



IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN AND THE WAR ON “TERROR”

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I am going to focus on al-Qaeda’s evolution since September 11 and the new environment, how the organization has changed in response, and then on where we stand today. And, just to contradict some of the prevailing sentiment, I’ll end with a touch of optimism.

Most important to point out is that the haven in Afghanistan has been severely disrupted for al-Qaeda. There have been elections that show that the Taliban is set back far more than many people, myself included, thought. As a result, it’s much harder for this organization to have a haven where it can train, plan, relax and recruit. Chechnya, Iraq, Kashmir – the other kinds of mini-havens for the jihadist movement – are not the same. There is nothing comparable to what existed in Afghanistan. When you read interviews of former terrorists, one thing they talk about constantly is the pressure of the lifestyle, how the inability to relax anywhere, to see their families, to communicate, is a tremendous strain over the years. Not having a haven like Afghanistan brings this strain to the fore.

A second major change is that there is a worldwide effort against this organization. Before September 11 in many countries, including the United States, there was effectively a permissive environment for al-Qaeda. As long as their activities were not too egregious, they could often operate below the radar screen and not be picked up by local security forces. Today, this is much harder. This doesn’t mean that everywhere there is an equally vigilant effort, but the organization has to make far fewer mistakes in order to survive.

A third big change is that the effort here at home is much stronger. We could spend the entire day lampooning mistakes at Homeland Security or the FBI, but the big shift since 9/11 is that these organizations are focused on the terrorism mission. And simply by focusing, by asking questions, by devoting resources, they’ve gone from a grade of “F” or even a “not present” before 9/11 to a “C.” That’s not exactly brilliant, but it’s a huge shift in performance.

There have also been some changes, not necessarily for the better, on the world scene that have affected the organization. One of the biggest is what has happened in Iraq.

Go back to 1996. Bin Laden issued what many thought was a rather delusional public statement in which he said that the United States has a massive military presence in Saudi Arabia. Why? It’s obviously to control the region’s oil reserves and to use it as a springboard to attack Iraq. Nine



years later that statement is looking rather prophetic to many in the region. The organization – both al-Qaeda and the broader jihadist movement – has used this as a mobilizing device.

This is a highly unpopular war, not just in the Middle East but throughout the world. As a result, large numbers of clerics who are effectively bought by the state are denouncing the war and declaring it to be a legitimate jihad. You have individuals like the head of al-Azhar in Egypt, you have Saudi clerics who receive money from the government saying that it is the duty of individual Muslims to go and fight in Iraq to resist the United States. That's how unpopular this war is.

Naturally enough, in the United States, we tend to focus on al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization. However, its emphasis historically has not been on terrorism but on supporting insurgent movements throughout the Muslim world. As a result, by creating a strong insurgency in Iraq, we are playing to the organization's strength; we are helping it to do what it has done well in the past and giving it an opportunity to show this off.

Needless to say, U.S. support for Israel has also been something the jihadists have capitalized on, but I'd also like to highlight some less-known changes, such as the recent phenomenon of movements that were local becoming global. One is in Algeria. A group that was focused on the Algerian government, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), has embraced Bin Laden's agenda. Also, several Kashmiri groups have effectively become global. Many of these individuals are showing up in Iraq. Even though hundreds of individuals are being detained or arrested, this shift is a dramatic change for the worse for the United States.

Another change is that the United States is increasingly seen as anti-Islamic. Part of this is Iraq, part is Israel, but part of it is also the conduct of the war on terrorism. The United States has been cozying up to various disreputable regimes – Uzbekistan being an example – and, as a result, complaints that the United States is against freedom and liberalization have taken on additional credence. U.S. efforts to try to regulate charities and change education, and statements by U.S. evangelical leaders, have all been portrayed in much of the Muslim world as a U.S. effort to undermine Islam.

With this background, al-Qaeda has changed. It has become a more regional, networked organization. Also, we've seen it become more sectarian in nature, more anti-Shia in several countries, and more anti-Jewish. It was always very anti-Jewish and anti-Israel, but the targeting didn't reflect this until recent years. And their rhetoric at least suggests an increased economic focus.

This is a rather negative portrayal of what's going on in the world, and you could say that the jihadist movement is doing well. It's still recruiting, it's still raising money, and what we're seeing is the spread of the al-Qaeda model. The several hundred individuals who may have sworn loyalty to Bin Laden may be on the run and effectively pursued, but thousands or tens of thousands of individuals who support this ideology are flourishing. They are acting without the broader organization or with only loose connection, and that's of grave concern.

I said I would end on a more positive note. The first point to bring out is that networks are often bad for most actions. The advantage of a networked organization is that it can survive. It's much harder to disrupt a networked organization; there's no head to cut off. The flip side is that the organization loses control. Bin Laden spent many years trying to prevent the jihadist movement from turning on itself, from splitting over who represents the best variant of Salafi Islam, and making sure it didn't go after Shia. When you are networked, it is much harder to control this. As a result, we've seen these tensions rise to the fore.

It's also more difficult to orchestrate and calibrate your attacks. Before the U.S. election, Bin Laden made a statement in which he lampooned the idea that he was at war with the United States because of its values. He said, Look, are we attacking Sweden? – a very liberal state they are not attacking. The irony is that the jihadist movement is engaged in a struggle in the Netherlands. Why? Over values. It's much harder for the senior leadership to focus on politics because much of



the rank and file does care about these value issues. So it's much harder for it to act strategically.

You're going to see national differences dividing groups. What we see in Saudi Arabia is a dispute over whether to fight the United States first or to fight local regimes. Some Saudis say, we should go to Iraq and fight the Americans there. Others say, no, our duty is to fight the Al Saud first.

The implication for the United States is that there is probably going to be less time for spectacular attacks. Because the organization doesn't have the haven in Afghanistan, because it is networked and thus can't exercise the same sort of training and control, it will be harder for it to do spectacular attacks that take many years to plan. I would not say this means we should rest; fewer spectacular attacks doesn't mean fewer attacks. It's very easy to do a car bomb; large numbers of people are learning how to do an IED in Iraq. All this can be done by individuals with very limited training and wreak tremendous damage, killing a lot of people. But the truly spectacular attacks will be harder.

