. Do something. You want to help us? Get food to us."

And then the Christian was like, "Well, I think we can all get along. We are going to work this out." They are not going to work this out.

So my question to you, each of you, whoever, maybe starting with the general and going down the list: What do we do about a government that doesn't want to talk about dividing the oil up, which is their main asset? What do we do about a government that doesn't to each other? What do we do about a government that doesn't want to redo the constitution?

We talked to NGO women who said, "You gave us a worse constitution than we had under Saddam. We have no rights. I have the same rights as a child or a mentally disabled person now. Thank you very much."

So I want to ask you, what do we do? What do we do about the political situation, because that really is for me what the third way needs to be if we are going to stay out there.

General.

General CLARK. Let me begin by saying first, it is not our country. We don't own it. We cannot rewrite the constitution. We cannot tell them what they should and should not believe, and how they should behave toward each other. What we can do is try to muster together all of the different ways of reaching the political leaders and the factions they represent. We can do this to try to change the outcome. That is why we must combine the military, the diplomatic and more intensive political work in the provinces in Iraq.

I cannot understand why this Administration and the people who seem to support it refuse to engage in diplomacy in the region. I don't understand it. They would rather see people die than initiate a dialogue. I don't understand that. If we would do that, I think there is a chance we could reduce the levels of tension and then maybe some of these other changes could work their way out. But our political options are limited because we designed it in such a way that we gave the country back to its occupants.

Mr. BOOT. I don't think that the political solution to Iraq lies outside of Iraq. The key is, how do you get the different factions to come to some kind of agreement?

We have been trying very hard to do that over the course of the last four years. Our ambassadors, Khalilzad, John Negroponte, and now Ryan Crocker, they have all had these meetings in Baghdad of representatives of the various factions trying to work out an agreement, and they have not had a lot of luck because even when they have worked out agreements, they haven't meant very much on the ground because there has been pervasive climate of insecurity and fear in which no faction feels able to make compromises or concessions to the other one because they are afraid they are going to get killed if they do that, and their people are being killed in the streets.

Now, the theory behind the surge, the theory behind the current plan is if we can create some stability, if we can decrease the climate of fear, this will allow those Iraqis who are more moderate, and they do exist—people like Ayatollah Sistani, the former Shiite cleric in Iraq has been——

Ms. SANCHEZ. I understand the surge prospect. I don't need to be schooled on that. Maybe I can hear from Dr. Khan, unless you have something new to add.

Mr. BOOT. Well, the only thing I would add is, I——

Ms. SANCHEZ. I don't think the surge is working.

Mr. BOOT. Well, I think there are indicators that it is; there are some indicators that are negative. It goes both ways. But let me just, one point I will make in conclusion is, I don't think the political problems are insoluble. That is the same thing that people said about Yugoslavia in the early 1990's.

These people just hate each other; they want to kill each other. Well, we saw that with farsighted American policy, implemented by General Clark, with troops on the ground providing security, we were able to solve those problems, and I think we are able to do the same thing in Iraq if we just focus on security first.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Dr. Khan.

Dr. KHAN. I have a question for you. After that woman told you that her people were starving, what did you do? Did you step out of the room and immediately call for an aid truck or food to her constituency?

Ms. SANCHEZ. No, certainly not.

Dr. KHAN. Why not?

Ms. SANCHEZ. Because I am not in the executive branch. I don't control the troops. That is what the President controls.

Dr. KHAN. Well, this is exactly the thing. If we are doing things like that, then the message would go that we really care about the people to whom we have decided to bring democracy and stability. If we really cared about the suffering under Saddam Hussein, we will surely care about the suffering when they are starving. An initiative such as that would have done a lot more for winning hearts and minds. And believe you me, it will have cost us far less than a single cruise missile.

This is really an important issue. The President promised three steps when he talked about the surge. He talked about fighting insurgency, moving development and a political solution. And on the other two things, we have hardly achieved anything. It is like this, we spent $600 billion on defense, and we spent $100 million on public diplomacy in his budget, and all of it was redirected toward Katrina—no money to do nothing.

The rest of the world knows this. It also tells us very clearly that we actually do not have any intentions to have a sincere dialogue with these people. You know what the best argument about not attacking Iran is? The best argument for not attacking Iran is the bombing will not work. The message that it sends is that our first choice is bombing. If bombing works, why do we talk? But if bombing cannot work, let's try diplomacy.

This is the message which really resonates very strongly in the Middle East, and it is important for us to sort of get behind that. We have to convey the message that America is America. It is the city on the hill. We care about people regardless of who they are.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Khan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. I want to recognize Mr. Johnson for five minutes, but first acknowledge that he is Mr. Skelton's appointee to this committee, following the resignation of Marty Meehan.

We welcome you, and you are recognized for five minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am honored to serve on this committee and under your leadership, sir.

I would say that I think it is important for us to understand how we got to this point. It was indeed a lack of diplomacy that got us in this hot water that we are in. On the flip side of it, it was actually aggressive behavior by our executive branch, and the motivation of that aggression, what was it?

Some believe it was to capture and control the significant untapped oil resources that exist in the reserves in al Anbar province, about 35 billion barrels of oil awaiting exploitation. Some believe that was the real reason that we went into Iraq and invaded that sovereign nation, against the advice of many of our military leaders who told us that if we were to do it, we would have to have much more boots on the ground, many more boots on the ground, than we had the resources to supply over there, but we went in anyway.

And so the result was predictable, and it has been a colossal boondoggle. It is a tragedy that has resulted in close to 3,600 deaths, $500 billion in resources. We are on the hook for $2 trillion to recover from this. Our military assets have been so degraded that we now don't have the ability to face any other acts of aggression that may require our ground forces.

And so what do we do from here? Recognizing what got us here was the lack of diplomacy and aggressive behavior. Now, we need to engage in diplomacy to help us get out of this. I don't see where if we continue this so-called military surge that it is going to result in a better outcome than what has occurred up to this point. In fact, it will just get worse.

So I like the idea of diplomacy, gathering the stakeholders in that region together to talk about the challenges that exist. I also like the idea of encouraging with this new philosophy, the lack of aggressive pursuit of oil or whatever the case might have been. I like the idea of us having a new attitude when we approach our partners in the area, to encourage them to get involved.

Certainly, there is going to be a need for a force in Iraq to maintain the peace. The Iraqis are not able to do it themselves, and so therefore some kind of contingent that is made up of forces from other nations seems to be a great idea. I would rather us help to fund that kind of operation than to just simply step away from Iraq and let it fall into just a cesspool of terrorist development.

So I like the ideas that I have heard from both Dr. Khan and also General Clark. I think those can be melded together, and I would like to see us have an executive branch that will work with Congress to help fashion a new strategy for dealing with Iraq. It also plays into the way that we deal with Iran and other nations in that area. Do we send a message to them that we are coming after you next? We are certainly not in a position to do so militarily, General Clark.

So I would like to ask Mr. Boot to step out now from your defense of the surge and just ask you to think just theoretically now. How could diplomacy bring about a different set of conditions in Iraq? Do you think it is possible that diplomacy could make a difference there if would draw down some of our forces, send a diplomatic message that we have changed our outlook on things, and we now want to bring partners in to help us solve this situation? Is that something that can work?

Mr. BOOT. Congressman, I would love it if diplomacy would work. I would love it if we didn't have any more fine young men and women risking their lives in Iraq. Believe me, nothing would make me happier. I just don't see any way we can get out troops out of the line of fire and still achieve our basic national objectives such as keeping al Qaeda on the run and preventing them from taking

over provinces of Iraq, and preventing a civil war that will spill over into the neighboring region and destabilize friendly states.

I think all three of us basically agree that if we just pull out now, the results would be catastrophic. What I disagree with is I don't think that diplomacy offers some kind of magic way that we can somehow draw down our forces and still achieve our objectives. I just don't think that there is that magical solution. I wish there were.

Dr. SNYDER. We will now go to those members who arrived after the gavel. We will go in the following order in which people arrived: Susan Davis, Geoff Davis, Mr. Gingrey, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Bartlett, Mr. Miller and Mr. Jones.

Ms. Davis, for five minutes, and then to Ms. Shea-Porter, without objection from the committee members.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I welcome you as chairman of this committee as well.

Thank you all for being here. Actually, we don't always get a chance to mix things up a lot, so we appreciate the fact that you are disagreeing; that we can hear really the nuances of that as well. It is important.

I just came back from Iraq as well, a very quick snapshot, but there are a few things that certainly were clear to me. One was that, yes, I agree, we need more time, but the reality is that nobody could really put a finger on what that is, and certainly short of five to ten years in terms of the development of leadership, that probably wouldn't get the job done.

The other thing that I think was apparent to me is the threat is real. I don't think we can sugarcoat that in any way. But then the reality is, what greater threat are we not addressing because we are so focused on Iraq. If you could also talk about that, that would be helpful.

But my question really is around the reality that no matter what we do, I think, short of quashing our adversaries in every way possible, that it would be seen as a victory by them. So the question is, if that is the case—if you agree with that, and perhaps you don't—how do we then manage that, without accelerating or further creating even greater problems down the line? I am not talking about just a good PR campaign. In reality, how do we manage that message?

My guess is that no matter what happens, it is going to be a little like Russia in Afghanistan. I mean, that is going to be a message. If you agree or disagree, and how do you manage it?

Whoever wants to go first—Dr. Khan?

Dr. KHAN. I find your question very intriguing. You are basically asking what are the larger implications of Iraq. I think it is not just about Iraq or U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. It is about the status of the U.S. as a dominant moral leader in the world, as well as a major player economically. What has clearly been happening in the last five or six years is that we are bleeding economically. We are also bleeding militarily.

What Iraq has succeeded in doing is exposing the limits of U.S. power. The single most important lesson that we can draw from Iraq is that the United States is no longer capable of achieving political goals through military means. Look at what has happened?

Israel's failure in Lebanon is another lesson, that Israel cannot achieve political goals through military means. Our proxy fight with Hamas in Gaza is another lesson that we are not achieving political goals through military means.

So in spite of the fact that when the U.S. is unquestionably the most dominant military power, our ability to achieve political goals through military means has completely diminished. This is the most important lesson for us to draw.

And while we are bleeding in Iraq, China and India are growing and growing and growing. The challenges to U.S. domination is not coming from the Middle East. It is coming from Asia. Europe is becoming economically very strong. The pound today is $2.25 or $2.23.

So we have to recognize that are we going to lose the larger picture by pursuing these goals of regime change and transformation in Iraq, partly motivated by a vendetta post–9/11. These are some very serious questions about which we need to have debate.

And on diplomacy, we must understand—the diplomacy is something that the State Department does. No. Diplomacy is a way of doing business. So we can go to Egypt and say one thing, and then Rumsfeld or somebody else says something completely undiplomatic simultaneously, and let's hope that diplomacy has to work.

We have to understand that diplomacy is the way of doing business. The President is not just the commander-in-chief, but also the diplomat-in-chief. It is time he recognized that.

Mr. BOOT. Well, unfortunately I don't think that pulling out of Iraq too soon will in any way help us to achieve other vital objectives around the world. In fact, I think it would imperil——

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Can you just define for me "too soon"?

Mr. BOOT. I will come to that in a second.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Okay.

Mr. BOOT. Because I think if we pull out of the situation, given what it is today, that would be seen as a victory for al Qaeda and Iran. I think that would be a blow to American interests around the world and it would cause our enemies to redouble their efforts to hurt us elsewhere. For example, in Afghanistan, where a lot of people say if we get out of Iraq, we could focus on Afghanistan. Well, I think if we get out of Iraq right now, the situation in Afghanistan will deteriorate even further because al Qaeda will pour more resources into there and they will feel more empowered to come after us the way they felt empowered after the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan in the 1980's.

Now, how do we avert that? I think we have to realize that at this point, there is no responsible alternative to a long-term American presence in Iraq—five, ten years, something like that—the way we have had a long-term presence in places like Bosnia, Kosovo, South Korea and elsewhere.

Now, obviously it is untenable to have American troops fighting at this level of intensity and suffering these losses for five to ten years, but the hope is, and the plan is that if the surge can try to stabilize the situation somewhat over the next year or so, and as Iraqi security forces increase in effectiveness, they can take on more of the burden and our forces can downsize.

I think we all agree that eventually we want to have a smaller force. I think something along the lines of the report issued by the Center for New American Security, we would have a force basically focusing on advisory, on special forces missions and so forth. I think it would take more troops than they think it would take. As I said before, I think it would probably take around 80,000, but I think that we are probably going to need to have 80,000 troops there for 5 to 10 years to safeguard our interests.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

General Clark.

Dr. SNYDER. Go ahead, General Clark.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. My time is up, but I am trying to get in a quick response.

Dr. SNYDER. Go ahead, General Clark.

General CLARK. I do think that when we pull out, we do have to manage the perception of that draw down of force. I think there is a risk, as your question implies. That is why I believe that you have to change the strategy before you work the draw down. That change in strategy has to involve the principles of renouncing forcible regime change.

I agree with what Dr. Khan is saying about the movement to take advantage of our engagement in Iraq by China and India and other powers. We are inflaming the Islamic world. We are feeding the al Qaeda recruiting machine. Change the strategy first before we worry about changing the troop strength on the ground.

We are debating the wrong issue in the American press. The reason we have been debating that issue is because this way, if you disagree, you can be said not to be supporting the troops. It is convenient shorthand. Everybody understands troops. Strategy is too complicated. Diplomacy is too abstract, and so forth.

There is no magic bullet in diplomacy, but if we don't change the strategy and start talking to the nations in the region and change our aims in the region, then I don't think there is much chance of the surge—whatever its military success where the troops are at the moment—translating that into political success is unlikely.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Davis for five minutes.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate Dr. Khan's comments very much and his perspective. Frankly, I would like to meet separate with you where we can have a more free-ranging discussion on this. From my own experiences in the Middle East in the military and otherwise, the one thing that I think has been interesting in the dialogue both on the panel and also with some of the members is I think we are falling into a false dilemma here very quickly, and that is that it is diplomacy or military force.

Particularly with General Clark's perspective, Bosnia's diplomacy was effective because we had overwhelming military force on the ground and the ability to enforce our will, albeit somewhat ineffectively and ham-handedly in areas. Human beings make mistakes, but it was necessary to preserve continuity and peace in that part of the world. It was at a critical time that much of the world wasn't aware of.

