

IRAQ

BRIEFINGS AND HEARING
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IRAQ AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2007

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

Chairman LANTOS. The committee will be in order.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for scheduling today's hearing, and assembling yet another very distinguished panel to talk to us about United States policy in Iraq and elsewhere.

Dr. Kagan, I read the executive summary of your statement that you provided us with, and found it to be very interesting and certainly provocative and challenging, at least from my perspective.

Ambassador Holbrooke, I read your statement with very keen interest and I couldn't agree more with the issues that you have raised in your discussion of the choices that America now faces. It is clear, at least to me, that in Iraq we should be focused on managing the consequences of a disastrous policy that underestimated the enormity of the task in Iraq, and did not provide sufficient troops necessary at a time when sufficient troops would have made a difference in stabilizing the situation.

Now, as pointed out, we are in a position where we cannot resolve the differences between Iraqis. Only Iraqis can do that.

I would note on a positive step forward by the Iraqi cabinet in approving a draft law on the distribution of oil revenue. This step, while necessary, is not sufficient however to stop the sectarian violence in Iraq. But instead of implementing a rational policy that would extricate us from the mess that is now Iraq, we seem instead to be intent of fomenting region wide Sunni-Shiia conflict with the aid of our friends, the Saudis.

If Seymour Hersh's recent article is even half right, then the United States is engaged in supporting Sunni extremists with Saudi money as a way to counter Iran. It strikes me that such a policy carries with it the very real risk of region wide conflict. The law of unintended consequences will apply here as it did in Afghanistan during the war with the Soviet Union. With our blessing and our instigation in the eighties and nineties, the Saudis supported the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan. That policy produced both good and bad outcomes. Withdrawal of the Soviet Union was good, descent into civil war of Afghanistan was bad. The birth of al-Qaeda proved worse than bad.

The administration seems ready to repeat this sequence across the Middle East in an effort to counter Iran, but we don't have any

control over where this money goes. It seems to me that there is a significant risk of winding up in the hands of groups who are just as happy to attack us and our interests as they are to attack Iranian interests.

Mr. Ambassador, I would be interested in your view of such a policy, the likelihood of its success and an assessment of the potential risks that are involved as well as hearing from Dr. Kagan on the same matter.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much. And before going to Ambassador Holbrooke, I am delighted to call on my good friend from Indiana, the distinguished ranking member of the Middle East Subcommittee, Mr. Pence.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for calling this important hearing and bringing these two learned, experienced, and distinguished witnesses before this panel.

I believe there is simply no more pressing matter before the Nation today than the issue of succeeding in Iraq as the success of our overall foreign policy I believe is inextricably linked to victory in Iraq.

The great Prussian military philosopher Karl von Clausewitz, with whom our distinguished chairman is quite familiar, described the nature of war nearly 200 years ago.

Chairman LANTOS. I know him personally.

Mr. PENCE. I know. [Laughter.]

I meant academically familiar, Mr. Chairman.

As you know he wrote, "If you want to overcome your enemy, you must match your effort against his power of resistance which can be expressed as the product of two inseparable factors: The total means at his disposal and the strength of his will."

American might is unsurpassed. That is a bipartisan opinion on this committee. Therefore, our enemy targets our will.

I was home in Indiana this past week, had a number of town hall meetings, and I heard two things. Number one, I heard Hoosiers who were concerned about our lack of progress in Iraq, but I also heard profound concern over the possibility that we might abandon this cause before we achieved a stability and a victory for freedom in that troubled part of the world.

Yes, the Iraqi Government needs improvement. My concern is that the repeated reference to a political solution overlooks the administration's nonstop effort to accomplish that. I agree with Dr. Kagan's statement that "The strategy of relying on a political process to eliminate the insurgency has failed." Nonetheless I do want to credit the administration for recently making extraordinary progress in negotiating an agreement on oil revenue. The *New York Times* credited Ambassador Zol Kollazaid's negotiations as crucial to achieving unanimous cabinet approval this past Monday.

Mr. Chairman, I say respectfully it is not sufficient for those charged with national leadership to just be armchair quarterbacks. I think the critics of this administration's policy in Iraq, including those distinguished witnesses today, ought to be willing to tell us what course they would take, and specifically what the Middle East would look like in the wake of an irresponsible American withdrawal. Clever words like redeployment I don't believe will fool

America's enemies, they know exactly what it will mean, withdrawal, defeat and retreat. It will mean that because they will define it that way.

I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses and I also appreciate their agreement on two main issues. They both desire success in Iraq and they both recognize according to testimony that rapid withdrawal would be disastrous. I believe that we should declare victory as our national policy in Iraq, and I look forward to the insights of these two distinguished men.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much, Congressmen Pence. It is a strong preference of the Chair to our witnesses at this point, but I will, as always, be happy to entertain 1 minute statements should anybody be so inclined.

If not, Ambassador Holbrooke, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD C. HOLBROOKE,
VICE CHAIRMAN, PERSEUS LLC, FORMER UNITED STATES
AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a great honor to appear again before this committee which, as I will never forget, was the very first committee I testified before in 1977, almost exactly 30 years ago. But the pleasure is far greater today, because you, Mr. Chairman, are a man who has been a close friend and advisor to me personally for many years, and also to my wife who shares with you a common country of birth and a commitment to the values that you have always epitomized.

Chairman Lantos's career is well known to all of you, but his influence often exercised in low key and subtle ways may be less well understood to many of you. While I was at the United Nations, Congressman Lantos, as my wife would say, Lantos, was by far the most helpful member of the House in dealing with issues of immense complexity, including the absolutely extraordinarily difficult issue of fixing the arrears problem. Congressman Lantos's role in deepening understanding on the most vital issues of national security whenever possible on a bipartisan basis has been huge to our Nation.

This has been true on the crises we face in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran. This committee has an opportunity—indeed, I would suggest, an obligation—to address these issues urgently. It is with this in mind that I appear before you today, just after a trip to northern Iraq and Turkey, which concluded with the Munich Security Conference at which Congressman Berman, among others, was present as well.

Let me start, Mr. Chairman, with a statement that I never thought I would make and never wanted to make. The situation in Iraq is far worse than it ever was in Vietnam. I speak as a veteran of services as a civilian in Vietnam for over 3 years, and four more years on working on the problem in the White House of Lyndon Johnson, the State Department, the Pentagon where I wrote one volume of the Pentagon Papers, and the 1968–1969 Paris Peace Talks with the North Vietnamese. Never, in the years since, did I imagine that anything would or could be worse.

But Iraq is worse than Vietnam except in terms of American casualties, and this is compounded by the fact that we are waging a second war in Afghanistan that is also not going well, although I believe strongly that it is still salvageable in Afghanistan and must be turned around.

What makes these two wars all the more disastrous is that the major beneficiary is the country in between them, Iran.

First, we eliminated regimes they despised but could not get rid of themselves, the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Then, even as we got tied down in protracted insurgencies in both countries, Iran fattened its coffers with high-priced oil, backed two dangerous anti-Israeli movements, Hamas and Hezbollah, quietly supported extreme anti-American movements within Iraq, and exported the most virulent brand of anti-Semitism since the Holocaust. And last but certainly not least, they are defying the world and developing a nuclear capability.

Now, Mr. Chairman, my opening statement, which I submitted to you on Monday as requested, has been overtaken by events that you and your colleagues have already alluded to. As everyone knows, the Secretary of State announced yesterday that the United States will participate in international meetings convened by the Iraqi Government, to which Iran and Syria have been invited.

While this falls short of what many, including myself, think would best serve our national interest in regard to Iran, it is an important step forward, and I share your acknowledgement, both you and the ranking member of the minority, in regard to that.

It is also a clear response to the recommendations and pressures from the American public, the new Congress, and the Baker-Hamilton Commission. It should therefore be welcomed and encouraged, and it is to be hoped that these meetings will have the participation of Iran and Syria. Both nations must have buy-in in Iraq is ever to be stabilized. This is equally true of the other neighbors, Turkey, Syria, Jordan and of course Saudi Arabia.

Discussions with Iran should not be restricted to the nuclear issue but the whole range of things they are doing to destabilize a vast region, and I might add, the Russians must be part of this process.

But until yesterday the idea of participating directly in a broadly-based international effort to deal directly with Iran had been rejected by this administration. This is doubly remarkable in light of the recent breakthrough by Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill in his talks with North Korea, and I think in light of the announcement yesterday it is extremely fortuitous that you have him as your witness this afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

The model Chris Hill used, with the full backing of President Bush and Secretary Rice, was simple and elegant, and it definitely bridged the rather public internal disagreement within the administration. Hill conducted a bilateral negotiation within a multi-party forum, the Six-Party Talks. This put the other four countries, especially China, the primary host, in the position of exerting pressure on North Korea while allowing the United States negotiating flexibility to reach an agreement.

I might note that the 1995 Dayton negotiations, which you mentioned earlier, Mr. Chairman, that ended the war in Bosnia were

conducted by a small American team, and Chris Hill was my senior political deputy. He is one of the most outstanding career diplomats this Nation has, and essentially—making allowances for vast differences in substance and structure—Hill followed a similar structure with the Secretary of State and the President's support after an intense internal debate in the administration.

At Dayton, the European Union and the Russians played an important role. So they must do in regard to Iran as these negotiations begin.

Let me turn directly to Iraq itself, and let us start with a simple but critical proposition which Congressman Pence has already referred to. All Americans want success in Iraq. And here, Mr. Chairman, I want to stress something very important about the difference between Iraq and Vietnam. There are many similarities, but there is a critical difference, and I say this because of all the noise that is going on in the public debate, particularly on the cable channels.

In Vietnam, as all of you know and many of you remember personally, the opposition to the war included people who actively took the side of the enemy, the people who were killing Americans. People demonstrated carrying Vietcong flags. They had posters of Ho Chi Minh. This was not the right thing to do while Americans were under combat, and people in their anger against the war went far further than they should have.

But I want to stress particularly to my friends on the minority side of the aisle that this is not the case in Iraq. There is nobody who wants these dreadful people to succeed, al-Qaeda, the Taliban, the Sunni extremists, the Shiite extremists. This is a critical but unnoticed difference, and this is in reference to your comment, Congresswoman, that we are here for—and I agree with you—we are here to discuss practical solutions.

I would also add that the announcement of Secretary Rice yesterday was in fact, and she acknowledges in her hearing yesterday, a response to the very kind of practical suggestions put forward by Baker-Hamilton Commission, by many members of this committee, by many leading American foreign policy experts.

I don't question the patriotism or motives, the motives of those with differing points of view, and I regret the assertion that opponents of the war are aiding and abetting the enemy. That is not true, and as General Pace himself has said, they are exercising the very things we are fighting for.

But the U.S. and President Bush do indeed face the most difficult choices imaginable and we must be honest about them if we are to contribute this morning to their solutions. Perhaps the additional troops being rushed to Iraq can delay a far worse blood bath for awhile, but I believe, and I say this with great regret, that no surge will definitively turn the tide and, as everyone knows, as President Bush himself has said, sooner or later the United States will leave Iraq.

The question therefore is not whether but how and when we re-deploy in Iraq. How do we redeploy in a responsible manner—not the irresponsible manner, to use Congressman Pence's exact—and avoid the chaotic end that we saw in Vietnam in 1975? How do we protect our vital national security interests in the rest of the vast

and vital and turbulent region that stretches from Beirut to Bombay, from the Mediterranean to the Himalayan Mountains? How do we deal with the estimated 6,000 al-Qaeda in western Iraq who are there as a result of the war? They weren't there before the war but they are there now, and we can't just say, well, it is our fault they are there. We have to deal with them as a real threat. And if we are going after al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, we can't ignore them in a situation much closer to the European heartland.

The first thing that must be done is to define our vital national interests. This has not been done adequately to my mind. Time does not permit a full review today of what these vital national interests would be, but I suggest you consider additional hearings focused on this precise issue in order to help educate the American people. What is our vital national interest in the region?

The consequences of the administration's mistakes have created a new set of consequences, and al-Qaeda entrenching itself in western Iraq, and Sunnis and Shiites tearing each other apart, with Americans caught in the middle, what should we do? Two of your colleagues, Mr. Chairman, have asked this to be specific. I will try briefly to answer the question posed.

The President's answer was the surge, which I view as a mini-escalation. To my mind, and I believe my distinguished co-witness will disagree with me on this point, I think 21,000 troops is either too many or too few. I don't believe it is the right amount. Now, none of us are going to know until the history books are written. I base my assessments on many years of participating in, studying, and watching guerilla wars.

Twenty-one thousand are not enough to turn the tide, but they significantly deepen our involvement in a war that everyone says cannot be won through military means. American casualties will increase and the escalation increases the risks that the ultimate American exit from Iraq will be precipitous.

At this point, Mr. Chairman, it is clear that all our choices in Iraq are bad. Given these circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that, however difficult and however painful, we should try to manage a careful phased redeployment of American troops rather than face the situation in the future that might force our hand. This is to some extent what the British decided to do with their announcement last week. More British withdrawals are certain in my view once the prime minister changes later this year, and the South Koreans with far less notice are following the same pattern.

Such a redeployment, and please note I used the word "redeployment" very deliberately, would take perhaps a year if done properly, and could start relatively soon if President Bush would consider it and present it, not as a defeat but as an opportunity to salvage something from the wreckage that is now Iraq. The United States could leave some troops behind for specific tasks related directly to our own national security interests—first and above all—pursuit of al-Qaeda and their network in western Iraq. And again I stress, since everyone here is supporting enhanced effort in Afghanistan against the same enemy, we can't go after them in Afghanistan and ignore their growing presence in western Iraq, and I don't think enough attention has been focused on this conun-

drum. Secondly, to help stabilize the situation between Turkey and the Kurds of northern Iraq; third, perhaps training Iraqi forces.

American troops long ago achieved their original objective, the removal of Saddam Hussein, but they should not nor will they be able to stay indefinitely to oversee the creation of a government, in President Bush's words, "of national unity that can defend itself."

If we wish to influence the political future of Iraq, we must seek to do so now while American troops are still there. Time is not on our side, and anti-American feelings are continuing to grow even among those who hold their freedom from a murderous dictator to the bravery and skill and courage of Americans.

Beyond Iraq we must focus on two states—Turkey and Israel, the two democracies and our two close allies in the region. Turkey remains our indispensable NATO ally, the front-line state of the post-Cold War era. Yet it has gone from strongly pro-American 6 years to violently hostile today. This is a long-term disaster for both nations and must be reversed.

As for Israel, the issues are obvious and they lie beyond the scope of today's hearings, but it must be said, Mr. Chairman, that Israel has not benefitted from the Iraq war as some in both the United States and Israel once hoped and once predicted. On the contrary. Iraq has only, in my view, increased the isolation and dangers to Israel.

Another issue closely related is the Kurdish question. In this regard, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit for the record my recent article in the *Washington Post* based on my trip to that area.

Chairman LANTOS. Without objection.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Allow me to close with a few words about Afghanistan. It is inexcusable that this vital front in the war on al-Qaeda was allowed to languish for so long. When I warned of this danger in a column in the *Washington Post* almost a year ago, two of the administration's most senior officials called me and told me I was "too pessimistic." I remember these calls vividly because I was arguing for bipartisanship in Afghanistan, and I was accused of politicizing the very issue I was seeking to encourage bipartisanship on.

But the fact is when I re-read the column in preparation for this testimony today, Mr. Chairman, I was too optimistic. The situation has gotten worse than I expected. Mr. Chairman, we must win the war in Afghanistan or else Osama bin Laden will return in the baggage train of the Taliban and start again to plot attacks on our homeland, not from a cave under pressure on the border, but unpressured inside a vast country.

But Afghanistan will require more troops, more resources, and more support from our NATO allies. That in turn will require effective American leadership internationally to summon the international will, and on-the-ground in Afghanistan where up to now with the exception of our military forces we have not fielded the first team. It will also require bipartisan support for a much later economic assistance program and, Mr. Chairman, I recommend a complete reevaluation of the drug program where the American taxpayers have seen billions of dollars wasted, every cent of it wasted while the number of acres growing poppy seeds and the amount

of opium has grown 40 to 50 percent a year as we have spent \$1 billion a year on this program. It has been a total failure.

Mr. Chairman, I believe your committee can play a leadership role at getting Afghanistan right before it is too late, and I thank you enormously for the honor of appearing before you today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Holbrooke follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD C. HOLBROOKE, VICE CHAIRMAN, PERSEUS LLC, FORMER UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr Chairman,

It is a great honor to appear again before this committee, which, as I will never forget, was the very first committee I ever testified to, back in 1977. But the pleasure is far greater today, because your new Chairman is a man who has been a close friend and advisor for many years, not only of me, but of my wife. His career is well-known to all of you, but his influence, often exercised in low-key and subtle ways, is less well understood. While I was at the United Nations, he was by far the most helpful member of the House in dealing with issues of immense complexity, including fixing the arrears problem. His role in deepening understanding of the most vital issues of national security, on a bipartisan basis whenever possible, has been huge.

This has been true on the crises we face in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran. This Committee has an opportunity—indeed, I would suggest, an obligation—to address these issues urgently, and it is with this in mind that I appear before you today, just after a trip to northern Iraq and Turkey.

