IRAQ

BRIEFINGS AND HEARING

BEFORE THE

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IRAQ

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Congressman Ros-Lehtinen.

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

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

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE

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

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

Good, please.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That is impossible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was not about reality. It was about hope.

But hope is not a strategy.

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

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

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

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

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

Secretary Rice understands this and has begun to engage.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An element of confession in this would not hurt.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[The prepared statement of Ms. Albright follows:]

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

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

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

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

There are no good options.

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

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

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

The question is how.

The first step is to clarify what our interests are.

Three nightmares come to mind.

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

Second, an Iraq that is subservient to Iran.

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

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

We have brought this on ourselves.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What sense does this make?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This has been obvious for years.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I say that we cannot have it both ways.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was not about reality. It was about hope.

But hope is not a strategy.

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

We must act in ours.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I have no magic wand.

I expect this year to be brutal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All that is required is that America become America again.

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

We must live up to our own democratic principles.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NDI for instance has trained——

Chairman LANTOS. National Democratic Institute.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How would you apply this to the current Iraq situation?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Dead wrong.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I fully agree with you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. We do.

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

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

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

Mr. ACKERMAN. Welcome to the minority.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Berman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So I am speaking for myself here.

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

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

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

And so that would be a key part.

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Smith.

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

What exactly do you mean by that?

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

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

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

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

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

He was not, I think, supported enough.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Ackerman.

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

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

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

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

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

Somehow sanity is the answer.

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

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

Hitler was elected democratically. He was directed by evil.

So many people today are directed by God.

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Pence.

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you very much.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Rohrabacher.

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

Chairman LANTOS. That was my statement.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. That came from the Secretary.

Ms. ALBRIGHT. I make omelets, too.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Payne.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Time's up.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Manzullo.

Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

Thank you, Madam Secretary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Paul.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. PAUL. Thank you very much.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Wilson.

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

I yield 45 seconds to Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

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

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

Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Ms. Woolsey.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Fortenberry.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Ms. Jackson Lee.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Gentlelady's time has expired.

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

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Inglis.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. INGLIS. I would be happy to.

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

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

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

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

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Miller.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Boozman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. So with failure——

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

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

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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