One of the reasons that the inefficiency, the ineffectiveness of the interagency community, the non-uniform functions, was I am convinced because there were no casualties. As we see on the evening news and the General is agreeing with me, these casualties are provoking negative public opinion on a variety of factors.

I think one comment I have heard that has been disappointing in is this Administration. I think I have heard about eight or nine times. But there is more to it than that. This is really where I would like to go with this discussion.

In Haiti, where many of our mutual friends served, we encountered the same problems as in Iraq. The military could do its function, but the non-uniform piece didn't. That was under a Democratic Administration with a Democratic Congress, I might add—a very liberal Democratic Congress. We had the same problem. But again, the process is critical here for us to understand.

In Iraq, what we are seeing exacerbated in a huge way, is separating out the diplomatic piece. It is a broken national security process desperately in need of reform. The term "strategy" has been thrown out, but I haven't heard anybody say what that end-state strategy should be.

I think that in my mind, we need serious reforms of the interagency process around a national strategy to integrate our instruments of power, rather than deal with the silo of diplomacy or the silo of military force, to work with the spectrum that will advance our cause and ultimately—to your point, as you rightly pointed out—solving that meal problem would have built a relationship that would have transcended politics. Frankly, we need more of that.

With that, I would like to open it up to the group to make some comments about the need for governmental reforms that aren't pejorative statements about one political party or another. This is an American problem now. Much of what has happened now has been demonstrated in Mogadishu, in Bosnia, in Panama. In Operation Provide Comfort, we saw all out of proportion to its size—this in Grenada.

What do we need to do to reform the national security process to avoid the problems that we have today in the future? I will start with the General.

General CLARK. When we looked at Haiti in 1994, and I was the J–5 then, we recognized that we needed to be able to write an op plan for the U.S. Government. There was no capacity to do so.

So we convened a group and we wrote the op plan, and it said things like in the conventional operations plan, you give your task to your subordinate units—this was written to come from the President of the United States saying Department of Justice provide civil police training and provide the rebuilding of the legal system; Department of Commerce encourage job creation in Haiti; Department of Health and Human Services, look at public health, improve public health in Haiti.

The problem is, of course, there is no mechanism to do that. There is no appropriations for it. There is no authorization for it.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. For the record, to reclaim the time for a moment, which is my point. I keep a PowerPoint presentation—actually it was Harvard Graphics back in those days that one of

your officers put together—that actually got it only 50 yards down the field—the football field analogy—and there was no other agency support to do this, even though the military force was there. I think that is one of the missing pieces.

If you could continue?

General CLARK. Having said that, once you develop these tools, you have to use them wisely. The problem we have in the United States if we have been leading with our military. The military should be the last instrument used. It became the go-to instrument in the 1990's because it had communications and logistics, and because it could provide for its own security.

It is far better to have the civilian intervention capacity, to be able to do real strategic planning on preventive diplomacy.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. I agree. I agree wholeheartedly with what you are saying. But would you admit, though—and I think it is very important for the record to depoliticize what I think is going to define our policy as a nation for the next 25 years—would you admit for the record that in the 1990's, the problems that you faced as a commander-in-chief are very similar to the ones that Admiral Fallon and Dave Petraeus are facing right now, where our let's say the more expeditionary or deployable aspects of what I think are our greatest strengths as a country—our values, our outreach, our ability to provide continuity to people's lives.

So your troops had to improvise and do things that frankly were outside the operational purview, in a way more fitting with the small wars doctrine that we experienced at other times in our history.

General CLARK. Well, I am not sure why you are asking me to make this comparison and make this admission——

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. The reason that I have is because you have been very, very prominent nationally in using your prior military experience in our common ground and common heritage, to excoriate, and I think in many cases rightly so. I have been a critic of Administration policies myself that have led us to where we are.

However, I think it is important that we transcend that as Americans versus Democrats or Republicans, and ask the bigger question. If the same problem was there in the 1990's that is there now, it is simply much bigger because we see it in the state of this environment.

What we need to do is offer a solution, rather than generalities, and say what are some of the reforms practically that we could do and personnel policy. What are the things that we could do that would allow us to go to the doctor's point, the soft spectrum coming across that military force is the absolute last, but we have a strong military deterrent were that needed.

General CLARK. I agree with where you are driving, but I want to explain something. I didn't come to this dialogue as a member of the Democratic Party. I became a Democrat because of this Administration and its preference for using military force. The difference is that in the Clinton Administration, military force was a last resort.

In this Administration—and my friend Max Boot illustrates some of the attitudes that I have heard from others in the Administration—there is a reluctance to talk to people that we disagreed with.

Look, before we went into Haiti, we actually sent Sam Nunn and Colin Powell down there to negotiate, and we didn't have to do the airborne drop in Haiti. We were able to talk it out, rather than invading. We did not do the bombing at the outset, and we tried everything to stop the bombing——

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. Let's stop right there. I am reclaiming my time, General.

General CLARK. I just want to make sure there is a clear distinction. I am agreeing with you on the need for the tools, but I am explaining the difference, and I think the difference is fundamental, because it is too late, even if you reform the United States government, to use those same tools to get us out of where we are in Iraq. It is too late.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. What we are talking about, again, the political posturing aside, I think that one of the points that I would come back to is you had the same fundamental national security process and system, and you can't say, well, we were diplomats then versus now, because all I want to do if you have agreed that in fact the process was broken. The same issues were in fact in place at that time.

It doesn't hide leadership errors, but I think it is important that the American people understand that this is not simply a personality-driven crisis that we are in. We have a deeper crisis and the process of how we proceed with national security needs to be addressed that transcends all of this.

With that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

General CLARK. Mr. Chairman, I just can't let the point go because I want to make it clear, there is a difference between the Administrations. In the Democratic Administration, there was every effort made to learn from Haiti. PDD 56 was created and we intervened in Bosnia and Kosovo in a much different fashion and a much greater awareness of our limitations than we did in Haiti.

Now, when I went to the joint staff in 2002 and talked to the J–5 before the operation in Iraq, I said, what about PDD 56? And what about the planning process, and what we learned from the Balkans, because he had been there? And he pointed to the third floor of the Pentagon and he said to me, "Can't do it. It is them. They don't want it."

We know now from all the work that has been done how this Pentagon under Secretary Rumsfeld reporting to President Bush, refused to do the post-war strategy planning that was doctrinally required and that we did prior to the Kosovo campaign.

So I agree with you on the need for governmental reform and the tools, but I want to make clear there was a distinction in the Administrations.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. Mr. Chairman, could I indulge you for 30 seconds?

Dr. SNYDER. You certainly can, Mr. Davis. I like a good bar fight. I have already expressed that, actually. Go ahead. [Laughter.]

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. The only thing I am asking you to make clear, because it is obvious I think the record is fraught with ineptitude in various areas, but the one thing that I would come back to is the process allowed that. It wasn't a matter of personal-

ities. I would tend to disagree from the operational perspective that the Administration is gentle-handed in its use of the military.

The bigger issue, and I think really for the record where we need to leave this with, is we have a much bigger issue that transcends personality, it transcends political party, that can somewhat minimize mistakes in this process—to your point earlier—that will allow us to use the full spectrum of our instruments of power to get to a proper end for a true national strategy, which I personally don't believe we have had as a country since the end of the Cold War.

I yield back, and thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Davis, to make a very mundane minor point that agrees with part of what you are saying, is you may have seen on page three of the interim report that came out yesterday, this one sentence: Expansion of the PRT program is not yet complete, with only about half of the approximately 300 additional PRT personnel deployed to date. A full complement of civilian surge personnel will be completed by December 2007.

This is something Geoff and I have talked a lot about, the frustration. This is not a Rumsfeld problem. This is not a Gates problem. It is a problem that somehow in our system that the State Department, USAID, or whoever it is, can't get civilians on the ground, and here we are at the interim report time, and they don't even have half the personnel yet.

We are giving Iraqis a bad time because they are hitting less than 50 percent on their satisfactory/unsatisfactory, and we only have half of the civilian personnel in the PRT, which is an issue not talked about.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. I think it points to the issue we have discussed, the State Department authorizations for manning, the lack of appropriations for costs, and the same officer that did the Harvard Graphics presentation also made the point quite clearly the night before the President's speech that the State Department would not comply with those personnel capabilities because they didn't have them, and that it would be ultimately the military.

Thank you for your indulgence.

Dr. SNYDER. It was really Dr. Gingrey's indulgence.

Dr. Gingrey for five minutes.

Dr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. That was very interesting.

First of all, let me thank our witnesses, Dr. Khan, Mr. Boot, General Clark. I am sorry I missed a lot of this. We had a little activity going on on the floor, which is very important.

General Clark, you said you didn't want to let that last point go. I need to also say that I want to not let a point go. You said under President Clinton, maybe the reason you became a Democrat was that he used the military as a last resort and not a first resort. I would say that that probably was the appropriate posture, being that he had weakened the military to such a drastic extent, as well as our national intelligence capability.

But that being said, let me start by saying that I appreciate that you have put forth specific details in your redeployment plan. It is not a vague troop reduction amounting to a limited presence within

120 days, with no plans or details for how to make this occur, like something else going on on the floor today.

You actually discuss specific troop numbers and areas in which to focus. I do commend you for that. I largely agree with your comments that our approach must be linked to a deeper, more effective political effort, and that political progress on the part of the Iraqi government certainly has been disappointing.

I want to take issue, though, with some of your comments. You say the issue isn't troop strength in Iraq, but rather United States national security in the region. I don't know how these two can be divorced. I want you to talk about that. If we have this precipitous draw-down in Iraq, won't it affect our national security in the region?

Dr. Khan said, and I heard his testimony just before I left, that we have 100-something thousand mercenaries fighting on behalf of the Iraqi government. I don't know who they are. I didn't know that. I haven't heard a lot of intelligence, but I certainly didn't know about that.

He says they have to be replaced. Are the Iranians and the Syrians realistically going to come in there and do that on behalf of this Iraqi government that we have paid such a tremendous price and sacrifice and blood, sweat, toil and dollars to stand up?

This is what I want you to talk to us about. Wouldn't our national strategy be significantly hampered if the Iranians and the Syrians fill the void left by our departure and dictate the future course of Iraq?

General CLARK. I think that we have to have a strategy in the region that maintains an effective U.S. role, even as we are pulling troops back from Iraq. I think the way to do it is to change the strategy before you change the force structure and force deployments and activities on the ground.

What I would like to see is a full-court diplomatic press, the same way we did it to stop the war in Bosnia. We sent a team over there. We had a kit bag of tools. We said we were prepared to put so many troops in. If we get an agreement, we are prepared to do such and such. There is so much aid that you can get, and we are prepared. And there were seven things we were prepared to do.

We also said that we want you to tell us what you want. What we need is a list of principles that guide U.S. policy that we could say, these principles apply throughout the region. Let's say, respect for borders; respect for national sovereignty. We say: Here are our principles; do you agree to these principles? Can we get a statement on it? Can we move forward from there and gradually work to enlarge a dialogue in the region?

If we do that, we will take the venom out of the insurgency and out of the resistance in Iraq. We will be able to slide those troops out of there in good order, and we will be able to maintain U.S. influence. If we don't change the strategy, if we continue to say we are not talking to Iran because we don't have enough leverage over them and they are evil, and we are not going to talk to Syria because we don't like them, and there is a U.N. commission; and we don't like Hezbollah and Hamas because—if we say that, and we try to isolate these states, what is going to happen is they feed the resistance. We have more U.S. losses, more instability in Iraq. We

undercut our own strategy and we undercut our men and women in uniform.

Dr. GINGREY. General, I want to say that the key in your remark, your response, is the modifier "in good order" in regard to bringing the troops out. Elaborate on that. What would you call "in good order"—120 days?

General CLARK. What I call for is a change in the strategy first. I am not advocating a precipitous withdrawal like lining the troops up on the road and marching out right now. I am not saying that we should do that.

Dr. GINGREY. General, there is only one——

General CLARK. I don't think——

Dr. GINGREY [continuing]. Highway of death.

General CLARK. I don't think the situation in Iraq is so far gone that we have to just throw up our hands and say, okay, we quit. I don't think we are there. I think a year from now if we haven't changed the strategy, we could be at the point where the American people will believe that.

You know, there are 25 million people and they are struggling to survive in Iraq. There is going to be an Iraq whether U.S. troops are there or not. So the question is, how do we relate? What we need to do is change the strategy now, so that we empower the troops over there to work more effectively against whatever elements, hard-heads that are there still resisting.

We have to enunciate the kinds of strategic principles that other people in the region can sign up to. If we say we will only talk to democratic governments, then there is no point in continuing to fight in the region because you are going to invite the resistance of those non-democratic governments. We don't have the power to effect immediate regime change in Iran, Syria, and every other country in the region.

Why do we want to? Those are their countries. They have their ideas. If our ideas are better, let them percolate in. This should not be an ideological campaign. What we are trying to do is fulfill our obligation to the people of Iraq by ending the violence, and get out troops out of Iraq safely. That is all.

Dr. GINGREY. General, my time has expired. I want to thank you for your forthright testimony here. I appreciate it.

Dr. KHAN. Can I make a quick 30-second comment?

Dr. SNYDER. A 30-second comment, Dr. Khan. Go ahead.

Dr. KHAN. Yes, sir. The 100,000 people that I was testifying to, Congressman, were not mercenaries hired by the Iraqi government. The U.S. presence includes 100,000 civilians who are not employed by the U.S. Government. They work for Blackwater, people who work for Halliburton, people who work for various contractors—some armed, some unarmed.

So if the U.S. were to withdraw, the U.S. logistical support is 150,000 troops plus 100,000 additional people, and some put the figure at 120,000. So we are looking at more than 250,000 people to replace this. So if the U.S. were to withdraw all its troops, there wouldn't be 150,000 people coming back. There would be over 250,000 people coming back to the U.S. from Iraq. That is the point I was trying to make.

Dr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, if we have a second round, I may have an opportunity to pursue this with Dr. Khan.

Dr. SNYDER. I might say, too, members may have questions for the record, and we would hope to get those back timely. We are going to be interrupted with votes at some point.

Mr. Bartlett for five minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much.

Do each of you have something to write with and a piece of paper? Could you write four things down for me? First of all, "hate each other"; "hate al Qaeda"; "hate us"; and "something else," as a fourth line, "something else." Just write that down, "something else,"—"hate Bush." Again, "hate each other, hate al Qaeda, hate us, and something else."

Now, if you will write down a percentage by each of those that you think accounts for the total violence that we see in Iraq. How much of that violence comes from hating each other; how much of that violence comes from hating al Qaeda; how much of that violence comes from hating us; how much of that violence comes from something else.