Let me start with a statement that I never thought I would make: the situation in Iraq today is worse than it ever was in Vietnam. I speak as a veteran of three years of service as a civilian in Vietnam and four more years working on the problem at the Johnson White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, and the 1968–69 Paris Peace Talks. Never, in the years since, did I imagine that anything would, or could, be worse. But Iraq is—and this is compounded by the fact that we are waging a second war, in Afghanistan that is also not going well, although I believe strongly that it is still salvageable and must be turned around. What makes these two wars all the more disastrous for our nation is that the major beneficiary is the country between them, Iran. First we got rid of regimes they despised, the Taliban and Saddam Hussein. Then, even as we got tied down in protracted insurgencies in both countries, Iran fattened its coffers with high-priced oil, backed two dangerous anti-Israeli movements, Hamas and Hezbollah, quietly supported extreme anti-American movements within Iraq, and exported the most virulent brand of anti-Semitism since the Holocaust. And last but certainly not least—they are defying the world and developing a nuclear capability.

But the idea of leading a broadly-based international coalition to negotiate directly with Iran has been rejected by this Administration, even though just such a course has been recommended by almost every foreign policy expert and the Baker-Hamilton Commission. This is doubly remarkable in light of the recent breakthrough by Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill in his talks with the North Koreans. The model he used, with the full backing of President Bush and Secretary Rice, was simple and elegant, and deftly bridged the rather public internal disagreement within the administration: Hill conducted a bi-lateral negotiation within a multi-party forum, the Six-Party Talks. This put the other four countries, especially China, in the position exerting pressure on North Korea while allowing the U.S. the negotiating flexibility to reach an agreement. I might note that the 1995 Dayton negotiations that ended the war in Bosnia, in which Chris Hill was my senior political deputy, followed a similar structure, with the EU and, importantly, the Russians, represented at a high level, but with all the critical discussions being simply between the U.S. and the warring Balkan parties.

The North Korean agreement raises anew the question: why doesn't this administration try a similar approach with Iran? Mr Chairman, I am unable to answer this question with authority, because, like the Baker-Hamilton Commission and countless experts, I am simply baffled. I hope that your Committee will focus in future hearings on this issue. Of course, the other side, the Iranians, might not respond; the internal situation there has become increasingly unclear, and perhaps a power struggle greater than we can see from afar is underway that would make a positive Iranian response unlikely. I am fully prepared for that. But, as the story of Nixon-in-China reminds us, opening a door can sometimes produce results previously unimaginable. The breakthrough in North Korea, so strongly opposed by many people

within and close to the administration, further illustrates that. Finally, let me stress my belief that as long as we are tied down in Iraq, it will be virtually impossible to deal with Tehran, while Iran can continue to raise the price for us in Iraq with relatively low-cost, deniable actions.

Let me turn therefore to Iraq itself. I must start with a simple, but critical, proposition: all Americans want success in Iraq. I do not question the patriotism or motives of those with differing points of view, and I regret the outrageous assertion that opponents of the war are aiding and abetting the enemy. But the United States and President Bush face the most difficult choices imaginable, and we must be honest about these issues if we are to contribute to their solutions. A long term American presence in Iraq is inconceivable, for obvious military and political reasons. Yet most experts believe that a rapid withdrawal is likely to result in an even worse bloodbath than the one already going on, as well as further gains for Iran and al-Qaeda. The United States is perceived in the rest of the Arab world, which is overwhelmingly Sunni, as backing the Shiites, thus increasing our problems with the very Arab nations we have traditionally been closest to. Yet there is no gratitude among Shiites, nor should we expect any. They want everything in Iraq, after having been the suppressed majority for over 400 years. What the United States unleashed, we can no longer control. Perhaps the additional troops being rushed to Iraq can delay a far worse bloodbath for a while, but no surge will turn the tide, and—as everyone knows—sooner or later the United States will leave Iraq.

The question, therefore, is not whether, but how and when we redeploy in Iraq. How do we redeploy in a “responsible” manner, and avoid the chaotic end in Vietnam in 1975? How do we protect our vital national security interests in the rest of the vast and vital region that stretches from the Mediterranean to the Himalayas? How do we deal with the estimated 6,000 al-Qaeda now operating in western Iraq, as a result of American politics?

The first thing that must be done is to define our vital national interests—something that has been sorely lacking. Time does not permit a full review today of what these would be, but I suggest that you consider hearings focused on this precise issue in order to help educate the American people. While oil and energy resources are often put at the top of any list, we cannot allow ourselves to be blackmailed because of energy. In any case, remaining in Iraq hardly helps us, or anyone else, on oil. There is plenty of oil there, but it will not flow to the rest of the world in significant quantities until there is peace and stability, and, in any case, American has never been dependent on Iraqi oil.

Nor is promotion of democracy a top priority, at this time, in Iraq or its neighbors. Now, Mr Chairman, you and I have both spent much of our lives supporting democracy and human rights around the world; indeed, it is one of the issues that first brought us together. But the oath we take when we enter government service calls on us to preserve and protect the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. We can deplore the behavior of regimes in nations from Burma to Zimbabwe, and we should use whatever influence we have to call them to account for their treatment of their own people. If the opportunity arises, we should act to promote a peaceful transition to popular rule, as we did in the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, Chile, and Central and Eastern Europe. But we cannot intervene everywhere, and in any case, military action is unlikely to produce the popularly-based governments that we prefer. Those who supported the initial action in Iraq did so because the American people were misled on the issue of Weapons of Mass Destruction, because Saddam was a monster, because we believed that the administration was competent, because they asserted a link between Saddam and 9/11, and because when American troops are in harm’s way, our first instinct is to support them. But not—I repeat, not—to impose democracy in a country that had never known it, that was torn by ancient sectarian divisions, and that should never have been created within its present boundaries to begin with.

The consequences of these monumental mistakes have created a new set of consequences. With al-Qaeda now entrenching itself in western Iraq, and Sunnis and Shiites tearing each other apart, with Americans caught in the middle, what should we do?

The president’s answer was the surge, which is really a mini-escalation. To my mind, 21,000 more troops are either too few or too many. They are not enough to turn the tide, but they significantly deepen our involvement in a war that cannot be won through military means. American casualties will increase, and the escalation increases the risks that the ultimate American exit from Iraq will be a precipitous one.

At this point, it is clear that all our choices in Iraq are bad. Given these circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that, however difficult and painful, we should try to manage a careful, phased re-deployment of American troops, rather

than face a situation in the not-too-distant future that would force our hand. This is, to some extent, what the British decided to do with their announcement last week; more British withdrawals seem certain once the Prime Minister changes later this year. The South Koreans are following much the same pattern.

Such a re-deployment would take approximately a year, if done properly. It could start relatively soon, if President Bush would consider it—and present it—not as a defeat, but as an opportunity to salvage something from the wreckage that is now Iraq. The United States could leave some troops behind for specific tasks related directly to our own national security—first, pursuit of the al-Qaeda network in western Iraq; second, helping stabilize the situation between Turkey and the Kurds of northern Iraq; third, possibly training Iraqi forces. American troops long ago achieved their original objective—the removal of Saddam Hussein—but they should not, nor will they be able to, stay indefinitely to oversee the creation of a government, in President Bush's words, "of national unity . . . that can defend itself." Such a government is, in fact, not possible in Iraq today, except perhaps under another brutal dictatorship. Senator Biden and Les Gelb have proposed a solution to this conundrum that I have supported: an Iraqi version of the Dayton Agreement that would create stronger regional governments within a single federal state. The Kurds already have their own self-administered region in northern Iraq, while SCIRI, the most powerful Shiite political group, wants something similar for the south and east. Yet both the Administration and the Baker-Hamilton Commission opposed Biden-Gelb. Perhaps they did not understand it, or perhaps the open Saudi Arabian opposition prevented it from getting the attention it deserved. But time is running out for the United States to play an important role in this or any other solution. If we wish to influence the political future of Iraq we must seek to do so now, while American troops are still there. Time is not on our side, and anti-American feelings continue to grow, even among those who owe their freedom from a murderous dictator to the bravery and skill of American troops.

Beyond Iraq, we must focus first on two states, Turkey and Israel, the two democracies, and our two closest allies, in the region. Turkey remains our indispensable NATO ally, the front-line state of the post-Cold War era. Yet it has gone from strongly pro-American six years ago to violently hostile today. This is a long term disaster for both nations, and must be reversed. As for Israel, the issues are obvious, and lie beyond today's hearings. But it must be said that Israel has not benefited from the Iraq war as some in both the U.S. and Israel once hoped and predicted. On the contrary, Iraq has only increased the isolation and dangers to Israel.

Another issue, closely related, is the Kurdish question. In this regard, Mr Chairman, I would like to submit for the record my recent article in *The Washington Post*, based on my trip to Turkey and northern Iraq.

I wish to close with a few words about Afghanistan. It is inexcusable that this vital front in the war on al-Qaeda was allowed to languish for so long. When I warned of this danger in a column in *The Washington Post* almost a year ago, I was called by two of the Administration's most senior officials and told I was "too pessimistic." Today, re-reading it, I think I was rather too optimistic—although I was not optimistic at all. Mr Chairman, we must win this war, or else Osama bin Laden will return and start again to plot attacks on our homeland without the pressure he now faces as he hides in caves on the Pakistan border. This will require more troops, more resources, and more support from our NATO allies. That, in turn, will require effective American leadership, something that has been lacking in recent years. It will also require bipartisan support for much larger economic assistance programs, and a complete re-evaluation of the drug eradication programs, which, despite their enormous cost, have been a colossal failure. Once again, Mr Chairman, I believe your Committee can play a leadership role in getting Afghanistan right—before it is too late. . . . Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Chairman LANTOS. Ambassador Holbrooke, we are deeply grateful for your penetrating tour dar rezone, and we will be questioning you on many points. I would now like to turn to Dr. Kagan.

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

Mr. KAGAN. Mr. Chairman, honorable members, it is a great honor for me to appear before you to talk about this most important topic, the most important challenge I think that the United States faces in the world today, and I do not say that lightly be-

cause I believe that we face a great many very grave challenges around the world, and I am very worried about the shape of the future international environment, and I think it is very important that we talk about Iraq with a full understanding of the likely consequences of various courses of action on that international environment and that we keep it in that larger context of real geo-politics as well as the context of the global war on terror.

I think the global war on terror is extremely important, but I think our interests in the world now are not limited to the pursuit of the global war on terror. In Iraq, I believe that the two issues of geo-politics and our real interests in the world and the global war on terror are closely intertwined and I will speak about that briefly in a moment.

I would like first to say that this is, I believe, my fourth appearance before a congressional committee on this subject, and I have been impressed on every occasion by the civility and the level of discourse that I have seen which contrasts so markedly with a great deal of the rhetoric that we hear in the press, and I salute Congress for working so hard to address these issues in a serious fashion, and for bringing in experts of a variety of perspectives to present their views.

I think the disagreements about what to do in Iraq now really come down to three major headings. Can we succeed in Iraq? Is success still possible? If it isn't possible, can we contain the effects of failure in Iraq and prevent them from undermining or security both from a geo-political standpoint and from the standpoint of global war on terror? And lastly, does it matter to the global on terror whether we succeed in Iraq or is there some way to pursue our interests in the global war on terror on Iraq without actually getting the sectarian violence under control and succeeding as fully as the administration and as I believe we ought to?

I would like to say in response to the first I do believe that we can succeed. I do believe that Iraq is fundamentally different from Vietnam in a great many ways as my distinguished colleague pointed out. I do not agree with his assessment that the situation in Iraq is worse than the situation we faced in Vietnam. From the standpoint of insurgencies, traditional insurgencies, it certainly is not. In Vietnam, there were large mobil forces of the enemy organized into battalion and larger double combat units moving supported directly by the large organized combat forces of one of Vietnam's neighbors.

We have seen nothing like that in Iraq. Most of the energy in Iraq cannot bring to bear larger than squad-sized formations, and we do not have regular units of Iran, Syria or any other state operating against us in Iraq.

Now, the situation is more complicated because we are facing, in addition to an actual insurgency on the part of certain portions of the Sunni Arab community, also widespread sectarian violence, but from the standpoint of traditional insurgency measure I do not agree that Iraq is worse than Vietnam. I think our situation there from that perspective is significantly better.

I think Iraq is different from Vietnam in another important way. We were able at the end of the day to walk away from Vietnam, and the consequences of walking away were relatively confined. It

is true that a number of the states neighboring Vietnam also fell to communism as some had warned that they would, and other states that did not fall nevertheless came under great pressure. It was also true that the net result of that was far less significant than many people thought it would be, and far less significant than many other things that were going on in the world at that time.

I do not believe, in fact, I am convinced that that is not true in Iraq. If you look at the measures, and there is a terrific report that I commend to your attention if you have not already seen it, by Ken Pollack and Dan Bymam called "Things Fall Apart", about the likely consequences of spillover in the region if we allow Iraq to implode completely.

There is every reason to believe that if we withdraw from Iraq without establishing a basic level of security and a basic level of effective governance that the war will turn into a maelstrom that will involve the entire region, and we have already seen Iran directly involved in supporting insurgents, Shiia insurgents, also apparently Sunni insurgents in Iraq. We have seen Syria involved in supporting insurgents in Iraq. The Saudis have made it clear that if this gets out of hand they will intervene. The Turks have threatened to intervene.

I think that a collapse in Iraq is very likely to lead both to regional conflict and also to subsidiary civil wars throughout the Middle East, especially throughout the Arab world, and I do not think that anyone can really say honestly that is in the interests of the American people to have such a thing happen.

So as many people are pessimistic about the possibility of success in Iraq where I think it is possible, I think people are not pessimistic enough about the likely consequences of allowing Iraq to collapse completely, and I think it is worth discussing that in a lot of detail, and I would commend again to the attention of the committee the Pollack and Bymam report, and I would suggest that you might want to address in more detail various scenarios for possible consequences of an American withdrawal from Iraq from a regional perspective.

Does Iraq matter to the global war on terror? Well, Ambassador Holbrooke pointed out that there are thousands of al-Qaeda fighters in Al Anbar province, and he is absolutely right, and there is no question that that question must be dealt with. There are many who would say that the way to deal with that problem is to abandon our efforts to bring sectarian violence under control, and instead focus our efforts in Iraq on somehow preventing those 6,000 al-Qaeda terrorists in Al Anbar province from establishing bases and training camps and so forth, and basically take some sort of approach—I am not even sure exactly what it would look like—to prevent them from gaining a foothold.

The problem is that in my view this is a misreading of the situation in Iraq. Al-Qaeda is not only in Al Anbar. Al-Qaeda operates throughout the belt of cities and villages that surround Baghdad. Its networks run into the heart of Baghdad. It is at the heart of much of the sectarian fighting in Baghdad. The networks run into Diyala province, into the provincial capital of Bacuba, and all the way out to the Iranian border, and they run up to the north into Ninua province as well.

So dealing with al-Qaeda in Anbar, even if you could do that without dealing with the sectarian violence, would not deal with the al-Qaeda problem in Iraq. But it is also very important to recognize that al-Qaeda and its activities are very closely tied to the sectarian violence.

Kim Kagan is showing in a report that will be released tomorrow called "The Iraq Report"—it will be on the *Weekly Standard* Web site—that there is in fact a very intimate connection between al-Qaeda activities in Iraq and sectarian violence, and it is not simply that al-Qaeda generates the sectarian violence, which was the stated objective of al-Qaeda and Iraq leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in which, unfortunately, he succeeded.

Al-Qaeda works to generate sectarian violence. It then works to bring about sectarian cleaning. It then works to intimate the local people into supporting it and allowing it to establish bases. What we have seen in Diyala province especially is that you cannot actually treat the problem of al-Qaeda in Iraq without addressing the sectarian violence at which al-Qaeda is the root.

So I do not believe that there is any way to fight the global war on terror responsibly without addressing the problem of sectarian violence in Iraq that is so intimately tied to the dangers that al-Qaeda poses.

Now, I would like briefly to make a couple of points about the current operation. The President announced a change in strategy on January 10, and I would like to emphasize here the words "change in strategy." The numbers of troops that are going into Iraq are not by themselves going to be determinant of anything. If the President had not changed his approach to this war, but had continued to pursue the train and transition approach that has been the hallmark of our efforts since 2004, I would not have supported the increase of forces because I do not think that that strategy could succeed.

I think that all along in this effort we have had a fundamentally misguided strategy that did not focus on what to my mind is the first and foremost responsibility of any counter insurgency force or peacekeeping force for that matter, which is establishing security in the population.

The President has now declared that it is our strategy to help the Iraqis establish security. In order to pursue that changed mission the commanders on the ground feel, and I agree with them, that we need additional forces.

It has been 6 weeks, about, since the President made that declaration. So far approximately one additional combat brigade has entered the theater and is operating in Baghdad. Another one is in the process of deploying, but the deployment will not be complete for another 12 weeks or so. We have not yet begun to see the major clear-and-hold operations that are to be the hallmark of this operation. The U.S. military has been conducting operations to prepare for the clear-and-hold to come, but it has not even yet begun what will be the major effort. That will not happen for weeks at the least, in my view.

Nevertheless, we have already seen some very positive developments in Iraq. In Al Anbar province, remarkably, the Sunni sheiks have largely turned against al-Qaeda. We are fortunate in this re-

gard that our enemies are ideological and etilogues and are not very adaptable, and they made the mistake of killing a Sunni sheik last fall, and of committing a variety of other atrocities, including beheading four school girls and leaving their heads in a cooler in front of a government believe, and I believe it was Ramadi, all of which has had the effect of turning the tribal leadership in Al Anbar against them.

