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A THIRD WAY: ALTERNATIVES FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE (PART 2 OF 4)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
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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 2 OF 4)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, July 18, 2007.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 3:06 p.m. in room 2118, 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.

Dr. Byman, you may be aware we are anticipating some votes sometime between now and 3:30. It will be a fairly long number of votes, although it may be expedited. So what we will try to do is get through my opening statement, Mr. Akin's and perhaps your opening statement and see where we go from there. And you have been through this before, and we will probably ask you to hang around if you can, and we will come back after votes.

This hearing today is a second in a series of four that this subcommittee is going to do on looking at other alternatives as we look ahead in Iraq.

Last week, we had General Wes Clark, Max Boot and Dr. Muqtedar Kahn and had a very robust discussion. I think the members enjoyed it. I think we learned a lot. We tried to get beyond what we see as a polarization of the current debate that occurs a lot in Washington but throughout the country to get beyond, frankly, some of the simple statements and on to some of the more nuanced challenges that the country has.

We are pleased to have with us today Dr. Dan Byman. He is the Associate Professor and Director of the Security Studies Program at the Center for Peace and Security Studies at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. He holds a joint appointment with the Georgetown Department of Government, is also Senior Fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution.

Dr. Byman has served as a professional staff member with both the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States, 9/11 Commission and the Joint 9/11 Inquiry staff of the House and Senate Intelligence Committee. He has also worked as the Research Director of the Center for Middle East Public Policy at the RAND Corporation and as an analyst for the U.S. Intelligence Committee.

Dr. Byman has written widely on a range of topics related to terrorism, international security and the Middle East. His latest book is Things Fall Apart: Containing the Spillover from an Iraqi Civil War that he co-authored with Ken Pollack investigating the connection with states that sponsor terrorism.

We also had originally scheduled Dr. Philip Zelikow, who had worked with Secretary Rice I think from 2005–2007. I wanted to just touch on these details for a minute. Very smart guy. We were looking forward to him being here. He had finalized his written statement with the staff on late Monday afternoon. It was distributed to all our members on Tuesday morning, and sometime in the mid-morning we received a call from his assistant that he would have to cancel.

I put in a call to him to try to get him to change his mind. It turned out that he called back later that day and informed us that somewhere in that intervening time the Administration approached him about being a consultant with the Administration to work on the Iraq war policy, and he didn't think it was appropriate for him to be testifying publicly.

He ask that his written statement not be made part of the record. It will not be, but he is also aware that it was already distributed publicly, and members can feel free to use it as they may. In fact, I have already asked a question at this morning's full committee hearing using a statement that I thought was a very thoughtful statement. But he is involved in this whole issue of what comes next in Iraq but is now working with the Administration.

So I will now turn to Mr. Akin for any comments he would like to make.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Snyder can be found in the Appendix on page 35.]

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

Mr. AKIN. Thank you.

Good afternoon, Dr. Byman, and thank you for joining us here today. You have a rare opportunity this afternoon. You have the benefit of offering your testimony with no one on your right and no one on your left to disagree with you, and so thank you for joining us.

Today's hearing is the second in a series aimed at breaking out of the false construct of talking about Iraq in terms of precipitous withdrawal or stay the course. While our first hearing was very constructive, I want to reiterate the purpose of this exercise. We are here to discuss alternatives that really offer a different plan to the current strategy. Simply critiquing the current approach is not the point of this hearing, and it is helpful only to the degree that it adds to proposing something different. So Dr. Byman, I look forward to—if you do have something that is really an alternative plan, we are particularly interested in that.

After looking at your testimony, it is clear that you advocate departing from the strategy in the sense that you want to emphasize having the U.S. combat forces go door to door, that you want to get

away from that, and securing and holding Iraqi neighborhoods in place. If the strategy requires roughly 160,000 troops, you suggest maintaining a troop presence of 20,000 in the region to contain a spillover and serve as rapid response forces in the event of regional intervention in Iraq, particularly from Iran.

I am curious how the relatively small footprint that you propose for the U.S. is sufficient to carry out the military roles and missions you identify in your statement, which is, one, training Iraqi forces, two, deterring conventional militaries from intervening in Iraq, three, supporting al Qaeda's enemies and, four, conducting direct strike missions. While I agree that these roles and missions are important, I would like to understand how you arrive at the number 20,000. Others who share your view that the U.S. should maintain these roles and missions believe a larger footprint is required.

Finally, your comments about spillover are sobering. Increased violence, humanitarian tragedy, a failed state, emboldened terrorists and regional actors all will result, in your view, in the wake of U.S. withdrawal or significant drawdown. Your policy prescription to address this problem is for the U.S. not to make a bad situation worse. Your statement also references other instances of spillover, particularly in Yugoslavia and Lebanon.

I would appreciate if you would take some time this afternoon to discuss how the U.S. should manage the consequences of withdrawal and identify lessons we should learn from the historical cases that you cite.

Thank you again, Dr. Byman, for joining us today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Akin can be found in the Appendix on page 37.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Representative Akin.

Dr. Byman, we will give you a chance to make an opening statement. Members have had your written statement for I think a couple of days now.

We will put the five-minute clock on. The red light will go on. You feel free to ignore it. But I will do that in the spirit of letting you know where you are at. When you hear the bell, if the bells go off, we don't have to leave here for eight or ten minutes after the bells go off so feel free to keep going on.

Dr. Byman, appreciate your being here.

STATEMENT OF DR. DANIEL L. BYMAN, DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES OF THE EDMUND A. WALSH SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, SENIOR FELLOW, SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Dr. BYMAN. Thank you very much. It is always dangerous to tell a professor that he has the freedom to speak for as long as he wants, so I will try hard not to abuse that.

Chairman Snyder, Mr. Akin, other members of the committee, thank you very much for this opportunity to speak before you today. I regret to say that I believe that the United States will not be able to bring peace and stability to Iraq in the next several years and that, even in the long term, ending the Iraqi civil war

would require a far greater military and civilian commitment than we currently have and, even then, I think the chances of success are far from certain.

I will also add that domestic political support appears to be waning, which makes increasing the burden quite difficult at this time.

Because I am skeptical of our chances for success and because I recognize the exceptionally heavy costs we are paying as a nation for remaining in Iraq, I reluctantly advocate reducing our troop presence substantially and moving away from our current policy.

However, I do not take this stance lightly, because I believe a U.S. drawdown would have severe consequences for Iraq and also for the region. Just as I believe Administration officials "best-cased" planning for the war going in, I do believe critics of the war are making a similar mistake today, which is that they are assuming that the situation could not get worse when it easily can; and my testimony today focuses on the problem of the Iraq war spilling out into neighboring states and beyond. I argue that it is imperative for us to have a plan for containing the spillover from the Iraqi civil war.

Because my testimony is focused as this hearing is on new approaches I am not going to belabor various Administration policies or various legislative alternatives, so I am happy to answer questions on them; and, instead, I am going to focus on the idea of a strategy of containment, which is really trying to prevent the Iraq problem from metastasizing beyond Iraq.

It is worth pointing out that the civil War in Iraq could easily grow much worse and I believe will grow much worse if U.S. forces draw down substantially. We can expect tens of thousands, probably hundreds of thousands of people to die or be injured in the war and millions more refugees up from the over two million today; and I will point out that the United States has in other cases intervened to stop humanitarian tragedies of this scope.

That said, there are four strategic problems I think we should focus on.

One problem is going to be terrorism. Iraq is already a haven for terrorists. They have used Iraq for doing attacks in Jordan and elsewhere. We are going to see this sort of thing increased if the U.S. presence is reduced.

Another problem which is happening in the region is Iraqis radicalizing the politics of several states in the region, in particular, those states that have Sunni-Shia divides. This issue, which has gone up and down historically, is becoming more salient than it has in the last hundred years in terms of political divisions. Refugees are going to be a huge problem. As I mention, there are already two million. Increasingly, the refugees will be poor, and many will bring the war with them. They are going to overstrain the countries they are in.

In Jordan, perhaps one out of every six people in Jordan today is a refugee from Iraq; and many of these people are ripe for radicalization. We have seen this in conflict after conflict where young men in particular arrive with nothing to do, and year after year life goes on with very little hope and, over time, they join the fight.

And the last thing is, because of these problems and in part because of simple opportunism, we are likely to see neighboring states intervening in Iraq, in particular Iran, which is already there in a paramilitary sense, but also Saudi Arabia, Turkey and other states that have made threats of intervention.

What should we do about all these problems?

One of the first things to do is to not make a bad situation worse. Several options currently being discussed I am skeptical about, but one I will single out in my spoken remarks is partition.

For the United States to engineer a partition deliberately today would not serve U.S. interests. First of all, to do so in a safe way would require hundreds of thousands of troops, more than we currently have. But I think, even more importantly, the model people seem to have in mind is the former Yugoslavia. There you had communities divided after years of fighting, you had relatively clear borders for partition in contrast to Iraq, and I think, most important, you had leaders who could speak for their communities.

Part of the problem with Iraq today, with any mantra of a political settlement which I think everyone assumes could be achieved with a magic wand, is that the leaders do not speak for their communities. There are literally hundreds of leaders who matter, and no one could bring the fighters to the table. There may come a time after years of bloodshed and ethnic cleansing when a de facto partition may be appropriate for Iraq, and the United States should not take this off the table. But it is not something we should engineer today.

One of the biggest challenges we are going to have to deal with is the refugee issue; and, at the very least, we should be providing technical assistance to Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Kuwait to help them ensure that refugee camps do not become insurgent operating bases. Another option would be to resettle refugees from Iraq outside the region, and I will include the United States in this.

In my judgment, we owe a moral debt but, more importantly, a practical one that if we have millions of Iraqi refugees that resettled on the borders near Iraq it is likely these refugees will contribute to a civil war. If we can dissipate this group somewhat and have them sent around the globe, including to the United States, the war-causing consequences will be mitigated.

Beyond this, the United States is, of course, always going to have to go after terrorists, in particular terrorists going after the United States, through a combination of special operations forces, air power and intelligence assets; and at times the United States will have to work with factions in Iraq below the government level to do so.

Also, the United States is going to have to prevent Iran from intervening; and I have to be careful what I say here. Iran is already intervening in Iraq, and Iran's interests are massive and to say no Iranian intervention is a goal we will not be able to achieve. But we need to set up some realistic red lines. Some obvious ones are Iran laying claim to Iraqi territory, pumping Iraqi oil, or sending its own forces into Iraq to aid its factions in terms of conventional military forces.

What would U.S. military forces do in this? In my judgment, they would play five roles. One would be deterring Iranian conventional military involvement in Iraq, so large-scale forces, conventional forces, training Iraqi forces. And here I don't mean something like the Iraq Study Group. This is not tens of thousands of trainers helping Iraqi forces in a comprehensive way. This is something that there will be certain factions within the government will want to support, certain units, and we can provide a limited number of trainers to support them.

And, in a similar way, we will need to improve what used to be known as foreign internal defense of our allies, helping the police refugee camps and, in general, building their paramilitary and police capabilities as well as their military capabilities; and we will also have to work with different groups in Iraq that are fighting al Qaeda such as our current support with Iraqi tribal groups where it might be logistical support, intelligence or firepower. And at times, of course, we will have to send our own forces in, that our allies will not be able to go after certain groups or they simply will not be willing to do so and we will have to do it ourselves and this includes missions to gather tactical intelligence.

Now the good news on this is, since the training mission is limited and since Iranian conventional forces are limited——

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Byman, the acoustics in this room aren't so good, and my experience as being somebody at the end, so if you would pull that in as close—yeah, that would be good.

Dr. BYMAN. I apologize. Is that better?

Dr. SNYDER. That is substantially better.

Dr. BYMAN. Sorry about that.

I will add that I think this can be done with a limited number of troops in part because many of these troops can be based outside Iraq. Iran's military forces are exceptionally weak now. An over-the-horizon presence would largely suffice to deter them.

And I will add further that the training is not going to be of the scale that some have proposed in terms of having literally half of the military forces in Iraq be dedicated—the U.S. forces are currently in Iraq dedicated to training. That this would be a more traditional training mission done by special operations forces or selective light infantry units not of the scale we are doing now. As this implies, the demands on special operation forces and other units involved in training and intelligence will remain heavy and perhaps even grow. I would endorse ideas to create a special training capacity and also to continue growing these units. I recognize that there are limits to how quickly you can do this and to keep them effective, but I believe that should be a constant interest.