Can you write down those four numbers for me: "each other, al Qaeda, us, and something else"? Have you finished?

General Clark, if you would give your paper to Mr. Boot, and——

[Laughter.]

Dr. SNYDER. Roscoe, would you like me to be humming the theme song from a game show? [Laughter.]

Mr. BARTLETT. All right. This should really be in writing for me because this is a question I have wanted answered for a long time, and we have three really good experts here, for which I am very appreciative.

Are all of your numbers written down?

Okay. Mr. Boot, if you will hand your paper to Dr. Khan. And Dr. Khan will hand his paper to General Clark.

Okay. General Clark, what were the numbers that Dr. Khan had for "hate each other"?

General CLARK. Fifteen percent.

Mr. BARTLETT. How many?

General CLARK. Fifteen percent.

Mr. BARTLETT. Fifteen percent. What is his percentage for "hate al Qaeda"?

General CLARK. Five percent.

Mr. BARTLETT. Five percent. What is his number for "hate us"?

General CLARK. Sixty percent.

Mr. BARTLETT. Sixty?

General CLARK. Sixty.

Mr. BARTLETT. Sixty percent. And "something else"?

General CLARK. Twenty percent.

Mr. BARTLETT. Twenty percent. What is the "something else"?

Dr. KHAN. The fear the Sunnis have of transition of power in a Shia-dominated Iraq.

Mr. BARTLETT. Okay.

Dr. KHAN. We call them "hating each other." It is a strategic thing.

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Boot, you have General Clark's paper.

Mr. BOOT. Correct. It says——

Mr. BARTLETT. What did he write down for "hate each other"?

Mr. BOOT. Twenty percent.

Mr. BARTLETT. Twenty percent. And "hate al Qaeda"?

Mr. BOOT. Ten percent.

Mr. BARTLETT. How many?

Mr. BOOT. Ten percent.

Mr. BARTLETT. Ten. All right. And "hate us"?

Mr. BOOT. Thirty percent.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thirty. And a huge "something else." What is the "something else," General?

General CLARK. They are in this for their own gain. This is an opportunity to put together a new Iraq, and they want power and they want their own values, their own interests, their own opportunities, and they are fighting to get it.

Mr. BARTLETT. Okay. And now I guess the only one I don't have is Mr. Boot's numbers. Dr. Khan has those.

What number does Mr. Boot have for "hate each other"?

Dr. KHAN. He has no numbers for anything.

Mr. BARTLETT. Sir?

Dr. KHAN. He has no numbers for anything. He has a note. [Laughter.]

Mr. BARTLETT. Does he have any numbers?

Dr. KHAN. No.

Mr. BARTLETT. No? Okay.

Dr. SNYDER. This was not an essay test, Mr. Boot. [Laughter.]

Mr. BOOT. I am better at English than at math.

Mr. BARTLETT. If you were to put numbers down, Mr. Boot, what would you put down? I don't want each of you informed by the others, but you have——

Mr. BOOT. Well, if I could just read the note, which is, I have no idea what the answer is. I don't think anyone does. But I think the primary driver of violence in Iraq is hatred and fear of each other among the Iraqi sectarian groups, not of the United States.

Mr. BARTLETT. Okay. So you would put a big number by "hate each other," and the others have a relatively small number by "hate each other."

This is very informative, Mr. Chairman. I stayed within my five minutes. Thank you very much.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Bartlett, you get an "A" on that test because you did stay within the five minutes.

Mr. Jones for five minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I always have great amazement at my friend, the Ph.D., who sits beside me, and I found that very interesting, I think.

I am one of many in Congress who, if I look at the last five years—and it is going on five years—and I listened to Dr. Khan, Mr. Boot and General Clark. I have great respect for you, sir, as well as the two I have not met until today.

It appears that, Dr. Khan, I didn't hear your presentation. I was late getting here, but in your opinion, do we have any friends in the Middle East that would like to see—I know they would like to see a stabilized Iraq. I assume that, but do we have any friends in the Middle East? Or is the hatred so deep for America being in Iraq that it is going to take generations to be in a situation?

What I am going to ask you now, and this is the question. I have felt for at least a year that if this Administration had any hope for a stabilized Iraq, that somebody should be chosen to be an ambassador for peace, someone that is internationally respected. And then to use, because of his statement last week, Colin Powell, because Colin Powell has said there would be no military solution. It just is not going to happen.

Does it make any sense—it would not happen overnight—but is there a potential, based on your knowledge of many people in the Middle East, that the right person—and I don't know who that is—that if this Administration really wanted to see that we could maybe have the dialogue that you have spoken about, and the general, does that make any sense? Is that even a possibility, that the right person could begin a long process of trying to develop a dialogue?

Dr. KHAN. I think that the first step that we should take is to not see the entire Middle East as monolithic. It is—very different. For example, the government which we dislike the most is the Iranian at the moment, and the people of Iran are the most pro-American in the entire Middle East. The governments that we like the most, one of them is Jordan, and the people in the Middle East who hate America the most are Jordanians. And people who also have the highest support for suicide bombings are also in Jordan.

So we have to understand that there is a lot more complexity to this. The people consistently in survey after survey in the Middle East make a distinction between America and American foreign policy. They consistently say "we hate American foreign policy," but they hate America.

Their biggest fear, hatred, and anger are directed at our President, the people like Dick Cheney. They are suspicious of people like me. They sometimes like me, and sometimes they don't.

But they have a lot of hope from people like General Clark. They have lots of expectations that the good side of America will balance those from the bad side of America, and that is the hope of ordinary people out there.

But have these all at a very different level. Their animosity, their anger, their hatred, it is at such levels that even if you agreed to everything that they wanted, they would still come after us, because it is not just about diminishing U.S. presence in the Middle East, but it is also for punishing the U.S. for the past, according to their perceptions.

So they want to drive the U.S. out of the region. They have other goals which are very similar—regime change, et cetera—and also they want to punish the West for past crimes, et cetera, and they have other theological agendas, too.

So I still believe that we have lots of friends in the region. Plus, their anti-Americanism in the Muslim world is much more rational than the anti-Americanism of the Europeans. The Europeans don't like us just because of who we are.

So if you look at the anti-Americanism in Pakistan and Indonesia before the earthquake and tsunami and after the U.S. provided relief, the positive attitude toward the U.S. in Pakistan and Indonesia jumped by 20 percent. It is a huge part of the shift, which clearly shows that people in the Muslim world are really rational.

If we hurt them, they hate us. If we help them, they like us. And that is a positive thing.

There are lots of people. I did see President Clinton in one speech in Doha where he postulated a speech that Brookings had written for him, and started reciting from memory verses from the Quran. I could see people in the Arab world who had tears. They seemed to respond to him antithetically. And people like Colin Powell, or even Jim Baker from the Republican side, will have a lot of legitimacy in the region.

I have a feeling that President Bush's father probably too still has a lot of reservoirs of good will in the Arab world in the places where his son doesn't have. So it is all that is not lost. I mean, this is not a place which hates us.

But we must also remember that there is a cognitive dissonance in the Muslim mind. Even those who love to hate us would still love to live with us and live here. So there is a lot of hope for us to build bridges very quickly.

Mr. BOOT. Mr. Chairman, could I just make a very brief statement on behalf of myself, and I will let Vice President Cheney speak on his own behalf. You know, I agree with Dr. Khan that the people of Iran are the most pro-American in the Middle East, and as I mentioned before, why are they the most pro-American in the Middle East? Because their government hates us.

Whereas if we adopt the policy, which has been advocated here by General Clark, of aligning ourselves with the government of Iran, we will probably turn the people of Iran against us, as we have turned the people of Egypt and Jordan and so many dictatorships around the region—Saudi Arabia—against us.

Let me just make one other point, if I could, because what I see here is a groundswell of people saying we want a diplomatic solution to the crisis that we face in Iraq. As I said before, I completely agree. But let me give you very briefly two examples of seeking a diplomatic solution, one of which worked and one of which didn't work; one in 1953 and the other one in 1973.

In 1953, General Eisenhower got us out of the Korean War, not by saying we are going to bring the troops home and try to make nice with China and the Soviet Union and others. What he did was he said we are going to keep the troops in and we are going to escalate if necessary. We are going to do anything that it takes to win. And he even dropped hints that he would use atomic weapons. Within six months, the North Koreans came to the table and we have an armistice that has now lasted these many decades that has been stable.

In the early 1970's, President Nixon and Henry Kissinger said we are going to bring the troops home, no matter what. And by 1972, they had brought the last American combat troops home. At that point, the North Vietnamese were happy to sign the Paris peace accord because they knew it wasn't worth the paper it was printed on. They knew that as soon as it was signed, they were set to violate the accord and they would go on to invade and conquer and occupy South Vietnam within two years of the signing of the accord. And Henry Kissinger claimed this was a great triumph of diplomacy. He got a Nobel Peace Prize.

Well, let me tell you, the South Vietnamese boat people don't think it is such a great triumph of diplomacy. The millions of Cambodians killed by the Khmer Rouge don't think it was such a great triumph of diplomacy.

Now, the difference between the two is that in the case of Korea, our diplomacy was backed by force, and as Congressman Davis said, the very important point, it is not a question of diplomacy or force. The most effective diplomacy is that when used in conjunction with force.

But if we start withdrawals now, that would be toothless diplomacy that would not achieve our goals, but will only convince Iran and Syria and al Qaeda that we are a paper tiger that can be attacked with impunity, and we will pay a very high price for it, not only in Iraq, but around the world in the future.

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Shea-Porter for five minutes.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. We will go to Ms. Shea-Porter.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Okay.

Mr. Boot, how many times have you been to Iraq?

Mr. BOOT. Three.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Three. And yet you said that you have no idea what the people were thinking. When you were talking about a diplomatic solution, and kind of pooh-poohing the idea, I would have been happy with a diplomatic understanding to begin with.

This is a problem that I think that we don't even understand who the people of the Middle East are. You, I am very certain, are aware of the fact that half of the Iraqi parliament, more than half of the democratically elected Iraqi parliament signed requests asking the United States to leave. Right?

Mr. BOOT. I am not aware that the Iraqi parliament has passed legislation asking the United States to leave.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Did you know that they signed a petition asking us to leave, and do you think that would be a good enough reason to leave?

Mr. BOOT. Actually, I don't think there is a single major faction in Iraq other than possibly al Qaeda that actually wants us to leave. Although if you look at public opinion polls, they say that the vast majority of Iraqis do want us to leave, but then the next question is, when do you want Americans to leave. And they say, as soon as you stabilize the situation, because if you leave now, there will be a disaster.

I have talked to many Iraqis over the course of the last four years, and they are all virtually unanimous in saying that, and that is the position of the Maliki government, the elected representatives of the people of Iraq.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Reclaiming my time. They did ask us.

Mr. BOOT. They have not. The Maliki government and the congress and the parliament of Iraq have not asked us to leave.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Okay. Well, we will follow up on that, but the idea that we don't know what they think is what is so disturbing. In the past couple of days, I have had the opportunity to sit in a couple of hearings. One of them involved people from the CIA, so I can speak about it.

And we are doing a global security assessment. What they said after they had been prodded was we are having trouble getting the kind of intelligence that we needed because of our strained relations with people on the ground in that area, and also countries including European countries.

Now, they phrase it that countries with bad attitudes don't give us the information that we need, but the point is that if it is not working militarily, then clearly we need to try something else. Today, I was fortunate enough to hear Major General Bob Scales talk about with this particular Administration, when we say we have a problem, the answer is maybe we can find a better computer, or we can find a larger weapons system.

Right from the beginning of time, good soldiers have always understood that the way that you get the information from people and the way that you win their hearts and minds has to do more with the way that we speak to them and understanding of their culture. We don't understand. In World War II they understood chewing gum and chocolate went a long way simply for finding out what was happening. We have not won their hearts and minds.

So I am concerned because I think what is happening is in the attempt to win militarily, what we have had happen to us is that we have weakened the military dramatically, particularly the Army, and I am going to ask General Clark to speak about that in a moment.

But I just wanted to paraphrase General Pace, when he was asked if he was comfortable with the idea that if there was an emerging fight anywhere around the world, was he comfortable with our ability to respond. All of us should be frightened by his answer. He paused and then said, no, I am not comfortable.

If every resource is in Iraq, if every ideology is sunk into Iraq—and I think that we are driven by ideology here—then how will we respond in the world?

And so, General Clark, I was going to ask you, what do we do now? Are you convinced that the Army is indeed strained to its breaking point and that we are losing men and women who would have gone career, and that we actually have a problem? And do you think that Iraq has weakened us around the world?

General CLARK. I do think Iraq has weakened us around the world. I think we have wonderful people in the United States Army and wonderful leadership, and I think they are over-stretched, and I think you can see the institution beginning to fray now. It has several different problems. One set of problems is simply fatigue. The families are fatigued and stressed. They have borne an unfair burden of this conflict.

A second problem has to do with relationships in the ranks, and the trust and mistrust between lower and higher authorities in uniform. I think that after the conflict, we are going to need a full after-action review process, a sort of wringing-out that we never did after Vietnam, in which seniors and junior leaders exchange views, the same way we do after a tactical operation.

I think that you can see the fraying of the recruiting effort now, as well as the problem with the equipment. We haven't budgeted everything we need even to re-set the equipment, much less the

people. So yes, I am quite worried about it. I don't think we have the response capability we need.

I would also tell you that more important than the military is the distraction that the Iraq commitment is doing to our national leadership. We are not focusing on the other issues that need to be addressed—our economic competitiveness in the world, our larger issues in the Middle East. And so this is a highly destructive, very political debate. I just hope we have enough wisdom to change the strategy before we pull the plug on the troops.

I was in Israel just before I retired in 2000. I remember speaking to the chief of defense, the minister of defense, about they were going to pull out of southern Lebanon. It was a strategically brilliant move by Ehud Barak, but it wasn't covered diplomatically and legally effectively, and the result was that when they pulled out, to regain legitimacy and rebalance their force, they actually created the impression that they were losers, and they were exploited.

I do worry about the perception management overseas. That is why I think we have to have a strategic change before we have an operational and tactical change.

Mr. BOOT. May I just jump in with one fast comment? Because I completely agree with General Clark that our military is overstretched. Some of us have been saying for years that we need a much bigger Army and the Bush Administration has belatedly listened to us, but I think too late.