Al Anbar is therefore becoming a far less hospitable environment for al-Qaeda. Thousands of Anbar youth have signed up for the police and are now taking to the streets to protect themselves against al-Qaeda. That doesn't mean that the threat from al-Qaeda is eliminated. It means that al-Qaeda is moving, and that is one of the reasons I believe why we are seeing and will continue to see increased al-Qaeda in Diyala, but no one would have imagined a few months ago, in my view, and I certainly didn't imagine that we would have made such progress in Al Anbar.

Even in Baghdad, the situation has changed dramatically in ways that I would not have anticipated in so short a period of time, so briefly into the surge. Muqtada al-Sadr has fled the country to Iran. Now surely he goes back and forth to Iran for a variety of reason, and he may have gone as likely to seek help as to flee, but it was a very bad moment for him politically to do that. It made him look much weaker.

In fleeing, he ordered his fighters not to resist American movements in Baghdad, and they have not. For the first time since 2004, American troops have conducted large-scale sweeps in Shaav and Oor, two Shiite strongholds north of Sadr City, and they just completed a raid into Sadr City. None of those operations were opposed.

Now, this is not clear and hold. They have not cleared those areas. They certainly are not holding them. But I would not have imagined that American forces could operate with so little resistance in Shiite strongholds this early into the operation.

Coalition forces arrested the son of Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, the effective leader of Skiri, and nevertheless Hakim continues to preach in his Friday afternoon sermons that the Shiia should not attack the Sunni, and that sectarian violence is not in Iraq's interest.

The new Iraqi general in charge of operations in Baghdad, General Abboud Gambar, has declared that he will assist Sunni people who have been driven out of their homes in the capital to relocate if they wish, and that he will even remove the Shiia families that have occupied their homes to make that possible.

Now, a declaration isn't action, and we will have to see if they follow through, but it is a dramatic declaration and much more than we have seen from this government.

The passage of the oil law through the Council of Ministers is a very positive step. It is one of the benchmarks that has been repeatedly demanded and of which people have been skeptical. They have moved forward on that.

In other words, I would say that even though we are only a short time into the surge, and we have not even begun the major operation that is to be its hallmark, we have nevertheless seen significant progress, and that does not mean that the progress will continue unabated. I fully expect that at a certain point that Jhi Shal

Madri will begin to fight us when they realize that they really will be eliminated. I fully expect, as we have already seen, that al-Qaeda in Iraq will step up its attacks. I fully expect that Sunni insurgents will continue to resist and fight, and of course the political complexities are enormous.

Nevertheless, at this stage I think the trend lines for the first time in a long time are even if ever so moderately positive, and I think that it is far from time at this point considering how central Iraq is to all of our interests to give up on this effort, and I would exhort Congress and the committee to give General Petraeus the time and the resources that he needs to help us to success in Iraq.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kagan follows:]

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Victory is still an option in Iraq, and it is vital to America's security. Defeat will lead to regional conflict, humanitarian catastrophe, and increased global terrorism.
- Iraq has reached a critical point. The strategy of relying on a political process to eliminate the insurgency has failed. Rising sectarian violence threatens to break America's will to fight, and it will destroy the Iraqi government, armed forces, and people if it is not rapidly controlled.
- We must adopt a new approach to the war and implement it quickly and decisively.
- Three courses of action have been proposed. All will fail.
 - Withdraw immediately. This approach will lead to immediate defeat. The ISF are entirely dependent upon U.S. support to survive and function. If U.S. forces withdraw now, they will collapse and Iraq will descend into total civil war that will rapidly spread throughout the region.
 - Engage Iraq's neighbors. This approach will fail. The basic causes of violence and sources of manpower and resources for the warring sides come from within Iraq. Iraq's neighbors are encouraging the violence, but they cannot stop it.
 - Increase embedded trainers dramatically. This approach cannot succeed rapidly enough to prevent defeat. Removing U.S. forces from patrolling neighborhoods to embed them as trainers will lead to an immediate rise in violence. This rise in violence will destroy America's remaining will to fight, and escalate the cycle of sectarian violence in Iraq beyond anything an Iraqi army could bring under control.
- We must act to restore security and stability to Baghdad, which has been identified as the decisive point.
- There is a way to do this.
 - We must change our focus from training Iraqi soldiers to securing the Iraqi population and containing the rising violence. Securing the population has never been the primary mission of the U.S. military effort in Iraq, and now it must become the first priority.
 - We must send more American combat forces into Iraq and especially into Baghdad to support this operation. A surge of seven Army brigades and Marine regiments to support clear-and-hold operations starting in the Spring of 2007 is necessary, possible, and will be sufficient.
 - These forces, partnered with Iraqi units, will clear critical Sunni and mixed Sunni-Shi'a neighborhoods, primarily on the west side of the city.
 - After the neighborhoods have been cleared, U.S. soldiers and marines, again partnered with Iraqis, will remain behind to maintain security.
 - As security is established, reconstruction aid will help to reestablish normal life and, working through Iraqi officials, will strengthen Iraqi local government.
- This approach requires a national commitment to victory in Iraq:

- The ground forces must accept longer tours for several years. National Guard units will have to accept increased deployments during this period.
- Equipment shortages must be overcome by transferring equipment from non-deploying active duty, National Guard, and reserve units to those about to deploy. Military industry must be mobilized to provide replacement equipment sets urgently.
- The president must request a dramatic increase in reconstruction aid for Iraq. Responsibility and accountability for reconstruction must be assigned to established agencies. The president must request a substantial increase in ground forces end strength. This increase is vital to sustaining the morale of the combat forces by ensuring that relief is on the way. The president must issue a personal call for young Americans to volunteer to fight.
- Failure in Iraq today will require far greater sacrifices tomorrow in far more desperate circumstances.
- Committing to victory will demonstrate America's strength to our friends and enemies.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much. We will begin the questioning with Mr. Berman of California. Before you begin, Mr. Berman, let me caution all of my colleagues that since I want to give an opportunity for every member to have his time, we are allocating 5 minutes to both the question and the answer. If you use up your time in the question, I will ask our witnesses to supply the answer in writing. Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Holbrooke has outlined an alternative proposal. I am not sure he believes that this administration is going to move to an alternative, and didn't assert that they were likely to. So I would like to focus my questions to you, Dr. Kagan, particularly your last sort of call for the Congress to give this some time to see if it can work.

The other side of that coin is a notion that if this doesn't work, if the funding comes, if the surge is allowed to play out, if sees and hold and rebuild is given the opportunity to work, that we will achieve some of the benchmarks that the President has referred to regarding a substantial reduction in sectarian violence, a political actions in Baghdad in terms of an oil law, in terms of the Iraqi militaries being utilized to bring peace and stability and not be part of the sectarian conflict, a variety of the other issues.

At that particular point what would your reaction be to a notion that essentially Congress take up your plea? We codify those benchmarks. We give time to see if those benchmarks can be achieved, but we create a process by expedited approval where we, if the President finds that those have been achieved and Congress disagrees that they haven't been achieved, we are allowed to offer without being buried in committee with votes certain guaranteed in both houses, resolutions of disapproval, the passage of which would have the effect of essentially tying the appropriations to the redeployment out of the non-Kurdish areas of Iraq with exceptions for protecting diplomatic missions, perhaps some training, and specific small-scale operations to deal with al-Qaeda bases and training camps.

In other words, something that has Congress assert its role in both funding and an oversight, accepting that this surge is going to take place, codifying the goals of that, because at some point the American people, yes, they want us to succeed, but if we can't succeed, they do want us to get out. And based on what has gone on

until now, the rather hapless performance and the conduct of this effort they are more and more skeptical about our changes of success.

Chairman LANTOS. Dr. Kagan, you have 2 minutes in which to answer.

Mr. KAGAN. Thank you. Congressman, I would certainly welcome Congress's statement that it was going to give this a chance, and I do agree that there will come a point where we will have to evaluate whether this strategy is working or not and whether the strategy has in fact succeeded or not. I don't actually think it will be very difficult to tell, frankly. I think that, you know, months after the surge is complete and we have conducted the clear-and-hold operations we will have a pretty good idea about where we are standing, and I don't think we are going to have to have a lot of debate, frankly, about whether it is working or not. I don't think it is going to be that finely balanced.

I do believe that it will work.

Mr. BERMAN. And if it doesn't?

Mr. KAGAN. And if it doesn't, then we are going to have to come up with another approach to dealing with the problem.

I am uncomfortable about two aspects of the proposal that you have laid out, which I am not familiar in that much detail, but if you are actually going to set a date on it, the problem is that war is not predictable, and I don't need to tell anyone sitting in this room that politics is not predictable. And so trying to set a specific time line for military and political success is, in my view, very problematic.

The other thing is that, although I am not trying to hold open the option to doubling down or double down and continuing to throw forces at this strategy if it doesn't work with the forces that we have, I do think that it will be very complicated to figure out what exactly is the right strategy for dealing with the consequences of failure, and I would encourage Congress not to prejudge that, because you can say now that what we will need to is maintain forces in Kurdistan and Baghdad and maybe special forces running around, but the situation at the time may require more than that.

So I think Congress absolutely does have the power and the right to rein in this war when it decides that the operation has not succeeded, but I think that it should give itself the flexibility to make recommendations that will be appropriate when the moment actually comes to make that decision.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Pence of Indiana.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the witnesses for their provocative testimony both before the committee today as well as in print. I availed myself of your written remarks, and listened intently from the side room to your comments today.

Ambassador Holbrooke, I hold you in the highest rest. I was particularly struck by your observation of your first appearance before this committee. I was at that point appearing before the senior class at Columbus North High School, which I know since my hair is grayer than yours is probably not a comfort to either one of us. But I admire your career. I admire your career, and frankly, I admire your candor today before the committee with regard to all

Americans want success in Iraq. I believe that to be true and said so myself, and your call for redeployment but still a redeployment in a responsible manner, your words, to avoid the chaotic end in Vietnam in 1975.

Let me ask you very specifically if I can. We might say the battle of Baghdad is underway. Troop surges beginning, and is having, it seems, some good effect in recent days. Let me ask you very specifically. I know you can comment on this.

Do you oppose efforts to eliminate or reduce funding to troops on the ground in Iraq? And could you answer that?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I do. I oppose it.

Mr. PENCE. Would you elaborate on that? Why?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I think that if the commander in chief has deployed the troops, the ultimate weapon of denying them the resources to carry out their mission only puts them in harms way, greater harms way. I would go further, Congressman, and thank you for reminding me how old I am, by the way, but not as old as our chairman. [Laughter.]

I would remind you that we cannot cut off the troop funding, but I must state in that context with the deepest anger that I can muster that I cannot understand how American troops have been sent to Iraq without adequate armor, up-armored Humvees, enough kevlar, and other matters. I know this is not the subject of the hearing, but not only should you not de-fund the troops, they should get more support, and the veterans should get more support. They have made the ultimate sacrifice. That is not what we are here for. I want to go to the other point that is in your question.

Professor Kagan, whom I greatly admire for his conviction and articulate commitment, has put forward a simple thesis—let General Petraeus try to succeed. Let me make clear that I don't believe he will succeed, but I would be delighted if I was wrong. If his success is possible, his success is for the Nation. He is a very smart commander, and I don't believe there is anyone in this room or any American, certainly no Member of Congress, who doesn't want Petraeus to succeed.

But when Congressman Berman a moment ago asked Dr. Kagan what to do if he doesn't succeed, Dr. Kagan said we have got to come up with a new plan. That is exactly the criticism that your side, as put to some of us. I was an original supporter of the resolution in September 2002, when four witnesses along with Kissinger, Colan Powell, Madelyn Albright, before the Foreign Relations Committees they heard that critical piece of legislation. I supported the legislation on the assumption there was weapons of mass destruction, that the President of the United States as commander in chief deserved our support, that Saddam was worse than Milosevic, one of the worst tyrants in modern times, but I never dreamed there wouldn't be a post-war plan, and I never dreamed there wouldn't be an adequate process.

Therefore, I think this time around we need an answer to the question Congressman Berman put to Professor Kagan, and all he said was we will know if it works. I would dispute that remark, Mr. Chairman, because I believe on the basis of 40 years of watching guerrilla wars that you will be having hearing in which some

people will say it is working, we will give it a B minus, let us give them more resources, and other will say it is failing, give them a D-minus, and I do not share—Fred, I simply don't share your optimism that you will know success when you see it. That is not the history of a hotly disputed war.

But more important, Congressman Berman's question. So again, I want Petreus to succeed. In a sense, the Nation has put all its eggs in David Petreus's basket, and he must succeed. It is for that reason that I say that the President either gave Petreus too many troops or too few. My instinct, and all of us are flying blind here, Mr. Congressman, my instinct is 21,000 is not the right number. I watched Robert McNamara make mistakes like this time and time again, and I am surprised that the Joint Chiefs accepted this enormous mission with such a finite number of troops. And I put to you finally, Mr. Chairman, what will happen if we are in this gray area in 6 months or 4 months, and things have gotten a little calmer because the enemy retreated in the face of the American presence, but we all know that withdrawal and turn over to the Iraqis won't work?

Fred talked about clear and hold. There is a third word here. It is clear, hold and turn over, and it is the turnover phase to the Iraqis that determines what happens if they come back and say to the President we want just a few more troops. What do we do then?

So, Mr. Chairman, I think what we are hearing here is an honest difference of opinion on where we are, where we are going, but the crisis is deep, very deep.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from New York, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much.

Why do 20,000 troops make a difference if they are going to be doing what 130,000 troops were already doing, or so we believe them to be doing? And how does this happen? And if it doesn't happen, then the question is going to be how many more troops make it work?

When I was a young State senator some 30 years ago, I called the police based on citizen complaints about a bunch of drug dealers hanging out on the corner, and they cleared them away, and I called up the captain, thanked him very much, and he says, don't thank me, I didn't fix the problem. I just moved it to a different corner. It is like a balloon.

And with terrorists, the answer is you are just going to move them to another corner unless for some reason you think 20,000 more troops in addition to the 130 are going to kill them all, and I don't think that there is any indication that that is the case.

As an old math teacher, I think the only thing that we are learning here is that if the yield of 130,000 troops is 3,100 dead Americans, that extrapolates from an additional 20,000 troops another 477 dead Americans. Is it then time to make a decision?

When my dear middle child, my son Corey was 4½ years old he decided he wanted to be a dinosaur when he grew up, and we love him, and we gave him all the encouragement we could give him. No matter how much encouragement we gave him we were a little bit skeptical. He later switched to wanting to be an allegator,

wound up as a lawyer, so I guess there was a pattern there. [Laughter.]

But the point is at one time no matter how nice your good, naive intentions might be when you decide that the plan is not attainable you have to come up with a different plan, and the plan isn't you should go to school for another 4 more years and study harder to be a dinosaur, some plans don't work out. Not every story has a happy ending. Not every life is filled with happiness and joy.

I think that we don't learn from those kinds of experiences and face realities and find a different kind of solution and a different kind of approach we wind up mucked down in the mire, we are mired down in the muck, anyway you want to have it.

I don't know how adding 20,000 troops fixes this problem. If it were 400,000 troops, I think a lot of people could say, well, maybe that can work and figure out things, but 20,000 troops is just going to cite the math that I have already put before you.

Dr. Kagan first.

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, I don't believe that I have ever been called a dinosaur before. I also wanted to be a dinosaur when I was young and that didn't work out so well for me.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. That I am not so sure of.

Mr. KAGAN. Thank you very much, Ambassador. I thought you were a diplomat. [Laughter.]

Congressman, to answer your question, the 130,000, and we have had as many as 160 some thousand troops in Iraq in the past, were not doing what the force in Iraq is now being called upon to do. They did not have it as their mission to provide security for the Iraqi people. They had it as their mission to train Iraqis and hand over responsibility.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Well, then let me ask this, Dr. Kagan, because our time is short, if they are not doing what has to be done, why don't we take 20,000 of the 130,000 and have them do what should be done with the new 20,000 and send 110,000 home?

Mr. KAGAN. Because when you look at the force requirements, we are actually accomplishing the mission of providing security, especially in Baghdad, and this was not a question of instinct or what we thought would work. We pulled together a team of experienced military planners with many years taken together of experience in Iraq, fighting situation, and we asked them given this mission, which is to try to establish security in the critical areas in Baghdad, what forces would be necessary. That is how we generated what our force——

Mr. ACKERMAN. So you are saying it is 150. It is not the 20 doing something new, it is 150.

Mr. KAGAN. All of the forces in Iraq are doing new things. This is not just a question of 20,000 establishing security and the others doing the same thing. This is a fundamental change in strategy.

Mr. ACKERMAN. And how is that working out?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, we haven't really begun yet, but so far, as I indicated in my opening remarks, the trend lines are positive, in fact, surprisingly so.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Well, not for a couple of funerals that I have been to recently.

Ambassador Holbrooke?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Well, I agree with your premise, and I wish to strike from the record my comment that Fred is a dinosaur.

You are expressing in more pithy terms my own concern, but above all we are embarked on what you might call the Petreus surge. We all want it to succeed. You and Congressman Berman have asked the key question. No one is arguing against it—well, you have expressed your view that it shouldn't have happened, but it is going to happen anyway, and we want it to succeed, and if we are wrong, great, but no one is addressing, while some people are charging us who have questioned it with not having a plan, the truth is that the people who are proposing it have no fallback plan, and I think your questions and those of Congressman Berman, and Congressmen Pence have highlighted that dilemma.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, and Mr. Ambassador, I certainly share your admiration for Chairman Lantos. Did I pronounce that right?