I would point out a broader implication for the ideology. One of the pieces of good news for the United States and the world generally is that where this ideology has come into power, it has done disastrously – in Afghanistan, in Sudan, and in a quite different way, in Iran. Where political Islam has tried to govern, it has had problem after problem and become relatively unpopular. Therefore, the United States and its allies are not waging a war against a popular governing ideology; they're waging a war against a popular opposition ideology. So some of what we fear most – the idea of these groups capturing a state – may be less of a nightmare if it does come about.

CHAS. W. FREEMAN, JR., president, Middle East Policy Council

One thing I hope we will come back to, Dan, as we move the discussion forward, is the question of what it is we're actually now trying to accomplish with 18,000 troops in Afghanistan. After all, we went there for two very clear reasons: to apprehend the perpetrators of 9/11 or decapitate the organization that carried out 9/11, which is something we've pretty much done; and to punish the innkeepers at this R&R center that you mentioned – the flophouse for Islamic revolutionaries known as Afghanistan. We threw the Taliban out of power. So we accomplished our objectives, and yet we're still there pacifying the place and keeping it safe for the cultivation of opium. So I think the questions we do need to focus on during this session are: What is victory in Afghanistan? What's success? Does our mission have an end?

MICHAEL SCHEUER, former chief, Bin Laden unit, Counterterrorist Center, CIA; author (as “Anonymous”) of *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror, and Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America*

I take a little different view on where we stand in Afghanistan than Professor Byman and even Ambassador Freeman. I think we made a tragic miscalculation, in the spring of 2002, that we had won the war, when we had only won the battle. We had won the cities very quickly, which was not surprising, and we let most of the insurgents – both al-Qaeda and the Taliban – go home with their rifles and other equipment into mountains and villages, where we have no presence at the moment and are not likely to have one in the near future.

In addition, since March of 2002, after Operation Anaconda in eastern Afghanistan didn't work out as well as the military thought it would, we initially had body counts of 900 or 1,000 and ended up in the low 60s as a final number. The military has basically been inactive in Afghanistan. The 18,000 forces we have there, as far as I understand it, remain mostly in garrison. The war has been carried to the enemy, to the extent it has been, by the special forces and the clandestine service; that, of course, is limited to the Afghan side of the border. It's like the issue of “we've killed two-thirds of al-Qaeda's leadership.” Well, we've killed two-thirds of the leadership we knew of on 9/11.



That doesn't take us to the end.

In terms of denying Afghanistan as a safe haven for al-Qaeda, if we examine the training camps at Kandahar or Khost in Nangarhar Province, those are closed. There is nobody there. But most of Afghanistan is uncovered by U.S. forces and, certainly since the Iraq War, uncovered by overhead imagery and other sorts of technical collection because there just isn't any. Probably two-thirds of Afghanistan is terra incognita to us at the moment.

The second point I would make is that Pakistan is about played out in terms of how much they can help us. I think no one had any right to say that Musharraf would have done what he's done so far. It has been extraordinary. Helping us in the cities – in Karachi and Lahore and Islamabad – is one thing; but actually moving his military forces into the tribal areas along Afghanistan is extraordinary, something I would not have expected him to do. I think they've pushed that rock as far as they can push it. They have suffered more casualties since August than we have in three-plus years in Afghanistan. It's extraordinarily unpopular among the religious parties in Pakistan, but, more important, among the tribal people. There was always a saying in Pakistan that the only people who need Pakistan are the Pak military. The tribes don't need Pakistan; we have our country here.

Musharraf has done about all he could, and we're now in a kind of stasis. We're not doing much militarily; the Pakistanis have played out their string; and some of the bills are coming due in terms of Musharraf's desire for more weapons systems.

What we've just seen in Afghanistan in terms of the election, I think, was simply the drawing of a line for the next civil war. People didn't vote for Karzai because he was a democratic leader or a competent individual. They voted for him because he was a Pashtun. And I think that message is clearly going to be received, not only by the Pashtun tribes in Afghanistan and on the Pak side of the border, but clearly by Fahim, Kanuni and the rest of those boys in the north. We're edging towards a civil war in which I believe the Pashtuns will reexert their traditional dominance with the backing of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the rest of the Gulf countries.

One thing we tend to overlook in Afghanistan is that, for better or worse, it's a cockpit of international rivalry. Everyone who lines up at the United Nations and says, We want a stable, peaceful Afghanistan, has a different definition. So what we'll see over time is the Paks, the Saudis, the Kuwaitis lining up behind the Pashtuns; the Iranians doing their best to protect the Shias, who always seem to take it in the neck; and the Russians, the Uzbeks and the Indians lining up with the northerners – the Tajiks and the Uzbeks. I think the Afghan drama has several acts to go through yet before we can say whether we've succeeded or not. I, for one, am not very optimistic.

On Iraq, I would simply say that there's no bigger gift we could have given to Osama bin Laden than the invasion of Iraq. I am not an expert on Saddam or weapons of mass destruction, or anything else about Iraq. I am pretty cognizant, though, of what it means for Bin Laden and militant Islam. In the view of many Muslims, it means that now three of the most sacred places in Islam are occupied by either the Americans or the Israelis. The Israelis hold Jerusalem – and the Israelis and the Americans are interchangeable in the minds of many Muslims. Now we're occupying the second holiest place, in Iraq. It's a disastrous situation for us to be in. Whether or not 1.3 billion Muslims support Bin Laden, 1.3 billion Muslims will be offended by the fact that all of their sanctuaries are occupied at the moment.

In Iraq, too, we've created a cockpit not unlike Afghanistan. Everyone wants peace and stability in Iraq. I don't think the Saudis and the rest of the Gulf countries, or the Jordanians and the Syrians – at least the Jordanians – want a Shia-dominated state next to Iran. And the Iranians clearly don't want the "re-upping" of a Sunni-dominated Iraqi state. But Iraq has spun out of control.