I don't think you are going to help the Army or the Marine Corps by pulling them out precipitously in defeat out of Iraq. I think that would be the worst thing possible in terms of their morale and their fighting fitness in the future. I think a lot of soldiers have been hanging in there because they want to be in the fight. They don't want to desert their comrades. They want to stay and win.

Those who have been over-stretched, who have been on multiple deployments overseas, if we pull out, you are going to lose a lot of the junior leadership and you are going to lose a lot of the NCO corps who have been in there as long as they had a chance of winning. But if that chance is gone, I think a lot of them will leave, and the Army will face a real crisis.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. May I add that we are losing them. I am interested that you are talking about it as if it would be a future activity. The reality is that right now we are losing our soldiers. They are bailing out, and I am worried about not having institutional history and understanding for the future.

The word "defeat," I think we have to get away from the word "defeat" here. We went in for a mission, and whether it was right or wrong, clearly we didn't have the right intelligence, but we said we were replacing Saddam and we did. And so at this point, I think I would have to argue at the word "defeat."

I think if we paint it that way, then we are all going to be losers for that. If we say that we did what we hoped to do in terms of replacing Saddam and giving them a democracy, but we don't leave our soldiers in the middle of a civil war, we could really start to have an honest dialogue about a responsible exit strategy.

Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Shea-Porter, we appreciate you being here today.

Here is what we are going to do. We may have another 30 minutes or so. We are going to go a second round, but to my committee members, we are going to do a strict five minutes, which means the gavel will come down when the red light goes on. I think we have a shot at getting around to everybody. That means if you are in the middle of an answer, the next person doesn't get to talk, so we won't be as liberal this time.

So we will go ahead and start the round. I am going to start off here. Mr. Akin, by the way, is on the floor. He wanted to speak on the resolution today.

General, I wanted to ask one specific question to you. I am going to quote you from when you testified September 26, 2002, remember, you and Richard Perle just a few weeks before we had the vote on the authorization.

This is what you said a few weeks before that vote: "We should not be using force until the personnel, the organizations, the plans that will be required for post-conflict Iraq are prepared and ready. This includes dealing with requirements for humanitarian assistance, police and judicial capabilities, emergency medical, reconstruction assistance, and preparations for a transitional governing body and eventual elections, perhaps even including a new constitution."

I mean, you could see what was necessary. Anyway, in view of your attitude then, what do you think about when we see the report come out yesterday that we were talking about earlier that says we have only been able to mobilize half of the 300 civilian PRT personnel.

What does that tell you as a military guy, knowing that some of your colleagues that you were raised with and served with are fighting and bleeding overseas, and we still don't have the civilian folks on board that we would like to have. What does that say to you? What do we need to do about that?

General CLARK. Well, the government hasn't lived up to the full set of requirements. And this is really a matter of the President of the United States. If he wants the government to live up to it, he will tell Dick Cheney, and Dick Cheney can probably make it happen. He has made a lot of other things happen. He makes it happen quietly, apparently, behind the scenes, but if I believe what I read in the newspapers, he is the most powerful guy we have ever had in the United States government.

So I don't know why he couldn't produce the kind of PRT support we need if we really need it. This government hasn't been willing to mobilize and deal with the diplomatic and non-military aspects of the mission. It has dumped it all on the men and women in uniform.

Dr. SNYDER. My second question for each of you, and just a brief answer. You have already touched on this in some of your written statements and some in response to questions. But these predictions of what would happen if things go badly and we have a precipitous withdrawal or things don't go well, the ability—I think you used in your words, Mr. Boot, a catastrophe in Iraq.

You know, the ability to predict human behavior, I can't say what my wife is going to tell me tonight when I call her on the phone. When you make these kinds of predictions about what a so-

ciety is going to be doing, when you make those kinds of statements, how much reliability can we place on it? How much reliability do you place on your statement?

Ambassador Crocker a few days ago I think in a New York Times interview made some very strong similar statements. How much reliability do we place on that, that those kinds of bad things will occur? Thirty years from now if things go differently we could be surprised and say, well, bad things didn't happen. Tell me how you analyze it as a scholar and how that will go?

Mr. BOOT. Well, I think it is based on my general knowledge of the situation and arraying the probabilities. I think everybody undertakes that. Of course, there is no certitude in these kinds of predictions, and I hope that I am wrong. I hope that we could withdraw and things would work out much better than I expect.

The problem is that we went into Iraq based on rosy scenarios. We went in there expecting the best and we got the worst. I don't think we can afford to leave expecting the best and be surprised by the worst. Whereas, if we expect the worst and plan for it, we can be very pleasantly surprised and things may work out much better than we feared.

Dr. SNYDER. Do you have any comments, Dr. Khan?

Dr. KHAN. Yes. I think the United States has a long record of not finishing business. After the Gulf War I, we did not finish the job then. In Afghanistan, we just up and left after the Soviet Union left. We did not finish the job of dealing—we did not disarm them. We did not relocate them back to where they had come. We left them.

On 9/11, and contemporary al Qaeda is a consequence of the fact that we did not deal with the first problem of Afghanistan. If we do the same thing—and I mean we are talking of an Administration who did not have a plan in Iraq, but if you do not deal with the post-withdrawal phenomenon in Iraq, we will be facing something which is much more devastating and much more horrific than what al Qaeda brought upon us. It is just not about dealing with the public opinion.

We must also demand responsibility from the American citizens. Over 70 percent support for this war. It is not just President Bush's fault or Dick Cheney's fault or this Congress's fault. They also supported this war, and now they want to run away without thinking about it.

We need to think this thing through, and the civilians need to back it up on what needs to be done in Iraq in the long term as well as in the short term. It is important for the leadership, working with Congress and the White House, to stand up and demand from the Americans more responsibility.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Johnson for five minutes—a strict five minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Clark, you have mentioned a couple of times, several times, that we need to change the strategy before we redeploy. You gave some examples of changing the strategy, renouncing regime change, engaging in dialogue with the stakeholders over there, pursue a solution to the Palestinian issue between Israel and the Palestinians.

Are you suggesting that we should maintain the same troop levels while we go through that pretty much diplomatic process? And should we sustain our current boots-on-the-ground numbers while we go through those diplomatic processes and get some kind of positive result before we downsize? Is that what you are suggesting?

General CLARK. I think in terms of what I am recommending for legislation and what the Congress should demand of the Administration, it should demand a two-brigade withdrawal so that you have a strategic reserve able to be reconstituted a little bit earlier back in the United States. Those two brigades should be out by Christmas.

Mr. JOHNSON. Approximately how many?

General CLARK. Two brigades, that is probably about 10,000 people by the time you count the support. That shows that the Congress then has the ability to direct the executive branch. This is better than cutting off funding or other things.

And then I think the Congress needs to demand that the executive branch come over within 60 days and lay out a new strategy. And it needs to be debated and the American people need to approve of a new strategy. I think if the American people really realized what the current strategy is, they would be in an uproar.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, I will tell you one thing the American public does understand is the intolerable number of escalating deaths and maiming injuries that are occurring, as well as the financial drain that we are undergoing. The American people, I think, want to see a redeployment of the troops now. They want to see an end to the hostilities, if you will, now, and that may not be militarily the best solution.

General CLARK. No, it is not. I hope that in the Congress of the United States that we not only reflect the will of the American people, but we help inform the will of the American people. I think there is an educational function that is here.

Look, these are terrible deaths that we suffered, and nobody can minimize the costs on the men and women and the families in the armed forces. But there are many other issues that are facing America right now. We have to get the strategy right before we react emotionally to this, because the consequences of what we would do were we to just pull the plug and let the troops come out in 120 days are likely to be profound and far-reaching.

Mr. JOHNSON. What exactly do you think would happen on the ground?

General CLARK. I think you will further super-charge al Qaeda recruiting worldwide. I think you will incentivize more attacks against Western institutions.

Mr. JOHNSON. In the Shia-dominated region, do you think that al Qaeda would be able to take hold and take control of that country?

General CLARK. I think it is not Iraq per se. I am addressing sort of the worldwide consequences. You disempower U.S. credibility and legitimacy around the world. It is more of the sort of "U.S. doesn't have the staying power." So obviously, I am an opponent of this strategy, and I was an opponent of the war. But you have to

get out of it the right way. If we don't get out of it the right way, we will compound our problem.

So right now out of frustration, a lot of people want to pull the plug on the Administration, when what they need to do is demand that the Administration change its strategy and its approach in the region. That is what is required, and then the troops can slide out.

Mr. BOOT. If I may, before the Administration is forced to change its strategy, I think it ought to be given a chance to see if its current strategy, which was changed six months ago, is working or not. As we know, Operation Phantom Thunder, which is the surge of operations, finally began in mid-June.

It is far too early to say whether it is working or not, although there are some positive indicators which I mentioned to you earlier. So I think we ought to at least give the current strategy a chance before moving on to the next new strategy.

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Davis for five minutes.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

I think there is certainly an element here in terms of trying to pursue an agenda. I think that everybody wants the same thing here in the end. What I think is also at play is trying to put our goals out there, and in many ways focusing the mind. I think someone said a noose focuses the mind like nothing else.

Do you think that there is an element at play here that is actually helpful? At one point, I think even General Petraeus acknowledge that the Congress being engaged and focused and debating and putting proposals out there was helpful. I would acknowledge that not every proposal was helpful, but on the other hand I think that absent that, there is a perception that somehow we are just going to let this go however it moves.

So I would like some response from you, and then maybe what is missing in this, or what surprises you. How is it possible for the Congress do you think to play a role other than doing "stay or go"? Because that has not been helpful, and I know I had an opportunity just two days ago to share that with General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, that we are getting to that same rhetoric. It is not helpful.

Mr. BOOT. If I could say, I completely agree with you. I think Congress does have a very useful role to play and I think these kinds of hearings are in fact useful to look very seriously and get beyond the rhetoric and look into the substance of proposals.

Look, I think the Bush Administration has made many, many mistakes over the course of the last four years, and I think Congress has been right and responsible in pointing those out. In fact, I wish it had done a little more of that on mistakes such as not increasing the size of the U.S. military so we would have more options—I mean, things that have not gone well.

But what I don't think helps and what I think really hinders General Petraeus's mission is when we hear high-profile politicians back home saying "bring the troops out now," even though when you read the fine print what they say is don't bring all the troops out right now; we are actually going to keep a force, and so forth.

But most people don't read the fine print, and the message that gets conveyed to our enemies in Iraq is that we are not there for

the long haul, and therefore that takes away some of the impact of our combat operations because they think they can wait us out.

Whereas if we come together as a nation and say we are committed to prevailing here, and we will not be driven out by al Qaeda; we will not be driven out by Iran; we will stay with the democratic government of Iraq, paradoxically, that kind of commitment is our best chance of drawing down our forces. Whereas if we keep talking about drawing down our forces, it makes it very hard to do so because that empowers our adversaries.

By the way, the Bush Administration is guilty of this, too, because every few months they read from the Defense Department—Secretary Rumsfeld, Secretary Gates—they keep leaking, we are about to draw down our forces. That constantly undermines what our troops are trying to do on the ground in Iraq.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. General Clark.

General CLARK. I just want to say, look, this is not General Petraeus's mission. This is the United States government's mission. It is the mission of the United States of America and it is the mission of President George W. Bush. And that means all the elements of the government should be brought to bear.

I happen to believe that these kinds of debates are constructive. I think the Iraqi political leaders do need to be incentivized. That is one of the reasons I am recommending a two-brigade draw-down mandated by Congress by Christmas, because I think they need a rap across the knuckles to get their priorities straight.

I do believe that Congress has an important role to play in terms of demanding the strategy. If you don't get the strategy you want, then you go to the other measures—the troop strength, the funding, the other things that are required. Congress has a role not only to raise and maintain an Army, but to help the United States correct a series of mistakes.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Dr. Khan.

Dr. KHAN. I think that the election season is becoming a major distraction for effective discussions about what needs to be done. The fact that now the Democrats have an opportunity to raise issues, I think there is a lot of posturing that is taking place, and it is all about Presidential elections, and also getting back and getting even with President Bush.

I think it was a mistake for this Congress to completely surrender the agenda-setting after 9/11 to the Bush Administration. And so now we are caught up upon the failures of a failed agenda. His initial strategy was wrong to begin with, and now he has made errors and failures that are compounded by the errors and failures of a wrong vision, wrong strategy.

What the Congress can do is reopen the post–9/11 debate and say what was the right thing to do for us to begin with, and can we now do those right things.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Davis for five minutes—and it will be five minutes this time.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. I would like to turn the dialogue inward for a moment, because I think Dr. Khan brings up a very good point. We are mixing strategy and operations and tactics here quite a bit in terms of as we discuss this. One center of gravity of this dialogue internationally that is taking place clearly is seen as

the American people. Perceptions overseas certainly are—and policies for that matter—are being derived based on our reaction to certain things.

Our debates now, our troops all over the theater last week were commenting to me about things they were watching on television. Our comments are interpreted through the filters of different cultures as well. My concern at the moment is one that relates ironically back to the friendly discussion that I had with the General earlier regarding our ability to integrate and to cooperate effectively, which I believe is less a personality issue and more a process issue—rightly the United States government, but what is that now other than a bunch of silos that don't work well together?

This is a question I would throw out to the group. I think one thing that is critical regardless of what we do—and I preface my remark by saying I do not believe that the President right now has a lot of credibility with the American people to be able to enunciate this vision of where we need to go, regardless of what solution that is, whether it is the current one or a new one.

But in reality, we have a deep-root problem of how do we articulate to our people to give them context? When I meet with the many families that I have of young people who have lost their young men—and I meet with every one in the district—they have a context, a very clear message articulated from that young person back to them of the filter of their experience. It is sober. It also has a message of understanding being part of a bigger context.

In talking to people out in the street with no connection with the military, there is a dissonance that is very real. They don't understand the end-state of the policy. We talk about intolerable casualties. What does that mean? I lost nine of my West Point classmates. Nobody talked about them in the past. That was intolerable to me. But in World War II, we lost 440,000 of our citizens out of a population of 130 million, when 10 percent of our population was under arms. People understood a context.

My question for you, to open it up, is most important of all explaining to the American people in a democracy how do we get to where we are by giving them a vision of what it needs to be, not in generalities, but why—not just what—but why we are doing what we are doing.

I will start with Dr. Khan.

Dr. KHAN. Frankly, I don't understand, myself, why we are doing what we are doing, because of what the President says and what he does——

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. I agree. We have a broken process, but what would you articulate specifically to the American people?