Chairman LANTOS. No, you didn't. It is Lantos.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Lantos, okay. [Laughter.]

Well, thank you very much for that and thanks for bringing that information to us.

And I appreciate both of your testimony today, but Mr. Ambassador, let me just note, and I agree that there has been some intimations by Republicans at times that is not justified and it is certainly not the right thing to do to suggest someone is not loyal in their criticism of our policies in Iraq, but disloyalty, I don't think, is what the description that concerned me.

What has concerned me has been not disloyalty but defeatism, and I will have to suggest that even in your testimony today there is a certain degree of defeatism. Your suggestion that basically if you look at what you were saying you are talking about a goal of avoiding a chaotic end.

I understand you were in Vietnam, and saw that debacle. I spent a little time there, and saw debacle as well, and I remember there were sectarian forces at play there too. If you remember, you had the Buddhists versus the Catholic undercurrent that was going on the entire war as well as the Vietnam QDD party, and the Kow Dai, and the rest of these sects that were around that were just part of that, and of course, this is magnified by ten in Iraq.

But that defeatism that I sense is not necessarily based on an in depth analysis as you possess, although I can see that the figure of the American troops and the refugees streaming to the Embassy roof top and taking off in the helicopter and the helicopter has been thrown off the aircraft carriers that have been emblazoned in your mind as well as in some of my colleagues' mind, I don't think we can let that image hamper us in doing what is necessary to create the kind of world that we need to create in order for America to be safe, and I think that has had a lot to do with this attitude of defeatism on the other side of this issue not just this last night, not just these few months, but since we got involved in the first place.

I remember right off the bat they were talking about a sandstorm, I remember during the sandstorm there was criticism, well,

aren't we getting bogged down already, and that was 5 days into the operation. Anyway, I think that attitude has a lot to do with it. Let me ask you some specifics.

I agree with you that there is a competency problem here. There was no plan, post-Saddam plan, and I would agree with my colleagues with their criticism of this administration, not on its goal, but on the competency that it has had in terms of actually administering this really important goal and project they set in motion.

When we are trying now to come to a way to manage the situation regionally, would you think that—wouldn't you think that it would be better for the President to call a summit of regional leaders and go there with them from Saudi Arabia, and from Qatar, and Kuwait, as well as Syria and Iran, and Turkey? Wouldn't that be better than just trying to open up a series of private negotiations with the various countries like Syria and Iran?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Thank you, Congressman.

Before I answer that question, please allow me a word on your use of the word "defeatism."

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I have served my country on and off for 45 years this year. I believe in the country. I don't believe we will ever be defeated in the sense that you mean. We have difficulties from time to time. Vietnam most notably, and now Iraq. Those are the bookends. Those will probably be the bookends of my own career.

But I have never been imprisoned by the Vietnam ghosts any more than you have. You were there. I was there. Some people were traumatized forever, but we have to learn from history, not be imprisoned by it.

In regard to the use of military force, I am quite willing to use it or threaten to use it when necessary, and as you know, did so repeatedly during the Clinton years when necessary in the Balkans over, I might add, the skepticism and opposition of two-thirds of the House which voted thee to one against what President Clinton did in Bosnia, and many people of both parties said force wouldn't work in the Balkans, and, as I said earlier, I supported the resolution in September 2002.

So I think the use of the word "defeatism" is exactly what I am trying to avoid. I have stressed in my comments here and in all the things I have written, as has Chairman Lantos, that what we are looking for is a solution that protects our vital national security interests. And again, if Petreus succeeds, I will be delighted. But the question has been asked by Congressman Berman and Congressman Ackerman what happens if they don't, and that has to be addressed.

Now, on your specific question, speaking just as a person who has practiced diplomatic arts, if President Bush were to ask my advice, which by the way he won't, I would not recommend he call for a regional summit conference. First of all, others wouldn't come, and it would just further weaken America's leadership role in the region and the world.

Secondly, summits should be carefully prepared. You don't just get on a boat like Woodrow Wilson did and spend 6 months in Paris and come up with a "solution," which 80 years later gives us

Yugoslavia and Iraq, Iraq came a couple of years later, but the seeds were set at Versailles. Summits must be prepared.

I am perfectly comfortable with the initial contacts at a lower level—who will represent the United States at this conference, what that person's instructions will be, and above all, will the Iranians be willing to engage our critical factors. But the proposition I want to put again to you today because it has been ignored in our discussion is this.

I don't believe, Congressman, that stability in Iraq is possible without the participation of the Iranians and the Syrians. This puts, and this is also true of Afghanistan vis-a-vis Iran, this puts the administration in a hellish difficult position. On one hand, Iran is the most destabilizing force in the region. On the other hand, their participation in the search for a solution in Iraq is unavoidable. How do you square that circle? That is why so many people, including Baker-Hamilton, recommended engaging Iran, but it has to be done with full understanding that they are not our friends, but there may be some common interests, and I think Fred Kagan suggested this. The Iranians may not want a full-scale civil war next door. But how do you deal with that factor?

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Sherman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If 2 years from now Iraq is peaceful and stable, and Iran has nuclear weapons, I think America will be far worse off from its national security perspective than we are today. Ironically, Bush will be far better off politically if that were to come to pass. All of America is focused on Iraq. The President grasps at straws to tell us why the future of Iraq is more than a modest importance to our own national security. The press is focused on Iraq because we are there. The President says we must be there because we are already there. He also tells us that if Iraq were to fall into hostile hands then terrorists would have a place to meet and discuss how to plot against us as if they have no place to meet today when bin Laden is in north Waziristan and of course the 9/11 hijackers met and plotted in an apartment in Hamburg, for example. I don't think we are ever going to deny the terrorist a conference room.

So I will ask our witnesses. Let us say we have this conference that the administration has agreed to, and Iran offers a truly enticing package of all-out help toward stability and peace in Iraq. The throw in Syria as well who says they will help too in every way we can think of and beyond what we thought of. All we have to do is acquiesce in Iran's nuclear program. Is that a good deal?

Mr. KAGAN. I don't think it is a good deal, and I would not propose accepting it. I agree with you that the danger of an Iranian nuclear weapon is great. I see Iran as pursuing hegemonic designs in the region. I am very concerned about where that is headed and I am very concerned about the Iranian nuclear program.

But the main reason why I would not want to take that deal is that I do not believe that the Iranians could deliver. Whatever they promised in Iraq, the Iranians do not control Sadr. They do not control Hakim. Still less do they control the fighters of the Ji Shal Makti. To a slightly greater degree, they have influence with the fighters of the Badr Corps, but the Iranian rite I do not believe ex-

tends to being able to order Shiia factions in Iraq to stop fighting as long as there continues to be a danger to the Shiia community.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Ambassador Holbrooke?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I suspect that is correct, but I want to underscore our dilemma. We don't actually know. Not even the greatest experts in American and Iran understand fully the relationship between the Shiites of Iraq and the Shiites of Iran. The Arab Persian difference is rather critical here as well, and I don't think we should base our policies therefore on thinking we can understand and micro manage these things which we will never understand fully.

The fact is that while we don't know the exact relationships between these people we do know that Hakim, the very man who called on the President in the oval office a few weeks ago, spent—I don't know—something like 20 years in Iran, and el Sadra may not like the Iranians, but Fred believes he is in Iran now, and whether he is or not he has certainly been getting supplies, including lethal things used against Americans from Iran. So let us not overanalyze the situation.

Mr. SHERMAN. Ambassador, if I could follow up. Why all this attention toward the need to talk to Syria in Iran when I put forward the question, what if they delivered everything we could possibly ask for, and both you and your fellow witness says that would have perhaps only a modest impact on what goes on in Iraq?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. No, that is not what I believe. I truly don't know where a dialogue with Iran would take us. I don't even know if the Iranians would agree to such a dialogue at this point, although there is a lot of evidence they wanted one right after the Bonn negotiations that led to the Karzi government with Iranian support, nor did Richard Nixon know what would happen when he went to China. He didn't know what he was setting out for, but once the door opened amazing things happened.

I see no down sides if you proceed carefully with the iranians on the issue of Iraq while making clear to them that we remain intensely concerned about Hamas, Hezbollah, and their nuclear program, and their support of terrorism.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Royce of California.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Holbrooke, I too want to express my appreciation for your service to this country. We had an opportunity to work on issues affecting the African crisis, but I think that your perseverance as special envoy during the Balkan's war will be recorded by history. Your effectiveness in that position was very, very impressive.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Thank you.

Mr. ROYCE. I wanted to ask you because you brought up the op-ed that you penned about a year ago on Afghanistan, and former Ambassador Peter Thompson, who you and I know.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Galbraith.

Mr. ROYCE. Pardon?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I am sorry.

Mr. ROYCE. Thompson.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Sorry. Peter Thompson. Oh, yes.

Mr. ROYCE. Peter Thompson.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I know him well.

Mr. ROYCE. And myself, as a matter of fact, have been arguing for several years now about the magnitude of the crisis and challenge with respect to Afghanistan, and especially since this last fall when we have seen something of a tripling of attacks across the border from the federally-administrated areas in western Pakistan.

It is clear to many, I think, that the non-aggression pact essentially that was formed, the security pact between the central government and that area has in some ways loosened Pakistan's initiative in controlling the movement of the Taliban on that border. So you have, one, all the governance issues, which you are familiar with in Afghanistan, and two, now you have basically large-scale attacks being mounted across the border.

One of the questions I was going to ask you specifically is given the last 25 years' history of Pakistani meddling, is there any reason to believe that Pakistan has an interest in a stable Afghanistan? And if that concern is valid, then what steps could we take to ratchet up the pressure on Islamabad to combat the Taliban using its territory to launch these attacks against the Karzi government?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Thank you very much. I recall our days in Africa, you and Congressman Payne, and others with—I won't say nostalgia, but great respect and you played a huge role in creating a positive bipartisan relationship with Africa, and I am delighted to see Congressman Payne here today, and you have now taken the African subcommittee again, and I think that all goes well for these issues.

On Pakistan, I have seen only a handful of issues in the time I have been involved in these affairs where the intelligence community and the general assessments were in greater dispute than on the issue of—to put it bluntly—is Musharraf doing everything he could. That is why Vice President Cheney was in Islamabad a few days ago. And I know President Musharraf personally, and I have talked to him about this. And you know, Congressman, I still don't know what is going on.

The best I have heard, perhaps Professor Kagan has a more informed view, the best I have been able to glean from talking to American diplomats and President Karzi, President Musharraf and others is that the Pakistan Government in Islamabad doesn't fully control the tribal areas, that Musharraf doesn't fully control his own people.

On the other hand, as you well know, there are many people who think this is all a charade, and that ethic considerations that cross that border because of the huge Pustian population transcend everything else. And here again, and this goes back to the last question which raised the issue of Iraq and Iran, I need to stress this. We will never know more than 2 percent of the data we need to know and yet we have to make decisions of the greatest importance to our national security.

So what is our national interest? Our national interest is that the Taliban and al-Qaeda are on that border and in Waziristan,

and now Balochistan is getting very restive, and that is a direct threat to our national security, even though it is one of the most remote spots on the face of the earth. So the administration is correct to now put more pressure on Musharraf as Vice President Cheney did the other day. They were not correct not to do this much earlier.

They should also deal with the Karzi side of the equation. Karzi blames it on Musharraf. Musharraf blames it on Karzi. Obviously, there is corruption and mess in Afghanistan. There are corrupt police chiefs in many of the provinces, corrupt provincial governors, and this combination is creating a kind of a mini-Afghanistan right on the border, an intolerable situation which gives rise directly to the strength of the Taliban. We must do something about this.

Several people, including Senator Clinton, have proposed a special envoy to negotiate that regional issue. I believe the administration has now begun to consider that favorably. They have one for Turkey Kurdistan, General Joe Ralston who is a superb envoy. They have one for Kosovo, Ambassador Wisner who is a terrific envoy. This strikes me, Mr. Chairman, as something that you may wish to spend more time on.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Ambassador Holbrooke.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Wexler.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Holbrooke, I think if we took nothing from this hearing except your very wise highlighting of the fact that 6,000 al-Qaeda remain in Iraq, and that at a minimum our position should be unified in eradicating that direct threat to the United States, I think we will have done our country a great service.

I would like to follow with a point I think Mr. Ackerman started with, and that is the Seemore Hearsh article in the *New Yorker* over the weekend which the essence is—it is a long, terrific article, but the essence of it, if I understand it correctly, is that there has been a dramatic new strategy or program that the administration is now implementing in concert with our Saudi allies and possibly others that we will now directly aid Sunni extremist groups with the hope that these Sunni extremist groups will counterbalance the growing influence of Hezbollah and other Shiite extremist groups even though the Sunni extremist groups are either directly connected to al-Qaeda or are indirectly connected to al-Qaeda at the same time back to your what I think is most pressing point, that 6,000 Sunni, al-Qaeda-related, Iraq insurgents have killed many, many American troops in Iraq.

So I am trying to make sense out of a policy which in some ways seems to resemble what has occurred in the past in the terms of Iran contra, because if this is true the administration is doing this, spending hordes of money probably doing it, and if I understand it correctly, this Congress has not been consulted, this Congress has not appropriated a single dollar in that regard, and this administration may as we sit here be engaging in overt operations, spending an enormous sum of American money supporting Sunni extremist groups in one country when those very same Sunni extremist groups next door threaten us and our troops directly.

Ambassador Holbrooke, Dr. Kagan, can you comment or do you care to comment on Mr. Hearsh's article, but more importantly, the premise of the policy?

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, I haven't gone into that article in a great deal of detail, and I am not familiar with what the administration is doing. What I would say is I find it extraordinarily unlikely that the administration is conducting any such policy, and I certainly agree entirely with you that it would be terrifically misguided for us to directly to fund Sunni extremists with the notion of arming them in some way to help fight Shiia extremists, and I certainly would hope that we are not doing that.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, gentlemen.

We are all dealing with having to make judgments based upon probabilities and it is a very difficult business, and I thank you for your insights.

Given the difficulties that we have experienced in Iraq and obviously we hold out hope for a stabilized future in the near term that leads to a stabilized long-term future. Given a possible scenario as you both have painted of a larger conflagration that engulfs the entire region, is it compelling other responsible members of the international community and the Arab world, the Egyptians, the Jordanians, the Saudis, in addition to them the Turks, to begin some conversations, and pursue potential outcomes using their leverage to control the forces of chaos that are either currently in Iraq or could spill over in other areas?

In your work, have you seen any movement in this regard because it is, frankly, a potentially positive outcome given the current difficulties?

Mr. KAGAN. I am glad that you asked the question, Congressman, and I think it is a very important issue, and I would like to start by saying—first of all, I would like to take exception to the notion that Ambassador Holbrooke has put out that we are at fault in some way for not laying out what will happen if this plan fails. We have laid out a plan to deal with the current crisis.

We can certainly talk about a variety of options for dealing with the complete catastrophe that will ensue if we actually fail there. They are all bad, and I think that is what emerges from the study that Ken Pollack has already done that shows there really aren't very many good options. I am happy to lay out a variety of options. What I am concerned about is the immediate situation and what happens if we fail right now.

It is certainly going to be necessary to persuade our Sunni Arab allies in the region to convince the Sunni Arabs in Iraq that they are not simply the tip of a spear behind which is the full weight of the Sunni Arab community because that sense can embolden them to continue an insurgency with the aim of regaining control of Iraq.

So the Sunni Arab states play an important role in the message that they send to the Sunni Arab community within Iraq, and we

definitely have to be engaging them, and I do think that we have begun to reach out to them in a variety of ways.

The trouble is that what we are not going to persuade them to do, in my view, is to stand aside while a Shiia government, if this were to occur, were to begin to conduct genocide operations against the Sunni Arab in Iraq, and the problem is that because we have not been focusing on providing security to the Iraqi population, and we have not been adequately defending the Sunni Arab, particularly in Baghdad, from Shiia attacks, that there is nervousness in the region about how this might escalate if we don't change what we are doing.

And what I am hearing a lot of back channel is that there is a lot of enthusiasm among our allies in the region for what we are trying to do in a sense, that we really have to get this under control. But I believe, I am really confident about this, that the only way that you are going to persuade the Sunni Arab states in the Middle East to make it clear to their Sunni Arab brethren in Iraq that they do not have support for continued insurgency is to make it simultaneously clear that they will be protected, that they will be safe, and we need to play a very important role in that process.

Chairman LANTOS. Ambassador Holbrooke.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Mr. Chairman, Fred's comment in response to your question, the first part, raises an apse critical point which transcends everything else, and I think kind of frames it.

I don't believe that the United States can stay in Iraq simply not to lose. That is a recipe for a stay which is unlimited in scope and duration. We must have a clear achievable goal. The President of the United States has stated what his goal is repeatedly—a democratic Iraq which can defend itself and sustain itself. That is a clear goal, but I believe it is one that will take much more resources and much more time than is available.

If the goal as set out by Dr. Kagan, which is a much more realistic goal than the one the administration has set forward, is not achieved, we must reevaluate. That I think is the core of it. So neither of us are defeatists. I am just trying to suggest that we have to be more realistic about where we are and prepare for more than one possible scenario going forward. That to me is prudent policy planning.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Before turning to my next colleague, let me just emphasize what a strong and important point you just made. Iraq is not the only arena of engagement for the United States, and while I certainly don't think a person of your sophistication, Dr. Kagan, would take such a position, as I listen to some spokesmen it seems that the rest of the world is ignored as if in fact the United States could engage its human and material resources ad infinitum in Iraq as if the rest of the world did not exist, and I believe at this stage our other responsibilities are among the most pressing arguments for moving toward an orderly redeployment of American forces.

The gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I will move to Mr. Meek's table here.

As a segue to the observation by Mr. Lantos, I think it is important, and I want to direct my question to Ambassador Holbrooke, I think it is very important to be precise in our language, and I

think we have failed to really define what our vital national interest is, and what are the real threats.

Recently, there was a hearing in the Senate, and a question was asked to the Director of Intelligence, Mr. McConnell, about the probability that al-Qaeda members in Pakistan or Iraq are organizing an attack on the United States. And he replied to this effect: That an attack would most likely emerge from Pakistan while he described Iraq as a "cause celebre for the Jihadists in creating forces."

I think what has happened is that we confuse, if you will, the threats to the United States with the war in Iraq. You know, we hear the numbers of 6,000 al-Qaeda members or affiliates currently in Iraq when obviously prior to the invasion it was my understanding that there was some 150 members of Ansar al-Islam in northern Iraq under the protection, ironically, of the no fly zone. We see al-Qaeda elements emerging all over Africa, elsewhere.

My own sense is that we have made a mistake in the confusion between the war on terror and our presence in Iraq. I would just like to get your comment, Mr. Holbrooke, but before I do I would like to make an observation.

I agree with you wholeheartedly that we can't predict and we don't know what the future is, and I found it interesting your exchange with Mr. Rohrabacher about Vietnam and the symbolism of that helicopter, and Vietnamese streaming toward the American Embassy at the end of the war, and it really provoked in my mind the image of some 30 years later President Bush in Vietnam signing a trade agreement with the Vietnamese, and I think it was a portrait, it might have been a bust in the background looming over his shoulder of Ho Chi Minh. So while we can gain, if you will, the expectations of our withdrawal, we really don't know. Ambassador Holbrooke.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I was struck by that picture too and the extraordinary irony of it. I am not sure exactly what you want me to address.

Mr. DELAHUNT. What I would like you to do is to define what you believe our national interests are in Iraq.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Our national interest in Iraq are to—I tried to address this in more detail in the prepared statement, much of which I didn't read. Our national interest in Iraq are al-Qaeda, a point we have already discussed. Maybe they weren't there before 9/11. They weren't there before 9/11, but we all agree that they are there now and we can't be fighting them in Afghanistan and ignore them in Iraq, and that is a very important point that I would urge this committee and all Members of Congress to keep in mind as they discuss these so-called dates for total withdrawal. It is a very complicated issue, made more complicated by domestic politics.

Number two, stability in Iraq. A civil war may not be avoidable, but if it isn't, then we must protect our vital interests in the region. They start for me with Turkey, our indispensable NATO ally and front-line stage; Israel, which has been put under greater danger by what has happened; dealing with the Iranians; dealing with the Saudis. Oil is a factor but I do not think American foreign policy should be determined by oil, and then Afghanistan, and then finally, Congressman, a larger point, America's image in the world,

particularly among the one billion Muslims in the world. That it suffered grievously in the last 5 years is self-evident. The administration does not appear to have a public diplomacy plan in hand that works. Here is another great issue for this committee to highlight and make suggestions on.

We need the kind of leadership that Edward R. Murrow provided during the Kennedy administration at the height of the cold war, an inspirational message that tells the world what we really stand for, and then a sophisticated delivery systems that take into account modern technologies and ancient cultures. None of that, Mr. Chairman, is in place today.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Before yielding to my friend from Arizona, I ask unanimous consent that the transcripts of the committee briefing and ties with Iraq held on January 17, and the committee briefing and ties with the Baker-Hamilton Commission report held on January 19 be made part of the record of this hearing.

[The information referred to precedes this hearing.]

Chairman LANTOS. I am delighted to yield to my friend from Arizona, Mr. Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank the chairman for yielding, and thank him for scheduling this hearing. Ambassador Holbrooke, I have also been a student of yours in school as well for awhile and admired your work.

You mentioned in your testimony the need to—well, this is what I have flushed out a little—be less involved in Iraq in order for dialogue with Iran and Syria to have any potential.

How far do you think we need to go in removing ourselves from Iraq or changing the composition of our forces there, or what needs to happen in order for those, and I share your view that we don't know where those negotiations or that dialogue might go, but I have long been in favor of that dialogue? But where will it have most effect?

Mr. HOLBROOKE. There may have been a slight misunderstanding, Congressman. I don't see a linkage between our force levels and a dialogue that involves Iran. We don't need to withdraw troops to have a discussion with the Iranians.

On the contrary, what I am trying to suggest and this is a very key point that Dr. Kagan and I are gently disagreeing on, since I—I said in my testimony that an ultimate American withdrawal from Iraq is a given. We are not going to stay there as we did in Vietnam for well over a decade. We don't have the resources, the commitment, the American support, and our military is stretched much too thin.

What I am suggesting is that our negotiating position will be stronger if we manage a redeployment, but I am not saying that that is linked directly to discussions with Iran. There is obviously an interconnection.

Mr. FLAKE. Good. Dr. Kagan, do you see any utility in moving forward with dialogue with Iran and Syria?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, I certainly have no objection to the administration's recent proposal to discussing the issue with them. As I said before, I am very skeptical about what they are actually capable of

delivering in Iraq, less in Afghanistan where Iran is playing a role but with a much larger role of being played by Pakistan.

So we can talk to them, but I am concerned that what they will demand, and this will remain to be seen, but what they will demand is the Iranians will want a pass on their nuclear program, which I don't think we should give them, and the Syrians will want a pass on controlling Lebanon, which I don't think we should give them, and I think we could make both of those deals and still not have a significant impact on the conflict in Iraq which I think right now being driven largely by internal dynamics.

So I am not opposed to talking with them, but I am very skeptical of the likely outcome of such negotiations based on what I perceive to be their interests.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Congressman Flake, I need to underscore because of what Fred just said a key point, and perhaps a difference.

There are some people in the government and outside the government who think that talking to your adversaries is in an of itself a sign of weakness, but I think the bulk of professional opinion is on the other side. But there is another point of view. It is what has constrained us with the Iranians for many years in addition to the Iranians own behavior.

There is a difference between state actors like Iran and non-state actors as well, and I want to stress that in talking to bad people does not in itself mean a concession or a sign of weakness, and President Reagan illustrated that most dramatically when he talked to the very people he called an evil empire. President Bush has made clear his view of the Iranians, a view I think most of us share.

But it is a serious and significant tactical disagreement here, and I am glad that this step was taken yesterday. Wherever it leads we can always terminate it at any time. We are the United States. We are not risking our national security by getting back in a room with the Iranians. We have done it before.

Mr. FLAKE. I agree with you, and I have argued for a long time we should take that further with countries like Cuba as well.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. The next witness this afternoon, I am obviously somewhat prejudiced here since he is a very close friend, is Exhibit A of the fact that you can talk to a member of the evil empire and come up with a step forward while protecting our national interests.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

I am particularly delighted to call on my colleague from Texas who is making his first appearance as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Congressman Green. We are delighted to have you, and you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask that my statement be placed into the record. I ask unanimous consent that my statement be placed in the record.

Chairman LANTOS. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Green follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE GENE GREEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. Chairman, let me first say it is an honor to join you on this committee, and for my first time sitting with the committee, we could not be addressing a more urgent issue.

While we may disagree on how to get there, at the end of the day every member of Congress wants to see a functioning and stable government in Iraq.

We know what countries like Iran and Syria want to see in Iraq, and the current situation in Iraq is exactly what they want to see.

So the Administration and Congress must assess how we can move forward, provide the conditions for a stable situation in Iraq and allow the Iraqis to take over their own country.

I don't think what remains to be done can be done militarily—we need to get the Iraqis and our allies on board to come up with solutions to power-sharing in the government, a fair division of Iraq's petroleum revenues and other problems driving a wedge between the different factions in Iraq.

Today's testimony should be insightful and beneficial, and we are fortunate to have Ambassador Holbrooke, who has experience resolving civil conflicts, to give his take on the situation in Iraq.

I want to thank Ambassador Holbrooke and Dr. Kagan for being here today and I look forward to their testimony.

Mr. GREEN. Ambassador Holbrooke and Dr. Kagan, most of my colleagues have asked questions, so I have got a couple of my own.

Ambassador, in your statement on page 2 where you, and I think this is so true but I want to read it:

“The United States is perceived in the rest of the Arab world, which is overwhelmingly Sunni, as backing the Shiites, thus increasing our problems with the very Arab nations we have traditionally been closest to. Yet there is no gratitude among Shiites, nor should we expect any. They want everything in Iraq, after having been the suppressed majority for over 400 years. What the United States unleashed, we can no longer control.”

I know there is some empowering we have to do both with the majority and with the minorities, the Sunnis and the Kurds, and I know, I have been keeping up basically just through the news media with one of the issues is the distribution of the oil resources, and I know there has been a bill that has passed through some of their—I don't know if it is finished—their Parliament. But if not their—

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Excuse me for interrupting. They have announced they have reached an agreement in the last 2 days. It has not been approved by the Parliament.

Mr. GREEN. From what you know of that legislation or that agreement, because that is one of the linchpins I think we need to do is to make sure that whether you are in an oil-producing area to keep the country together, the folks who may not have it need to have those resources guaranteed by Iraqi law. Do you think that is a starting point, a good starting point, because this is the first time—

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I am hesitant to talk about oil to a representative from Texas, but I will try to answer your question.

Mr. GREEN. We do a lot of oil.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. I was in Arabell in northern Iraq when the negotiations reached a breaking point 3 weeks ago, and they actually had broken off unsuccessfully. In the last few days they have reached an agreement. The details are highly technical. None of us

know all the details. But I would just be very brutal about it, again speaking simply as an American from our national security interest.

It doesn't matter to me what that oil agreement is. What matters to me is that it be acceptable to all three elements in Iraq, and the key factor here are the Kurds who when I was in Arabell was refusing to make the agreement, and I would draw your attention to one other very important point which nobody has focused on yet. It turns out that there is a lot of oil in the Sunni areas, and people have a pretty good idea where it is, but they can't develop it in conditions of insecurity. That may be a long-term factor which could ease the problem because up to now we have all believed that all the oil was in the Kurdish areas and the Shiite areas.

Having said that, I close again where I started. Whatever agreement is acceptable to the three factions, that it shares the revenue and helps keep the country together is fine with me.

Mr. GREEN. And I think that is something we ought to as a country encourage because if we can at least get them to talk to each other and share the resources they will know that one region won't be impoverished. And I have heard the same thing about the Sunni area, that there is great potential, but typically when you hear reported the production is in the Kurdish area, or the Shiia area, and not in the Sunni, but to have stability they could actually be.

Again, even from Texas, you know. Just so that oil gets in the world market I will be happy with that, and you know, you are going to have to come to Houston because we have the folks that can get that oil out of the ground wherever it is at, and be that as it may.

Dr. Kagan, I didn't want to leave you out because I enjoyed your testimony too.

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, if I could just respond——

Mr. GREEN. Please.

Mr. KAGAN [continuing]. Briefly to Ambassador Holbrooke's comments.

The issue of the Sunni oil is not just an issue of security. There are many places in the world where you have a lot of insecurity and you nevertheless have international investment, and you nevertheless have people working oil fields. The security is an important problem, and as I said, I think we have seen a lot of progress on that. But the oil law actually really is critical to that because I think we have been looking at the oil law as a way of bringing Iraq together and solving the sectarian differences, and I am not convinced, you know, what it is going to do for that.

Mr. GREEN. It is not the panacea.

Mr. KAGAN. Right. But what it will do is create the legal basis that is the absolute essential precondition for having foreign investment in Iraq, and one of the big problems we have seen so far is that because there has not been agreement about this, and specifically agreement about to what extent the regions in Iraq are empowered to make agreements and so forth, it has been a hostile climate for foreign investment.

Now, this isn't going to be a panacea in that regard either because there is a question of security as well, but I think from the

standpoint of developing that oil, actually getting this law through the Parliament really is very important.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

I am delighted to call on my friend from South Carolina, Mr. Inglis.

Mr. INGLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Kagan, Ambassador Holbrooke described what the American national security interest is now. How would you answer that question Mr. Delahunt asked earlier?

Mr. KAGAN. I think America has a number of vital national security interests that are tied up in Iraq. I think the fight against al-Qaeda is very high on the list, and again I want to reiterate, this is not just a problem of Anbar. This is a problem of all of Iraq. Wherever there are Sunni in Iraq there is the potential for this.

I have been a little bit puzzled, frankly, by part of this discussion because I am not sure why people are convinced that the al-Qaeda that are in Afghanistan and Pakistan are more dangerous to us than the al-Qaeda that are in Iraq. If you look at the history of the development of the Mujahadeen movement, you will see in the 1980s that the Mujahadeen were engaged very actively in fighting the Soviet Union, and they did not pose a threat largely to people who were outside of that particular conflict.

Once that threat ended you had a lot of trained Mujahadeen fighters who had been victorious who then spread out and created the—conquered Afghanistan ultimately, and created the preconditions for the al-Qaeda attacks on September 11. If we allow Iraq to collapse, then the likelihood that you will see a similar phenomenon. They may not take over Iraq, but they will be come dangerous beyond Iraq in a way that they are not at the moment because they are so engaged in finding what is right now looking for them like an increasingly losing battle. So I think it is very important not to underestimate the actual al-Qaeda danger.

I also find parenthetically a little bit odd this trade-off between the question of focus on Iraq and focus on al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda does not have large-scale training bases in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda has bases in Pakistan. Are we proposing to send troops into Pakistan? Is the problem that we want to invade Waziristan and Balochistan in order to deal with this?

I am a little bit puzzled about why these two things, which are rather different in terms of what we can do and what we should do, are being conflated.

But beyond the question of the global war on terror and beyond the danger that al-Qaeda in Iraq may pose down the road is the very imminent danger, in my view, of a full-scale regional war that will pit Sunni versus Shiia, that will destabilize the regimes that are Iraq's neighbors, and it is important to remember that with the exception of Jordan none of those regimes are homogeneous in terms of ethnicity or sect. Persians make up about 51 percent of Iran. There is a significant Baluchi minority which is already very restive. Saudi Arabia has a significant Shiia minority. Kuwait has a significant Shiia minority. The Shiia minority that is ruling Syria is 11 percent of the population.

All of the preconditions are there for an explosion of the region which will have devastating consequences because, again going

back to the Pollack and Byman report, what you see is that when you have these spin-off civil wars and they happen in many, many cases—the exception being the one in which Ambassador Holbrooke played such a critical role in the Balkans where we actually managed to get violence under control—when you don't do that then you have civil wars and the civil wars tend to spawn even more terrorist groups, and this is a common phenomenon. So I think those are vital interests that we have right now.

Mr. INGLIS. Speaking of this question of civil war, what percent of the trouble in Iraq right now do you think is an insurgency, and what percent is internal?

Mr. KAGAN. I think most of what we are seeing in Iraq is internal. I think we are seeing Sunni Arab insurgency that is continuing, but that is, frankly, losing force. We are having continued attacks by al-Qaeda on United States targets, also on Shiia targets in an effort to stoke the civil war, and increasingly on Sunni Arab targets because the Sunni Arab's leadership in Anbar has turned against them.

So you have a lot of civil war going on. The Sunni Arab insurgency is a part of that. But I believe that the process is very largely internal to Iraq right now in terms of where it is drawing its support and what is driving it.

Mr. INGLIS. And if it is internal, why not focus on the political causes? In other words, why not put them on a schedule like we had them on for elections, for the adoption of an oil law, for the fixing of the Ba'ath problem and announce that publicly?

Mr. KAGAN. Well, the problem is we have been trying all along to find a political solution to this problem, and the difficulty is that if the population doesn't have a basic level of security, where people don't have to worry in the morning if they are going to live to see the end of the day, then trying to get political processes to solve that is very unlikely to be successful. It is very important to establish security first as a precondition, and then to move forward with this political process.

I am astonished at the degree of successes we are already seeing in the political process given that we have not yet established security. But I believe that as we establish security our leverage to press them to find political solutions will increase dramatically.

Mr. INGLIS. But can you—

Chairman LANTOS. I am sorry. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I was here, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I was here.

Chairman LANTOS. Yes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the chairman very much, and the witnesses.

Let me indicate my belief that Iraq is worse than Vietnam, but I think the lesson that comes from Vietnam really is that a leaving did not generate a collapse of the values and the existence of America or its foreign policy.

I think another example is the 20 years that Russia spent in Afghanistan left, certainly unsuccessfully, but there is no documentation that would suggest their staying would have accomplished their goals.

I also associate myself with the remarks of Chairman Lantos, and hope that some voices are listening in Iran to issue our chairman a visa, but also the recognition of Members of Congress who might be vital in their opportunities for visits to Iran as well. So I would like to pointedly ask Ambassador Holbrooke and Dr. Kagan thank you very much for your testimony as well.

I have a bill that combines the recognition that the military I believe has already accomplished victory. It is called the Military Success Act of 2007, and the surge or plus-up diplomacy of 2007, capturing the Baker diplomacy aspects as part of it.

I believe that the war should end. I believe the troops should be redeployed. I have given them time up until October 2007. I actually put a time in, but I also respect, if you will, staged redeployment, because I think the security comes from not allowing our troops to be the lightening rod, if you will, for antagonism, and I don't believe that we must continue to be the scapegoats of violence for those who want to use us as a target.