From America's perspective, the most important thing about Iraq is that it has accelerated the change that Professor Byman talked about. We've moved from Bin Laden and al-Qaeda being a man in an organization to a position where it is now a movement or a philosophy, and he is a heroic



leadership symbol. For better or worse, Bin Laden is the only credible Islamic leader of international stature. Nobody wears an "I Love Mubarak" T-shirt or a "We Love the Al Sauds." He has filled the leadership vacuum very nicely.

Currently, we may be seeing in Iraq what we saw in Afghanistan when the Soviets invaded. The Saudis, the Kuwaitis, the Egyptians, the Algerians, the Tunisians emptied their jails of Islamic militants on the condition that they accepted a ticket to Karachi or Peshawar and then ended up in Afghanistan, hoping that they would kill Soviets and die in the process. It didn't entirely work. They killed a lot of Soviets, but not all of them died. I think we're probably seeing the same thing in Iraq. I don't think it's a coincidence that so many of the dead foreign insurgents are Saudis, for example; and, because this is a legitimate jihad, the money is flowing. The run-up in oil prices is one thing that hasn't been covered enough in the media. Going from \$30 to \$50 a barrel for a while created a great new fund for donations to the mujahedin in all parts of the world.

Finally, on the condition of al-Qaeda, I disagree to some extent with Professor Byman. Clearly, one part of Bin Laden's genius has been not to seek command and control of anything outside of al-Qaeda. Professor Byman said that the first priority has been insurgencies, but I would put that second. Bin Laden and al-Qaeda have always seen themselves as the vanguard of Sunni Islamic militancy. Bin Laden has said very clearly, time and again, Al-Qaeda and I cannot beat the Americans alone. We cannot hope to do that. We need a worldwide effort hitting Americans, hitting their allies, causing disorder. And he said, My role, if I have one, is not as military commander but as inspirer and instigator. I think it's fair to say that, with our help, he is accomplishing this.

Next is the insurgency that Professor Byman talked about, and the third is Bin Laden's own military unit. The only real command and control he has ever wanted in terms of attacks is on the attacks against the United States, and I think he maintains control of those. I believe that one of the failures of the U.S. intelligence community is to assume that if someone doesn't attack us when we expect it, they can't do it, or we've beaten them. I'm not at all sure we have any idea what their structure is inside of the continental United States.

Finally, I don't think we've really begun to wage this war from the U.S. perspective. I don't think policy makers on either side of the aisle have a clue about what they're doing. Bin Laden is not fighting us because of our society or our values, our morals, our elections, women in the workplace or Budweiser beer – none of what the Ayatollah Khomeini used to rant about. They're focused on our policies. That's the danger.

Right now al-Qaeda's center of gravity is American policies. Bin Laden has turned Clausewitz on his head. The biggest fear al-Qaeda has, besides fighting a superpower, is that that superpower will somehow change some of the policies that have been in place for the last 20 years.

AMB. FREEMAN: I think both Dan Byman and Mike Scheuer, in one way or another, have alluded to what I consider to be the most disturbing overall trend, which is the increasing unity of the Islamic world around the view that it is under assault from the United States and American allies, whether through the Israeli occupation and rampages through Gaza and the West Bank, or through the American occupation and rampages through Iraq. In Osama bin Laden's case, there is also the claim that the Al Sauds somehow are fronting for the United States in controlling Mecca and Medina to the advantage of infidels.

The net effect of all this has been – if you look at Osama's comments, as I read them – an increasingly self-confident tone coupled with the emergence of the objective of building a worldwide Islamic political movement to complement the military and terrorist actions that have been taken. My sense is that the one place where significant progress is being made in rolling up Islamic terrorists is Saudi Arabia. The problem there is being reduced; more terrorists are being killed than



created because there's a three-part approach, which I don't see being applied anywhere else.

First, there is a deliberate and effective effort to counter the ideas of the terrorists and the extremists, so battle is joined at the level of ideology. Second, there's an effort to co-opt, amnesty or entice into surrender those who are opposed to the regime. Third, there is a ruthless campaign to kill anyone who persists in plotting terrorism.

All of this has created a situation in which Islamic extremists have been able to infiltrate and take over, in some respects, ethnic struggles in other arenas. To unite these ethnic struggles in a broader context that corresponds to the one that Dan and Mike outlined, I'd like to ask Anatol Lieven to come up and tell us something about the stage beyond the Middle East as it is affected by Islamic extremism.

ANATOL LIEVEN, senior associate for foreign and security policy, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; author of *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism*

I thought I would say something about the Chechen conflict, both because – as Ambassador Freeman says – this is a classic case study of how international jihadis have been able to move into and even colonize a local ethnic conflict. You could also say that the best advice to America or to the West would be to look at what the Russians have done and then do exactly the opposite in each case. Ever since I first came to Washington, fresh from reporting on the first Chechen war in 1996, I have found many people in the American uniformed military and intelligence community who have been willing to learn from the Russian experience in Chechnya.

Unfortunately, at the policy-making level and too often in the world of the think tanks, there has been an attitude that recalls something that the late General Aleksander Lebed said to me, back in 1994, before the Chechen war, when he was still a general commanding in Moldova. He had been a Soviet officer in Afghanistan, and I was a British journalist on the side of the mujahedin, so we had quite a lot to talk about. I asked him at one point, “General, given what happened to us, the British, in Afghanistan on so many occasions when we tried to conquer the place in the nineteenth century, how could the Soviet army have made the same mistake again? Why didn't you learn from what happened to the British?” He gave this very sour smile and said, “Ah, but you don't understand. You were capitalist, imperialist exploiters. We were bringing liberation to the people of Afghanistan. How could we possibly learn anything from you?” A very familiar attitude, I'm afraid, in this town.

The first lesson of Chechnya – something that has been very much obscured – is that it is a great mistake to concentrate on al-Qaeda as such. Russian propaganda has encouraged this mistake, but Russian propaganda is to some extent trying to exploit the Western popular delusions that everything comes down to al-Qaeda. I keep being asked – by Western journalists, by Russian journalists – whether I believe that al-Qaeda is present in Chechnya or has played an important role there. I say, No. And they say, Oh, so the Russian government is lying, and there are no international Islamic extremists (jihadis) in Chechnya. I say, No, that isn't what I said.