I will conclude, though, with a note of pessimism. Iraq is already a failed state. Iraq is already a haven for terrorists. It is so despite the presence of almost 160,000 U.S. troops there today. The idea that we could draw down U.S. forces in any way, whether as significantly as I propose or in a partial way as others do, and yet not have the situation get worse is naive.

My problem with staying in Iraq is that I believe current U.S. policies are not working and are—in fact, the situation is getting worse and, thus, the sacrifice is not worth it. Having said that, I do believe that we should expect a lot of nasty things to come out

of Iraq, and we will be dealing with this as a regional policy for at least a decade to come.

Thank you very much.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Dr. Byman.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Byman can be found in the Appendix on page 40.]

Dr. SNYDER. As is our practice on this subcommittee, both Mr. Akin and I would like to be put on the five-minute clock. So there we go. That way, we will try to get through everybody before we have votes, and then we can go multiple rounds.

Dr. Byman, you are here alone, but I am going to give you a chance to debate somebody else. In response to Dr. Gingrey's questions last week, General Wes Clark—retired General Wes Clark was here. General Clark was not a supporter of the original war, but this is what he said, and it is a fairly long quote, so bear with me.

He said, 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 are 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 need to fight in the region, because you are going to invite the resistance of those nondemocratic 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 own 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 our troops out of Iraq safely. That is all.

That is the end of the quote.

So I want you to respond to that. But the two thrusts there, number one, here is one supporting the war who says the situation in Iraq is not so far gone that we have to throw up our hands and leave; and, number two, the issue of fulfilling our obligation to the Iraqi people.

And this also came out in a hearing last week from Dr. Kahn who reminded the committee, you know, when the war began, 70 percent of the people supported the President and the war; and he kind of had his finger up at one point saying, you all are responsible for what happens in Iraq now. Your very gloomy statement says he reluctantly—you use the word "reluctantly" but say it is time to accept the fact that it is not working. Spar with General Clark there, if you would, about who thinks that it has not so far gone we have to throw up our hands.

Dr. BYMAN. I have heard statements like General Clark's in 2004, in 2005, in 2006, and now today; and what they tend to do

in my opinion is focus on one or two particular factors and say it is improving slightly, it could be worse, rather than look at the whole.

Let me give you some very big-picture, negative observations that are behind my conclusions. One is that political unity is getting worse, not better, that the ability of the United States to engineer deals among Iraqi factions was stronger several years ago than it is today.

A second is that sectarian violence is much worse, that this was a dynamic that initially we could talk primarily about a war between Iraqis who liked or did not like the U.S. presence. Now, for many Iraqi fighters, the U.S. presence is actually not terribly important. They are much more focused on killing each other.

A third factor is that the training mission is not working. Every benchmark, every report we receive suggests that problems remain, and in particular let me single out two.

One that you don't hear much about but is tremendously important is the performance of the Iraqi police. If you talk to most Iraqis, they will mention crime, not civil violence as their number one problem, that people simply cannot leave their homes because they are afraid they will be kidnapped. They are afraid they will be robbed. And the police in Iraq are a disaster, and the basic functions of government thus are in jeopardy when the police do not work.

A second problem is that, because the government is increasingly seen by many Iraqis as really just a sectarian militia, that when we train the government we are training one side in this war and even one faction within a faction.

So I do believe we should support some elements over another, but we shouldn't think that most Iraqis embrace the idea of a very, very strong police under the—or, excuse me, very, very strong armed forces under the Maliki government.

We see reports again and again of different Sunni groups in particular being very concerned about a strong army led by people they see as their enemies. And since these trends largely are getting worse, we see no change in the neighboring states' willingness to intervene, at some point I have to be able to look people in the eye and say, the sacrifice, yeah, has a chance of succeeding—and three years ago I was willing to say that—but, increasingly, I am not willing to say that, and several years ago I reached the point of believing this is not going to succeed.

The only way it would be possible in my judgment would be for literally several hundred thousand more troops in Iraq, western quality troops—and I am basing this on U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Manual which was offered by General Petraeus, so I don't feel my estimate is that far out—and I believe we as a country don't want to provide that level of support.

Another point which is a very painful one to me, obligation. Yes, we have a moral obligation to Iraq. At some point, though, I think we have to say that we are not going to fulfill it because the cost of the sacrifice is too great for the American people. If there is still a problem 5 years, 10 years, 20 years, that obligation would still be there. But at some point you have to say it is not working and move on.

It troubles me greatly, frankly, and part of why I wanted to take in so many Iraqi refugees is a very small way of fulfilling our obligation to some Iraqis. I recognize that doesn't right the scales. But it is one way of paying obligation. But at some point more obligation is not enough, and I think we have reached that point.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Akin for five minutes. And, Dr. Byman, that was the call for votes. I think what we had better do is let Mr. Akin ask his questions, and then we will go for votes, and that is the way it will be.

Mr. AKIN. Dr. Byman, it seems like you are pretty straightforward here, but I don't know if you really spell it out. What I am really hearing you say is, if we pull a whole lot of troops out, there is going to be a huge civil war going on. And you are saying pull a whole lot of troops out. So what you are saying is we basically have to accept the fact that a whole lot—some number, a million Iraqis are going to kill each other in the near future. And that is what you are advocating. That is what it sounds like what I am hearing you say. Maybe that is kind of stating it in a cold-blooded way. But is that partly what you are saying?

Dr. BYMAN. Right now, sir, I believe that U.S. troops in Iraq are slowing the fall of Iraq into chaos and that if we withdraw there will be no net to slow this fall. But, that said, the fall is happening anyway. So it is not that I feel the situation is getting slowly better, I think it is getting slowly worse. Iraq is going to have this civil war.

The question to me is, where are U.S. forces going to be? What role are we going to play?

And several years ago I was willing to say we should try to stop this. But we have reached the point I think of no return, unfortunately; and that does mean Iraq will suffer.

I would like to tell you again to wave a magic wand and say it will be all right if we leave. It will not be all right. It will be quite dangerous, and I am very concerned that the danger will go from beyond Iraq to the region, and that is why I believe we need planning for this now.

Mr. AKIN. So I think that is fair to say, you know, we are all looking at a whole series of alternatives. You know, none of them look wonderful. Wonderful would be if it just wasn't going on.

But, on the other hand, I haven't heard anybody say—although I had some constituents come and say, well, what we think we should do is just put the troops around the border and let them all fight it out all internally. It is not too different than what I am hearing you say.

Dr. BYMAN. The implication of some people is that the Iraqis deserves the disaster that they are going to create. My personal view is we are not going to stop it, and there is a limit to how much I am going to ask young men and women in particular to put their lives on the line to try to limit this when I believe it is going to happen over time anyway. And my hope is that we can stop it from going beyond Iraq, and even that may be difficult.

Mr. AKIN. Right. Your comments, also, you talked about the training and the training that we have done, that was a committee—that was the subject of this committee's study for a six-month period of time. I don't think that our result of what we studied was

nearly as pessimistic as the way you described it. You sort of took the worst possible part of that, saying it was the local police. Of course, Iraqis never had local police before, and that was the worst part of what we saw.

The training, the national—the actual military side of it, that training has gone reasonably well. Those people are picking up a lot of the fight. And there is some considerable argument that we are starting to close down areas where al Qaeda can really work because we are starting to—we have a big enough footprint now that they are getting squeezed out and that there may come a time when we really kind of drop their influence way down and their trouble-making capacity down.

Another piece of the question is, so we back off, we let the al Qaeda come in, stir up the—get the Shias and the Sunnis fighting and everything. So then what happens at a certain period of time? Some dominant group takes over. Say it is the al Qaeda that take over. Then are they going to be allowed to export their violence all over the Middle East and in Europe? Or how do you see that playing?

Dr. BYMAN. I think that an al Qaeda takeover of Iraq is unlikely. The more realistic question to me is, will it take over a place like Anbar province or large chunks of Iraq? And I would say that, right now, they would take over parts of Iraq. So little pockets here and there.

In some areas, tribes would win; in some areas, there would just be criminals; in some areas, you would have jihadist havens. And we should go after them whenever they are concentrated. But the problem will be when they are not concentrated, and that will be an extremely difficult problem.

Again, I would like to tell you that this will not be a significant problem. I think it would. And what I want to do is to start to think about this now to make sure we have the local allies in Sunni parts of Iraq where it might set up shop to make sure we are working with regional security services against them. But I don't think that our presence there has stopped them from making inroads.

And I will give the counter, which is every day we are there it is a recruiting poster for the broader jihadist movement. Unfortunately, I spend much of my time looking at jihadist Web sites; and Iraq is their number one propaganda tool.

And the trade-off, sir, is, in my judgment, is one between inspiration and operations, where when we are there, they are inspired, which is bad. But when we are gone, their operational capacity will increase, which is bad. So I see it as a lose-lose, unfortunately.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you. I think my time has expired, and it is probably time for a vote. Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Byman, what we will do, we have nine votes. The first one is a 15-minute vote. We have half the time left, and eight two-minute votes, but that is two minutes congressional time, which kind of slots into the three- or four-minute range. But sometimes we get pretty good at it.

The staff tells me you brought some written work to do to fill in your time. We also have a fairly large number of young people here today. You are certainly welcome to respond to any of their ques-

tions either formally or you can turn around and conduct a class. That will be up to you and the staff. We appreciate your being here, and we will return as quickly as we can.

The committee is in recess.

[Recess.]

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Byman, thank you for being here.

We will resume. Our order will be a little distorted. Dr. Gingrey, you are recognized for five minutes.

Dr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, let me pass for five minutes until I can get situated. You can start, and then you can come back.

Dr. SNYDER. That is fine.

Mr. Akin, would you like to go a second round at this time?

Mr. AKIN. Why don't you go first, and I will follow up.

Dr. SNYDER. All right. I will. Why don't you run our clock there for us.

I wanted to get to this question that you and I were talking about earlier. I think we were talking about what is our responsibility; and in your written statement you say, let's see, unfortunately—quote, unfortunately, just as Administration officials 'best-cased' the planning for the initial invasion of Iraq, critics of the war are making a similar mistake with regard to a U.S. withdrawal, end quote.

And above that you refer to the fact that a, quote, U.S. drawdown will have severe costs for the Iraqi people, end quote.

On the second page of your written statement you state, "Based on the experiences of other recent major civil wars such as those in the former Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Somalia, Congo, Afghanistan, the Caucasus, and elsewhere, we should expect many hundreds of thousands or even millions of people to die with three to four times that number wounded. Hundreds of thousands or even millions of people to die with three to four times that number wounded."

And that struck me. I mean, you have a pretty gloomy statement overall, but your estimation that there could be millions of people who die I think is the gloomiest statement I have heard about the potential ramifications. I am not saying it may be inaccurate.

What has concerned me—in fact, Mr. Hunter was talking about it at a full committee hearing today—is the indiscriminate nature of the war that is going on now, the large numbers of children that are being killed. And when you talk about possibly hundreds of thousands, or we should expect many hundreds of thousands, many hundreds of thousands or even millions of people to die, I think it is fair to say there will be hundreds of thousands or even millions of children to die.

Now tell me again, with regard to your analysis of U.S. responsibility, how do you—when you see that kind of number, by your estimate that kind of number, how do you weigh what our responsibility is with regard to that kind of decimation of population?

Dr. BYMAN. Sir, I should begin by saying I am not an ethicist, so I am giving you my statement as a human being more than as a professor or a specialist. The number I came up with for deaths is something that—Iraq, of course, has had well over a hundred thousand deaths from its war so far; and the numbers get even higher depending upon what you count. Do you count the devastation of war that destroys a sewage system so people die from bad

water? Does that count in a death toll from the war or is that a death toll from bad water? There are tons of ways you can play with these numbers, some honest, some dishonest.

A big question on the death toll is, can people become refugees? If people can't flee—people often flee because they are afraid of being killed. If they cannot flee, then they are more likely to die, and they are also more likely to fight. And that option needs to be there to keep the death tolls low.