So let me pose this question, Ambassador, and I will also raise another point of success in the Bush administration that might be a study for how you could collaborate and use foreign policy or diplomacy to actually solve problems in Iraq.

There is this constant threat that redeployment generates collapse and the constant refrain of the administration, they will fight us there or fight us here, so we are the baby-sitters of al-Qaeda. I think there are many other places where we can fight al-Qaeda, the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan, in Afghanistan where the real war on terror is.

How do you respond to that as opposed to a real plus-up of diplomacy which would include what we have begun? And I applaud Secretary Rice, Iran and Syria, some of us have been crying in the darkness for so long for that kind of engagement. We see what happened in North Korea.

Then, too, the success story of PEPFAR, the AIDS effort, isn't that a good example of how you could use diplomacy—certainly an odd example in this hearing—but how you could use diplomacy and sort of be the Pied Piper and bring other countries along? We failed in Iraq so badly, which really brings us to where we are today.

I welcome your thoughts, but I must finish by saying bring the troops home now. I really believe that Vietnam is a lesson of that. We didn't lose statute, we didn't lose position. In fact, we are now engaged in both South Vietnam and North Vietnam.

Chairman LANTOS. You gentlemen have a combined total of 55 seconds to answer the lady, so Ambassador Holbrooke.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Since the time is very short, Congresswoman Jackson Lee, and you and I have worked many years on the AIDS problem, let me just address that.

PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief, is, in my view, the most successful foreign policy program of this administration. As president and chief executive officer of the Global Business Coalition Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which is something I spend a lot of time on, we have strongly worked with the White House, with Mrs. Bush, we have worked with this committee under its previous chairman and with the Senate side to get the appropriations.

I know many of you in this room are ambivalent about certain aspects of this, abstinence versus condoms and all these issues, but the fact is that President Bush showed worldwide leadership on this issue, pushed other countries to do something, and the result was, and I have seen this personally, lives saved. On World's AIDS Day, I was in western Kenya, in fact, in the home area of Senator Obala on World's AIDS Day, and I saw people whose lives have been extended by American drugs delivered directly through PEPFAR.

I asked them, incidentally, where the drugs came from. You will be amused at the answer. Walter Reed. I said, well, because the drug said on them Walter Reed Hospital. I said, no, it is the American people, the handclasp is missing, and that goes, Mr. Chairman, to the earlier point.

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, who I have worked with a great deal on this issue, has talked about the success of diplomacy. We have talked about the failure of public diplomacy. We are not getting enough credit for the \$2.5 billion that on a bipartisan basis this House appropriates for this program because if the people think it is Walter Reed, no, it is the United States.

So this was a bipartisan effort. I wish there were more of them, and thank you for the opportunity to raise this issue.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

I would like to call on my friend from Georgia, Congressman Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to get right to this.

I just returned from an excellent trip abroad with the NATA Parliamentary Assembly, which I am a voting member, and from that trip I want to get three responses to. One of those stops was at Landstuhl Air Base Hospital in Germany where I went in and had one of the most extraordinary experiences of our trip. That is to visit these soldiers.

I believe in this whole debate. We often forget about the soldiers, almost like we are playing some game here. These are lives and deaths of soldiers. There is an extraordinary threat to our national interest, I believe, in the over-strain we are placing on our military, and particularly these soldiers.

Two questions came to mind and I want to put to you. I asked, and he said he doesn't believe democracy is going to work here from their experience, and I want to ask each of you do you think that democracy can work in this region, especially when we are fighting a situation that has been going on since Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Ishmail, and Esau, and Muhammad and all of this? And how can we make that work?

The other point is to address the concerns of these soldiers in terms of one said, a soldier, his fellow soldier didn't even have body armor on. He talked about a Frag Humvee that is not undergirded.

My whole question here is where is the concern for the military, and are not we over-straining? And then can democracy work?

But the other part of my question I wanted to ask is the concern that we are losing strength of our allies because of our association in Iraq and the damage it is having to our NATO efforts especially in Afghanistan? I particularly have reference to Italy, that while

we are over there their government came apart on two issues. One was an air base up in the northern part of Italy that we are opposed to, and they want to get their involvement of Afghanistan because they see it associated with Iraq.

I know I have touched a lot there but I wish you could respond with candor you feel democracy can work. When are we going to respond to our soldiers and give them what they want, and the strain that this operation in Iraq is placing upon our allies and wanting them to pull out of Afghanistan, especially Britain, Italy, and France?

Mr. KAGAN. Congressman, I would like to begin by addressing your second question. I will address the others. But I am terribly concerned about our military. I spent 10 years teaching at West Point, and I have got something like 1,000 former cadets who are serving in these forces, many of them close friends, many of them now deployed, and my best friends come from that time. Many of them are over in Iraq right now. I am deeply concerned about our soldiers.

I am very concerned about an issue which is similar to the one that Ambassador Holbrooke has raised on a number of occasions, although I disagree with him about how it would play out. What I am concerned about is that if we withdraw right now we will inflict a searing defeat on our soldiers because we have seen this before as we have pulled out prematurely of many areas in Iraq. The people, the local people that our soldiers have come to know who have trusted our soldiers to be there to help them will be rounded up by the enemy, tortured and killed. This happens repeatedly. I am very, very concerned about what the effects will be on our army of watching that.

We speak about our image in the world. I can assure you that there will be images endlessly repeated on Al Jazeera of atrocities being committed by Iraqi police and other elements in Iraq with our forces stacking arms in the background preparing to leave, and it will be a disastrous defeat for us in the eyes of public opinion, and I am very concerned about that as well.

To the question is democracy in Iraq possible, we frequently hear that Iraq is a country with no democratic tradition and therefore democracy is unlikely. I would put it to this committee that with the exception of our own there have been virtually no states in the world that have become democracies that did not previously have no democratic tradition. This happens commonly. This is how almost all democracies come into being is in places that don't have a democratic tradition.

What the Iraqis need in the first instance is the peace that is essential for democracy to flourish. I believe that we can provide that peace. I recognize that there is disagreement about whether or not we can succeed in that, but I am absolutely confident that if we don't provide that peace then there is no prospect for democracy, stability or peace in the region.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

I will now have to tell my colleagues—we have two more colleagues who have questions. Delighted to call on my friend from California, Ambassador Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I remember the President standing on a battleship saying, "Mission accomplished," so I am confused about what it is that we supposedly accomplished several years ago, and we have had more American personnel killed since then.

We don't appear to know who our enemy is, that we are fighting ghosts. We are using conventional warfare and they are using IEDs. Our vision is clouded by the sand that our heads are found in. We are looking at a culture that we don't quite understand. The Sunnis and the Shiites are warring. And so I think that our intelligence has been quite faulty.

So Dr. Kagan, do you believe that we have adequate intelligent resources on the ground in Iraq to enable our troops to tell the difference between Sunni insurgents, Shiite death squads, and the Iraqi civilian population? If so, why haven't they been able to stem the tide of sectarian warfare in Iraq? And if not, how can we expect pouring troops into Baghdad to pacify warring groups in the Iraqi capital when they don't wear uniforms, we do, and we can't identify who they are? So can you respond, please?

Mr. KAGAN. I would be happy to. It is a very good question and the answer is that the best sources of information that we have in Iraq are our soldiers on the ground interacting with the population. One of the problems that we faced is that they have spent 3 years largely confined to forward operating bases with the mission of training Iraqi forces, transitioning and trying to stay out of contact with local Iraqi people.

What I have heard over and over again from soldiers at every level of command is that when they move out into the population, when they co-locate with Iraqi units in small groups, as they are doing now in this plan which is a new departure for us, we have not tried this on a large scale in Iraq before, when they actually work to provide security to the population, then they begin to receive a tremendous amount of intelligence from the population.

In fact, the people that I have spoken to who have been over there engaged in this say you start to get useful information about 2 weeks after you begin to establish yourself in the neighborhood, and about in a month you start to get tremendously valuable intelligence, and our soldiers on the ground are capable of distinguishing between insurgents and innocent people when they are in a neighborhood long enough to understand who belongs there and who doesn't.

So we really have a misunderstanding, I think, of what the nature of the intelligence problem is. We do have also sorts of difficulties within intelligence agencies and don't get me wrong. There is all kinds of problems with our intelligence. But when you talk about the intelligence to know how to conduct ourselves in this fight.

And I would like to take exception to the notion that we are fighting IEDs with conventional tactics either. We most certainly are not. We are fighting IEDs with counter-insurgency tactics that have long tradition, and that are based very heavily, especially in this strategy, on exactly an evaluation of what has worked in previous counter-insurgency operations and avoiding what has failed.

But the single most important intelligence asset that we have is the American soldier embedded with Iraqis, within the Iraqi popu-

lation building trust relationships so that the Iraqis will provide the intelligence that we need to conduct our operations.

That is why I believe that increasing not only the number of troops in Baghdad but also getting the troops that have already been there off the forward operating basis and into the city will actually increase their security. The most dangerous thing that an American soldier can do is get into a Humvee on a fob, drive into an area that he doesn't know very well, drive around for awhile patrolling where he has no local contacts and no real reference for understanding who is on what side, and where he hasn't laid the groundwork so he doesn't know where the IEDs are and so forth, and then try to return to base.

Ms. WATSON. Okay, our time is just about running out but I just want to say this. I am confused by the President saying mission accomplished. Now, we are escalating this war. I am confused that you tell us that we can do something about the IEDs when our troops are getting killed and maimed every day because of not only the IEDs but the suicide bombers, and I am confused that we think we can solve the problem between two warring factions, and these problems go back to biblical times, 6,000 to 7,000 years.

I am confused to think that sending more troops in who don't know the language and don't really understand, and we are not training them to do guerilla warfare, we are training them conventionally, that we can be optimistic about success. I don't think we find success in 20 years.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. I know it has been a long hearing and many of us pop in and out, so I appreciate having an opportunity just to, first of all, commend both of you for your excellent testimony, and I have to say that I was one that did not support, giving the President the preempt to strike authority. I thought that there was still opportunity, I wasn't sure whether there were weapons of mass destruction.

However, I recall that Saddam Hussein finally, even though he violated U.N. resolutions throughout his time, he did finally say that the U.N. had the right to go anywhere they wanted to go, and I think that that was the point that he finally admitted that his game was over, because, as we found, there were no weapons of mass destruction. He had done a great bluff game. He had confused our intelligence people.

I think that the biggest mistake was that our President did not, did not take that opportunity and ordered Hans Blix and the inspectors out in 48 hours, and then the preemptive strike began, and for that I think we have made a terrible mistake.

I totally support the Afghanistan and if our resources were deployed there, by now we would have at least finally done away with al-Qaeda as we know it. Difficult to rein, but if we put the resources into that, we had all of the support of the entire world. Countries were calling us. They sympathized with us. We were attached. None of them, practically none of them felt that to have innocent people just killed in our World Trade Center and in the

Pentagon and so forth, that that was a dastardly, cowardly act, and we had all of that going, which we have blown now.

The whole manner of warfare is changing so drastically that you just have one person who can take out 40 or 50 people and with the religious fervor that some of them have we are going to continually have these suicide bombings.

When I was in Afghanistan 2 years ago, they were proud of the fact that they said we don't do suicide bombing. That is not our thing. That is some foreign thing. And now it has gotten there and these people are trained, and they are doing the same thing in Afghanistan that was happening in other places. So our might becomes equalized by these dastardly acts.

So I don't know how you win a war like that. I mean, Korea was—we just talked about Vietnam withdrawing. Well, Korea was also, the line was drawn, and I think there is overwhelming superiority that we have in these megaweapons and these \$6 billion to \$7 billion aircraft carriers are equalized by some 500 guys willing, waiting in line to blow themselves up.

So I wonder, you know, my good friend Ambassador Holbrooke who I agree probably one of the most dignified diplomats that I have know. You know, you just put him in a place and he comes up with solutions. Usually people are experts in one area. He is just an expert in the whole world. You know, give me the country, and I will give you the answer. And so I have a lot of admiration for him.

But you know, when he says that—Ambassador, that you feel we should almost stay the course, you don't want to defund our troops, nor do we, and your question was right. You said is 20,000, you think it is either too many or too much. Of course, no one knows. And I missed most of the discussion, but what would you advise at this point when it is a civil war?

They are in a college one day blowing up people. They are in a marketplace the next day. They go into mosque the next day. They are in another city the day after that. Now they have got some new chlorine they are trying out. I mean, every day it is some other Draconian type of situation. How do our men and women stay in the middle of that when they almost have nothing to do with what is going on?

Chairman LANTOS. Ambassador Holbrooke, you have 25 seconds in which to answer.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Twenty-two according to this clock.

Congressmen Payne, we discussed this at great length. I want to stress, I don't think we ought to defund the troops. I think that is not right to the troops themselves. I think, in fact, we ought to give them the armor and so on they need.

Secondly, there appear to be 6,000 or so al-Qaeda, mainly in the west. If we are going to fight them in Afghanistan, and I know you support that effort, we also have to deal with them in western Iraq.

Where Dr. Kagan and I differ is over the possibility, probability, chances of success in Baghdad itself. When you were out of the room I said that I hope General Petraeus succeeds, but I am more skeptical by a large amount than Dr. Kagan is, and therefore I think we need to look at the possibility—indeed, I would advocate

it—of redeploying troops to deal with al-Qaeda and deal with Afghanistan, and disengage from the civil war.

It is a risky strategy but I don't think the current one will succeed. I am willing to give it a try because we have no choice. The President has deployed the troops. They are on their way. He can do that under his authority, but we should be prepared for alternatives if it fails.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Finally, I am happy to yield the microphone to my friend from New York, Congressman Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and it is great to see you again, Ambassador Holbrooke and Dr. Kagan.

Since I am the last questioner and a lot has been asked about Iraq, I am not going to go into the specifics, but one of the things, Ambassador Holbrooke, you obviously have been, you were right there at the Dayton Accords. They wouldn't have happened without you. One of the things that has been said falsely about the United States is that we somehow are anti-Islam; that we somehow don't—instead of being the protector of all nations, we somehow take our foreign policy and we turn against Islam.

That is, of course, a lie. Nothing can be further from the truth. You know better than most how we helped Muslims in Bosnia, how we salved Kuwait from being swallowed up by Saddam Hussein. In Albania, of which you and I have worked closely together, there is no more pro-American country than Albania, a Muslim country. And we are now debating independence for Kosovo, a mostly Muslim country.

I am wondering if you could just give us your thoughts about Marti Ahtissari's plan for Kosovo, and debunk, along with me, this absurd notion that somehow the United States is hostile to Islamic majority country.

Mr. HOLBROOKE. Thank you for the opportunity to address Kosovo.

Briefly, I pay tribute to your personal efforts and those of Chairman Lantos on this issue. I like Marti Ahtissari's plan given where we are. The fact is in the first term of this administration they should have dealt with the problem when Ginchich was alive. It would have been much easier to when Solonovich was foreign minister. He was from Pech. Something could have been done. It is much tougher now.

Having said that, let us get on with it. The Etisari Plan is a clear guide path to independence even if the "I" word is not in his report. It needs to be embedded in a Security Council resolution. The Bush administration has appointed a brilliant American envoy whom I know you know, and I know that the chairman knows, Frank Wisner, on a pro bono basis to support that. He has just been in Moscow. I believe this is a key issue in United States-Russian relations.

I want to be clear on this. The Russians have said at the Putin level they will not support something that the Serbs oppose in Belgrade. If that means they will veto the Security Council resolution, which will come to a vote in either March or April, if they Russians veto it, the Russians will unleash upon all of us in the middle of

Europe another high-risk situation which could lead to a renewal of ethnic tensions in an area where we don't need it.

I know that Ambassador Wisner has made this point, as has Marti Ahtisaari to the Russians. I hope that the Secretary of State and the President are also making this point because this last question, Mr. Chairman, may turn out to be the first question of another hearing if the Russians act to veto this resolution.

As for the Albanians, your friends, you probably are widely regarded as Albania's best friend in the House, they must agree to protect the minority rights, and you can play a big role in this Congressman Engel. And as for Belgrade, they have to choose between the future which lies toward Brussels and the past with lives in the deep myths and legends of things that did or did not happen in the year 1389. This is a big issue and I thank you for giving me an opportunity to comment on it.

One last point in the 46 seconds remaining. Bosnia, this administration has been not aggressive enough in implementing a successful outcome in Bosnia, and now the United States, the Europeans and the Russians are all diverging on how to extend the office of the high representative. The U.S. has lost a lot of leverage by withdrawing all its troops prematurely. We should have left some.

Having said that, I think we need to focus again on Bosnia to make sure that the current forces to not disintegrate what has been 11 years of peace and American commitment without a single American troop in either Bosnia or Kosovo killed or wounded in over a decade because we went in heavy, unlike Iraq, and we enforced it by shooting first and asking questions later.

Thank you, Congressman.

Chairman LANTOS. Well, I want to thank our two witnesses on behalf of all of my colleagues for an extraordinarily valuable and educational and significant hearing. I want to thank my colleagues.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:40 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

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

JANUARY 17, 2007

I thank the Mr. Chairman for yielding. More importantly, I thank Chairman Lantos and Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen for holding this hearing. Welcome Secretary Albright. Your service to our country as Ambassador to the United Nations and as Secretary of State in the Clinton Administration was historic and is much appreciated and respected by every member of this committee and all Americans who understand how important it is for the United States to use its superpower status and its enormous assets—diplomatic, economic, political, military, and moral—in the cause of global leadership for peace, justice, and security. I look forward to your testimony and having the opportunity to probe your views in depth. Thank you again for being here.