Dr. KHAN. I think there are a couple of things that we need to understand. There is turmoil in the world and we have to understand that as America we have an important role to play. It is our responsibility to play the role of the underwriter of stability in the world as a sort of police officer because we benefit from stability in the world.

But we must also realize that the threat to the United States is not just a threat to the U.S., but it is also a threat to the global order that we exist as Americans and it is our responsibility to try

to understand this. But our response has to be much more compassionate, much more understanding.

Like, for example, our immediate reaction was to seek security for the United States by making everybody else feel insecure. That is the biggest philosophical error that we have committed. We should have fought for the security of all. Everybody in the world should have felt secure by the initiative that we would take in the post–9/11 world, and we would have the world on our side. Even today when I go across Europe, I find that even those who are fighting the war on terror—the intelligence community, counterterrorism—they have absolutely no cooperation from the U.S. The cooperation is one-sided.

And all of these things continue to undermine our unilateralism. The biggest thing that happened to the U.S. was we were an invisible empire before 9/11. We showed our fangs after 9/11 and nobody likes that. And how do we tell the American people what happened?

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. And I appreciate that perspective.

General, what would your message be to the American people if you had a clean slate completely, and were dealing with the circumstance, to give them context of why we need to do whatever that let's say next strategy would be?

General CLARK. At this moment in history, the United States is the preeminent power in the world. We can't be safe in our own values and institutions and interests at home unless we reach out and help others abroad. We need to be helping. We need to be promoting and supporting our friends and those who share our ideas. That is what we need to be doing.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. Thank you.

Dr. Boot.

Mr. BOOT. I agree that we have a vital and important role to play in the world. I think our top priority at the moment has to be to attain an acceptable solution in Iraq. I think it is naive to think that we achieve our other objectives if things come apart in Iraq in the middle of the Middle East.

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Gingrey for five minutes.

Dr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

I want to say to Dr. Khan and to my colleagues on this side—Mr. Davis—that he was talking about the President having very little credibility. I would remind both of them and everyone present that Abraham Lincoln, President Lincoln, in 1864 had very little credibility as well. President Truman didn't have a lot of credibility in 1945. And here we are talking about the court of public opinion.

I want to remind everybody that in April of 1941, 80 percent of the American people felt that we should not get involved in the situation in Germany, and what was going on within imperial Japan. That was 7 months before the unprovoked attack on Pearl Harbor. So I just would throw those points out there for food for thought and consideration.

I will direct my question to again, General Clark.

First of all, again let me just say that I appreciate your forthrightness. I think if you looked up the Federal Election Commission (FEC) report when you ran for President, you probably

wouldn't see me as a contributor. You may see Dr. Khan's name, from some of the remarks that he has made.

But since you are not a candidate for President this time around, let me ask you this question. You talked about the stress and strain on the military and the end strength——

General CLARK. I want to warn you. I haven't said I won't run. [Laughter.]

Dr. GINGREY. Reclaiming my time, because you certainly seem very prescient in regard to your plan. In fact, indeed, I think that after we get General Petraeus's report, what it should outline to us today at this hearing may very well be what the Administration has in mind and needs to do. So I commend you for that.

Now to my questions, though. In regard to the cost of the war and the strain on our troops, do you think that we should institute a war tax? And do you think we should reinstitute the draft?

General CLARK. I think that the United States needs to distribute the burdens of the war more equitably. I don't have any problems with asking the American people or elements of the American people or through some mechanism to collect the funding that is required.

The government is running a deficit right now. We are not funding the full support of this war. I think we need to take a real look at the cost. You know, the cost isn't $400 billion. The cost is probably between $1.5 trillion and $2 trillion when you look at the total cost of what is going to take to recover from it. That cost is going to have to be recaptured. The government should responsibly start doing that.

As far as the draft is concerned, I don't favor conscription, but I do believe that it is the obligation of the government to have the kind of dialogue about how we are going to man and support our armed forces if the volunteer force doesn't draw in the people we want, and if we sustain our commitment there. I think it is our obligation to have that dialogue before the armed forces fail.

Right now, I am concerned. I know quality men and women are leaving. I know we are not getting the kinds of recruits we need. More importantly, we are allowing the United States Army to become unrepresentative of the United States of America. It is the obligation of the Congress and the Administration to raise those issues.

So I am not advocating conscription, but I am advocating a dialogue about how we are going to maintain our troop strength other than simply raising the enlistment and reenlistment bonuses.

Dr. GINGREY. General, I thank you.

I have a little bit of time left, if Mr. Boot would like to respond to the question, and Dr. Khan. I have 30 seconds left.

Mr. BOOT. Your question is about the war tax and conscription?

Dr. GINGREY. Absolutely.

Mr. BOOT. I don't think under the present circumstances I would favor either one, because I think that the economy is proving to be very robust in the last few years, and though the war is extremely costly, we are absorbing the cost from the financial perspective from the economic perspective, and we are continuing to grow very strongly.

Now, the cost in human terms is harder to absorb, obviously—the loss of fine young men and women—but I don't think there is much support in this country for conscription. If you will recall, there was a vote a couple of years ago in the House, and there was something like only members supported the draft. So I don't think that is very likely.

Dr. GINGREY. I believe that my memory serves me correctly, the two that supported it were the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Representative Charlie Rangel, and also one of the cardinals on defense appropriations, Mr. Jack Murtha.

Mr. BOOT. Well, so it is hard to pass legislation that only has two votes in Congress. So I don't think that is very likely. But I think we do need to look at expanding the recruiting base.

One of the things that I would look at is to lift the prohibition that you currently have to have a green card in order to enlist, because there are a lot of people who don't have green cards, but who would like to become citizens. I think a lot of them would be happy to—in fact we are expediting citizenship procedures for a lot of people in uniform. I think we can do even more to expand our recruiting base.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Jones for five minutes.

Mr. JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Boot, I do agree that we have a robust economy, but we are borrowing money from China, Japan, and the UAE like we have never borrowed before in the history of this country. We are borrowing this money to help pay for the war in Iraq. There is no question about it.

This is my question, I guess. I guess you saw each one of you today in The Washington Post, CIA said instability seemed to be irreversible. This was said in November of 2006. CIA Director Hayden was speaking to the Iraq Study Group. I am not going to read everything, but just a couple more points, and I do have a question.

"The government is unstable to govern," Hayden concluded. "We have spent a lot of energy and treasure creating a government that is balanced, and it cannot function." He further stated, "A government that can govern, sustain and defend itself is not achievable." He was talking about Iraq.

I am not taking a view, but the point is, and you know the statement that we were given that raises the scenario of before we went into Iraq. And I quote General Gregory Newbold, who I have great respect for—a three-star Marine general that gave up the fourth star: "I was a witness and therefore a party to the actions that led us to the invasion of Iraq an unnecessary war. Inside the military family, I made no secret of my view that the zealots' rationale for war made no sense—the neocons that sold us this information and created the justification that was never justified."

My point and my question, and I will start with you, and we have a little bit of time and everybody could speak to this. You say that we have to stay the course. That sounds like the President of the United States. We have to stay the course. Well, with this nation going bankrupt, both treasure and men and women, and you are opposed to a draft, how in the world and what do you see as victory in Iraq?

Mr. BOOT. First, Congressman, you are citing a CIA prediction of what would happen in Iraq. I think as we have seen in recent years, the CIA is hardly an infallible oracle about what will happen in Iraq.

Mr. JONES. So is this Administration's policy.

Mr. BOOT. I agree. I have been critical of the Administration, too, but let me cite you another intelligence estimate which was leaked almost a year ago from the chief Marine intelligence officer in Anbar province, where he wrote that Anbar province was lost; there was nothing we could do to retrieve the situation in Anbar province.

Well, guess what? In the last year there has been a turnaround which nobody expected. The unpredictable happens.

Mr. JONES. Okay. Please. Reclaiming my time. Go back, because I want the other two gentlemen to speak, and give me what you see and how you would explain to the American people what the definition of "victory" is. How would you explain what is "victory" in Iraq?

Mr. BOOT. I think victory is a sustainable representative government in Baghdad that is able to police its own soil and to prevent international terrorist from using it as a staging ground. I think that is essentially what we are looking for. You are right about the cost of the war. It is heavy in both blood and treasure.

In terms of the treasure, I think that is not to sustain, given how robust our economy is and how strongly it is growing. The question of the sacrifice of our young men and women is harder to sustain, but the question we have to ask is: As opposed to what? If we could end the war by simply pulling out and everything would be great afterwards, I would say pull out. But my concern is that we will lose far more people in the future if we pull out today.

Mr. JONES. Reclaiming my time. First of all, the robust economy is that to the Chinese we have sent thanks to two Administrations more manufacturing jobs to China than we ever have. We have had a classified briefing on Red China and how much money they are putting into their navy and air force, and most of that money is coming from the trade deficit with China which is over $200 billion.

Real quickly, General, what would you say to the American people?

Mr. BOOT. If I could just for 30 seconds on the trade deficit?

Mr. JONES. I am going to lose my time. Let the general speak and then the doctor.

I mean, how would you explain victory so that we would recognize it?

General CLARK. Well, I don't think it is possible to at this point claim there is going to be a victory in Iraq. I think you have to ask, what is an acceptable condition that we could live with. It us a government that doesn't harbor terrorists, doesn't commit acts of aggression against other states in the region, and that will participate in the normal diplomatic intercourse and trade and so forth in the region. That is all.

I don't think that you are going to get a long-term sustainable representative government. I think it is unlikely. If we got it, it would be great. I just think it is unlikely and I don't think it is

a condition for America's achievement of what it needs to be able to pull back.

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Shea-Porter, for five minutes.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you.

After just six months being in Congress, I am amazed at the contradictions I have heard in what has been said at all the hearings I have attended.

Mr. Boot, you just talked about giving a green card to people to fight for us. Now, either we have the will of the American people which is essential for what you call "victory" or we don't. And recruiting people almost sends kind of a mercenary, that somebody else will fight our wars for us. First, we want to borrow the money to have the war, and then we want to borrow the people from other nations to fight the war.

So I guess my question to you is, earlier, you talked about defeat. So exactly what is your idea? You use the word "defeat," so how could you say that you would pull out if you thought that would work, because wouldn't that be defeat?

And what about that debt that we have to other nations? You talked about a robust economy, but you can ask anybody anywhere around the country about—and by the way, I hear from my own constituents all the time that we don't have money for the hospitals; we don't have money for the infrastructure; we don't have money for social programs, which is a direct result.

So what exactly are you proposing as your idea? And could you also tell me where we would get the troops if we didn't take them from other nations?

Mr. BOOT. What I said was if we could pull out without suffering a catastrophic defeat, I would favor a pull out, but I am afraid that the pull out under those circumstances would result in a defeat.

In terms of where we can get the troops, we Army has had some strains on recruiting, but it has struggled to meet its numbers for a few months, but overall year by year is has met its numbers, where it has seen very strong reenlistment rates. On July 4 in Baghdad, General Petraeus led one of the largest reenlistment ceremonies we have ever had. The troops have been extraordinary and dedicated and committed, and have stayed in this fight.

Now, I mentioned the possibility of lifting the green card requirement, which is something we have done in the past. You can call people who serve in expectation of citizenship or for some other reason. Without being citizens, you can call them mercenaries if you want, but that would have to extend to people like Lafayette and General Kosciuszko who helped us to win independence or the many fresh immigrants off the boat from Ireland and Germany and elsewhere who helped the Union to win the Civil War. We have used troops born abroad many times in the past. They are fighting today. We have many non-citizens in the military today who are serving very valiantly.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Reclaiming my time. I think they were fighting in our country on our soil for our effort.

Mr. BOOT. They have also fought for us abroad in other places as well.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Excuse me—our war. And here, I am just so confused by this. I mean, I have to tell you that you are not the

only one who shifts the wording around, because in March when I was in Baghdad we asked General Petraeus how much time did you need. And he said at that time, early summer, and he would know clearly whether it was working or not, the surge. And he used the word "surge," and I have trouble remembering which surge you are talking about, because we have had quite a few surges.

Mr. BOOT. The one that started on February 15.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Okay, because you named another one that you dated back to June. But the issue is that——

Mr. BOOT. The surge of operations—Operation Phantom Thunder started on June 15 using the surge force——

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. This is the problem I think that we are having, that we are talking past one another. But it is really way past time to stop saying General Petraeus deserves more time. It is interchangeable, depending—Secretary Gates deserves more time.

Deserves more time for what? What we are asking right now is for a responsible strategy to not necessarily win in the terms that you use, but certainly stabilize Iraq. The very first hearing that I attended we asked what the goal was—this was back in January—and it was to stabilize Iraq. Nobody used the word "military victory" except the President. It is stabilize Iraq.

So how can we have a dialogue here—what can we really do that would get at that sort of——

Mr. BOOT. You won't find anything about the surge strategy. The President has launched a new strategy. I was very critical of his previous strategy a year ago. We have started a new strategy. The surge of forces began on February 15. The last troops in the surge arrived in mid-June. Operations using those troops began on June 15. That is why I said it is too soon to judge the results of the surge. However, there are a lot of early indications have been positive, as I mentioned before.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Reclaiming my time. We are in year five of this war—year five.

I yield back.

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Davis, are you just dying to ask a question?

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. I really was, just in terms of numbers, because one of the I think concerns that people have was that the surge was likely too little and too late. Had there been the ability of more troops, longer deployments, God forbid—I mean, would we be in a different position even today in your estimation than we are had we actually truly surged with a lot more troops?

General CLARK. I am not sure if the occupation was ever going to succeed once we used military force, disbanded the army, and let the anti-Baathists take charge. At that point, it was just a matter of time. What we had to have done is thought through the occupation, pre-identified that people who were going to be important movers and shakers on the ground, the institutions that had to be retained, the city leaders that had to be identified—and dealt with those people.

It wasn't just a matter of troop strength, but it was partly a matter of troop strength. It was more an attitude of just total misunderstanding of the situation. To be instructive on this, you should look at how the Soviet Union occupied eastern Poland in the

Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. It is an amazing example of how one country can take. They knew every village. They knew every enemy. They had special parties designated. They had prepared for this. We did not prepare.

So the idea of maybe it would have been different if we had three or four—maybe. But what we really needed was to understand the situation.

Dr. SNYDER. The timing is good.

Gentlemen, we appreciate you being here. That was a good discussion. I want you to feel free, if things come to mind and you would like to have an addendum written statement, you submit that and it will be made a full part of the record and be distributed to members of the committee.