I am hopeful that the death tolls won't go into the millions, but I think it would be irresponsible to say at this point, when we know so little about what this war would be like, to say that will not happen.

My moral view, my view of morality is that there is a question of can we stop this, and the answer is I think we can as a nation, but it would require a tremendous level of sacrifice. And not the level we are talking now, not sustaining the surge for five years out, but really doubling or perhaps even tripling the number of U.S. troops.

Standard troop estimates for an Iraq sort of conflict are about 500,000 troops. We are not remotely near that. And even when you count trained Iraqis, which is a relatively small number, we are not remotely near that. So the question to me is not can we allow this to happen, but are we willing to pay the cost to do so? And my judgment is that we are simply not going to do that.

So I don't see the value in keeping the current levels of troops there if it's not going to solve this problem. I think we will get to that level of suffering and strife several years out. Regardless of whether we are there or not, the United States will simply delay this, rather than stop it.

Dr. SNYDER. I think one of the factors, when you think about the tremendous sacrifices that military families are making and our men and women in uniform, is if it was phrased "are you willing to risk life and limb to prevent hundreds of thousands or even millions of children from being killed", I think substantial numbers of American families would see this thing differently. But it depends on, you know, the reliability of your estimate. I recognize how difficult that is.

Mr. Akin, shall we resume first round and come back with second round and then we will go first with you?

Mr. AKIN. I think that is a good way.

Dr. SNYDER. So Mrs. Davis for five minutes.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman; and I think the discussion that you just had certainly, I mean, raises all the areas in which you touched.

I was wondering really what the response to your paper, done at the beginning of this year, has been and how you have been able to, I guess, counter some of the challenges to that? How have you been able to do that?

Dr. BYMAN. Well, what is slightly amusing from my point of view is, when I initially did this work, I was attacked quite a bit from people on the right side of the political spectrum for being very critical of the prospects for success in Iraq; and today I am being attacked considerably from people on the other side for saying that, if we leave, things are going to be quite bad. So I am kind of proud

of the consistency with which I have managed to alienate almost everyone.

My critique in general is, although my colleague and I, Ken Pollack, offer our thoughts on how to contain the war—and I should be clear again, as I was in my written testimony, my spoken remarks, especially on force size and some of the other options, are quite different from what Dr. Pollack believes, that we have tried to come up with some plans and ideas. This is something best done by the interagency process of the U.S. Government.

Dr. Pollack and I are two individuals at a think tank. There are a few other individuals at think tanks around town coming up with ideas. But this is a massive undertaking. It involves operations with a host of allies, it involves humanitarian operations, it involves almost every capacity of the U.S. Government, and I am stunned and saddened that we as a government are not planning for this possibility.

That I would love it if the surge worked; and I am hoping, frankly, that my analysis of it is wrong. But even if you are a proponent of the surge and believe it will work, I would think that you would have to say there is at least some chance it won't, and we should be planning for it to fail.

So the question I have here is—that I am trying to address is, if the surge fails, what should we do? And my judgment is it is failing. But even if I am wrong in that and it seems to be succeeding, it still strikes me as appropriate to plan. And that is where I am most disappointed, is I don't see much movement in the planning community, in the professional planning community or in the political planning community for this. And there is a lot going on in the world I don't know about, so maybe it is going on without me, but nothing I have heard shows that.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. You mentioned the interagency coordination or planning. I think that we have been seeking that for some years now, actually, in this effort; and I am wondering, do you believe that there is anything in the potential for interagency work today that would actually mitigate the spillover effects that you identified?

Dr. BYMAN. I think part of the problem with doing the planning is that if you go down this road you are at least implicitly saying the surge may not work, and various government agencies have been reluctant to start walking down that road. We do some programs, such as working with security forces in the region, that are part of what I believe is a mitigation strategy. We do have some capacity for standoff attack in the region. We do have some capacity to surge, not in the sense of Iraq, but to surge our air and naval presence in response to Iranian aggression. So some of these things are part of what I consider a containment of Iraq strategy. But it is only a part, and we need a lot more.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. What I am wondering as well, though, is whether—you know, you talk about strategically engaging our allies in the region. Does that include Saudi Arabia in that? And do you believe that we—have you seen any effort to do that in such a way as to acknowledge in fact that we will need them there to act differently in the future?

Dr. BYMAN. With our diplomacy with Saudi Arabia, the Saudis are exceptionally discreet, and most U.S. officials who work with the Saudis on a regular basis try to be as well. So of all the countries I focus on, Saudi Arabia is the one I will know the least about in terms of current initiatives. I do know the Vice President, among other people, has gone out to the Saudis to push them to do a better job securing their own borders. I do know that there is regular security service and military cooperation with the Saudi counterparts. So there are a series of initiatives.

I know from the other point of view the Saudis are exceptionally concerned about the United States not just leaving Iraq but leaving the region, that they fear that, having been burned in Iraq we will depart in a very precipitous manner. And so they are concerned as well. So I do think there is a chance to work together on this.

The caveat I would end with is that the Saudi institutional capacity, especially outside Saudi Arabia, is weak. They are quite good at offering money to different parties around the world, but in terms of doing their own training missions and their own military missions, they don't have much outside the kingdom.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Yeah, we haven't seen that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will come back for other questions.

Dr. SNYDER. We will now go to Mr. Johnson, who was here at the time of the gavel, and then go in order of members as they came in. Mr. Sestak's not here, Mr. Jones, Dr. Gingrey, and Mr. Bartlett. So Mr. Johnson for five minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I made my way down to this hearing today, I passed by the office of Jim McDermott out of Washington, who, since I have been a Member of Congress, seven months ago I took office, he has maintained a board outside of his office. In fact, there are two boards, two large poster boards; and on those boards are the photographs of each and every serviceman and woman who has been killed fighting the war in Iraq. And two poster boards now are filled.

The last little space was taken up just a couple of days ago, I guess. I just noticed that there was no more room on that second board. It must be about 150 faces, smiling faces of young people on that board, all of whom are now dead. The last one died I think it was July 4th.

And I was having a great day, great spirits; and as I bebopped my way down the steps and passed that display I was rendered sober immediately, thinking of my responsibility here in Congress toward the young people who are deployed in a war, in the midst of a civil war in Iraq. They are losing their lives every day, and their parents and loved ones grieve in their absence.

Then today there was a hearing in Armed Services. One of the persons who testified, Dr. Jessica Tuchman Mathews, pointed out the fact that in Iraq over 4 million Iraqis are refugees, internally displaced or dead from the violence. In other words, when you add up the dead and the displaced, 4 million. And she said in per capita U.S. terms that would be 50 million people dead or forced out of their homes, forced to flee to Canada or Mexico. That is the gravity of this situation over there.

And she also said that, due to the vacuum, the power vacuum that was left when the U.S. took down Saddam, took out the military, took out the social structure there, the power, the vacuum that was left caused the struggle for power now. And the struggle for power by all of the sectarian interests over there will continue whether or not the U.S. is there or the U.S. is not there. It is inevitable that the parties over there will fight it out until they get tired of fighting, until someone, some power that has tested and tried the others and the others have wilted and now the power now resides with one, the winner. And at that point peace can be attained.

Given that very thoughtful and reasonable analysis, why does it make sense for the United States to continue to have forces deployed in the middle of a civil war that we started? We started it, and certainly we have a—it is an indelible—it is a stain that is indelibly etched on our history forever that we started it. And we owe those four million people something. But is it to keep our troops there or is it to have a more robust diplomatic effort that can help enhance the prospects for an internal political solution to that conflict over there?

Dr. BYMAN. As you know, sir, I am personally skeptical that large numbers—the current force size can do the mission we want it to do in Iraq; and that is part of the reason I favor a significant drawdown. However, I am also skeptical that a diplomatic solution can be reached without the security situation stabilizing. That right now we can have a meeting of the Iraqi parliament or we could have a meeting of the ministers of government, but they don't control the people with the guns on the street level. So any deal they strike isn't really worth that much for most of the communities in Iraq; and, as a result, this conflict is still going to play itself out.

And that is where I am so pessimistic. I don't see the chance of either a political solution or a military solution in the near term; and, as a result, my view is what are other U.S. interests in the region that might be jeopardized and how could we avoid losing even more at this point?

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

Mr. Jones for five minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much; and, Dr. Byman, thank you for being here today. I found it very interesting. I got here a little bit late, but your comments about your feelings three years ago versus where your feelings are today and what the options are, which are not good, and you stated that, whether we stay or whether we leave.

But let me give you—the question is this. Would the Iranians be happy to see us leave or would the Iranians figure that if we leave then they have got a problem they have got to handle?

Dr. BYMAN. Right now, many in Iran would be delighted if we left; and I think many believe that Iran could best benefit from the power vacuum there. I do believe that, in the short term, Iran's influence would grow. But it is unrealistic from my point of view to expect Iran to have significantly more interest—or, excuse me, significantly more capability to influence events in Iraq than we have

had. They have a much weaker military, they have much less money, and many Iraqis, including many Iraqi Shia, are intensely prickly about Iranian involvement.

There is a Persian-Arab rivalry, of course; and Iraqi Shia were the bulk of the troops who fought against the Iranians in a very bitter war in the 1980's. And there is a general sense that all people have, which is that they don't want an outsider meddling in their country.

So I do think Iran's influence would grow. I don't want to pretend it wouldn't. But I judge that to be manageable. And I believe Iran would start to have a number of problems, that Iran would find many of its proxies are not terribly loyal, that many of the people it wants to empower it is not succeeding with. But, that said, Iran in the short term at least will have an increase in influence.

Mr. JONES. I think today at the hearing Dr. Mathews was saying that in her opinion that it is difficult to say how much worse the situation would be if we pull out. Would the civil war become widespread? She said it is just impossible to say yes or no. You have your feelings that you feel—not you, but any professor like yourself.

But, again, I go back to Iran for this reason. If this civil war, if we pulled out, would expand to all parts the Iraq, which would border on Iran, would you think that they would feel compelled, even though their army is small or not as strong as ours, that they would have to do something in a formal way with their military?

Dr. BYMAN. I think that is quite plausible. And that is how I think of Iraqi futures, is I try to think of not what is likely, because there are so many factors in play it is so hard to predict, but what passes the smell test? And that scenario you just outlined certainly does, where Iran feels that, whether the Shia as a whole are suffering depredations or its particular proxies are having problems, that it feels the need to intervene more forcefully and decisively. And in part Iran might do that because it believes they are easy pickings, the Iraqis are too weak or disorganized.

The United States should make a very strong effort to stop exactly that, to make sure Iranian involvement is limited to its present level; and that will be hard to do. And there U.S. capabilities actually work tremendously in our favor. We do have a lot of capabilities to interdict Iranian forces, and the key is to make sure that Iran knows that now, so they know that option is off the table for them.

In particular, I fear a scenario where Iran steps up involvement so its rivals such as Saudi Arabia or Kuwait or Jordan start backing their proxies more and there is a tit for tat that leads to almost inadvertent escalation. That is something that is part of a containment strategy we should aggressively try to stop, both through military deterrence but also through very aggressive diplomacy.

Mr. JONES. Let me very quickly, because my time is about up, but this Administration from a foreign policy standpoint seems to get a D or D-minus, maybe even an F. Because it has been a failure. There is no question about it. Do you think having a new look—and I am not talking about a presidential election. But do you think that it makes any sense at some point in time—it is not

now—but this Administration would select someone to represent this country in the Middle East in a private way maybe to put together some relationships that we now don't have? Would that make some sense at some point a year from now, maybe less than that?

Does it make sense to have a new face, instead of President Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice? Does it make any sense to get somebody like a Colin Powell? Not saying that he would be the person. But to put a new face out? Would that be of any help to start a discussion that we now don't seem to have with some of these countries?

Dr. BYMAN. In my judgment, yes. That person, though, needs to have a very unusual resume. They need to have enough stature within the Administration to be taken seriously.

Because the people in the region are very sensitive to power relationships, and they know that retired ambassador so and so doesn't have the President's ear, and so they will not pay particular attention. But that person needs to be seen as relatively independent.

I think the idea of retired Prime Minister Tony Blair is a great example of the right sort of person, someone very respected both publicly but also within the Administration, yet who has a degree of independence. So I think the idea is a very sensible one, sir.