Mr. Chairman, there is no more important subject on the nation's agenda today than the situation in Iraq. While I am new to this Committee, like all of us—and all Americans—I am not new to the issue of what to do about Iraq. Like you, Mr. Chairman, most members of Congress have been grappling with this question since before October 2002, when the Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF) was approved by the Congress.

Mr. Chairman, this past Monday we celebrated for the 21st time the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. That is, of course, fitting and proper given all that Dr. King did to bring about equality and understanding here in this country and around the world. But it also well to remember during these difficult days when the United States is bogged down in the misguided and mismanaged war in Iraq, which has claimed the lives of too many of our brave young service men and women, that the Dr. King was, above all, a person who was always willing to speak truth to power. There is perhaps no better example of Dr. King's moral integrity and consistency than his criticism of the Vietnam War being waged by the Johnson Administration, an administration that was otherwise a friend and champion of civil and human rights.

Speaking at the historic Riverside Church in New York City on April 4, 1967, Dr. King stated:

I am as deeply concerned about our own troops there as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting them to in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where armies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved. Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy, and the secure, while we create a hell for the poor.

Somehow this madness must cease. We must stop now. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam. . . . I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as one who loves America, to the leaders of our own nation: The great initiative in this war is ours; the initiative to stop it must be ours.

Mr. Chairman, these words were spoken by Dr. King one year to the day before his death. Thus it is that nearly 40 years after his death, Dr. King continues to teach us all.

Forty years later, the United States finds itself again bogged down in another misguided, mismanaged, and unpopular war. And once again, it is time to speak truth to power. Although I am proud to have been one of the 126 Democrats in the House who voted against the October 2002 Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF) in Iraq, I remain saddened that our voices and votes were not powerful or persuasive enough to steer our country away from the iceberg that is the Iraq War. Given the loss of the more than 3,000 brave servicemen and women, the 23,000 American casualties, the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis killed and wounded, and the nearly \$400 billion of taxpayer dollars expended on this misadventure, it is small consolation to know, as the Washington Post finally recognized in an article by Walter Pincus published December 4, 2006, the 126 House Democrats who spoke out and voted against the Iraq War resolution have turned out to be correct in their warnings about the problems a war would create.

We Democrats spoke truth to power. We predicted before the war that “the outcome after the conflict is actually going to be the hardest part, and it is far less certain.” We made the point that it was essential for the Administration to develop “a plan for rebuilding of the Iraqi government and society, if the worst comes to pass and armed conflict is necessary.” As my colleague, Mr. Skelton, now the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee wrote to President Bush, “I have no doubt that our military would decisively defeat Iraq’s forces and remove Saddam. But like the proverbial dog chasing the car down the road, we must consider what we would do after we caught it.”

We warned of the “postwar challenges,” particularly the fact that “there is no history of democratic government in Iraq,” that its “economy and infrastructure is in ruins after years of war and sanctions” and that rebuilding would take “a great deal of money.” We warned against sending American soldiers to war in Iraq without adequate protection against biological weapons.

Mr. Chairman, I am also reminded how General Eric Shinseki told the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2003 that the Defense Department’s estimate of troops needed for occupying Iraq is too low and that several hundred thousand soldiers would be needed. Then Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, appearing before Congress two days later, testified that Gen. Shinseki’s estimate was “wildly off the mark” and that it is “hard to conceive that it would take more forces to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq than it would take to conduct the war itself and to secure the surrender of Saddam’s security forces and his Army. Hard to imagine.”

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld named Gen. Shinseki’s successor one year before the end of his term, making him a lame duck and an example to the rest of the military. Three months after Gen. Shinseki’s comments, former Army secretary Thomas White admitted he was right. Dr. King would applaud the general’s courage.

Mr. Chairman, to date, the war in Iraq has claimed the lives of 3,020 brave servicemen and women (115 in December and 20 in the first 14 days of this month). More than 22,000 Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries. American taxpayers have paid nearly \$400 billion to sustain this misadventure. The war is also exacting a terrible toll on the Iraqi people as well. Conservative estimates place the number of dead and wounded in the hundreds of thousands. The latest tragedy, yesterday’s bombing of a university in Baghdad took the lives of more than 70 innocent persons. All told, more than 108 Iraqis were killed yesterday in Baghdad.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly opposed the proposal announced by President Bush last week. It is clear that President Bush has not offered a new strategy for success in Iraq, just an increase in force levels of 20,000 American troops. The president’s proposal will not provide lasting security for Iraqis. It is not what the American people have asked for, nor what the American military needs. It will impose excessive and unwarranted burdens on military personnel and their families.

Mr. Chairman, the architects of the fiasco in Iraq would have us believe that “surging” at least 20,000 more soldiers into Baghdad and nearby Anbar province is a change in military strategy that America must embrace or face future terrorist attacks on American soil. Nothing could be further from the truth, as we learned last year when the “surge” idea first surfaced among neoconservatives.

Mr. Chairman, the troop surge the President announced is not new and, judging from history, will not work. It will only succeed in putting more American troops in harm’s way for no good reason and without any strategic advantage. The armed forces of the United States are not to be used to respond to 911 calls from governments like Iraq’s that have done all they can to take responsibility for the security of their country and safety of their own people. The United States cannot do for Iraq what Iraqis are not willing to do for themselves.

Troop surges have been tried several times in the past. The success of these surges has, to put it charitably, been underwhelming. Let's briefly review the record:

1. Operation Together Forward, (June–October 2006):

In June the Bush administration announced a new plan for securing Baghdad by increasing the presence of Iraqi Security Forces. That plan failed, so in July the White House announced that additional American troops would be sent into Baghdad. By October, a U.S. military spokesman, Gen. William Caldwell, acknowledged that the operation and troop increase was a failure and had “not met our overall expectations of sustaining a reduction in the levels of violence.” [CNN, 12/19/06. Washington Post, 7/26/06. Brookings Institution, 12/21/06.]

2. Elections and Constitutional Referendum (September–December 2005):

In the fall of 2005 the Bush administration increased troop levels by 22,000, making a total of 160,000 American troops in Iraq around the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections. While the elections went off without major violence these escalations had little long-term impact on quelling sectarian violence or attacks on American troops. [Brookings Institution, 12/21/06. www.icasualties.org]

3. Constitutional Elections and Fallujah (November 2004–March 2005):

As part of an effort to improve counterinsurgency operations after the Fallujah offensive in November 2004 and to increase security before the January 2005 constitutional elections U.S. forces were increased by 12,000 to 150,000. Again there was no long-term security impact. [Brookings Institution, 12/21/06. New York Times, 12/2/04.]

4. Massive Troop Rotations (December 2003–April 2004):

As part of a massive rotation of 250,000 troops in the winter and spring of 2004, troop levels in Iraq were raised from 122,000 to 137,000. Yet, the increase did nothing to prevent Muqtada al-Sadr's Najaf uprising and April of 2004 was the second deadliest month for American forces. [Brookings, 12/21/06; www.icasualties.org. USA Today, 3/4/04]

Mr. Chairman, stemming the chaos in Iraq, however, requires more than opposition to military escalation. It requires us to make hard choices. Our domestic national security, in fact, rests on redeploying our military forces from Iraq in order to build a more secure Middle East and continue to fight against global terrorist networks elsewhere in the world. Strategic redeployment of our armed forces in order to rebuild our nation's fighting capabilities and renew our critical fight in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al-Qaeda is not just an alternative strategy. It's a strategic imperative.

Mr. Chairman, it is past time for a NEW DIRECTION that can lead to success in Iraq. We cannot wait any longer. Too many Americans and Iraqis are dying who could otherwise be saved.

I believe the time has come to debate, adopt, and implement a plan of strategic redeployment. I am not talking about “immediate withdrawal,” “cutting and running,” or surrendering to terrorists, as the architects of the failed Administration Iraq policy like to claim. And I certainly am not talking about staying in Iraq forever or the foreseeable future.

I am talking about a strategic redeployment of troops that:

- Reduces U.S. troops in Iraq to less 60,000 within six months, and to zero by the end of 2007, while redeploying troops to Afghanistan, Kuwait, and the Persian Gulf.
- Engages in diplomacy to resolve the conflict within Iraq by convening a Geneva Peace Conference modeled on the Dayton Accords.
- Establishes a Gulf Security initiative to deal with the aftermath of U.S. redeployment from Iraq and the growing nuclear capabilities of Iran.
- Puts Iraq's reconstruction back on track with targeted international funds.
- Counters extremist Islamic ideology around the globe through long-term efforts to support the creation of democratic institutions and press freedoms.

As the Center for American Progress documents in its last quarterly report (October 24, 2006), the benefits of strategic redeployment are significant:

- Restore the strength of U.S. ground troops.
- Exercise a strategic shift to meet global threats from Islamic extremists.
- Prevent U.S. troops from being caught in the middle of a civil war in Iraq.
- Avert mass sectarian and ethnic cleansing in Iraq.

- Provide time for Iraq's elected leaders to strike a power-sharing agreement.
- Empower Iraq's security forces to take control.
- Get Iraqis fighting to end the occupation to lay down their arms.
- Motivate the U.N., global, and regional powers to become more involved in Iraq.
- Give the U.S. the moral, political, and military power to deal with Iran's attempt to develop nuclear weapons.
- Prevent an outbreak of isolationism in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, rather than surging militarily for the third time in a year, the United States needs to surge diplomatically. A further military escalation would simply mean repeating a failed strategy. A diplomatic surge would involve appointing an individual with the stature of a former secretary of state, such as Colin Powell or Madeleine Albright, as a special envoy. This person would be charged with getting all six of Iraq's neighbors—Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait—involved more constructively in stabilizing Iraq. These countries are already involved in a bilateral, self-interested and disorganized way.

While their interests and ours are not identical, none of these countries wants to live with an Iraq that, after our redeployment, becomes a failed state or a humanitarian catastrophe that could become a haven for terrorists or a hemorrhage of millions more refugees streaming into their countries.

The high-profile envoy would also address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the role of Hezbollah and Syria in Lebanon, and Iran's rising influence in the region. The aim would not be necessarily to solve these problems, but to prevent them from getting worse and to show the Arab and Muslim world that we share their concerns about the problems in this region.

Mr. Chairman, the President's plan has not worked. Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is, as we all know, a definition of insanity. It is time to try something new. It is time for change. It is time for a NEW DIRECTION.

I look forward to hearing from Secretary Albright and considering her thoughtful responses to the Committee's questions.

Thank you. I yield the balance of my time.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE TED POE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

JANUARY 17, 2007

In 1999 then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who we now have the privilege to speak with today, warned Congress not to make up a "half-baked deal" to end the conflict in Kosovo. The "struggle may be long," she warned, but the U.S. must remain committed to the region. Her reasons? The consequences would be "serious" if the conflict continued and ultimately spread. She said, "... we must not falter and we cannot fail." Well, we cannot fail in Iraq, either. The president understands the stakes of our operation in Iraq, and so do the American people. If we lose in Iraq, so does democracy. And if democracy loses, the terrorists win.

Hardly anyone would disagree with President Bush's statement last week that the primary concern in Iraq right now is security, especially in Baghdad. It is inconceivable that Iraq could be more secure if our troop levels remained the same, not to mention if they began to withdraw. We need more boots on the ground in Baghdad. We need our troops to work as much as possible with Iraqis to quash sectarian violence. The president's plan to send approximately 21,000 new troops to Iraq and to further integrate civilian and military personnel is a step in the right direction. With additional U.S. military support, we can give the Iraqis what they need to take the reins of their own security, and we can leave when the time is right and ripe for a fully-functioning and *stable* democratic Iraqi government.

Our top priority, bottom line, should be accomplishing our goals and winning the war in Iraq. We can only accomplish our goals by increasing U.S. troop levels in Baghdad.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE JANUARY 17, 2007, BRIEFING RECORD BY THE HONORABLE J. GRESHAM BARRETT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

DOCTRINE OF PREEMPTION

Thank you for joining us today Madame Secretary and for your thoughtful testimony. I only have a few questions for you this morning:

Question:

In one of your statements, you said the way to a stable Iraq is through a “democratic solution.” We all agree that a military solution alone will not bring us victory, but my question to you is—is it realistic to think we can help the Iraqi government find a political solution without first gaining control over Baghdad?

Response:

Stability in Baghdad is vital to a democratic Iraq. The question is whether stability in Baghdad can be achieved by military means.

Question:

Does it hurt the “democratic solution” or goal we desire to achieve if we say an increase in troop levels will not work, even if General Petraeus advocates such a plan?

Response::

U.S. policy in Iraq cannot help but benefit from a free and open debate. Few things have hurt our policy—or our trips—more than misguided optimism about what could be achieved in the absence of political progress.

IRAN’S MEDDLING IN IRAQ

Question:

Given your knowledge of the region, do you believe that other countries are working inside Iraq currently?

Response::

Of course.

Question:

If so, which countries and how do we deal with them?

Response::

The United States has 140,000 troops and an extensive civilian diplomatic presence in Iraq. Coalition troops are also still active. Investors and contractors from a host of nations are working inside the country. Iran has long time ties with many Iraqis, including members of the government and Shiite religious leaders. Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan have informal ties to other groups inside Iraq.

Question:

If Iran and Syria and their known terrorist associates have been found to be working inside Iraq to destabilize the country, would you consider this an act of war?

Response::

This is a hypothetical question. It seems obvious; however, that it would be for the Iraqi government to decide whether attacks aimed at de-stabilizing it should be considered acts of war.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ALBIO SIRE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

- Madame Secretary, I want to thank you so much for coming to testify before the committee and we appreciate your time this morning.
- When Secretary Rice was here last week, I asked her what it would take for Saudi Arabia to become a more active player in the stabilizing of Iraq. Secretary Rice stated that the Saudis could start by canceling the Iraqi debt owed to the government and private institutions. In previous statements, she has also stated that the proper role for Saudi Arabia and any other country in the region would be to help the Iraqis, and not to critique them.

- I do not understand the current Administration's inability to use diplomacy as a means to engage key allies in the stabilization of Iraq.
- According to the Iraq Study Group Report, Iraq's neighbors must be more engaged in order to achieve stability in Iraq. Saudi Arabia has been mostly disengaged from the current situation in Iraq. They have declined to provide debt relief or substantial economic assistance to the Iraqi government. Iraqi Sunni Arab politicians have also complained that Saudi Arabia hasn't even provided political support for their fellow Sunnis in Iraq.
- Up to this point, Saudi Arabia has not agreed to give assistance to Sunni Arab's in Iraq, although there has been mounting pressure from influential Saudi figures and religious scholars to provide direct political and security assistance. There are private individuals within Saudi Arabia that are presently financing Iraqi insurgents to confront what they perceive as Iranian-led Shiite ascendance in the region.
- As a neighbor of Iraq, it is in the best interest of Saudi Arabia to have stability in Iraq. The Saudis could also use their Islamic credentials by helping to reconcile differences between Iraqi factions, along with helping to eliminate al-Qaeda in Iraq. This could also lead to greater support in the Islamic world for a stabilization agreement.

WRITTEN RESPONSE FROM THE HONORABLE MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE, TO QUESTION SUBMITTED FOR THE JANUARY 17, 2007, BRIEFING RECORD BY THE HONORABLE ALBIO SIRE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Question:

What, in your opinion, do we need to do to bring Saudi Arabia into a more active and positive role?

Response:

I appreciate the question and agree that it is important that Saudi Arabia play a constructive role in promoting stability in Iraq, although I am not familiar with recent discussions between Saudi leaders and U.S. officials on this subject. It is not hard, however, to identify a dilemma—the Saudis worry about the rise of a second powerful Shiite Muslim state in the region; they also worry about being accused of aiding terrorists if they openly support the Sunni factions, few of which are entirely untainted by the violence. This is one more reason why I believe it is important to organize a comprehensive diplomatic support group for Iraq. Only through a regional diplomatic approach will countries be able to agree on a common strategy, in which nations are able to help Iraq without being accused of contributing to the sectarian violence.

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

JANUARY 19, 2007

I thank Chairman Lantos for convening this critical meeting on the issue of paramount importance to our nation's foreign policy regarding Iraq. It is a pleasure to welcome my good friend and former Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Lee Hamilton. Your distinguished service to our country continues today long after your 34 year tenure in the United States House of Representatives. One of the highlights of my career in Congress is the opportunity I had to serve with you in the 104th Congress.

Your honorable service to our country has continued after your retirement from Congress and includes your tenure as Co-Chair of the 9/11 Commission, your membership on the Hart-Rudman Commission, and your most recent contribution as Co-Chair of the Iraq Study Group ("Baker Hamilton Commission" or "ISG"). This report provides convincing evidence that immediate action must be taken to enable the *"United States to begin to move its combat forces out of Iraq responsibly."* I agree with the findings of the Iraq Study Group (ISG) and with the American people that the Bush Administration's Iraq policy has failed and the time to change course is long overdue.

This war has long been a disaster and President Bush must remedy the situation he has created by taking to heart the assessments and recommendations of this comprehensive report. I, along with my democratic colleagues have been offering the

President constructive advice and criticism on the war in Iraq since 2003—criticism and advice which the President has repeatedly rejected, but which the Iraq Study Group has now embraced.