This world of Sunni Islamist jihadi extremism and terrorism is not a single organization. It is a web or a net with different nodes. Gilles Kepel puts it very well when he says that al-Qaeda is not actually a base, as its name suggests, but a database. It is a source of recruits, certainly, and of information, technology, contacts and links. But it doesn't control everything. Of course, these different nodes share the same basic theology, though with certain distinctions; they share the same basic ideology, the same ultimate geopolitical aim, and the same vision of a future society.

But the different nodes concentrate on different specific enemies at particular times. This has been true ever since I first met the Arab volunteers in Afghanistan way back in 1988, when they were fighting the Soviet Union, armed and to a degree funded by us. They made absolutely no



secret of the fact that when they had defeated the Soviet Union – and they meant not just to drive it out of Afghanistan, but to destroy the Soviet Union itself – we were next. All this business about Osama having only become anti-American as a result of the Iraq War of 1990 and the American defense of Saudi Arabia is nonsense. The people who moved into al-Qaeda were speaking perfectly openly to Western journalists in Afghanistan about their hatred of America, their hatred for Israel, and their long-term plans in that regard.

In Chechnya, we have therefore seen a group of mostly, though not exclusively, former Arab veterans of Afghanistan, some who had previously fought as well in the Algerian conflict or in Bosnia, who then moved there to continue, as they would see it, the Afghan jihad against Russia and are drawn from an extensive range of Middle Eastern countries. They have links to al-Qaeda and certainly. Al-Zawahiri visited Chechnya in 1996. He has written very clearly in his pamphlet “Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner” about how al-Qaeda can also exploit Chechnya as part of the global jihad; how it can use Chechnya to mobilize more support among Muslims for its overall cause. But it is not that al-Qaeda has been in command of the international jihadi forces fighting in Chechnya. Khattab, their first leader, was an associate of Osama bin Laden, not, as far as I can make out – certainly not in Khattab’s view – his subordinate.

I was in a position, as a journalist visiting the Caucasus and Chechnya in the early ’90s and during the first Chechen war, to see some of the genesis of this jihadi presence in Chechnya. It began, of course, not with an explicitly jihadi movement at all, but with the move of Middle Eastern and, above all, Saudi-funded religious and charitable groups into the region.

It’s a grave mistake to regard fundamentalist and jihadi as the same thing. I was listening to a French minister on television last night, saying that the French state must set out to, if not abolish fundamentalism, at least deliberately, as policy, reduce it as part of the war on terror. I don’t know whether that’s possible. I’m not even sure this is something appropriate in a democracy. But something to keep in mind is that a great part of the fundamentalist world – even a Salafi and Wahhabi one, and even in the former Soviet Union – is politically quietist. This corresponds to some extent to past distinctions in the Sufi world between Qadiri and the Naqshibendis, who also had some of these distinctions when it came to active involvement in politics and in military struggle.

Most of the Middle-Eastern-backed fundamentalists who moved into the Soviet Union were not aiming to carry out jihad. They were aiming to do what they said they were doing: set up schools, mosques and madrassas, fund the haj, and spread their version of Islamic culture. But clearly this also provided cover for jihadi groups to come in as well.

Until the war of 1994, however, these groups – and in Chechnya, the new modern fundamentalists – were also pretty weak. It was, above all, the Russian intervention of December 1994, without question, that sucked these groups into Chechnya and gave them their chance. Without that, they would have had some presence; they would certainly have gone on trying to base themselves in Chechnya. But it is extremely unlikely that they would have attained anything like the power and influence they later achieved.

Their success in this regard during the first war comes from a number of different sources, which we would do very well to study, given our present experience in Iraq. In addition, we cannot exclude the fact that, whether for bad reasons or good, we might be drawn into future occupations of this kind elsewhere in the Muslim world if we come under – God forbid – a new attack like 9/11.

The first is that this does, to some extent, conform to a historical pattern. Those who say that the exploitation of ethnic conflict or the mobilization of ethnic conflict in the name of radical Islam is a new phenomenon are completely wrong. If you look not just at the past history of the Caucasus, but to some extent of Afghanistan as well, the ethnic struggle of the Caucasian mountaineers mobilized and organized in the name of Quranic radical Islam was the central feature of the Caucasian struggle against the Russians in the nineteenth century. It is also something that has played a



critical part in the history of the Pashtuns, another deeply divided tribal people who have a very strong ethnic and ethno-religious sense, but have always had tremendous difficulty in organizing themselves along modern, nationalist political lines. Again and again, in the fighting against the British and now the Soviet occupation today, you find Islam and jihad being used as a substitute for what we would regard as more modern and effective forms of national and political mobilization.

There is also the effect of war itself. There is, perhaps, not quite such a long step as we think between the soldier who is prepared to die for his country or his cause, and the suicide bomber who is determined to die. There is a difference, but it's not an absolute difference. In the first war in Chechnya, you had groups who called themselves "suicide" forces. They were not actually going out to commit suicide deliberately, but they were willing to risk their lives to what we would say is a fanatical extent.

There is also the impact of money. The State Department suggests that in the second Chechen war alone, up to \$100 million has been transferred to support the Chechen resistance. Money is not, however, the most important thing. There is the visible willingness of these Arab and other volunteers to risk their lives and to suffer hardship to help the Chechens, particularly at a time when, as the Chechens see it, they're not getting help from anybody else.

Finally, there is another important phenomenon – perhaps not in Iraq, but in other parts of the Muslim world and on the periphery of the Muslim world in Europe, and perhaps in parts of America as well. Olivier Roy and Gilles Kepel, once again, have written about this in a very interesting fashion. These are groups who feel themselves to be deeply peripheral – peripheral in the Muslim world, peripheral in the societies in which they live, whether the Soviet Union or the West; impoverished; alienated even from their own traditional culture; in Western Europe, often not speaking Arabic properly, let alone Berber; in the former Soviet Union, maybe not speaking Chechen or speaking it very badly. What happens is that these missionaries from the Middle East come in and say, you know what? You don't need to. You don't need to have this understanding and knowledge of your tradition in order to be not merely a true Muslim, but the best Muslim. Just sign yourself up to this limited set of principles – maybe even written in Russian or French, not Arabic – and you are not just a good Muslim, but you are better than these lazy, decadent people sitting around in the heart of the Muslim world or Saudi Arabia or wherever. This is a tremendously appealing thing if you are a young, impoverished, de-culturated person, whether in Chechnya or southern Thailand or even Afghanistan.