Mr. JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Bartlett for five minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much.

I was one of just a handful of Republicans that voted for the Spratt substitute before we went into this war because I did not think that what we wanted to do there was very doable. I thought it was a very steep hill to climb.

There is no country around Iraq that has anything like the government we wanted them to have. We have dictatorships in several countries. We call them royal families. They may be benevolent dictatorships, but dictatorships nonetheless. We have kings in Jordan and Syria. We have the mullahs, kind of a theocracy running Iran. And we have an on-again, off-again sort of a democracy in Turkey where, by constitution, the military can throw out the civil government at any time they wish.

I wanted a U.N. Resolution because I did not want us to own this war. I wanted this to be a U.N. action. I am not a big fan of the U.N.. I don't mind so much them failing. I mind an awful lot the United States failing. And I thought there was a very high probability of failure here.

Aside from not owning this war, as we do now, what else might be different if the Spratt amendment had prevailed and we had a U.N. Resolution that was not our war?

Dr. BYMAN. That is a very difficult question, so I will give some conjecture.

The big problems we had in Iraq, in my judgment, were an immediate nationalistic backlash among Iraqis that later on morphed into a series of other conflicts but began with angry Iraqis and not enough troops. I think that having more international backing might have led to more troops. Not necessarily, though, but might have led to more troops. Also, it would have sent a message that we were not in Iraq to stay, that we were not going there to be an

occupying power; and having the United Nations imprimatur helps with that.

But, that said, both of those to me are uncertain, especially the troop levels. So I am not sure how much difference it would have made in the end. Several of the factors that produced the insurgency, such as the de-Baathification campaign, the getting rid of the Iraqi military very early, and also in general the surprisingly failed nature of the Iraqi state, the fact that we didn't anticipate just how broken this place was, these still would have been there. So I think it certainly would have been better if we had international support. I don't want to say that. But that only would have gotten us part of the way.

Mr. BARTLETT. But at least if it was a U.N. operation we wouldn't own the war and it wouldn't be our failure, would it?

Dr. BYMAN. I don't know, sir. My judgment is that we would say it is a U.N. operation, not an American operation, but most of the world would look and say, you know, 90 percent of the troops are American, the diplomatic impetus behind this was American, the political brainchild was in America. It may have a U.N. label, but it is an American war. It would perhaps reduce it a bit, but I think it would still be ours.

Mr. BARTLETT. So we would have to use some diplomacy to convince people it wasn't ours.

Dr. BYMAN. That would be the goal, yes, sir.

Mr. BARTLETT. That's why we have diplomats, isn't it?

Dr. BYMAN. That is certainly one of the reasons.

Mr. BARTLETT. Okay. My wife has a very good characterization of where we are now, I think. She says it is like having a tiger by the tail. You hang on, he will drag you to death; you let go, he will eat you. She doesn't see any easy way out, and I am afraid I don't see any easy way out.

I thank you very much for your insight. I think that because there is so much difference of opinion on this subject that you might make your decision by a roll of the dice and be just as erudite as if you made it after a long, thoughtful process. Thank you very much.

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Byman, if you are still up for it, we will give members an opportunity to have a second round of questions. I have already had my second round. Mr. Akin.

Mr. AKIN. I am going to pass.

Dr. SNYDER. Going to pass.

Mrs. Davis.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you again for being here, Dr. Byman, as well.

I think one of the maybe more unrealistic notions that we have as we are trying to pull this together is that, in fact, even if there was an all-out civil war that we would be able to stay on the sidelines. I think that would be difficult to do.

I know that you are trying to suggest ways to mitigate that, to have areas where, you know, the people could go for safety, that you would have some forces on the border that you would try and find safe havens where one might. I am just challenging in some ways that notion, because I think that it seems to me that it would be difficult for the U.S., having gotten out in some way, to not in-

tervene. I mean, that is one of the challenges. In many ways, I think that is something the Administration is suggesting, that in fact we wouldn't be able do that. Can you respond?

Dr. BYMAN. Sure. I have to be careful. I don't want to tell a Member of Congress about the political mood of the American people, and that is to me really what it would come down to.

There are a couple different possibilities you can think of. One is the genocide in Cambodia after the Vietnam War, where two million people died. But there was absolutely no appetite in this country to intervene to stop that. The idea of in 1977 saying to the American people let's go back to Southeast Asia and fight another war, despite the horrific situation there, I think wasn't going to happen. So there is a question: Would many people in the United States simply say, having not succeeded in Iraq, we would look to wash our hands of it?

And part of my goal in my own work is to try to say we cannot wash our hands completely. We can draw down, but we cannot leave. We should expand our regional involvement, even as we reduce our presence in Iraq. So the message I am giving is one that I am not sure will have many natural sympathizers.

My personal sense is that, while many Americans will be troubled by the killing in Iraq, many of them feel that the United States has done enough and that the natural constituency that would be outraged by this sort of killing is actually part of the constituency right now strongly calling for the United States to leave. So I don't see that political pressure, but I think every member sitting at the table is far better qualified to make—to answer your question than I am.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. One other issue that we spoke about today was the extent to which al Qaeda is preeminent in the Sunni insurgencies today. And I think it is suggested it is maybe about 15 percent of that insurgency but not the primary players, even though horrific as they may be. Could you comment on that and whether or not in fact it has been—we use that al Qaeda in Iraq as if in fact that were the entire insurgency and how that is playing a role in terms of the discussions today. I had asked that question earlier. And what you feel we should be doing to counter the jihadist propaganda, if you will, in terms of the fact that—and indeed they are playing a role and dealing the cards there.

Dr. BYMAN. Two very important questions.

They are part of the insurgency. From our point of view, they are the most important. Because if the Iraq war were to die down those people would still be going after U.S. allies and Americans, while various Shia thugs would not. So although they are only part of this, they are a very important part from an American national interest point of view.

One of—I actually think that, on this, the Administration's thinking and planning has improved considerably in the last year. One of the shifts in the last year under General Petraeus is a shift from only focusing on the insurgency and only focusing the emphasis on the Sunni parts to also trying to rectify the failing state problem, to go after groups like the Mahdi Army that are not being subordinate to the government; and that is vital if you want to sta-

bilize Iraq. As you know, I am skeptical about troop levels and so on, but that is the approach you want to take.

So I think that we have gotten better on that issue. Not saying all our enemies believe one thing and they are all pigeon-holed, but that 15 percent to me is disproportionately important and especially for the purposes of my own research and testimony, which is about the conflict beyond Iraq. Because those people have already done terrorist actions outside Iraq, and it is perfectly reasonable to expect that to increase, at least in the short term, if the United States gives them more freedom of action.

On the propaganda, I take a somewhat different view. We spend a lot of time on propaganda, and we call it public diplomacy, of trying to make ourselves look good. And that is a very difficult effort when we are doing several policies in the Middle East that most people simply don't like. I think, you know, as peoples, as governments, we just disagree.

I would spend a lot more time making the adversary look bad. These are people that deliberately kill women and children, they have many teachings that are extremely unpopular among most Muslims, and rather than try to defend our own actions, we should go on the offensive and make it about them.

If the debate is about the legitimacy of U.S. policy toward Iraq and Israel, even though I share much of the Administration view on this, if that is the debate, we are going to lose it. If the debate is about their treatment of women and children, their actions, their interpretation of Islam, we are going to win that one.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Jones for five minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Dr. Byman, I am going to read a quote from General Jack Sheehan, and then I have got a question.

General Sheehan, 35 years in the United States Marine Corps, was offered the position as war czar; and he turned it down. And what I want to read to you is his quote in *The Washington Post*, April 11th, 2007:

I have never agreed on the basis of the war, and I am still skeptical. Not only did we not plan properly for the war, we grossly underestimated the effect of sanctions and Saddam Hussein on the Iraqi people.

There is the residue of the Cheney view: we are going to win; al Qaeda is there; that justifies anything we did. And then there is the pragmatic view: How the hell do we get out of Dodge and survive?

Unfortunately, the people with the former view are still in the position of most influence. The very fundamental issue is they don't know where the hell they are going. And I think when I hear a general, I don't care if it is Army, Air Force, Marine, but this is a Marine, 35 years, when he makes that type of statement, I think he is speaking for a lot of people. And I think you, in your comments today, you have acknowledged that.

Then today we had Dr. Kagan—I believe is the way you say his name—who was part of the neocon—he didn't say he was, but I did—that helped get us where we are. They didn't see anything but just we are going in, they are going to love us, and in about 120

days we are going to be out and everything's just going to be lovey-dovey, which was obviously a failed policy.

But this was in a paper written by the McClatchy: Deployed, Depleted and Desperate. It is April of this year.

Very quickly, here is a question for those who—that still support President Bush's strategy to stretch out the Iraq war until after he has left office and for those who think we should be prepared to continue our bloody occupation of Iraq for five to ten years. And this is the point. Are you ready to support reinstating selective service, the draft, even if that means your sons and daughters or your grandchildren will have to put on the uniform and go hold the cities and towns of a nation that is in the middle of a civil war? That is why I was very interested in your writings and also your positions.

I personally think that the American people, the latest poll of July the 11th said that 68 percent say Bush is wrong on this war. We are getting to a point of where I think we as a nation are becoming desperate. And I use that word "desperate" when I am talking about manpower, and I don't believe that we can sincerely survive on a voluntary military when they are worn out. There are four and five deployments. The national guard is worn out, the reserve is worn out, the active duty is worn out, and yet we still have not had the courage in this Congress to come forward——

I want to thank Chairman Ike Skelton, who is not here today—I mean, he is not on this committee, he is full chairman—that he brought this to the floor. And I was one of four Republicans to vote with the chairman. Because my rationale was that, for the first time in five years—and this is the fifth year of the war—we as a Congress have never passed a bill that was not a supplemental, that was a policy bill, as modest as this was, just to make a statement. And I just really—I have heard—you know, you can restate if you want to—but I just don't know that this country can continue to borrow money from other governments and try to pay for a war, pay the interest on the public debt, and do what we are doing to our military. We are breaking the Army and the Marine Corps. We are breaking it.

Dr. BYMAN. Briefly, sir, I think you are right. And it is frustrating. I direct the largest master's program focused on security in the country, and I have two types of students. I have students who are part of the Iraq effort, they are going to Iraq, they are coming from Iraq, and everyone else. And they are in two different worlds. The ones who are going to or are coming from Iraq, they are scrambling in their family situation. Many of them are dealing with personal loss in a whole variety of very difficult ways. And for even the rest of this community focused on security, Iraq is a much more abstract thing; and that is very troubling to me.

And I am speaking not here as someone who likes to consider himself an expert on some issues but really just as a citizen, that we have this divide. And in Iraq in particular I am troubled, because what we are asking of our troops by our own doctrine requires far more troops; and so to ask a few to bear, to do the job of many is I think irresponsible and will not work.

Mr. JONES. Thank you, sir.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Sestak for five minutes.

Mr. SESTAK. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I apologize. I didn't get back from the vote right away. I had an interview.

What I am taken with is that at some time soon—and I cannot agree more with Representative Jones—this Congress may actually by force of law bring about an end to this tragic misadventure. In my mind, however, although I have always, even when I was in the Navy and the war was going on with the carrier battle group I had there, felt that a date that was certain was, given enough time, the right strategy, but what I am most taken with now is the dog may eventually catch this car, and by force of law we may actually bring an end.

I think an end is necessary but insufficient. The how and the means by which we end it is of even greater importance to the safety of our troops and to the security of this nation. End it we must.

I honestly believe Democrats need to, if they are—shift from pure opposition to understanding that the consequences of the aftermath are so great for this nation, that it is the country's war because of that, not Bush's. We need the Republicans, more than four, if we are to end this tragic misadventure. Because I am not anti-war—I was in the military 31 years—I am pro-security. And his points are so well taken.

The Clinton Administration, two divisions went C3/C4 for 60 days, and the howl on it. We don't have one unit here that could go and save our 30,000 troops in South Korea today, not one at the ready. So I honestly believe a strategic approach to this is vitally important.

With that as template, to jump down—I have always been taken with everyone talking about it is a political dimension to this, and I agree. When I was with Senator Hagel, everyone talked about the influence of Iran; and the National Intelligence Council said the other day that when they said we spiral into 18 months of chaos within 18 months if we withdraw, but they never considered the influence of Iran in a positive way.