Members may also have questions they would like you to respond to for the record. We hope that we can get those in a timely fashion.

With that, the committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:45 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JULY 12, 2007

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JULY 12, 2007

Opening Statement of
Chairman Dr. Vic Snyder
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Hearing on "A Third Way: Alternative Futures for Iraq"

July 12, 2007

Good morning, and welcome to the first in a series of four hearings that the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations will hold on alternative strategies for Iraq. We currently have over 160, 000 U.S. forces on the ground there. Additionally there are over 5,000 government civilians assigned in Iraq, and most recent reports indicate we are paying over 180,000 contractors throughout the country.

The costs of the war to the American people, both in terms of the lives of their sons and daughters, and the dollars they entrust to the government, are mounting. U.S. casualties have spiked in recent months. The number of American troops killed in action has risen by 37% in the last three months over the previous three. The U.S. government has spent over 350 billion dollars in Iraq to date and the monthly cost of the war is now up to 11 billion dollars and is likely to rise further.

The House is considering, and will soon be voting on, legislation calling for the redeployment of troops from Iraq. Our intent with this series is to have practical discussions that avoid the extreme positions of immediate withdrawal or staying the course indefinitely. By doing so we hope to both enhance the public debate and inform future full committee deliberations. We have invited retired senior military officers, defense policy experts, and academics who specialize on the Middle East.

The full committee is holding complementary hearings on a broader scope. Yesterday it heard witnesses give their views on the "Global Security Assessment". Upcoming ones will address Middle East regional security issues, the "interim" Iraq report and General Petraeus' September report on the surge. The subcommittee will ask witnesses to discuss the implications of their alternative ideas or what the strategy post-surge should emphasize.

We've asked our witnesses to look forward rather than backward. We are not intent on rehashing how we got to where we are. They have all been asked to address similar aspects of their alternatives so members and the public can more easily draw comparisons in key areas. The areas we are interested in include:

- Financial and personnel requirements,
- The impact on the people of Iraq,
- The affect on regional stability,
- The bearing on U.S. national security generally, and
- What it means for the U.S. military

Today's hearing will begin with testimony from retired General Wesley Clark, former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO. General Clark appeared before this committee in 2002 and 2005 with Richard Perle to discuss military and diplomatic strategies for Iraq before the war and before the bombing of the Samarra Mosque. In one of his most recent articles he describes a regional strategy to address challenges in both Iraq and Iran.

He will be followed by Mr. Max Boot who is a Senior Fellow in National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. His July second op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times* indicates he favors continuing the surge strategy. So we'll be interested to hear what he would recommend after the surge draws to a close next spring.

Our final witness will be Dr. Muqtedar Khan. Dr. Khan, is the Director of Islamic Studies at the University of Delaware and a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. He wrote an article last fall, "Iraq: There is a Third Way." In this article he suggests that the third way is to "Muslimize" the occupation of Iraq by demanding that key Arab and Muslim allies provide the necessary troops to establish real security in Baghdad, particularly given how much the U.S. provides these nations in military and economic aid. We will use our customary five minute rule for questions and proceed to members based on seniority.

Welcome, again, to our witnesses. We're looking forward to your remarks. We will take your whole text for the record, but I ask that you keep your prepared remarks fairly brief so we can get to our questions.

Now, I would like to turn to my colleague, Mr. Akin, our ranking member, for any opening remarks he might have.

Statement of Ranking Member Todd Akin
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
House Armed Services Committee

Subcommittee Hearing on A Third Way: Alternatives for Iraq, Part 1 of 4

July 12, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me begin by recognizing the new chairman of the subcommittee, Dr. Snyder. I look forward to working with you, and know that under your stewardship the committee will continue work on critical issues facing the Department of Defense in a bipartisan manner. Vic, thanks for choosing to be our chairman.

Today's hearing is the first in a series aimed at breaking out of the false construct of talking about Iraq in terms constrained to "precipitous withdrawal" or "stay the course".

Given the current political environment, the President's interim progress report on benchmarks mandated by this Congress, and the debate

taking place today on the floor of the House, I know this series of hearings will be challenging. But, I agree with the Chairman that the Congress must carve out a space where we can focus and wrestle with policy – not politics. I hope these hearings provide the space for thoughtful, non-partisan discussion.

So, I agree this will be a useful exercise, but only if it is done correctly. The purpose of this hearing is to hear alternatives to the current strategy that truly offer a different plan. Simply critiquing the current approach is not the point of this hearing and is not helpful. I ask the witnesses to offer and define an alternative plan, and explain how it is different from the plan General Petraeus is currently implementing in Iraq.

Let me help begin this exercise by identifying key features of the current strategy. In 2006 the U.S. began shifting its strategy from having our armed forces pursue al Qaeda and building the Iraqi Security Forces to a strategy that emphasized having U.S. combat forces go "door to door" performing a counterinsurgency mission aimed at securing and holding Iraqi neighborhoods. Implementing this plan requires roughly 160,000 troops at a cost of about $10 billion a month. Current troop levels also allow the U.S. to

train, equip, and advise the Iraqi Security Forces, and deter regional actors from destabilizing the democratically elected government of Iraq. There are signs that this plan is working, but according to General Petraeus the strategy cannot be fully assessed until this September.

I offer this broad sketch of the current strategy to emphasize the strategic issues that any alternative plan must address. Any plan must, at the very least, do the following:

- State the roles and missions of the U.S. forces in Iraq
- State the personnel levels required to complete these missions
- State the expected funding requirement to execute this plan
- Clarify the U.S. role, if any, in building the Iraqi Security Forces
- Explain how the plan deters regional actors from destabilizing Iraq.

Responding that the current plan doesn't work or fails to adequately address these areas is simply not enough. Again, we are asking you for an alternative – not another critique. I would ask my colleagues on the subcommittee to be vigilant about truly challenging these proposals so we can be sure that we are in fact listening to "alternatives".

With these parameters in mind, I look forward to hearing our witnesses' statements.

Again, thank you for being here today.

[Yield Back to Chairman Snyder]

House Armed Services Committee
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

A Third Way: Alternative Futures for Iraq
July 12, 2007, 3:00 PM
2212 Rayburn House Office Building

Testimony of General Wesley K. Clark (USA, Retired)

Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe
Senior Fellow, Burkle Center for International Relations, UCLA

Chairman Snyder, distinguished members of this subcommittee, it is an honor to come before you today to discuss Iraq and our future policy options there.

At the outset, though, I'd like to thank you for the attention and the support you've given to the men and women in uniform, and their families. Members of the Armed Services Committee have been assiduous in studying the needs and providing the necessary financial authority and guidance to have built the finest Armed Forces in the world, and a force which has represented your nation and served it courageously and well.

It's only proper, therefore, that this Subcommittee help ask and answer the hard questions to be asked concerning our over four years deployment in Iraq: whether it is "succeeding," and, if not, how the mission should be modified or curtailed, and at what cost.

These questions are in no way the material of abstract, hypothetical musings. Just about everyone in public life has now formed strong opinions, and certainly the American public has, also. By strong majorities they believe the war is unwinnable, and want the strategy changed. They also want the troops brought home - and taken good care of when they return here - but they don't want to lose. And so the public debate has increasingly turned on the consequences of a withdrawal for Iraq, our friends in the region, and for ourselves - with a "precipitous withdrawal" being the one which leads to increased violence.

You can receive the testimonies of the generals and state Department experts that can discuss every tribe, militia and province. I don't propose to do that today. But what I would like to do is offer my perspective on the region, and then propose a course of action which could prove to be the "least worst" of the choices available.

The United States is today engaged in a four-fold struggle in the Middle East, and each of the struggles is interconnected with the others. At the most benign level, the US is in hot competition economically, to capture its share of oil exports and earnings, and to sell its share of goods and services. Our long term dependability has been a

winning factor in building enduring US influence and commercial penetration in the region. Second, the US works to assure to security and safety of the state of Israel, within the broader interest of seeking to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and helping Israel assure its long term survival and success within the region. Third, the United States is engaged in a three-decades long struggle against Iranian extremism, which has manifested itself through terror bombing against US forces, harassment of oil shipping lanes, the pursuit of a long range, nuclear strike capability, Iranian interference in Lebanon, and, of course, assisted by our topping of Saddam Hussein, within Iraq itself. Finally, the US is caught up in the almost ten-year-old struggle against Al Qaeda.

These struggles help frame the ongoing conflict in Iraq, circumscribing the options and weighting the alternatives. The US will not and cannot abandon the region, nor our friends and interests there. The analogy with the US withdrawal from South Vietnam ought therefore to be unthinkable. US interests require continuing engagement in this region. But neither can the US make mincemeat of the fragile and artificially created states in the region, nor the governments that rule them, however much we should disagree with their policies and principles, for any of these existing governments is, if not a bulwark against a stronger Al Qaeda presence, then at least a regional actor which may be held accountable in some sense. We don't need any more failed states in the region, whether in Gaza or in Iran. Yet over the next twelve-to-eighteen months the Iranian nuclear effort is likely to culminate in the credible capability of significant uranium enrichment, and, absent a real diplomatic initiative from the Bush Administration, either this Administration or the next will be forced to acquiesce in an Iranian nuclear capability - with all the risk that entails - or execute a series of air and naval strikes to delay or destroy that capability - with the risks of further aggravating tensions and terrorist activities as well as disrupting global markets and flows.

So, the issue isn't troop strength in Iraq, but rather US national strategy in the region. As of now, it is not too late for that strategy to be significantly altered. The US

would have to renounce its aims and efforts of regime changes, pull back such forceful advocacy of democratization, engage in sustained diplomatic dialogue with governments in the region, including Syria and Iran, heed the advice of regional friends and allies like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Emirates and Qatar, and work not to isolate Hamas but to reshape it. This new strategic approach to the region must be linked to a deeper, more effective political effort within Iraq to align interests and structures, in order to produce the kinds of compromises necessary to end the civil war there. The tactics, principles and techniques of such a shift in strategy are no mystery. I and many others have for years called for such changes. But it seems all too clear that the leaders in the White House today have not, thus far, even seriously considered such change. They persist in seeking a largely military solution, focusing on troop strength and tactics, and have had the temerity to label a 20% increase in US troops as a "new strategy," when all along it has been obvious that we have needed perhaps three times the on-the-ground troop presence they directed.

Consequently the "surge" strategy has produced no miracles: some local progress in Baghdad neighborhoods, perhaps, and an accompanying effort, perhaps underwritten by our Saudi friends, against Al Qaeda in Anbar. But the political agreements expected to emerge, miraculously, from the presence of a few more thousand US troops in Baghdad haven't.

The deeper truth is that we are engaged in a civil war inside Iraq aided and abetted by outside powers. It is not at all clear that the "surge" will, even were it to succeed in reducing the violence, bring this war to a successful conclusion. We are playing on others "home court." They own porous borders, language skills, long term relationships inside Iraq, and sufficient means to ratchet-up resistance and encourage divisiveness when and where it suits their purpose.

When well-trained and equipped troops are thrown into stabilization missions, they normally do succeed in temporarily tamping down violence. This is the historical record of occupying armies, from Europe to Asia. Local

opponents watch for vulnerabilities, redeploy to elude the occupier's grasp, and deepen their structures in preparation for the resumption of hostilities. But unless mechanisms for political reconciliation take hold, violence seems inevitably to resume and escalate as aggrieved parties find ways and means to pursue their aims despite the presence of an occupying force.

In the case of Iraq, these tendencies are exacerbated by the competitive struggle between Iran and its Shia surrogates, and the Saudi and Jordanian support for the Sunni's. The Iraqi government itself lacks the legitimacy and capability to resolve this struggle, whatever its "legality.". And so, no matter the vicissitudes in civilian deaths, or car-bombings, or disappearances in Baghdad, the underlying dynamics of the struggle continue. This Administration has refused to address their strategic causes and has left our brave soldiers and Marines hostage to a regional power struggle.

For this reason, I believe the time has come for the Congress to demand that the Administration begin the redeployment of American ground forces and state publicly and clearly that there will be no permanent US bases in Iraq. At best, this underscores the seriousness of the American people and helps incentivize Iraqi leaders themselves work to stop the conflict through suitable dialogue and compromise. Thus far, this has been notably lacking among the Iraqi's. At the very least, the redeployment will provide immediate relief for overstretched US ground forces.

These initial redeployments would be modest in scope, designed to stimulate internal Iraqi political dialogue, incentivize more intensive Iraqi efforts at accommodation, and underscore to the region that the United States will not be held hostage. I would like to see the withdrawal of two brigades over the next six months.

But this should be coupled with legislation compelling the Administration to address to Congress its strategy and regional efforts within sixty days. Pending suitable modifications to the Administration strategy to encompass full diplomatic and political efforts in the region and

within Iraq, and assuming continual recommendations by military commanders to retain the enhanced troop levels, then Congress should support the "current less two brigades" force through March, 2008, after which the US forces should begin a twelve-month transition out of direct combat operations, except against Al Qaeda, with a residual training, security, and counter-terrorism force sized in the 50-80,000 range, which will gradually phase out.

This is the force which would effectively under gird US diplomacy, assist the Iraqi's, maintain US capabilities against terrorists, and provide sufficient relief for the US to regain strategic military maneuverability.

However, if the Administration refuses to change its strategy appropriately, then I would see the need for a more rapid withdrawal of US forces, commensurate with reduced chances of success and the greater likelihood of having to reengage militarily within the region at a later time.

To underscore the obvious, the struggle in Iraq can certainly be lost militarily, but it cannot be won militarily, and certainly not with the limited US forces currently deployed. The hour is late, but not yet too late, to leave behind an integral, developing, and stable Iraq. But it is also true that the Administration has demonstrated its incompetence in designing and carrying out a strategy for success. And so I appeal to members of this committee to do your duty: help save our military, and help rescue our nation from the periless consequences of our strategic blunders.

STATEMENT OF

MAX BOOT
SENIOR FELLOW IN NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES,
THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS[1]

BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE
ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

JULY 12, 2007

Chairman Snyder, Congressman Arkin, members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for inviting me to testify on alternative strategies in Iraq. I am told that the subcommittee would like to explore a "third way" between "staying the course indefinitely" and "immediate withdrawal." I am not sure that a good third way actually exists; otherwise we would probably be pursuing it already. What I would like to do today is to survey the most prominent options offered in the current debate, examine their strengths and weaknesses, and then conclude with some thoughts about what the least-bad option would be.