AMB. FREEMAN: Very illuminating. I want to thank you very much for taking us to the periphery before we return to the center of things in Iraq, which we now do with retired Colonel Lang. Pat needs no introduction here. He has written a number of interesting articles, one in *Middle East Policy*: "Drinking the Kool-Aid," which I thought was particularly apposite. The other day I understand that someone went into the Oval Office – someone known to everybody here, a rather senior person who is on his way out of the administration – and was asked by the president what was going on in Iraq. He said, with his characteristic bluntness, "we're losing," and was asked to leave the office forthwith and not continue the discussion.

There's a question about what is going on in Iraq, and perhaps a competition between reality-based analysis, much disparaged in Washington these days, and hallucinatory optimism, which is the alternative.

W. PATRICK LANG, president, Global Resources Group, Inc.; formerly the Defense Intelligence Officer for the Middle East

There is in Washington a great division inside the government between policy makers and those who are in the intelligence business – the analysts who have the job of describing reality as



best they understand it in accordance with what ought to be, and used to be, a strict ethic of evaluation of evidence with rigor so that reality can be described to the government of the United States as a basis for policy making. Somebody once said to me that if the policy makers have made up their minds already, nothing you say is going to sway them. But I always took that as evidence of the fact that what you needed to do was get into the game early enough that they hadn't made up their minds yet. That seemed to work pretty well.

On the other hand, the other big group are the elected officials who come to office with an idea in mind of what sort of future they wish to create; what kind of a world it is that their policy, their vision of mankind's future, will produce. And they work toward that steadily. In their minds, information and description are often just powerful tools for creating the preconditions for the world to come that they desire and think is right.

Not surprisingly, there is a certain tension between these two groups: the people who feel it is their obligation to provide reality as a diet item so that you don't get the legendary computer-generated garbage in, garbage out as policy; and, on the other hand, the people who want you to shut up so that they can get on with telling the world how they want things to turn out. That's how things work here or in London or any place else.

I was asked yesterday by a reporter if, in fact, the situation was always such that the governments of the United States had sought to institute creative policies with regard to information. I said that there are always these tensions, but things seem to have gotten completely out of hand in the last four years or so. Perhaps the Clinton people didn't have as firm a set of opinions about how things ought to be, or there were some other brakes on their behavior. But under normal circumstances, what happens in these intelligence agencies, in my experience, is that people at the top in the policy world are usually quite intelligent, well-read, urbane people who understand that there has to be some reality base for the decisions they're going to make or else things will get completely out of hand. Lower-level policy people have a tendency to try to pressure intelligence analysts into not saying what they don't want to hear or not including things in national intelligence documents, or voting the right way on revisions of national intelligence estimates – things like this.

When you get to the very top, however, there usually is a core of people who are going to insist that the intelligence guys be left alone so that what they have to say can be heard, because they are in fact the people who are going to ensure that we don't fall on our faces.

My thesis with regard to Iraq is that the Iraq story is not really so much about Iraq or the international jihadis. It's really about us. We Americans, as a group, and the governments that we create for ourselves, have a continuing inability to understand that other people really are different than we are. As a result, we tend to attribute to them motives that we're comfortable with, that we think reflect where society and human nature ought to be at this time – how people ought to feel about various issues, where the human race is going, and what reaction these people will have if we try to liberate them. I've been involved in a number of such attempts across the world. We've had varying success.

In Iraq you have a particular example of that. You also have an example of that in descriptions of the international jihadi movement. You hear all the time – and we've heard this here today – that al-Qaeda has transformed itself from what was essentially a command-and-control-type organization into a networked organization, and that this changes them in this way or that way.

On the other hand, other people have said that they never really attempted to do that except with regard to their own particular assets under local control by Osama bin Laden. I would tend to subscribe to the latter view. I don't really believe that al-Qaeda or the jihadi movement is an international conspiracy. I don't believe that it's an international movement or even a movement, in fact. I think it's a historical phenomenon that recurs periodically in the course of Islamic history every so many years, when people start to think about the fact that they are discontented with the



alignment of forces in the world.

It's very easy to think that our policy is what causes these people to dislike us. It certainly doesn't help, and in this case, I think it has certainly exacerbated their attitudes toward us and tended to focus attention on us. But there is an underlying phenomenon of hostility within the Islamic world, which tends to recur every so often and which is given focus by particular sets of historical events. We are in the midst of one of those recurrences.

In Iraq, we have a recurrence of our problem. The government of the United States ignored the counsel of many people in the intelligence community and the academic world who knew better. Instead of invading the Iraq of the Iraqis – the Iraq in which the alignment of forces for over 1,000 years, with the Sunni Arabs or their Turkish allies and friends at all times in charge and the Shia Arabs a subordinate underclass – we decided that every Iraqi wanted to be a participant in the world as we believed it ought to be. On that basis the U.S. government decided to invade the Iraq of our dreams, an Iraq in which we would be welcomed in the streets, we would need very minimal force, and there was no requirement for an occupation.

As a result, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps are now in Iraq with a grossly under-strength force committed in a place where we probably can't generate a lot more because other people don't want to go in there with us, and we don't have a lot more force to generate at home except over a long period of time. If you look at the newspapers today, you'll see that, at one point, General Abizaid faced the situation in Iraq with 100 main battle tanks in the whole country. There are people here who will say: do you need tanks to deal with guerrillas? Hell, yes. We're talking about a situation in which my cousin or my former student at West Point or somebody's brother are walking down streets in Iraq and are very likely to come under attack through ambush. In that situation, I can tell you as a practicing soldier in the old days, you do not want a fair fight; you want to have an unfair fight. You want to look back over your shoulder and see an Abrams tank so that whoever shoots at you, you're going to come out on top in the process of building fire supremacy. That isn't what we have in Iraq.