Do you proposition, in a third way of thinking, that really redefining the possibilities, because that is what we are really about in this third way, we could actually have Iran, Syria deal with the extremists as we deal with the center, with the incentive for their behavior being our redeployment? Understanding the time to redeploy from Somalia for 6,300 troops took 6 months, and we inserted another 19,000 to protect them. We got 100,000 U.S. civilians there, over 160,000 troops.

So two points. Iran, is it critical to defining a possibility of leaving behind an unfailed state as we redeploy?

Dr. BYMAN. I think that Iraq is a failed state fundamentally right now, and Iran's ability to rectify that is more limited than ours.

Mr. SESTAK. Is more?

Dr. BYMAN. More limited than ours is. I think there are parts of the country that Iran could have tremendous influence over. And that may be a reasonable approach to parts of Iraq where, rather than talking about Iraq, we go province by province, in some places neighborhood by neighborhood and, you know, take out what we can. And that is depressing to say.

But it is reasonable for Iran to look to Iraq to try to play a stabilizing role. But we should remember some of Iran's interests are fundamentally against ours. They want Iraq to be anti-American. Now it doesn't have to be violently anti-American, but they want it to be anti-American.

Also, the Iranians believe we are leaving anyway, and so the incentive to deal from their point of view is rather limited, because they have said for a while now America is on its way out.

Mr. SESTAK. That does differ from what Mr. Fingar, the head of the National Intelligence Council, said. He said they have a strong interest in not leaving behind a factionalized government. Ambassador Crocker said the same and said that their prognosis on it spiraling into chaos would be different if Iran were included in the mix.

Dr. BYMAN. The Iranians certainly do not want Iraq to spiral into chaos. But like us, for that matter, they have conflicting goals. They want stability, but they want stability on their terms.

Mr. SESTAK. Is that a bad deal if you have stability? We don't have the government we want now. So what if it is different than we want?

Dr. BYMAN. If Iran can help foster stability in Iraq, we should encourage it to do so. So that is—my bottom line is strong agreement on that point.

Mr. SESTAK. Last-second question, if there is time for one more.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Sestak, we have actually gone a second round, so we will start your second round now and start the clock for another five minutes.

Mr. SESTAK. You didn't talk—or I may have missed it as I went through your testimony. Did you talk about training or leaving behind or changing the mission on training the forces of Iraq? Many have talked, like the Baker Hamilton Study, that that is a key part, as we draw down, to doing that. Had you spoken to that issue? Do you believe in that?

Dr. BYMAN. I touched on it lightly. I believe in two types of training missions. But let me talk about this a little bit.

A very important training mission is stepping up training with neighboring states. So states that are not already in chaos but have the potential to be infected by Iraq. So step up those programs.

I do believe that we want to work with some Iraqi factions, and this could be factions close to the central government, it could be tribes in Anbar province or elsewhere, and that training might be part of that mission. But here by "training" I don't mean the massive training people are talking about that the Iraq Study Group seemed to endorse of, you know, brigade-sized training units. To me, that is far too big. I don't think most of that brigade is actually trained in training, if you know what I mean; and I think that we won't get that much more bang for our buck with a significantly larger training force. So I would still do training but at a much smaller level.

Mr. SESTAK. I wonder about that, also. I am glad to hear you say that.

I have watched as bills get passed or things get posited there. It is almost like somebody in immigration, the bill over in the Senate, you have to have touchback because somebody wanted it, you

know. And it sounds good, and we will give that to them. We will train. We will protect the borders. We can't protect our own borders.

In training, you know, there is 47,000 combat troops out of the 160,000 there. And to me it is not a question of training of these people, it is a question of the motivation and loyalty. Are we ready to embed our troops and potentially have another Blackhawk Down? You know, 40 or 60,000 troops, that means there is only—and 20,000 are going to be advisors or trainers, that is another 40,000 for 60,000, and that means only 10,000 are combat on a 2:1 ratio. I mean, does this concern you?

Dr. BYMAN. Certainly. Any training mission will be dangerous for the people involved. But, again, to be clear about what I mean, I am not thinking about joint combat patrols.

Mr. SESTAK. Pieces.

Dr. BYMAN. And much of it could be done outside Iraq, and it is a very limited effort.

And very important, which this committee has looked at a bit, I know, is the issue of the Iraqi police; and from a counterinsurgency point of view, police are often the most important instrument. And we don't have—we have limited programs in the State Department, but we don't have the kind of significant training programs for police, and I think we should develop them. So to me it is a very different capacity and one that most—most combat forces, most American forces are actually not oriented toward.

Mr. SESTAK. At the end of the day, your position is, I gather—and I didn't hear everything and I apologize—is you thought this was something that might have been doable. Now you feel as though our security writ large, or to our men and women there wearing the cloth of the nation, it isn't right to remain, at least not in the levels we are at.

Dr. BYMAN. Correct, sir.

Mr. SESTAK. What then? Is it down to zero?

Dr. BYMAN. My personal estimate, and it was a back-of-the-envelope estimate, is that you end up with about 20,000 troops in Iraq and in the neighboring states.

Mr. SESTAK. Doing what in Iraq?

Dr. BYMAN. Part of it would be a training mission, part of it would be direct strike mission against al Qaeda and jihadist assets——

Mr. SESTAK. How many inside Iraq? Back of the envelope?

Dr. BYMAN. This will depend on——

Mr. SESTAK. These numbers we went over.

Dr. BYMAN. Well, it depends whether, you know, will Kuwait take a lot of these people? How many will be protecting refugee camps?

Mr. SESTAK. I think you are right, also. We have bases in Kuwait, Qatar.

Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Bartlett for five minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much.

I am conducting my own little poll, and I wonder for a moment if you will help me. If you have a piece of paper and something to

write on, could you write down four brief things for me: Hate each other, hate al Qaeda, hate us, and something else. Now, if you would put opposite each of those four the percentage of the present violence we see in Iraq, which is attributable to each of those four?

Dr. BYMAN. Okay.

Mr. BARTLETT. Now, can you read me those numbers? What percent of the violence is because they hate each other?

Dr. BYMAN. Twenty percent.

Mr. BARTLETT. Twenty percent. And how much is because they hate al Qaeda?

Dr. BYMAN. Five.

Mr. BARTLETT. Five percent. How much is because they hate us?

Dr. BYMAN. Ten.

Mr. BARTLETT. Ten percent. Wow. The something else is really big then.

Dr. BYMAN. Something else is very big, yes

Mr. BARTLETT. What is it?

Dr. BYMAN. Something else is a variety of factors relating to a security vacuum, which is crime, personal insecurity, tribal rivalries, opportunism, ambition. That when you have a situation where there are no police and no state, violence tends to break out; and it tends to break out among people who, before, they were friends and neighbors.

So when you have the situation of a failed state, over time things like they hate each other, I would have put that—even a year ago, I would put that much lower. But over time the violence begets violence, and the hate each other begets hating each other. Most Iraqis didn't hate each other six or seven years ago. They hated their government. They hated some outsiders, and—but the violence itself has caused many of these problems. The collapse of the state has caused many of these problems.

Again, I keep going back to things like the police. That is in part because, when you talk to Iraqis, a lot of what they focus on are crime and personal security. Yes, they are concerned about death squads, but they are also concerned that they can't send their daughter to school because the local gang leader is going to kidnap her and hold her for ransom.

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Chairman, this is very interesting. In the brief poll that I have run, there is pretty much consistency that the hate each other is not very large; and I was surprised and continue to be surprised at the very low percentage that is attributed to hate al Qaeda, because I was led to believe that the only entity in Iraq that was hated more than us was al Qaeda, and apparently that is not true. I found huge differences in the percentages of violence that is attributed to hate us, and that is very interesting.

I will continue my little poll. Thank you very much.

It is my understanding that your considered judgment is that the sequela in Iraq will be little affected by when we leave?

Dr. BYMAN. I am sorry, the what will be little affected?

Mr. BARTLETT. The sequela, what happens in Iraq will be little affected by when we leave, whether it is now or a year or five years?

Dr. BYMAN. I think that it will be hastened when we leave. But whether it is now, in a year or five years, I think it will be has-

tened at that point. So if there is a heavy cost to be paid, which I believe, I think that it is better to pay it sooner and not have to deal with the day-to-day costs.

Mr. BARTLETT. It will be hastened. What is it?

Dr. BYMAN. Well, we are providing security in parts of Iraq. We are reducing some of the violence in parts of the country. I don't want to say that the U.S. troops there are doing no good. They are doing some good. And when you remove them, security in those neighborhoods may go away.

And also you are sending a signal that could—right now, most of the armed groups cannot mass in large numbers because they would be extremely vulnerable to U.S. firepower. If we leave, they will be more able to mass; and when you are more able to mass you can do damage on a greater scale. So I do think that the violence will spike, but I think I could be testifying before you in five years, sir, and say the same thing if we still have the same troop level there.

Mr. BARTLETT. We are clearly on the horns of a dilemma. Our young people are being killed; and the longer we stay, the more of them will be killed. But if with our leaving there would be enormously increased numbers of Iraqis, most of them innocent, killed, then we clearly have a dilemma. As a compassionate, honorable people, what do we do now that we are in this situation?

Dr. BYMAN. Let me—since I am on the record, let me put a caveat in about your earlier poll before I go to your very troubling question. Although I attribute only five percent to hating al Qaeda, they are indeed hated. But they are only in small parts of Iraq. So much of the violence is occurring in areas where they have nothing to do with it. It is not a question of how hated they are; it is a question of their role in the violence.

What do we do as conscientious people? We try to make a difference. We try to help the victims of suffering. But I believe we have tried to make a difference for several years now. And it is not just that it hasn't worked, it is that the situation has gotten worse. And at some point you say we either have to try something new and dramatically different, which in my judgment would not be a surge of 20,000 troops, it would be a surge of far more, or you say this is not working, we should spend our resources and spend our efforts somewhere else.

And, sir, part of the reason I am so troubled by my own recommendations is the tremendous suffering that Iraq is going through that I think will increase. But I don't believe we are fixing that. I don't believe Iraq is getting better. I believe it is getting worse. So I can't in good faith say we need to stay there and have the situation only steadily get worse, because I believe that is not a path toward eventually solving this problem.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Byman, I have one final question; and we will see if Mr. Sestak or Mr. Bartlett have any final questions.

On page nine of your written statement you say, quote, no matter what happens in Iraq, an overriding U.S. national interest will be to limit the ability of terrorists to use Iraq as a haven for attacks outside the country, especially directed against the United

States. The best way to do that will be to retain assets—airpower, special op forces and a major intelligence and reconnaissance effort—in the vicinity to identify and strike major terrorist facilities like training camps, bomb factories and arms caches before they can pose a danger to other countries, end quote.

But the reality is, under the scenario you are outlining, that will be a very crude tool for going after al Qaeda. And under the scenario you have outlined—major enhancement of violence, much more instability, back to a failed state—we will be kidding ourselves if we think some kind of over-the-horizon force can deal with a relatively small number of terrorists that may have their eyes on us rather than on what is going on in Iraq. Isn't that a fair statement?

Dr. BYMAN. Yes, sir.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Sestak, do you have any further questions?

Mr. SESTAK. There are some that say that a scenario that you paint is not by any means one that would ensue. They say—and parts of this isn't all that you said, but would the violence spread outside the country? Civil wars in Afghanistan, Algeria and Lebanon have not. Some say the regional powers will be sucked in, and yet Saudi Arabia and Iran don't want a direct confrontation. Nor does Syria, Sunni-led, as compared to fighting now a proxy war, if we depart, between it and Iran. And that Iran might dominate or have undue influence.

It always seemed to me out there that they were Iraqis first, Shias second, and they fight among themselves in the south. And so, in redefining the possibilities, it just seems to me that those that tend to draw that our withdrawal will necessarily have something spiral—in those three areas I mentioned, it portends to me that we aren't making progress this way. There is a possibility the other way.

The only thing I find missing, which I think you may disagree on, is are you able—because I do believe these powers don't want to be sucked in—are you able to leverage them in a different way to engage them than we have done in the past? To where they came to us in 2003, Iran? To where they worked toward the same goals they have in Afghanistan, up until recently reportedly, because they didn't want al Qaeda and Taliban there? But you say you really don't think that these countries could potentially have some sort of keeping this from spiraling into the chaos that many say?