To make my own position clear from the outset, I believe we should maintain the surge (160,000 troops, or 21 Brigade Combat Team equivalents) as long as militarily possible, then move to the pre-surge force of 140,000 troops (15 BCT's), and then, when events on the ground permit, gradually transition to a force of perhaps 80,000-100,000 troops (4-6 BCT's plus advisory, Special Forces, and logistics elements) focused primarily on assisting the Iraqi Security Forces for many years to come.

That isn't as dramatic as pulling all U.S. troops out of Iraq as soon as possible. But even if wanted to implement such a retreat it would be hard to do right away; estimates from within the military suggest that an orderly departure would take six to twelve months. It would certainly be possible to leave faster than that, but that would require a precipitous abandonment of allies and equipment. In such a scenario U.S. forces would probably have to fight their way out of the country, with insurgents determined to inflict a final humiliation on a defeated superpower. This pell-mell scramble would likely produce traumatic images along the lines of the last helicopter lifting off the Saigon roof.

Withdrawal options

The most precipitous withdrawal that is being considered in Congress is Senator Chris Dodd's plan to begin pulling troops out within

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a month and then have them all out by the end of the year. Along similar lines, the New York Times editorial board recommends a withdrawal that would be completed within as little as six months. Most advocates of total withdrawal suggest a slightly slower timeline. The leading legislation along those lines, co-sponsored by Senators Carl Levin and Jack Reed, would begin troop withdrawals within 120 days of passage and complete it by the spring of 2008. With the support of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Senator Russ Feingold has coupled this drawdown plan with an amendment that would cut off funding for further combat operations after March 2008.

The Iraq Study Group (the Baker-Hamilton Commission) also called for a general pull-out on the same timeline but offered some major caveats which included the possibility of a short-term troop increase of the kind the Bush administration is now undertaking. The ISG report said: "By the first quarter of 2008 [i.e., April 1, 2008], subject to unexpected developments in the security situation on the ground, all combat brigades not necessary for force protection could be out of Iraq. At that time, U.S. combat forces in Iraq could be deployed only in units embedded with Iraqi forces, in rapid-reaction, and special operations teams, and in training, equipping, advising, force protection and search and rescue."

That's quite a list of exceptions, and the ISG made no attempt to estimate of how many soldiers would be required to carry out all these remaining missions. Nor have most politicians who embrace these recommendations, including Senators Ken Salazar and Lamar Alexander, who have sponsored legislation to implement the ISG's recommendations. (Those recommendations are also backed by the two leading Democratic presidential candidates, Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, as well as by numerous other lawmakers, including a growing number of centrist Republicans such as Richard Lugar, Pete Domenici, and George Voinovich.) Many in Washington seem to think that 20,000 troops or even fewer—I have heard figures as low as 5,000 cited--might suffice. However, the Center for a New American Security, a centrist Democratic think tank, has released a "Phased Transition Plan" by James Miller and Shawn Brimley that calls for 60,000 troops to remain in Iraq at the end of 2008 to carry out these tasks. This would include a big decrease in combat strength and a big increase in advisor strength that, they envision, would last until 2011 or 2012.

Bing West and Owen West, a father-and-son team of distinguished Marine veterans and writers, have come out with their own, slightly more robust version of this advisory strategy. In an article in Slate [http://www.slate.com/id/2166854/pagenum/2/], they write:

> A full-fledged Plan B would leave about 80,000 U.S. troops in Iraq in 2009, about half as many as will be in-country at the height of the surge. The adviser corps would nearly quadruple, to 20,000 troops, with another 25,000 in four combat brigades and special-forces units, plus 30,000 logistics troops. Another 5,000 Americans will live on the grounds of the new U.S. embassy in Baghdad,

> where they will rarely venture out. A comparative handful of American diplomats, called Provincial Reconstruction Teams, currently live with U.S. brigades. Far more are needed. Another 15,000 American contractors would provide security and training functions, up from 10,000 today. In addition, the number of foreign contractors who provide food and logistics to the U.S. military would remain steady at 90,000 or drop.

The Wests propose to maintain this deployment for a decade or so—through 2017 presumably. Their plan provides considerably more margin of safety than does the similar proposal from the Center for a New American Security. Note that their proposal includes, in addition to 80,000 U.S. troops, another 15,000 security contractors. If we have fewer contractors, more troops will be required. The overall force needed to carry out an ISG-style strategy is probably around 100,000.

A diplomatic offensive?

Along with calls to redeploy American troops in lesser or greater number, various analysts and politicians have also offered ideas for other initiatives that could be undertaken to improve the political situation in Iraq. The ISG called for a "New Diplomatic Offensive" undertaken by the United States and a "Support Group" made up of other states and the United Nations. That idea has been taken up and amplified by numerous others, most recently Senator Chuck Hagel, who has suggested the appointment of a United Nations special envoy to mediate among Iraqi factions. Such suggestions are innocuous enough, but it is unlikely that even the world's greatest diplomat could solve the myriad woes that bedevil Iraq today. As if Iraq's internal problems were not bad enough, a contributing factor to the current unrest is the destabilizing behavior of its neighbors, in particular Iran and Syria. The ISG suggests that its "diplomatic offensive" could meet this challenge. Its report states: "Iran should stem the flow of arms and training to Iraq, respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and use its influence over Iraqi Shia groups to encourage national reconciliation.... Syria should control its border with Iraq to stem the flow of funding, insurgents, and terrorists in and out of Iraq."

Well, of course, they should. Or at least we think they should. But how do we make the leaders of Syria and Iran agree that they should do what the members of the Iraq Study Group think they should do? The ISG recommended that the "United States should engage directly with Iran and Syria," but it gave no reason to think that such talks would yield progress. An indication of Iranian interest (or, more accurately, lack thereof) in negotiations may be gleaned from the fact that even as the recent talks were occurring on May 28th in Baghdad between the American and Iranian ambassadors, the government in Tehran was detaining four Iranian-Americans on trumped-up charges of espionage. And even as the Bush administration has signaled greater willingness to engage in diplomacy as recommended by the ISG, all indications are that

the regime in Tehran has been stepping up the flow of funds, munitions, and trainers to support terrorism by anti-coalition forces in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The Iranians and Syrians are responsible, directly or indirectly, for the deaths of hundreds of American troops and many more Iraqis. Their attacks are becoming more brazen, not less, as indicated by the Quds Force-organized invasion of an Iraqi government compound in Karbala in January which resulted in the kidnapping and murder of five American soldiers.

The ISG report suggests that, like the U.S., Syria and Iran have an interest in an "An Iraq that does not disintegrate and destabilize its neighbors and the region". That may well be the case, although it's hard to know for sure. All else being equal, Iran and Syria may well prefer an Iraq that is stable and in one piece. But not if it means that Iraq will emerge as a democratic ally of the United States in its war against terrorism. That would be the worst of all worlds for a terrorist-sponsoring Iranian regime that would then find itself surrounded by allies of the "Great Satan." Much better, from the strategic perspective of Syria and Iran, to continue fomenting terrorism in Iraq that will bleed American forces and prevent Iraq from emerging as a unified actor capable of threatening its neighbors, as Saddam Hussein did in the 1980s and 1990s.

Syria and Iran are skillfully waging a proxy war against the United States in Iraq that, if current trends continue, could well leave Iran as the dominant player in most of the country. The Iranians are doing with the Jaish al Mahdi and other front groups in Iraq what they have already done with Hezbollah in Lebanon: expanding their sphere of influence. Why Ayatollah Khameini and his inner circle would voluntarily want to end this policy, which is achieving their objectives at relatively low cost, remains a mystery. The thing most likely to dissuade them from their current path would be the threat of serious military and economic retaliation, ranging from air strikes to an embargo of refined petroleum imports to Iran. Such steps would have a good chance of inflicting so much pain that it would force Iran and Syria to alter their behavior, but there is scant political support in the United States for such a tough policy, however justified. The one notable exception is Senator Joseph Lieberman, who continues to call attention to Iranian aggression, but he is a prophet without honor in his own party.

However scant the support among the American political class for turning up the heat on Syria and Iran, there seems to be only marginally more interest in paying the kind of substantial bribes that might induce them to change their behavior. This would probably involve, at a minimum, giving the Syrians a free hand to dominate Lebanon and the Iranians a free hand to develop nuclear weapons. The ISG report shied away from recommending these types of unpalatable concessions. Instead, at the same time that it called for major concessions from Iran and Syria over Iraq, the ISG also called for "a verifiable cessation of Syrian efforts to undermine the democratically elected government of Lebanon" and for the United Nations Security Council to continue to deal

with "the issue of Iran's nuclear programs"—hardly steps calculated to win the favor of Tehran or Damascus. The incentives recommended by the ISG are either insufficient (increased trade and diplomatic relations with the U.S., which Tehran has shown no interest in pursuing) or unobtainable (the return of the Golan Heights, which the current Israeli government has shown no interest in granting). Failing some pretty hefty carrots and sticks, talks with the Iranians and Syrians are extremely unlikely to find a negotiated solution of the kind envisioned by the ISG and by such eminent other voices as Senators Richard Lugar and Hillary Clinton.

Partition

Another commonly mooted option designed to achieve a political solution in Iraq is to partition the country. This plan has been developed by Senator Joseph Biden and my former boss, Les Gelb, president emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations. It has been backed in various gradations (from formal partition to loose-knit confederation) by Senators Sam Brownback, Barbara Boxer, and Kay Bailey Hutchison as well as by such well-respected analysts as Michael O'Hanlon and David Brooks. Some degree of federalism in Iraq is obviously a good idea, and it has been embraced by pretty much everyone involved in the debate. But if calls for decentralism go significantly beyond the status quo in Iraq (which already gives almost complete autonomy to the Kurdish region and a large degree of autonomy to other provinces), they could create significant problems. Some of those difficulties are aptly summarized by the ISG:

> Because Iraq's population is not neatly separated, regional boundaries cannot be easily drawn. All eighteen Iraqi provinces have mixed populations, as do Baghdad and most other major cities in Iraq. A rapid devolution could result in mass population movements, collapse of the Iraqi security forces, strengthening of militias, ethnic cleansing, destabilization of neighboring states, or attempts by neighboring states to dominate Iraqi regions.

To these well-founded warnings, I would add a couple of points. First, most Iraqis do not support partition. The latest Pentagon progress report on Iraq, released in June, cited a poll taken in April which found that only 36% of Iraqis thought the country would be better off if divided into three or more separate countries. The strongest support comes, not surprisingly, from the Kurdish region, but among Iraq's Arab population there is strong desire to keep the country whole. Even proposals for regional devolution meet a mixed response, with some Shiites in favor but many joining Sunnis in opposition. It would be hard to impose on Iraqis a solution they do not themselves favor.

Even if we could somehow partition Iraq—and no one has offered a credible plan for how to split up multi-sectarian metropolises like Baghdad and Mosul--it is not at all clear that the resulting mini-states

would be any more peaceful or stable than today's (nominally) unitary polity. Note that there is considerable turmoil right now in southern and western Iraq even though the former region is almost exclusively Shiite and the latter region is almost exclusively Sunni. It is to be expected that bitter struggles for power would continue in partitioned Iraqistans and that, in addition, the mini-states would be at war with one another. To name just one potential source of future discord: No Sunni state, lacking its own natural resources, could possibly trust a Shiite-dominated government to equitably share its oil wealth absent some kind of ironclad outside guarantee.

This brings us to the one situation in which a partition might make sense and be stable: if it were to come about as a result of negotiations among the major participants and if it were to be enforced by a sizable foreign troop contingent. The model I have in mind is Bosnia. But recall that the Dayton Accords occurred only after years of terrible bloodletting that exhausted all of the parties, and, even then, the accords required a NATO troop presence and quasi-colonial international governance that continue to exist more than a decade later. We are nowhere close to such a solution in Iraq, and even if it were achieved it would not accomplish what most advocates of partition want, which is a withdrawal of American troops. A serious partition plan would, on the contrary, require an indefinite, long-term presence by our forces (at least 450,000 soldiers, if we are to achieve the same troop-to-civilian ratio as in Bosnia), because few if any other nations would volunteer to send their own troops into this cauldron.

Saddam Lite

A third possible political solution has been less widely discussed: ending our support for the current democratically elected government in Baghdad and backing a military strongman instead. What we might call the "Saddam Lite" policy has been advocated by Middle East scholar Daniel Pipes and a few others. At this point I wouldn't rule it out on moral grounds (soft authoritarianism is preferable to violent chaos), but it doesn't seem terribly practical. A military dictator demands, by definition, the support of a strong army. Yet the Iraqi Security Forces are too weak and too divided to control their own country even when fighting on behalf of a representative government. It is hard to imagine why they would be more effective fighting on behalf of some dictator drawn from one of Iraq's sectarian communities. Moreover, no one has seriously suggested how this would-be strongman might gain the allegiance of the ethnically and religiously divided armed forces and police forces. The one name that has been mentioned as a possible strongman is Ayad Allawi, who was briefly Iraq's appointed prime minister in 2004-2005, but he appears to have more support among neighboring Sunni states than in Iraq itself. I wouldn't be opposed on principle to Allawi becoming a dictator if he could impose law and order, but there is no reason to think he would be able to win the loyalty of the Iraqi Security Forces, much less to use them to impose his diktat on the rest of the country. The Maliki government may

be frustrating and ineffectual, but it would be a mistake to give in to our impatience and repeat the mistake we made in South Vietnam, where the overthrow and murder of Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963 made the government in Saigon less, not more, effective.

Civil war and its consequences

In short, neither calls for a diplomatic offensive nor calls for the partition of Iraq nor even calls for a military dictatorship offer a serious prospect for lessening the shock if all or almost all American troops were to leave Iraq anytime soon. It is, of course, impossible to know what would happen if we were to pull out anyway, without a stable political and security structure in place, but few serious analysts in or out of uniform think that the results would be pretty. Some advocates of withdrawal airily predict that if the U.S. were to leave the "Iraqis would get their act together," and with American troops no longer acting as a crutch, they would have to resolve their differences through political compromise. Such rosy scenarios are highly improbable if not entirely impossible. Far more likely would be an all-out civil war.