At the same time, our entire program in Iraq is based on the idea that we can reorganize Iraq to our heart's content and then move on to reorganize other places. Who is next on the list? Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, you name it. There are people in all of these countries who think that's a wonderful idea. Why? Because they haven't experienced it yet, that's why. They haven't experienced the chaos that will ensue when we pull the keystone out of the arch and all the blocks fall down, just as they have in Iraq today.

So, when you look around in Iraq and see that things are falling to bits, and it's very difficult holding elections because the Sunni Arabs won't accept the diminution of the power that they have held for age-old periods, should we be surprised? Yes, we should. We should be surprised that we have been so foolish and that we persist in this foolishness.

Now, about the story that we were just told of a friend of ours who went into the Oval Office and told the highest authority in the land that the war is not going well and was thrown out of the building. What does this mean? It means that we are still persisting in our fantasy; that we believe we understand how these people ought to be and that we can organize them with minimal effort because they really want to be like us.

This is like cartoonish fiction from 30 or 40 years ago about Vietnam. You can think of the Marine Corps drill sergeant in the movie "Full Metal Jacket," created by that genius of the cinema Stanley Kubrick, who says to the boys he's training, Just remember, inside every gook there's an American trying to get out. That line is repeated in the movie *Apocalypse Now*, when the crazy cavalry colonel on the beach says exactly the same thing. It was a recurring theme that the artists of the world understood then.

We have done this over and over again. We refuse to understand that these people have



different motivations than we do. They have a different culture. This isn't about "Kodak moments" and video of exotic native dances. What it is about is that it is absolutely legitimate that they don't have to be like us in order to live good and fruitful lives. Until we accept that and believe it, we're going to continue to have one misadventure after another. If we're going to persist in this foreign policy, we'll need an army of about 800,000 and a Marine Corps of 250,000. We're going to have to pour our blood and treasure into these places forever.

We tried doing this kind of thing during the 100 years of the twentieth century over and over again. My family's adventures in the Philippines, in China, and my own in various places are all testimony to that fact. Why we have returned to this dead dog is beyond my comprehension.

Q&A

Q: Dr. Byman, you made a passing comment about some of the friction between us and the Arab and Muslim worlds. It sounded almost as if it was a footnote when you were mentioning that our policy towards Israel is one thing that fuels global insurgency. Could you elaborate on that? It's time the United States started addressing what those policies are; if they are consistent with the American values of life, liberty and property; and, if they should be treated as more than a footnote, that they should warrant more serious debate and consideration.

DR. BYMAN: No, it certainly is not a footnote. I was focusing on change, and you're mentioning an element of continuity. What is a little different about this are two things during the last five years. U.S. support for Israel has been a constant, so people who say this isn't that important say, why is it important today but not important 20 years ago?

Two different things: first, the information revolution. What happens in Jenin is watched in real time by people around the world. We saw this with Mohammad al Durra. People around the world were watching a father trying to shelter his son unsuccessfully. As a result, the filter of time was reduced and, as a result, the emotional level is higher.

In much of the Arab world in particular, there used to be tremendous control over the media. As a result, regimes could tamp down as well as increase sentiment according to their policy. The information revolution has reduced this considerably.

Related to all of this is a shift in U.S. policy, which has become less critical towards Israel. Needless to say, the United States and Israel always were and, I think, will be, for as long as I will live, very close allies. But there has been a shift to a relationship that is unquestioning and uncritical. I'm hoping this may be changing. The election of Abbas as prime minister may not be the landmark event everyone is claiming it is in the true sense, but it is an opportunity for change. I would give the Bush administration credit, several years ago, for trying to engineer this position. At the same time, I would give them tremendous criticism for, once they succeeded in bringing him some power, cutting him off at the knees. Trying to go back to the Mitchell plan, to the basic principles, is something the United States should actively be trying to do.

There are ironies in this situation. The Kashmir dispute is tremendously important for U.S. security and tamping down the problem there. But I can't tell you how to do that. I can't tell you what the answer is. Most thinking observers can look at the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and tell you what the outline for the final settlement could be on both sides. It's unusual to have a nasty, conflict persisting concurrent with the outlines of quite real and acceptable solutions. I'm hopeful we will return to being an ally of Israel that is not only a close friend, but one that is going to push Israel in the direction that it clearly should go.

MR. SCHEUER: My own view on this is more narrow and not involved so much with values and morals. I think it does America tremendous harm in the Islamic world for us to be so obviously the dog that's led around by the tail. We don't behave at all as a great power, and one of the great



weaknesses of great powers is not to behave as such. The Israelis have done a marvelous job in controlling the nature of debate in this country over our policies toward Israel. Whether it's people sending out from AIPAC a list of rules on how to review my books, or the fact that if you criticize Israel you're an antisemite, it's a tremendous covert action. I wish our intelligence community could have done the same over the course of the past 30 years anywhere.

But my gripe is that the only way things change is through debate, and we're not able to debate this issue in this country at this time to any great extent. No one suggests abandoning the Israelis, but it's certainly an all-or-nothing discussion whenever it's raised and that is a dangerous thing. I believe nation-states are not going to pass away, and Israel should be able to do whatever it wants to do to protect itself. My question is whether what the Israelis want to do is worth any American lives or American funds. I think that's a debate we need to have in this country.

COL. LANG: One of the really interesting books about this subject is *One Palestine Complete*, the story of the period of the British mandate in Palestine. What you come to realize reading that book is that the period of the 1920s and 1930s was filled with exactly the same kinds of issues, hatreds, difficulties and violence that you see today. I wander around Palestine and Israel from time to time, asking people what they feel about the other side. My conclusion is that there are not yet sufficient numbers of people really reconciled to the idea of each other to make the possibility of longstanding peace a reality. That may well emerge, but I don't think we are there yet.

You can quote all kinds of statistics from Khalil Shikaki and others about how they all want this, but if you ask people what they will actually settle for – what is it they really want – and blow your way through their obfuscations and delaying tactics, what they really want is very exclusive in nature and not a true partnership with the other side.