Dr. BYMAN. A couple different points.

To begin with, on the various civil wars you mentioned, they did actually spill over in many ways. In Lebanon, Israel and Syria fought a war.

Mr. SESTAK. No, they sucked them in. They didn't spill over.

Dr. BYMAN. I guess it depends how you——

Mr. SESTAK. I mean, by clear definition here.

Dr. BYMAN. I would define "spillover" as cases that also outside powers feel the need to be involved.

Because, in the Lebanon case, terrorism was a huge problem for Israel, emanating from Lebanon; and that was a form of spillover that led the Israelis to respond. But, in Afghanistan, I think we all know that, you know, 9/11, of course, and numerous other plots

emanated from Afghanistan. The civil wars in general led to Pakistani intervention. Afghanistan produced several million—three million, I believe—refugees. That had tremendously destabilizing effects. We are still seeing it in Pakistan today. We are reading about it in the newspapers today. In Algeria, you had terrorism, several attacks in France occurred, and an attempted attack on the United States from Algerian terrorists.

So even those cases which evince less spillover than some of the others, certainly it is there to me, but——

Mr. SESTAK. Back to the domino effect. Refugees are refugees. The instability spilling over is different.

Dr. BYMAN. I am not saying that Saudi Arabia will fall if we leave Iraq. So I don't want to say in that sense. But there are several forms of instability that can emanate from Iraq, and my judgment is that a few of them will show up in a few places, and that doesn't necessarily mean catastrophe, but it could mean very serious problems.

As you said, we can't predict this with any certainty. I would be the first to scoff at someone that said, two years from now, Saudi Arabia will have problem X because of Iraq. The flip side is also true. I think that we have many historical examples of these problems that civil wars spill over and suck in, as you put it. They are neighbors to the point where we should be very concerned and our policies today should try to head this off even though it might not happen.

And an example is when we went into Iraq in 2003 where a lot of—there were a lot of potential scenarios for how Iraq could have gone, and we focused on one which was an optimistic one. That to me wasn't completely ridiculous. In hindsight, it looks that way. But my view is, we simply didn't know. So we should have planned robustly for a range of negative ones as well. As you said in your remarks earlier, we need to be thinking about this from a bipartisan way, not just, should we stay in Iraq or go? But if we go, what is our strategy? What is our approach? What does this mean?

I am hoping, to go back to your point about Iran, we can leverage regional states. I am skeptical about Iran because we have so little luck leveraging them on nuclear weapons. Hopefully we can do more in Iraq because they do have an interest in stability. But even though they have been remarkably calcitrant, I think we should try; I just wouldn't count on it.

Mr. SESTAK. I would just make one final closing, on Iran, looking back the six years, I would say we outsourced our leadership of engaging to it—with it with the European Union and Russia and only belatedly have we come to the table.

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Byman, Mr. Bartlett has one final question, then we will let you go.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you so much. Thinking only of Iraqis, on an average day in Iraq today, is there more or less murder, killing and torture than there was under an average day under Saddam Hussein?

Dr. BYMAN. There is certainly more, if you average out all of the crimes of Saddam over the many years he was in power, there certainly seems to be more deaths, and certainly when you count refugee flows, more going on today. But the scale under Saddam was

considerable. And you should also add to that not necessarily death but a stifling political climate where even the barest political activity was prohibited and a cause of fear. And in the main parts of Iraq, you have an extremely robust political debate. You have freedom in parts of Iraq, and that matters as well.

So I think in terms of—simply in terms of violence, especially when you count crime, it is worse today. I don't want to make a blanket statement one way or the other on that.

Mr. BARTLETT. I thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Byman, we appreciate you being here. We appreciate you being willing to be the sole panelist today. Thank you so much. Members may have some questions they want to submit to you in writing, and if they do, we would appreciate you getting back answers in a timely fashion. Thank you so much for being here.

And the committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:44 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JULY 18, 2007

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JULY 18, 2007

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

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

July 18, 2007

Good afternoon, and welcome to the second in a series of four hearings that the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations is holding on alternatives for Iraq.

These hearings are not a critique of current or past policies; our focus is on the future. Our intent, by inviting smart and experienced experts, is to help set the tone for a public debate that will both identify and develop alternative approaches and inform future full committee deliberations. We have invited retired senior military officers, defense policy experts, and academics who specialize on the Middle East. Last week we heard from retired General Wesley Clark, Max Boot of the Council on Foreign Relations, and Dr. Muqtedar Khan, Director of Islamic Studies at the University of Delaware and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

The full committee is holding complementary hearings of a broader scope. Last week it heard witnesses give their views on the "Global Security Assessment". This morning, it addressed "Iraq Trends and Recent Security Developments." Additional hearings will cover 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. Instead, the witnesses have been asked to address similar aspects of their alternatives so members and the public can more easily draw comparisons in key areas.

We will begin today's hearing with a statement from Dr. Daniel Byman who is Director of the Security Studies Program and the Center for Peace and Security Studies at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. Dr. Byman is also a Senior Fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution and has researched and written extensively on the Middle East. Dr. Byman has served as a Professional Staff Member with both the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States ("The 9-11 Commission") and the Joint 9/11 Inquiry Staff of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees. He has also worked as the Research Director of the Center for Middle East Public Policy at the RAND Corporation and as an analyst on the Middle East for the U.S. intelligence community.

Before we hear from Dr. Byman, I want to say that we were also scheduled to hear from Dr. Philip Zelikow, currently White Burkett Miller Professor of History at the University of

Virginia. From 2005 to 2007 he was Counselor to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Prior to that assignment, he was the executive director for the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States - better known as the 9-11 commission.

Early yesterday, after he had submitted his statement to the sub-committee, Dr. Zelikow withdrew as a witness from the hearing. He informed the sub-committee that he was now advising the White House on Iraq policy and being *"now in a situation of offering advice to people who are working on these problems in the executive branch, ... it was inappropriate to go ahead and testify publicly under these circumstances".*

While the members have received Dr. Zelikow's statement and have had the opportunity to read his assessment and recommendations, it is regrettable in that we could not engage Dr. Zelikow first-hand to flesh out his thinking on the variety of alternatives for Iraq that are now being discussed in Congress.

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.

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 2 of 4

July 18, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon to our witness, thank you for being here today. You have a rare opportunity this afternoon – you have the benefit of offering your testimony without having someone to your left or right contradicting or disagreeing with your position. Thank you for joining us.

Today's hearing is the second 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". While our first hearing was very constructive, I want to reiterate the purpose of this exercise: we are here to discuss alternatives that truly offer a different plan to the current strategy. Simply critiquing the current approach is not the point of this hearing and is

not helpful. So, Dr. Byman, I look forward to hearing you discuss and define an alternative plan.

After looking at your testimony, it is clear that you advocate departing from the current strategy. You do not endorse pursuing a plan that emphasizes having U.S. combat forces go "door to door" performing a counterinsurgency mission aimed at securing and holding Iraqi neighborhoods. In place of a strategy that requires roughly 160,000 troops, you suggest maintaining a troop presence of 20,0000 in the region to "contain" a "spillover" and serve as "rapid response forces" in the event of regional intervention in Iraq, particularly from Iran.

I'm curious how the relatively small footprint you propose for the U.S. is sufficient to carry out the military roles and missions you identify in your statement: (1) training Iraqi forces; (2) deterring conventional militaries from intervening in Iraq; (3) supporting al Qaeda's enemies; and (4) conducting direct strike missions? While I agree that these roles and missions are important, I would like to understand how you arrived at the number 20,000? Others who share your view that the U.S. should maintain these roles and missions believe a larger footprint is required.

Finally, your comments about "spillover" are sobering. Increased violence, humanitarian tragedy, a failed state, emboldened terrorists and regional actors all will result – in your view – in the wake of U.S. withdrawal or significant drawdown. Your policy prescription to address this problem is for the U.S. "not to make a bad situation worse." Your statement also references other instances of "spillover", particularly in Yugoslavia and Lebanon. I would appreciate if you would take some time this afternoon to discuss how the U.S. should manage the consequences of withdrawal and identify lessons we should learn from the historical cases you cite.

Thank you again for being here today.

[Yield Back to Chairman Snyder]

Hearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Armed Services Committee on "A Third Way: Alternatives for Iraq's Future"

July 18, 2007

Prepared Statement of Dr. Daniel Byman

Director, Center for Peace and Security Studies of the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University
Senior Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution

Chairman Snyder, Ranking Member Akin, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, and Committee staff, I am grateful for this opportunity to speak before you today.

Despite the massive U.S. investment in lives and dollars, the situation in Iraq is steadily deteriorating with no end in sight. I believe that the United States will not be able to bring peace and stability to Iraq in the next several years. Even in the long-term, ending the Iraqi civil war would require a far larger military and civilian commitment than we currently have—and even then the prospects for success are uncertain. Moreover, domestic political support for the Iraq mission is diminishing, making it difficult for the United States to bear the heavy burden of the war for years to come. Because I am skeptical of our chances for success and because I recognize the heavy human, financial, and diplomatic costs of remaining in Iraq, I reluctantly advocate substantially reducing our troop presence and abandoning our current policy that prioritizes defeating the insurgents and building the Iraqi state for a policy that actively aims to mitigate the consequences of U.S. drawdown. I do not take this stance lightly because I believe that a U.S. drawdown will have severe costs for the Iraqi people and could worsen several U.S. strategic interests in Iraq and in the region.

Unfortunately, just as administration officials "best-cased" the planning for the initial invasion of Iraq, critics of the war are making a similar mistake with regard to a U.S. withdrawal. Although it may seem like the situation cannot get worse, it easily can: the problems of Iraq could spill over into neighboring states and beyond.

It is imperative that the United States have a plan for containing the Iraqi civil war. As painful as it may be to admit that that the U.S. effort to bring peace and stability to Iraq has failed, our new priority must be to prevent the Iraqi conflict from spilling over and destabilizing neighboring states and fostering international terrorism. Washington must fundamentally shift its strategy: the emphasis should no longer be on solving the problems in Iraq, but rather limiting the impact of these problems on U.S. interests in the region and beyond. The United States should soon begin a significant drawdown of its military forces but must, at the same time, become even more involved in working with U.S. allies and other countries in the region to contain the civil war's spillover. This shift

will not be easy. But planning now and taking the first steps soon may allow the United States to mitigate the worst effects of the regional chaos that the Iraq war is producing.[1]

In this prepared statement I briefly outline the costs and risks of a more massive civil war in Iraq that would follow a U.S. troop withdrawal or significant drawdown. I then propose a set of more limited interests and goals, most of which concern the stability of the Middle East outside of Iraq, and suggest appropriate U.S. policies. I conclude by making recommendations for U.S. military forces in light of these policies. Because the focus of this hearing involves looking beyond current debates to alternative strategies, I do not assess the progress of the surge or other concerns regarding today's Iraq policy that are currently in the newspaper headlines.

The Costs of War to Iraq

By any measure Iraq is deeply embroiled in a civil war, and the scale of the violence is likely to grow should U.S. forces withdraw or significantly draw down. A full-blown civil war in Iraq has many disastrous repercussions. Without question, a wider Iraqi civil war would be a humanitarian nightmare. Based on the experiences of other recent major civil wars such as those in the former Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Somalia, Congo, Afghanistan, the Caucasus, and elsewhere, we should expect many hundreds of thousands or even millions of people to die with three to four times that number wounded. The same experiences suggest that refugees, both internally and externally displaced, will number in the millions—and the number for Iraq is already over two million. The United States has *intervened* in other civil wars to stop tragedies on this scale.

Of course, an Iraqi civil war will be even more painful for Americans to bear because, if it happens, it will be our fault. We will have launched the invasion and then failed to secure the peace, a failure that produced a civil war. For years to come Iraqis, Americans, and indeed most of the world will point their fingers at the U.S. government.

Our efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East are already badly damaged. In particular, the autocrats of the region argue that democratization is a recipe for disaster—ignoring all of the risks that democracy's more repressive alternatives may entail in terms of breeding more political instability in this troubled part of the world. Already in the popular mind in the Arab world the democratic gains in Iraq are being overwritten by the continuing violence and the sense that Iraqi governments are too subservient to the United States.