This would be a humanitarian tragedy for which the U.S. would bear indirect responsibility. We would have blood on our hands—the blood of countless Iraqis who trusted us with their lives only to have that commitment cruelly betrayed, as in generations past we betrayed the South Vietnamese, the Cambodians, the Hungarians, and too many others. Beyond the troubling moral implications there are equally troubling strategic implications. Advocates of withdrawal pretend that this would not constitute defeat. They call it "redeployment." The world would not be fooled. In particular our enemies would see through such transparent public-relations ploys. If we are seen as the losers in Iraq—and we would be if we withdraw anytime soon--al Qaeda and the Islamic Republic of Iran would be seen as the winners. The perception of American weakness fed by a pullout would surely lead to increased terrorism against the U.S. and our allies, just as occurred following our ineffectual response to the Iran Hostage Crisis in 1979, the murder of our Marines in Beirut in 1983, the taking of additional hostages in Lebanon in the 1980s, the ambush of our Special Operations Forces in Mogadishu in 1993, the bombing of our African embassies in 1998, and numerous other outrages perpetrated by Islamist hate groups over the past several decades.

Besides the general psychological boost for radical Shiite and Sunni extremists around the world and the concomitant blows to American prestige and credibility, there would also be a concrete price to be paid on the ground. In the chaos that would follow an American pullout, it is quite possible, even probable, that al Qaeda would succeed in turning western Iraq into a Taliban-style base for international terrorism. Although the momentum at the moment is running against al Qaeda in Anbar Province, the tribal forces that are now cooperating with the Iraqi government would be incapable of defeating al Qaeda on their

own. If the U.S. were to pull out, the tribes would likely go back to cooperating with al Qaeda for the sake of self-preservation. Meanwhile, in the Shiite south of the country, Iran would likely expand its imperial influence.

That is only one of many possible effects of an Iraqi civil war that we need to contemplate before making the fateful decision to give up the fight. Daniel Byman and Kenneth Pollack of the Brookings Institution, two serious Democratic analysts, issued a sobering study in January called "Things Fall Apart: Containing the Spillover From an Iraqi Civil War" that should be required reading for anyone calling for a pullout. Byman and Pollack studied a number of civil wars stretching back to the 1970s in countries from Congo to Lebanon, and found that they are never confined within the borders drawn neatly on maps.

Civil wars export refugees, terrorists, militant ideologies and economic woes that destabilize neighboring states, and those states in turn usually intervene to try to limit the fallout or to expand their sphere of influence. "We found that 'spillover' is common in massive civil wars; that while its intensity can vary considerably, at its worst it can have truly catastrophic effects; and that Iraq has all the earmarks of creating quite severe spillover problems," they write. No surprise: After all, Iraq, with its oil wealth, has far more to fight over than Congo or Lebanon or Chechnya.

Containment

The question is whether we could avoid these spillover effects while still removing significant numbers of American troops. Byman and Pollack think we should remove our troops from Iraq's population centers, bringing many of them home while re-positioning perhaps 50,000 to 70,000 on the borders to contain the civil war and limit its regional impact. This scenario (which has been endorsed in various forms by, among others, retired General Anthony Zinni and columnist Charles Krauthammer) is a real possibility, but it comes with its own serious drawbacks.

For a start, is it politically viable for U.S. troops to remain in Iraq in sizable numbers and do nothing while a few miles away ethnic cleansing and possibly even genocide occur? The "CNN effect"—the effect of having such lurid pictures of violence broadcast 24/7 around the world--could be devastating for the morale of our armed forces and our people at home as well as for our international standing. In the Islamic world, it would only further reinforce the impression that we don't care about Muslim lives and that we only invaded Iraq for its oil—the very myths that feed terrorist recruiting.

A second problem is what exactly our troops would do to contain the civil war. Of course they could keep neighboring states such as Iran or Syria from sending conventional troop formations into Iraq, but that's not a very likely outcome in any case. Our troops would have a much harder time stopping the kind of infiltration which occurs now, disguised as part of the normal commercial and tourist traffic in and out of Iraq. If we can't stop terrorists from entering Iraq today, or from leaving Iraq to train in Iran and then return home, why would we have better luck with a smaller troop contingent?

And how would this rump force deal with another likely outcome of a civil war—massive refugee flows? Would U.S. troops prevent Iraqi civilians from crossing the border to safety? If so they would be assuming responsibility for their fate. If we want to avoid a Srebrenica-style horror, we would have to set up, administer, and protect giant refugee camps—what Byman and Pollack call "catch basins." This is a very dicey proposition, because, as we have seen in the case of the Palestinians, such camps tend to become a breeding ground of extremism and terrorism. How would U.S. forces react to attempts to organize terrorist groups in the camps? Would our troops not only protect the camps from without but police them from within? If so they would face exactly the same kind of unpleasant urban counterinsurgency that they are in engaged in today from Baqubah to Baghdad. If not, they could be fostering greater regional instability.

Picking a winner

Another way of dealing with an incipient civil war would be to embrace it instead of trying to prevent it or mitigate it. Some realpolitikers such as Edward Luttwak advocate a cold-blooded strategy whereby we would end our attempts to police Iraq and defeat both Sunni and Shiite extremists. Instead we would throw in our lot with the Shiites and help them to win a rapid victory in a civil war which would result, we hope, in the destruction of Al Qaeda in Iraq. This is practicable, but the consequences might be hard for many Americans to stomach. Remember the story of Sunni captives who were allegedly tortured in the basement of the Iraqi Interior Ministry in 2005 before being rescued by U.S. and Iraqi troops? In a civil war such stories would multiply a million-fold, except that there would be no hope of rescue for those who fallen into the hands of sectarian foes. If the U.S. were to back the Shiites—which in practice would mean backing not only the government but also militias such as the Jaish al Mahdi and the Badr Brigades—we would assume moral complicity for whatever atrocities they would carry out.

And even if they were to win decisively and rapidly, the outcome would not necessarily be to our liking, since the result would be, at least in the short term, a major increase in Iranian influence. It would also likely empower the most radical elements among the Shiites, men of the gun like Moqtada al Sadr who inevitably come to the fore when war erupts, rather than men of peace like Ayatollah Ali Sistani. But such a

rapid and decisive victory is unlikely in any case, given that Sunnis have great skill at unconventional warfare (as we have seen battling their insurgents over the past four years) and will have virtually unlimited access to arms and financing from neighboring Sunni states intent on blocking a Shiite takeover. Meanwhile, the Shiites, numerous as they are, are split among competing factions that might not be able to cooperate effectively even against a common foe.

The likely result of a cynical decision to simply throw in our lot with the Shiites would be a costly civil war that would drag on for years without resolution, and that would cause a lot of the spillover effects predicted by Byman and Pollack. Their warning should be heeded about the dangers of this policy: "proxies often fail in their assigned tasks or turn against their masters. As a result, such efforts rarely succeed, and in the specific circumstances of Iraq, such an effort appears particularly dubious."

Special Forces to the fore

Many advocates of troop drawdowns suggest a less extreme approach to coping with a full-blown civil war. They think that we should maintain Special Operations Forces (SOF) in Iraq to hunt down Al Qaeda terrorists while essentially giving a free pass to other sectarian militias. Some suggest that the SOF units should remain on major bases in Iraq proper; others, such as Congressman Murtha, call for an over-the-horizon presence in Iraqi Kurdistan or Kuwait. Either way this is not likely to achieve our objective of preventing terrorist groups from establishing and consolidating safe havens.

To see how well this strategy would work, ask yourself how much success do our SOF operators have today against terrorists in unfriendly states like Iran and Syria or even in politically ambivalent states like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia? Not very much, because to be effective SOF forces need access to good intelligence that can only be generated on the ground, and they need a permissive political climate in which they can swoop in without worrying about the diplomatic ramifications. Such a climate exists today in Iraq, and our SOF raiders are having great success in hunting down and killing both Shia and Sunni extremists. In fact, our Special Forces are taking down more jihadist desperados at the moment in Iraq than anywhere else in the world.

But even today there are major limitations on what even the most skilled special operators can accomplish. The substantial presence of the Joint Special Operations Command (the best of the best among our commandos) has not prevented terrorists from turning cities from Fallujah to Ramadi to, more recently, Baqubah into redoubts of depravity. A Los Angeles Times article summarizes what U.S. troops found in Baqubah when substantial forces recently stormed the city:

> For more than a year, hundreds of masked gunmen loyal to Al Qaeda cruised this capital of their self-declared state, hauling Shiite Muslims from their homes and leaving bodies in the dusty, trash-strewn streets.
>
> They set up a religious court and prisons, aid stations and food stores. And they imposed their fundamentalist interpretation of Islam on a population that was mostly too poor to flee and too terrified to resist.

If Special Operations Forces could not prevent the establishment under their noses of a Taliban-style "Islamic State" in Baqubah in the past year, how much luck would they have in the future if they had operate from Kuwait or the Kurdish region? That would be like trying to police Boston from Washington, D.C.

A SOF-centric strategy would not be likely to work, whereas we have seen time and again that the presence of large numbers of American ground troops can rout the terrorists. Just look at the success of offensives since 2004 in Fallujah, Ramadi, Tal Afar, and Baqubah. The problem with many of those operations in the past was that we didn't have enough troops to sustain a long-term presence after taking the city. Now, with the surge strategy, we may finally have enough to execute all phases of "clear, hold, and build," at least in some critical locales like Baghdad.

Invest in advisors

In addition to focusing on SOF operations against Al Qaeda, another integral part of most drawdown plans is to invest more heavily in advising and supporting the Iraqi Security Forces. This is a good idea in the abstract, but there are practical difficulties in moving from today's 160,000 troops to 80,000 or fewer without risking a collapse of the Iraqi Security Forces and of the entire Government of Iraq. We have repeatedly tried to implement a strategy of "as the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down"—and we have repeatedly found that the Iraqis on their own were incapable of standing up to the world's most deadly and depraved terrorists. When teamed with U.S. combat units, Iraqi Security Forces have shown growing effectiveness in their tactical operations, but if effectively left on their own the likely result is that they would find themselves hopelessly outmatched. That is, in fact, precisely what was happening in 2006 before the current surge started. Advisor strategies work best in those countries, such as El Salvador in the 1980s or the Philippines in the 1950s, where long-standing and robust military services already exist. That is not the case in Iraq; we demolished the Iraqi security infrastructure in 2003 and it still has not been adequately rebuilt.

I fully understand that we cannot continue to deploy 160,000 troops indefinitely, given the strains on our military and the demands of public opinion. But I would implore the committee to exhibit a little patience at

this point. You are looking for a Plan B, a third way between staying the course and leaving altogether. Well that's precisely what the surge is designed to deliver—it is an alternative to the failed strategy employed over the previous three years of trying to draw down U.S. troops as fast as possible without first establishing minimal security on the ground. General David Petraeus is now trying to implement a new approach utilizing not only more troops but utilizing them in different ways. He is pushing troops off large Forward Operating Bases and into smaller Joint Security Stations and Combat Outposts where they can carry out a classic counterinsurgency strategy focused on population security. The last of the surge forces only arrived in early June and it was only on June 15 that the U.S. command launched Operation Phantom Thunder to take advantage of the increased forces to simultaneously apply pressure against multiple insurgent strongholds around Baghdad and its periphery—something that has not been done before. Counterinsurgent operations cannot be concluded as swiftly as an armored blitzkrieg. This is not a three-day or three-week or even a three-month offensive. It will take many months (six to twelve months is a good estimate) to see if current operations are bearing fruit, and I hope that Congress will give General Petraeus the time he needs to implement his carefully considered strategy.

The strain on U.S. forces, especially the army, is great, but under current plans the surge can be maintained through at least spring of 2008. Thereafter, we could move to a pre-surge force of 15 Brigade Combat Teams for at least another year. Larger call-ups of National Guard and Reserve forces, however politically difficult, would expand our options even further.

It would be a serious mistake—a tragic mistake--were Congress to use its power of the purse to try to cut off the surge prematurely. If the surge succeeds in improving the security situation, especially in Baghdad, that could create the condition for political compromises that aren't possible in today's lawless climate. And that, in turn, could lead to a responsible drawdown of U.S. forces to a long-term level of around 80,000-100,000, with the bulk of those forces focused on advisory efforts. To end the surge too soon and transition to an advisory strategy right now, in such an insecure environment, risks the very catastrophe our troops have fought for years to avert.

The only responsible course for the time being is to continue backing General Petraues and the surge while at the same time laying the groundwork, political and military, for a lower-level commitment that could run for years, even decades if need be. This would require substantially increasing the number of embedded American advisors within the ISF from today's level of under 5,000 to an estimated 20,000, and we would have to see that these advisors are well-trained for their tasks and given the logistical and security support they need to operate safely and effectively.

Such large-scale advisory efforts are not possible today given the inadequate size of the U.S. Army because to create so many advisors would require breaking up at least eight Brigade Combat Teams (out of 43 total in the army) and transferring their officers and senior NCOs onto newly created advisory teams along with various individual augmentees. Such a transition would take many months, and it is prudent for the army and Marine Corps to begin planning today. (One good idea would be to implement Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl's blueprint for creating a permanent Advisor Corps within the army.) But the actual transition to an advisor-centric strategy should be held off as long as possible to give our troops time to make and consolidate gains on the ground. *The more security that our troops create today, the greater the probability that an advisor model would work tomorrow.* If we start withdrawing troops willy-nilly regardless of the consequences, the likely result would be a severe degradation of the security climate, with many of our former Iraqi allies turning violently against us, if only to prove their nationalist bona fides in the looming post-American order. This would put our remaining soldiers at greater risk, hurt their morale, and further imperil public support for *any* level of commitment, whether 160,000 or 60,000.

Stay with the surge

In conclusion, I applaud the committee's efforts to find a responsible longterm policy for Iraq, but I would caution against any attempts to move to a third way before the current way has been found to have succeeded or failed. The surge may be a long shot. It may not succeed. But it's the least bad option we have—as I hope I have demonstrated by analyzing the shortcomings of all the other alternatives.

It takes courage for members of Congress to support the continued presence of American troops in Iraq but no more courage than it takes for those troops to risk their lives every day. I hope that Congress will continue to stand with General David Petraeus, Lieutenant General Ray Odierno, and the outstanding men and women under their command as they continue to fight to secure an acceptable outcome and prevent what would probably be the most serious military defeat in our history.

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His latest book, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* (Gotham Books, 2006), has been hailed as a "magisterial survey of technology and war" by the *New York Times*, "brilliantly crafted history" by *The Wall Street Journal*, and "a book for both the general reader and reading generals" by the *New York Post*.

His previous book, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (Basic Books) was selected as one of the best books of 2002 by the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Christian Science Monitor*. It won the 2003 General Wallace M. Greene Jr. Award, given annually by the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation for the best nonfiction book pertaining to Marine Corps history, and has been placed on Navy, Army, and Marine Corps professional reading lists.

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