Q: The suggestion that Iranian involvement in Afghanistan is done purely in the interest of protecting that country's shares is a reductionist argument. Iran has other interests in Afghanistan that go beyond the Shia population. Perhaps you would want to touch on some of those. My other question relates to state support for terrorism. Is this still an interest of the United States?

MR. SCHEUER: Iran has multiple interests, both cultural and historical, in Afghanistan. They are clearly in competition with the Sunnis for using Afghanistan as a portal into Central Asia for spreading Shiism and Sunnism in that area of the world.

DR. BYMAN: If you look at the two most active state sponsors of terrorism, they are Iran, which is on the U.S. list, and Pakistan, which is not. What both countries are up to is engaging the terrorism directed against – in Iran's case in particular – U.S. interests. But Iran has not been responsible for using terrorism to kill Americans directly in many years. Both countries are supporting proxies to achieve a range of national objectives, but the scope and scale of state sponsorship of terrorism is dramatically different than it was 20 years ago. When we talk about al-Qaeda and state sponsorship today, what we should be focusing on is a very different challenge: passive sponsorship, deliberately looking the other way while support for radicalism occurs on their soil. Usually this is because there are strong domestic interest groups that support radicalism.

AMB. FREEMAN: You're describing U.S. support for the IRA.

DR. BYMAN: Exactly. This is the United States and the IRA in the 1970s; this is the Saudis and various jihadist groups in the 1990s; this is Pakistan and jihadist groups that perhaps continues to this day. These are countries that, for various reasons, do not confront their own problems at home. This is where our efforts on state sponsorship could go. Unfortunately, we lack the thinking about this issue in a serious way; we lack categories; we lack legislation. We have extreme categories – you are not a sponsor or you are. As a result, we don't even follow our own procedures on that.

DR. LIEVEN: Weak authoritarian states of the kind you get across most of the Muslim world do not



control even their own forces to the extent that it's sometimes assumed here in America. Therefore, you have people within the state system who are at the very least turning a blind eye to terrorism without this being the will of the government as such. Mike Scheuer said that Musharraf has gone very far indeed – probably as far as the Pakistani system will allow – in helping us against terrorism.

When I was last in Pakistan, I talked with a senior police officer in Karachi who said that, when he received orders to go after a particular jihadi figure or group, he shared that information with only two colleagues. Two. He informed the rest of the men who were going to have to carry out the operation literally the minute they got into their jeeps and buses to carry out the arrest. He was convinced, with good reason, that his police organization was thoroughly penetrated by sympathizers of the extremist groups concerned, and that they would be tipped off and disappear.

On Iran, an American journalist not so long ago asked me this question: How long has there been this Iranian stake in Afghanistan? How long have the Iranians been so concerned? It was obvious from his tone and the context that he expected me to say that it goes back to the Taliban days or back to Khomeini. But I said, Well, not much more than 2,500 years.

This is worth remembering with regard to Afghanistan and Iraq and a number of other things as well. It is overwhelmingly probable in historical terms that long, long after America and Britain have gone home from the Middle East, Iran will still be there.

COL. LANG: We forget that, from inside these Muslim and Arab countries, a lot of groups we're talking about look very different. One example is the Society of the Muslim Brothers, the Ikhwan al-Muslimun, in Jordan. It's an open secret that the Hashemite monarchy provided shelter to the Muslim Brothers, especially when they were driven out of Syria on repeated occasions. In Jordan, they never caused any particular trouble. As long as they kept quiet, they were tolerated and their aspirations were thought vaguely providential. During the first Chechen war, the immediate reaction here in the United States was that the Chechen rebels – who at that time were not much influenced by Wahabi-inspired jihadism – had to be bad people. They were rebels against the emerging Russian state and modern Westernism. I thought that was ridiculous. I heard a former chief of staff of the U.S. Army say over at CSIS that, of course, we have to back the Russians against these people. Why “of course”? This is a complete mystery to me. But we continue to see people react in that way automatically.

AMB. FREEMAN: I'm just going to make two comments on state sponsorship of terrorism. First, to the extent that state sponsorship is the issue, we know how to deal with it. You can deter state actions in ways that are very difficult to achieve with non-state actors. It's not that you can't inhibit non-state actors. You can. We know how to do that with organized crime, which is the classic non-state actor. Terrorists are not fundamentally different in terms of the sort of the problem they represent for the state. So, in some ways, our job would be easier if, indeed, state sponsorship of terrorism were once again the norm, as it was in the past.

Second, and perhaps more important, addressing the point that Dan Byman made about acquiescence by states in the use of their territory for various purposes related to terrorism: The danger here is that the trends in the Muslim world overall – the increasing lack of sympathy and even active antipathy to the United States – will gradually have a series of effects. One of them will be to make American bases or the American military presence in a Muslim country an attractive nuisance: it attracts, rather than repels, security problems. Therefore, the American presence, although intended to bolster security, ends up becoming a security problem. We saw that in Saudi Arabia, and we may see it elsewhere in the Gulf if current trends continue, as well as in Uzbekistan, Pakistan and other places. So governments, because of the withdrawal of sympathy for the United States by their populace and the turn toward antipathy, are no longer able to be partners with the United States. They are forced to withhold cooperation because that is what their publics demand.



Third, non-cooperation transmutes itself into some sort of clandestine support for the enemies of the United States. This is what majorities in many Muslim countries now would prefer. So we have a set of evolutions going on here that bear directly on the question you raise. And the end of the story, as several of the speakers have said, has not yet been written.

Q: In one of the last staff reports of the 9/11 Commission, which went into a detailed account of the attacks of September 11 as told by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, there is a brief note that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed joined the Muslim Brotherhood at age 16. What is the relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda in this larger militant jihadist movement? What are the implications of that, since it's a much larger, much more established, and much more sophisticated organization?

COL. LANG: The Society of the Muslim Brothers has become a political force in a lot of ways. You can trace a clear relationship to some of the Egyptian groups that became Egyptian Islamic Jihad and things like this. There were splinters of the Muslim Brothers, driven underground in various ways. – I think that's true. They are probably one of the main threads in the development of Sunni jihadism. But, having said that, what you're talking about really is an expression of the kinds of historical forces that we have been discussing. Water finds its own course. People have grievances and aspirations, and they're going to find expression organizationally.