A full-blown civil war in Iraq could lead to the loss of most or all Iraqi oil production from the world market. Iraqi insurgents, militias, and organized crime rings are already wreaking havoc with Iraq's production and export infrastructure, generally keeping Iraqi production below prewar levels of about 2.2 million barrels per day (b/d), and far below Iraq's potential level of more than double this output. Larger and more widespread conflict would almost certainly drive down Iraq's oil export figures even

[1] This testimony draws on my book *Things Fall Apart: Containing the Spillover from an Iraqi Civil War* (Brookings, 2007) and article "Keeping the Lid On," *The National Interest* (May 2007), both of which are co-authored with Dr. Kenneth Pollack of the Saban Center of the Brookings Institution. My testimony today, however, goes well beyond what Dr. Pollack and I have written and represents only my own opinion.

farther. Thus, all-out civil war, even if it could be contained in Iraq, would put upward pressure on oil prices.

Possible Forms of Spillover

The collapse of Iraq into all-out civil war means more than just a humanitarian tragedy. Such a conflict is unlikely to contain itself. In other, similar cases of all-out civil war that also involve a failed state, the resulting spillover has fostered terrorism, created refugee flows that can destabilize the entire neighborhood, radicalized the populations of surrounding states and even sparked civil wars in other, neighboring states or transformed domestic strife into regional war.

Terrorists frequently find a home in states in civil war, as al-Qaeda did in Afghanistan. However, civil wars just as often breed new terrorist groups—Hizballah, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat of Algeria and the Tamil Tigers were all born of civil wars. Many such groups start by focusing on local targets but then shift to international attacks—starting with those they believe are aiding their enemies in the civil war.

This process is already underway in Iraq; the 2005 hotel bombings in Amman, Jordan, were organized from Iraqi territory, which enabled the terrorists to better evade Jordan's skilled security services. Iraq-based groups are also inspiring others to emulate their targets and tactics. As they regularly do in Iraq, jihadist terrorists have tried to strike Saudi Arabia's oil infrastructure, a switch from the jihadists' past avoidance of oil targets. Moreover, their Improved Explosive Device technologies are showing up in Afghanistan.[2] Suicide bombing, heretofore largely unknown in Afghanistan, is also now a regular occurrence, with the Iraq struggle providing a model to jihadists in al-Qaeda's former home. Fatah al-Islam, the jihadist organization behind much of the latest violence in Lebanon, has many members who trained in or were inspired by the conflict in Iraq.[3]

In turn, an ongoing civil war can contribute to the radicalization of populations in neighboring countries. Already, the war has heightened Shi'a-Sunni tension throughout the Middle East. In March 2006, after Sunni jihadists bombed the Shi'i Askariya Shrine in the northern Iraqi city of Samarra, over 100,000 Bahraini Shi'ah took to the streets in anger. Bahraini Shi'ah are simultaneously horrified at the suffering of their co-religionists in Iraq and emboldened by their political successes. As one Bahraini Shi'i politician noted, "Whenever things in Iraq go haywire, it reflects here."[4] Similar problems may occur in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and other countries that have sizable Shi'a minorities.

And as Iraq descends into further violence, the numbers of refugees will grow. Iraq has already generated roughly two million refugees with another one million internally displaced. These represent large groupings of embittered people who serve as a ready recruiting pool for armed groups still waging the civil war. And as the wars in

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[2] Clay Wilson, "Improved Explosive Devices (IED) Technology in Iraq and Afghanistan: Effects and Countermeasures," Congressional Research Service, September 25, 2006, p. 2. http://research.fit.edu/fip/documents/SecNews1.pdf

[3] "Fatah Islam: Obscure Group Emerges as Lebanon's Newest Security Threat," *Associated Press,* May 20, 2007.

[4] As quoted in Hassan M. Fattah, "An Island Kingdom Feels the Ripples from Iraq and Iran," *New York Times,* April 16, 2006.

Africa's Great Lakes region shows, foreign countries where refugees find shelter can themselves become caught up in the civil war. At times the refugees simply bring the war with them: the fighters mingle with noncombatant refugees and launch attacks back in their home countries, while those who drove them out continue the fight against the refugees in their new bases. Neighboring governments may try to defend refugees on their soil from attacks by their enemies or at times exploit the refugees as a proxy for the governments' own ambitions. Moreover, large refugee flows can overstrain the economies and even change the demographic balances of small or weak neighboring states, upsetting what is often a delicate political balance.

Jordan appears at grave risk for refugee-based destabilization. Perhaps one million Iraqis have settled in Jordan, perhaps 20 percent of the population. Many of the initial refugees were relatively wealthy, but the new flows are poorer. Many are angry, and Jordan already has a Sunni jihadist problem of its own.

Then there is the "demonstration effect" caused when a civil war is about one group seeking separation or independence as the solution to its problems. At times, other groups in similar circumstances (either in the state in civil war or in neighboring countries) follow suit if the first group appears to have achieved some degree of success. Thus Slovenia's secession from Yugoslavia started the first of those civil wars, but it also provoked Croatia to declare its independence, which forced Bosnia to follow suit—and in both of the latter cases Serb enclaves within both countries themselves sought to secede from the seceding state and join with Serbia.

In Iraq, the most immediate secessionist concern is the Kurds: a people who have long deserved their own state but whose independence is opposed by many Iraqis and almost all of Iraq's neighbors. Kurdish leaders have so far behaved with admirable restraint, but as Iraq's problems mount and Kurdish popular support for independence (already high) grows, this could easily change.

All the problems created by these and other forms of spillover often provoke neighboring states to intervene—to stop the terrorism as Israel tried repeatedly in Lebanon when it fell into civil war, to halt the flow of refugees as the Europeans tried in Yugoslavia when civil war there, or to end (or respond to) the radicalization of their own population as Syria did in Lebanon. These interventions usually turn out badly for all involved. Iraq is already seeing both actual intervention and threats of intervention. Iran has hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of intelligence and paramilitary personnel in Iraq and is arming an array of Iraqi groups. Leaders of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan have all threatened interventions of their own, both to mollify domestic sentiment and to counter what they see as unchecked Iranian gains from Tehran's intervention.

First Do No Harm

If Iraq spirals into an all-out civil war, the United States will have its work cut out attempting to prevent spillover from destabilizing the region and threatening key governments, particularly Saudi Arabia. Not being prepared to quickly fall back to a containment posture will lead to an *ad hoc* approach that will involve many avoidable mistakes and missed opportunities.

One of the most difficult challenges for the United States is simply not to make a bad situation worse. Many of the policy options being discussed for Iraq, however, have the potential not only to fail, but to further undermine U.S. interests.

The first is not to try to pick "winners." The temptation for the United States to try to aid one Iraqi faction against another in an effort to manage the Iraqi civil war from within is enormous, and protecting some of our interests will at times require working with different sub-state groups in Iraq. Unfortunately, the historical reality suggests the limits of this approach. Proxies frequently 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.

Once an internal conflict has metastasized into all-out civil war, military leadership proves to be a crucial variable in determining which faction prevails (sooner or later). However, it is extremely difficult to know *a priori* who the great military commanders are. We know about Moqtada Sadr and Abdul Aziz al-Hakim but know very little about the field commanders of either the Mahdi Army or the Badr Organization, to name only the two best known Iraqi militias. And in some cases we don't even know the relevant militias, let alone their leaders.

Moreover, many communities are divided, fighting against one another more than against their supposed enemies. Commentators often speak of "the Shi'a" or "the Sunnis" as if they were discussing the Confederates or the Roundheads. In fact, Iraq's Shi'a population is fragmented among dozens of militias, many of which hate and fight one another as much as they hate and fight the Sunnis. It is an important element in the chaos of the country today and is attested to by recent battles in Amarah, where Jaysh al-Mahdi forces squared off against the Badr Brigade, and Diwaniyah, where Jaysh al-Mahdi forces fought Iraq's Shi'i-dominated security services, as well as the nightly bloodshed in Basra—all of which is Shi'a-on-Shi'a. Thus Iraq's Shi'a may go the way of the Palestinians or the various Lebanese factions, who generally killed more of their own than they killed of their declared enemies. What is true for the Shi'a is just as true for the Sunnis.

A second specific problem for the United States in trying to pick (or create) a winner in an Iraqi civil war is the question of how America would support its choice. Say we choose the Shi'a: all of the Shi'a militias are strongly anti-American or closely tied to Iran, and none of Iraq's Sunni neighbors (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan or Turkey) would help us to engineer a Shi'a militia conquest of Iraq. The Sunni neighbors would be glad to help us support a Sunni militia to gain control of the country, but most of these militias are closely aligned with Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia and other *salafi* jihadi groups—the principal target of the U.S. War on Terror—certainly an unpalatable choice.

And whichever group the United States chose to support would have to slaughter large numbers of people to prevail and establish control over the country—especially true in case of the Sunni Arabs, who make up no more than twenty percent of the population.

This is why some argue that the solution to civil war is partition. The basic problem with pursuing any version of partition today in Iraq is that it is probably impossible to do so without either causing the all-out civil war in the first place, or deploying the hundreds of thousands of American and other first-world troops whose absence has been the first-order problem preventing reconstruction from succeeding. Other than the Kurds, few Iraqis—whether political leaders, militia commanders or

ordinary citizens—want their country divided. And many of those who are fleeing their homes are not merely peacefully resettling in a more ethnically homogeneous region, but are joining vicious sectarian militias like the Mahdi Army in hope of regaining their homes or at least extracting revenge on whoever drove them out.

Nor is it clear that a move to partition would result in the neat division of Iraq into three smaller states, as many of its advocates seem to assume. As noted above, the Sunnis and the Shi'a are highly divided and are likely to fight amongst themselves, leading to regular war within the communities and a probable fracturing of power in areas where they predominate. Many militia leaders, particularly the Sadrists, have made clear that they intend to fight for all of the land they believe is "theirs", which seems to include considerable land that the Sunnis consider "theirs." Baghdad is one area of contention between Sunnis and Shi'a, but many major cities are also home to multiple communities. Much of Iraq's oil also lies in areas that are not peopled exclusively by one group.

The partition model most observers seem to have in mind is the former Yugoslavia. There, however, years of fighting preceded the partition, clarifying the relative balance of power of the parties involved. Perhaps more important, the communities had a degree of unity and clear leaders – Slobodan Milosovic and Franjo Tudjman, for example – who could command their followers to stop the fighting. Nuri al-Maliki and other Iraqi leaders cannot issue similar orders even if they wanted to. Iraq's civil war is just not yet "ripe" for a solution like partition, and therefore to impose it upon Iraq would require a far greater military commitment by the United States than the present one—closer to the troop to population ratio required to police the Bosnia partition, where the conflict actually was ripe for solution when Richard Holbrooke sat down at the negotiating table in Dayton.

In the end, after years of bloodshed and ethnic cleansing, a massive civil war in Iraq may eventually create conditions for a stable partition. And the United States should be prepared for this possibility. However, a major U.S. effort to enact partition today would be likely to trigger the massacres and ethnic cleansing the United States seeks to avert.

The Refugee Challenge

One of the most pressing issues is dealing with the refugee question—not only because of its negative impact on stability within Iraq but also the dangers posed to neighboring states. Because of our moral responsibility for the suffering in Iraq, many will want the United States to do something to try to "do something." Strategic necessity should reinforce our moral obligations.

One approach would be to create safe havens in Iraq's cities, but this would be a mistake. The various United Nations forays into Bosnia in the 1990s should remind us of how difficult such a strategy would be and how easily it could turn into a disaster. As the tragic experience of Bosnia demonstrates, Iraqi cities would require huge numbers of troops to keep them safe. In fact, this was the principle behind the first Baghdad security plan, which kicked off in the summer of 2006. That plan sought to increase security in the capital as the first step toward a gradual strategy of stabilizing the country and enabling reconstruction. It eventually failed because Washington did not provide adequate numbers of American and properly trained Iraqi troops (as well as the political and

economic support to lock in the security gains) to make the capital safe. Violence in Iraq's population centers cannot be controlled on the cheap—and would require substantial commitments of both men and materiel, as the latest (and much larger) Baghdad security plan is already demonstrating.