The cost of ignoring sound advice has been great and the American people have felt the loss. More than 3,000 Americans have died and 22,000 Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries in Iraq. American taxpayers have paid nearly \$400 billion to sustain this misadventure. The war is also exacting a terrible toll on the Iraqi people as well. Reasonable estimates place the number of Iraqi dead and wounded in the hundreds of thousands. We have sadly found ourselves in a quagmire indeed.

I am grateful for the Iraq Study Group report by the Baker-Hamilton Commission, which if heeded could help the Bush Administration find its way out of this grave and deteriorating situation. The challenges in Iraq are complex with violence increasing in scope and lethality daily. Among the 79 listed recommendations are:

(22) The president should state that the U.S. does not seek permanent military bases in Iraq;

(23) The President should restate that the U.S. does not seek to control Iraq's oil;

(32) Minorities. The rights of women and the rights of all minority communities in Iraq, including Turkmen, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Yazidis, Sabeans, and Armenians, must be protected.

I especially concur with the ISG recommendations that the President promise not to seek permanent military bases or control of Iraqi oil. This would give the American and Iraqi people some hope and faith in the American government and our intentions in the midst of this disaster—that this is not a war fought for profit with the blood of their friends and families. Also, as we aid their government with reforms, I agree that the rights of women and other minorities in Iraq must be recognized, or else our initial promise of “freedom” is denied to too many, and we leave them with a nation as welcoming of oppression as before. The United States must make it clear to the Iraqi government that the United States will carry out its plans, including planned redeployments, even if Iraq does not implement its planned changes. America's other security needs and the future of our military cannot be made hostage to the actions or inactions of the Iraqi government. Our countries brave soldiers and our foreign policy should not be hijacked by the sectarian sentiments of the Iraqi people and the failures of the Iraqi government.

Mr. Chairman, there is no more important subject on the nation's agenda today than the situation in Iraq. Given the loss of the more than 3,000 brave servicemen and women, the 23,000 American casualties, the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis killed and wounded, and the nearly \$400 billion of taxpayer dollars expended on this misadventure, the ISG recommendation to withdraw combat brigades is a tacit admission that the time has come for the United States to implement a plan of strategic redeployment. We Democrats spoke truth to power. We predicted before the war that “the outcome after the conflict is actually going to be the hardest part, and it is far less certain.” We made the point that it was essential for the Administration to develop “a plan for rebuilding of the Iraqi government and society, if the worst comes to pass and armed conflict is necessary.” It is now clear to all but the most neoconservative, die-hard supporters of the President that the time has come for a strategic redeployment that:

- Reduces U.S. troops to 60,000 by the end of 2007, and to zero by the end of 2008, while redeploying troops to Afghanistan, Kuwait, and the Persian Gulf.
- Engages in diplomacy to resolve the conflict within Iraq by convening a Geneva Peace Conference modeled on the Dayton Accords.
- Establishes a Gulf Security initiative to deal with the aftermath of U.S. redeployment from Iraq and the growing nuclear capabilities of Iran.
- Puts Iraq's reconstruction back on track with targeted international funds.
- Counters extremist Islamic ideology around the globe through long-term efforts to support the creation of democratic institutions and press freedoms.

Democrats also warned of the “postwar challenges,” particularly the fact that “there is no history of democratic government in Iraq,” that its “economy and infrastructure are in ruins after years of war and sanctions” and that rebuilding would take “a great deal of money.”

Mr. Chairman, I strongly opposed the proposal announced by President Bush last week. It is clear that President Bush has not offered a new strategy for success in Iraq, just an increase in force levels of 20,000 American troops. The president's proposal will not provide lasting security for Iraqis. It is not what the American people

have asked for, nor what the American military needs. It will impose excessive and unwarranted burdens on military personnel and their families.

Mr. Chairman, the architects of the debacle in Iraq would have us believe that “surging” at least 20,000 more soldiers into Baghdad and nearby Anbar province is a change in military strategy that America must embrace or face future terrorist attacks on American soil. Nothing could be further from the truth, as we learned last year when the “surge” idea first surfaced among neoconservatives.

Mr. Chairman, the troop surge the President announced is not new and, judging from history, will not work. It will only succeed in putting more American troops in harm’s way for no good reason and without any strategic advantage. *The armed forces of the United States are not to be used to respond to 9/11 calls from governments like Iraq’s that have not done all they can to take responsibility for the security of their country and safety of their own people. The United States cannot do for Iraq what Iraqis are not willing to do for themselves.*

Troop surges have been tried several times in the past. The success of these surges has, to put it charitably, been underwhelming. From Operation Together Forward in 2006, the Elections and Constitutional Referendum in 2005, the Constitutional Elections and Fallujah in 2004–2005 and lastly massive troop rotations in 2003–2004.

Mr. Chairman, the ISG Report gets it right: *rather than surging militarily for the third time in a year, the United States needs to surge diplomatically.* A further military escalation would simply mean repeating a failed strategy. A diplomatic surge would involve appointing an individual with the stature of a former Secretary of State, such as Colin Powell or Madeleine Albright, as a special envoy. This person would be charged with getting all six of Iraq’s neighbors—Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait—involved more constructively in stabilizing Iraq. These countries are already involved in a bilateral, self-interested and disorganized way.

Mr. Chairman, the President’s plan has not worked. Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is, as we all know, the definition of insanity. It is time to try something new. It is time for change. It is time for a NEW DIRECTION.

I look forward to hearing from Chairman Hamilton and considering his thoughtful responses to the Committee’s questions.

Thank you. I yield the balance of my time.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE LEE HAMILTON, CO-CHAIR OF THE IRAQ STUDY GROUP (BAKER-HAMILTON COMMISSION), TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE JANUARY 19, 2007, BRIEFING RECORD BY THE HONORABLE SHEILA JACKSON LEE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Question:

Many of the recommendations in the ISG report echo the potential value of a concerted and collected effort by the U.S. between the Iraqi government and Iraq’s neighbors, including Iran and Syria. How do we begin to initiate dialogue to seek this potential support from Iraq’s neighbors?

Response:

The Study Group recommended that the United States, working with the Iraqi government, should launch the comprehensive New Diplomatic Offensive to deal with the problems of Iraq and the region. The Study Group recommended that this step take by December 31, 2006.

As an instrument of this diplomatic offensive, the Study Group recommended the organization of an Iraq International Support Group. The membership of this Support Group should include Iraq and all states bordering Iraq, including Iran and Syria; key regional states, including Egypt and the Gulf States; the five permanent Members of the UN Security Council, and the European Union.

The Study Group further recommended the participation of the office of the United Nations Secretary-General.

While the United States needs to be a driving force in helping to organize and start this diplomatic initiative, the UN Secretary-General or the UN Security Council could be the formal chair of the Support Group and could initiate the multilateral diplomatic dialogue.

The United States should also initiate a direct, bilateral dialogue with each of Iraq’s neighbors.

Question:

Now that Iran is the most important nation in the region, it seems as if our approach of isolating Iran has backfired. How do we keep our values intact while having dialogue with Iran on issues of mutual concern ranging from Iraq to Iran's energy and nuclear policies?

Response:

We have tried to isolate Iran for years. Where has it gotten us? Because of its strong ties to Shiite militias and political leaders, Iran may have as much influence in Iraq as the United States. It is also a rising regional power, and continues to develop its nuclear program.

Talking to Iran is not appeasement. Conversation is not capitulation. The United States need not sacrifice its interests or its values to talk. Do we really think that the United States is too weak to negotiate? Do we think that American diplomats will immediately begin making concessions if they simply sit down at the table with Syrian or Iranian diplomats?

You cannot conduct diplomacy if you only talk to your friends. Certainly, we would like to see a different government in Iran. Yet we also have to deal with reality. If we can get Iran to take even modest steps to enhance stability in Iraq, both the United States and Iraq will be better off.

Talking is worthwhile even if we do not reach agreement. There are many reasons to negotiate: to build trust, explain our policies, probe intentions, collect intelligence, dispel misunderstandings, deter bad actions, and to reduce the chance of inadvertent escalation.

Question:

Mr. Hamilton, as you know, sectarian violence causes the largest number of Iraqi civilian casualties and sectarian cleansing is taking place in Baghdad. How will a surge in our troops combat sectarian violence and more actively pursue national reconciliation?

Response:

Much of the attention right now is on the troop surge. To some degree, that is understandable. We are all concerned when more of our young men and women are put in harm's way.

The political, diplomatic, and economic pieces of our policy are just as important as the military piece. The Study Group was explicit on the importance of a comprehensive approach. All elements of our policy should be pursued at the same time:

- Training as the primary U.S. military mission in Iraq;
- Engaging Iraq's neighbors—and the international community—on behalf of stability in Iraq and the region;
- Building the capacity of the Iraqi government and focusing on job creation as part of a robust economic program; and
- Holding the Iraqi government to performance benchmarks, particularly on national reconciliation.

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

Question:

Is the size of our troop surge too small to have a widespread and substantive impact to put pressure on the Iraqi government to seek national reconciliation?

Response:

The Study Group did not have a judgment on the number of troops necessary to provide security in a sprawling urban area of more than 6 million.

The Study Group agrees with the President that only the Iraqis can end the sectarian violence. The violence will not end unless Iraq's leaders step up and make difficult decisions about the future of their country.

A military response is only part of a policy response in Iraq. A comprehensive, political, military, economic and diplomatic response is necessary. All elements of policy must be pursued at the same time.

Question:

Isn't a diplomatic surge coupled with economic incentives such as creating jobs and bolstering reconstruction programs a better strategy to achieve national reconciliation?

Wouldn't a diplomatic and economic surge be better at improving the standard of living of the Iraqi people by creating jobs and increasing reconstruction efforts; and bolstering civil society such as human rights groups, the press, NGOs and advocates of minority, women and children's rights?

Response:

The Study Group places very strong emphasis on diplomatic and economic measures. Both diplomatic and economic measures are essential in support of the goal of a national reconciliation. Only Iraq's leaders can make the difficult and necessary decisions in support of national reconciliation. In the absence of national reconciliation, the violence in Iraq will not end.

The measures referenced in the question certainly could help improve the standard of living in Iraq and bolster civil society. Recommendations number 32 and 33 of the Iraq Study Group report address the protection of minority rights in Iraq, and the protection of civil society. The rights of all minority communities must be protected. The process of registering non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must not be used as a tool for politicizing or stopping NGO activity.

Question:

In 2006, while estimates of U.S. reconstruction assistance dwindled to \$750 million, we have spent a total of more than \$400 billion on our military efforts. How can we better balance this disparity so that we can win the confidence of the Iraqi people by illustrating more clearly our interest and investment in their standard of living and by bolstering the capacity of our reconstructive efforts?

Response:

The Study Group agrees with the premise of the question.

Building the capacity of the Iraqi government should be at the heart of U.S. reconstruction efforts, and capacity building demands additional U.S. resources.

Progress in providing essential government services is necessary to sustain any progress on the political or security front. Job creation is also essential.

For these reasons, the Study Group recommended that U.S. economic assistance to Iraq should be increased to a level of \$5 billion per year rather than be permitted to decline. We need better balance and integration in the use of U.S. power.

Question:

Prudently, the ISG report mentions many reasons to oppose a precipitous withdrawal (pp.37-38). Do you believe that conditions will improve significantly in Iraq over the next year?

Does it not make sense to begin a phased withdrawal and thereby save hundreds if not thousands of American lives?

Response:

The Study Group found the situation in Iraq grave and deteriorating.

Violence is increasing in scope, complexity, and lethality.

Key players within the government too often act in their sectarian interest.

Iraq's tremendous growth potential is hobbled by insecurity, corruption, lack of investment, dilapidated infrastructure, and uncertainty.

Iraq's neighbors are doing too little to help it, and some are undercutting its stability.

Absent significant action, particularly on national reconciliation, the Study Group believes these conditions and trends will continue. If current trends continue, the potential consequences are severe.

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

The Study Group stated further: "While these (training and equipping) efforts are building up, and as additional Iraqi brigades are being deployed, U.S. combat brigades could begin to move out of Iraq. By the first quarter of 2008, subject to unexpected developments in the security situation on the ground, all combat brigades not necessary for force protection could be out of Iraq."

Question:

The ISG report states: "the United States has both a national and a moral interest in doing what it can to give Iraqis an opportunity to avert anarchy" (p.2). At what point, would you say, we have paid our moral debt for having created the circumstances that led to the current situation? At what point does the withdrawal of our military become a higher national-interest priority than is the effort to limit instability in Iraq?

Response:

The Study Group did not give an opinion as to when the United States would have paid its moral debt or fulfilled its responsibility for events in Iraq.

The Study Group recommended that the United States should not make an open-ended commitment to keep large numbers of American troops deployed in Iraq.

Further, the Study Group recommended that the United States must make it clear to the Iraqi government that the United States could carry out its plans, including planned redeployments, even if Iraq does not implement its planned changes. America's other security needs and the future of our military cannot be held hostage to the actions or inactions of the Iraqi government.

The Study Group believes our leaders must build a bipartisan approach to bring a responsible conclusion to what is now a lengthy and costly war.

SUBMITTED FOR THE FEBRUARY 28, 2007, HEARING RECORD BY THE HONORABLE
RICHARD C. HOLBROOKE, VICE CHAIRMAN, PERSEUS LLC, FORMER UNITED STATES
AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

OPPORTUNITY FOR TURKS AND KURDS?

By Richard Holbrooke

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IRBIL, Iraqi Kurdistan—Whatever happens in Iraq, we must try to limit the terrible fallout from the war. The place to start should be with our indispensable NATO ally Turkey, the front-line state of the post-Cold War era, whose relations with the United States have deteriorated dramatically in the past six years.

The immediate issue is raids by Kurdish terrorists across Turkey's border with Iraq, which divides an area inhabited on both sides by Kurds who have long felt that they deserve their own country. Despite centuries of enmity, rapprochement is in the long-term interests of both Turkey and the Kurds of northern Iraq. But such an effort would be controversial and could be undertaken only with strong American encouragement.

First, some essential background from Irbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, which I am visiting after talks with Turkish leaders in Ankara. This peaceful city is disorienting: Am I in war-torn Iraq or booming Kurdistan? Will Irbil eventually become the capital (or part) of an independent Kurdistan? Or will this region become a battleground for another war, this one between Kurds and Turks?

You can call this place Kurdistan, as its citizens do, or northern Iraq, as the Turks do. But either way, the overwhelming majority (98 percent in a 2005 referendum) of its 4 million people do not want to remain part of Iraq. Who can blame them? Nothing here feels like the Middle East. The Iraqi national flag is banned; only the Kurdistan flag flies. And although the Kurds are sending some of their famously fierce warriors to Baghdad to support the Americans, they fear that Gen. David Petraeus's plan to turn the tide in Baghdad will not succeed.

Ever since a nation called Iraq was carved out of the debris of the Ottoman Empire by Winston Churchill and Gertrude Bell at the Cairo Conference of 1921, Turkey and Iran have opposed independence for the Kurds of northern Iraq because both fear that an independent Kurdistan on their borders would encourage existing separatist movements among their large Kurdish populations.

This symmetry of fears has led to semi-secret discussions and even some cooperation between our NATO ally and that charter member of the "axis of evil" on dealing with the PKK, a terrorist group that has conducted raids against both Turkey and Iran from bases just inside northern Iraq for many years. I would not rule out limited Turkish military action against some of those bases—especially since Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is under enormous political pressure to show strong nationalist credentials against hawkish rivals in an election year.

After years of mishandling relations with Turkey, last year the administration appointed retired Gen. Joe Ralston, the universally respected former NATO commander, as special envoy for the PKK problem. Ralston's intervention helped avoid a Turkish attack in Iraq last summer, and he is accelerating his efforts to get Irbil to rein in the PKK.

But there is a larger issue: the final status of Kirkuk, the multiethnic city that sits in the middle of a huge oil field and lies just outside the official boundaries of Iraqi Kurdistan. The new Iraqi constitution calls for a referendum this year on whether Kirkuk is to be incorporated into the Kurdistan region. The Turks—who refer repeatedly to the dangers to the Turkmen, their ethnic cousins who live in Kirkuk—have said that they will not accept such an event. Avoiding a full-blown

crisis will require intense mediation by the United States; unfortunately, Ralston's current mandate does not include Kirkuk.

Despite their history, Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan need each other. Kurdistan could become a buffer between Turkey and the chaos to the south, while Turkey could become the protector of a Kurdistan that, though still technically part of Iraq, is effectively cut loose from a Baghdad government that may no longer function. In addition, Turkey has a major economic opportunity in northern Iraq; already, more than 300 Turkish companies and substantial investment are a primary engine of Kurdish growth.

Rapprochement would require major undertakings by both sides. The legendary Kurdish leader who is now president of the Kurdish regional government, Massoud Barzani, needs to rein in the PKK and pledge not to interfere in Turkey's internal affairs. A compromise that took into account legitimate Turkish concerns would be necessary on Kirkuk; while this would be difficult, especially for the Turkish military, I believe it needs to be attempted, with strong American encouragement.

History and myth make a Turkish-Kurdish deal extremely difficult. It takes visionary leaders to alter the stream of history. Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer did it for France and Germany. Nelson Mandela did it in South Africa. But such people are very, very rare. Still, the crisis in Iraq requires Turks and Kurds to think of their common interest. Having just talked to the impressive leaders of both sides, I believe they understand that they face not just a crisis but an opportunity.

Richard Holbrooke, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, writes a monthly column for The Post.