At the very least, the United States should provide technical assistance to Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Kuwait to help them ensure that refugee camps do not become insurgent operating bases. Whenever possible, camps should be set up far from the borders. Policing is essential. In her study of refugee-linked conflicts around the world, Sarah Lischer contends that host governments must aggressively ensure that warlords do not run the camps and refugees are disarmed.[5] For many regional states, however, their management skills and military capacity is weak. U.S. aid can help bolster this.

Another option would to resettle refugees from Iraq outside the region—including in the United States. This could greatly reduce the strain on Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and other regional states. But neither Europeans nor Americans are eager to embrace Iraqi refugees, whose fate so far has stirred little compassion in either area. But if the situation deteriorates further, many Iraqis, like many South Vietnamese, compromised by their close association with the U.S. administration in Iraq, will need to be extracted.

The United States, however, should go well beyond current proposals to aid translators and other personnel who worked closely with U.S. forces. Programs like the "Orderly Departure Program" for South Vietnamese refugees should serve as a model: the United States should take in over a hundred thousand Iraqis and encourage its allies around the world to help similar numbers. Beyond the humanitarian benefits of such a program, it would reduce the war-causing effects of the refugee presence on Iraq's neighbors.

No matter what course of action the United States chooses vis-à-vis the refugees, there will be costs.

Managing Spillover beyond the Refugee Problem

As the refugee problem suggests, most of the problems related to spillover have no cost-free solution on offer. Nevertheless, the United States must also consider other steps to minimize spillover. All of these options are difficult and carry their own sets of costs as well as benefits.

Some costs are relatively straightforward—but will require the United States to spend much more in aid and technical assistance to shore up allies in the region who are absorbing the brunt of spillover. This could make a considerable difference to Bahrain and Jordan. Although it is often lumped in with the other Arab Gulf states, Bahrain's standard of living cannot compare to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait or the United Arab Emirates (UAE) because its hydrocarbon production is a fraction of theirs. While it does receive subsidies from its fellow Gulf Cooperation Council members, Bahrain is still the poor relation of the Gulf, and the country is already feeling the heat from radicalization of its majority Shi'a population from Iraq. Bahrain is also particularly vulnerable to anti-Americanism because it has been a reliable U.S. ally and hosts the headquarters of the

[5] Sarah Lischer, "Collateral Damage: Humanitarian Assistance as a Cause of Conflict." *International Security,* 28, 1, (Summer 2003), 79-109.

U.S. Fifth Fleet. Jordan is a small, poor country already overburdened by its long-standing Palestinian refugee population, and trying to absorb hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees as well could be the straw that breaks the back of the Hashemite monarchy. These refugees at the very least will strain Jordan's already vulnerable economy. They may also bring the Iraq war with them, increasing violence in Jordan itself and perhaps polarizing the population. Economic assistance to both countries could help dampen internal problems there derived from or exacerbated by all-out civil war in Iraq. In addition, both need help in policing refugee camps or and ensuring a robust counterterrorism capacity.

No matter what happens in Iraq, an overriding U.S. national interest will be to limit the ability of terrorists to use Iraq as a haven for attacks outside the country, especially directed against the United States. The best way to do that will be to retain assets (airpower, special operations forces and a major intelligence and reconnaissance effort) in the vicinity to identify and strike major terrorist facilities like training camps, bomb factories and arms caches before they can pose a danger to other countries. Washington would need to continue to make intelligence collection in Iraq a high priority, and whenever such a facility was identified, Shi'a or Sunni, American forces would move in quickly to destroy it. When possible, the United States would work with various factions in Iraq that share our goals regarding the local terrorist presence. These same factions, however, would want U.S. money and support for their own political agendas, and many of them would be involved in brutal actions of their own.

And we need to prepare for things going wrong. One would be the possibility of a disruption in the oil supply. Since 9/11, Sunni jihadists have shown a growing interest in attacking the world's oil infrastructure and have attempted several strikes on it, including in Saudi Arabia. Iraq is already victim to almost daily attacks on its oil infrastructure. If Iraq becomes even more of a haven for Sunni jihadi terrorists, it is likely that they will plot against the regional oil infrastructure and conduct additional attacks on parts of the Iraqi oil infrastructure outside their control.

The economic impact of such attacks could be considerable. A further reduction in Iraqi oil production would drive prices higher, given how tight world oil markets already are today. Of far greater concern, however, is the risk of attacks on Saudi Arabian production and transit facilities. Disruptions in the Saudi supply could send prices soaring. Even the greater *risk* of attacks would lead to an increased instability premium on oil, further increasing its price.

We cannot say we have not been warned. This is one area where what we do outside of Iraq--building up the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in order to reduce the impact of price spikes on U.S. consumers, developing contingency plans under the aegis of the International Energy Agency so that leading oil-consuming countries can better manage the risk of disruptions, and encouraging conservation in general—can enhance our freedom of action (and perhaps in turn reduce incentives to attack oil production and transit facilities.)

A Kurdish decision to secede from Iraq could provoke another crisis, especially if (as seems likely) Turkey, Iran and Syria move to oppose this. Because of the ease with which secessionism can spread, the number of groups in the Persian Gulf that could easily fall prey to such thinking, and the determination of Iraq's neighbors to prevent this, it will be necessary for the United States to persuade the Iraqi Kurds not to declare their

independence anytime soon. Iraq's Kurds (and all of the Kurds of the region) deserve independence, but this should only come as part of a legal process under conditions of peace and stability. In practice, however, Kurdistan must be managed as if it were independent—as if it were one of Iraq's neighbors. The Kurds are likely to share the same problems as Iraq's neighbors in terms of refugees flowing their way, terrorist groups striking out against them (and using their territory to conduct strikes) and the radicalization of their population.

The Kurds should be asked to police their own borders to minimize other spillover problems. In particular, the United States should press Iraq's Kurds to cooperate with Turkey to stop the militant Kurdistan Workers Party from using Iraqi Kurdistan as a rear base for its operations. Consequently, the United States will have to help the Kurds deal with their own problems of spillover from the civil war in the rest of the country and convince the Kurds not to "intervene" in the rest of Iraq. That will mean helping them deal with their refugee problems, giving them considerable economic assistance to minimize the radicalization of their own population and likely providing them with security guarantees to deter either Iran or Turkey from attacking them. One U.S. red line for Iran ought to be no attacks, covert or overt, on the Kurds.

Indeed, preventing Iran from intervening, especially given how much it has already intruded on Iraqi affairs, could be the biggest headache of all. Given Iran's immense interests in Iraq, some level of intervention is inevitable. For Tehran (and probably for Damascus too), the United States and its allies will likely have to lay down "red lines" regarding what is absolutely impermissible. The most obvious red lines would include sending uniformed Iranian military units into Iraq, laying claim to Iraqi territory, pumping Iraqi oil, or inciting Iraqi groups to secede from the country.

The United States and its allies will also have to lay out what they will do to Iran if it crosses any of those red lines. Economic sanctions would be one possible reaction, but this is only likely to be effective if the United States has the full cooperation of the European Union states—if not Russia, China and India as well. On its own, the United States could employ punitive military operations, either to make Iran pay an unacceptable price for one-time infractions (and so try to deter them from additional breaches) or to convince them to halt an ongoing violation of one or more red lines. Certainly the United States has the military power to inflict tremendous damage on Iran for short or long periods of time; however, the Iranians probably will keep their intervention covert to avoid providing Washington with a clear provocation. In addition, all of this will take place in the context of either a resolution of or ongoing crisis over Iran's nuclear program, either of which could add enormous complications to America's willingness to use force against Iran to deter or punish it for intervening in Iraq.

The Role of U.S. Military Forces under Containment

U.S. military forces would play several vital roles in containing the spillover from the Iraqi civil war. Missions for U.S. forces as part of a containment strategy include the following:

- Deterring Iranian conventional military involvement in Iraq. Iran's overwhelming interests in Iraq will lead Tehran to continue to deploy many intelligence and

paramilitary personnel to Iraq. Washington should try to minimize the scale of this presence and in particular ensure that Iran does not deploy its own conventional military forces to Iraq, either to dramatically augment the power of its proxies or to annex territory outright.

- Training Iraqi forces. Although under containment the United States would focus on preventing spillover, it would still want to maintain some influence in Iraq and, when it can be done at limited cost, bolster pro-U.S. forces in the country.

- Improving the "Foreign Internal Defense" capabilities of regional allies. Allies will need assistance with border security and policing refugee camps. Much of the aid will involve assisting regional paramilitary, intelligence, and police forces rather than traditional military support.

- Providing support to al-Qa'ida's enemies. Quite apart from efforts to maintain influence in Iraq, the United States will want to assist local government and tribal groups fighting al-Qa'ida and other anti-U.S. jihadist organizations. U.S. forces might provide logistical support, intelligence, and firepower.

- Conducting direct strike missions. In addition to helping Iraqis go after jihadist terrorists, the United States will need to conduct missions of its own that local allies cannot, or will not, conduct. Such strikes will involve special operations forces' raids, Predator strikes, and standoff attacks. This also involves risky missions to gather the necessary tactical intelligence for attacks on training camps and other terrorist facilities in Iraq.

The forces deployed to the region for the above missions can be rather limited—though some of the missions, such as deterring Iran, could be used to justify extremely large numbers of forces. Deterring Iran from large-scale conventional military activities can be done in large part through a limited regional presence, standoff capabilities, and forces ready to fall in on prepositioned materials in the Arabian peninsula and offshore. Iran's own conventional military capabilities are exceptionally weak, and the United States could easily surge to the region in response to an Iranian conventional force buildup. Most of the training activities would be done by relatively small numbers of U.S. forces, while direct strike missions will rarely involve anything larger than a battalion.

Much of the military presence for containing the spillover from Iraq can be based in neighboring states. Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey are all extremely important for helping keep the U.S. presence robust. A regional presence, however, is a diplomatic challenge—in the 1990s, in far less trying circumstances, the United States faced constant difficulties in gaining consistent military support from these states. Having a robust series of diplomatic agreements with as many regional states as possible is vital to ensure that the United States is not suddenly caught short by an ally's withdrawal of backing for a particular mission.

Overall, perhaps 20,000 troops based in the region and other forces based worldwide that are available to deploy rapidly to the region in response to Iranian

intervention should be able to fulfill the above tasks. Demands on special operations forces and other units involved in training and intelligence will remain heavy and perhaps even grow. Because such skills are needed for the struggle against terrorism beyond Iraq, increasing the pool of such forces should remain a priority for the foreseeable future.

The Limits of U.S. Forces

In a time of policy crisis, it is tempting to choose a Goldilocks solution, reducing the number of U.S. troops and limiting their mission without making more radical changes to either. Unfortunately, such a middle ground would be a poor place to make a stand. The large U.S. presence in Iraq is failing to dramatically improve the country's security situation, and it would be foolish to expect a smaller number of troops with a more limited mandate to help Iraq emerge from civil war. Large numbers of U.S. forces in Iraq would continue to be a magnet for foreign terrorists and a drain on U.S. resources while having no clear mission unless they became directly responsible for helping displaced Iraqis and running Iraq's refugee camps — a massive and difficult undertaking.

That said, it is imperative to recognize the limits of a significantly decreased presence. A smaller presence in Iraq would still serve as a recruiting tool for the *salafi* jihadists, although the diminished presence of U.S. troops would make this harder. It would also mean that American troops will continue to be targets of terrorist attack, although redeploying them from Iraq's urban areas to the periphery would diminish the threat from current levels. Finally, the United States will have to recognize the military limits of what can be accomplished. Terrorism in Iraq has flourished despite the presence of over 150,000 U.S. troops: It is absurd to expect that fewer troops could accomplish more. The hope is to reduce the frequency of terrorist attacks and the scale of the training and other activities from what it would otherwise be, but our expectations must by necessity be modest.

Many of the most important activities will fall outside the military's traditional emphasis on high-intensity combat operations. Training missions and intelligence are vital. So too are helping police refugee camps and otherwise assisting local security capabilities. Thus even though a containment strategy would mean that the United States would have a reduced presence in Iraq, this would not entail a return to a force posture and strategic doctrine comparable to that of the U.S. military before the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq.

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