DR. LIEVEN: The British police and security forces used to make a distinction between pub nationalists – Irish nationalists who get together in pubs, sing republican songs and commemorate the old defeats and battles – and the hard men who are actually prepared to join the active IRA and carry out terrorist attacks. The one is derived from the other. The recruiters operated in that republican world of sentiment, but then set up much smaller, tighter, secret groups who actually carried out the attacks. They can't be separated. At the same time, they can't be identified absolutely either.

MR. SCHEUER: The ties between the Brotherhood and the jihadi movement are very close. If you go back to the war against the Soviets, Hazam was a very prominent Muslim Brotherhood figure. We used to cut the world in half: Hazam brought money to the mujahedin in Afghanistan through the Muslim Brotherhood; Bin Laden brought the money in from the Gulf. And personally, when Asad did in the Brotherhood in Syria, Bin Laden's family welcomed many of the senior leaders of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood who escaped into Saudi Arabia, and gave them employment and places to live. When Bin Laden lived in Khartoum from '91 through '96, some of his closest associates were ex-members or exiled members of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. If I remember correctly, in Egypt we weren't even allowed to talk to the Brotherhood because it offended the government there. We don't really have much of an intelligence base on the Brotherhood.

Q: Policy makers ignore the differences between Americans and some of the societies in which we intervene. But don't they sometimes ignore the similarities? Didn't people think that the occupation of Iraq might be good from the point of view of the Iraqis? I once asked the prime minister of Estonia whether he wasn't concerned that the Iraqis might view Estonian and American intervention the way Estonia viewed the Soviet presence in Estonia. He said, Not at all, the Soviets were communist imperialists, and we're there to bring freedom.

COL. LANG: I actually never heard anybody say that they thought the occupation of Iraq would be a good thing. I would have remembered that.

AMB. FREEMAN: Yes, because it's preposterous. For many reasons, people occupy places, and they find that they are corrupted by the experience, even as the occupied are equally corrupted. One does not fight a war for the purpose of occupying places – until now. This was a first.

COL. LANG: But we didn't prepare to occupy Iraq. If people in the Islamic world think we did,



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they don't know how we would have done that. My father was an official in the occupation of Germany. He went to school for that for a year and a half before the event. It was all very well organized in the best American industrial tradition. We didn't do any of that for Iraq.

We didn't bring enough force in the period when poor General Garner was sent over there to try to stand up a government; there was nothing there to support him. These people didn't have vehicles, they didn't have staff, they didn't have a logistical base, they didn't have communications. They had nothing. They arrived on the scene and there was nothing to deal with. The government had dissolved and gone away, and the country was in chaos. This isn't preparation for occupation.

We did not prepare to occupy Iraq because we simply believed in our fantasy that it would not be necessary. We would overthrow Saddam's government, and the efficient and hardworking Iraqi bureaucracy would stand up the next day, come to work in their blue suits, white shirts and red ties, and everything would be great. Guess what? It didn't happen. And we had no fallback plan at all.

In the months before the invasion, when I was still willing to go over to [Fox News] and talk on their programs, I used to ask their consultants in the makeup room or the greenroom, What if you're wrong? What if it becomes necessary to occupy the country? What if there is resistance? What if the Iraqis do what, on long acquaintance, I believe they are likely to do, which is to fight back against this indignity? They said, you don't have to worry, that's completely out of the question. It isn't even worth thinking about. So we did this to ourselves.

AMB. FREEMAN: There was fairly extensive planning done for a reconstruction phase in Iraq under State Department auspices over the course of a year. But, in December 2002, the Joint Forces Command was assigned responsibility for that effort by the secretary of defense; and he also instructed them not to look at the State Department planning, which they did not. In fact, Jay Garner's efforts to bring someone from the State Department's planning effort into his team met with an angry rebuff from the vice president and the secretary of defense. The individual concerned was dismissed. So there was a chain of command here that deliberately did not plan in accordance with the fantasies that Pat Lang has suggested we were indulging in.

COL. LANG: I'm well aware of what Ambassador Freeman is talking about. It was a noble effort, but in the end it wasn't accepted.

AMB. FREEMAN: I was actually at the Joint Forces Command and asked them whether they had looked at the State Department effort. They said No, they had been told not to and that, anyway, they were told it was worthless. I asked, How can you know that it's worthless if you haven't looked at it? They said, We've been instructed that it's worthless, so it was worthless.

Q: I'd like to ask about the confirmation of the chief law enforcement officer, Mr. Gonzalez, as it relates to the war on terrorism. Gonzalez is implicated in the preparation of the memos that authorized the infliction of pain short of death and other things to disguise skirting the limits of torture and crossing into that as a means of obtaining actionable intelligence. I have heard that policy described as sabotaging our overall military mission in Iraq. I would like a comment on what that has done to the integrity of our military and American institutions and its effect on the Arab and Muslim world in terms of welcoming the United States as the beacon of hope, which I think the present government is still deluded in thinking is the case.

DR. BYMAN: We talk about the effect of something like Abu Ghraib on the Muslim world, but I think we as a broader analytic community have missed the point. If you put 150,000 troops in a difficult war zone for an extended period of time and surround them with cameras – phone cameras – you're going to see problems and abuses inevitably. Counterinsurgency warfare is by nature an exceptionally brutal form of warfare.



Abu Ghraib might not have happened if particular things had been done differently. But the idea that you would have a long sustained conflict where civilians are mixed up with combatants and nothing horrible is going to happen to some innocents, it reflects the level of naïveté about warfare. We have sold ourselves a bill of goods on the nature of counterinsurgency warfare – that we can do everything in a simple, clean, honest way – that only good guys will do this and only bad guys will be hurt, when, in fact, interrogation techniques and singling out the combatants make this much, much more difficult.

The abuses that occurred are completely inappropriate, and someone should be punished – not a low-ranking officer, but someone quite senior should be held accountable. This was a golden opportunity to show the rest of the world that the United States is a nation of laws and is a nation of accountability, and rather than seize this, we shunned it, which I think was a big mistake.

MR. SCHEUER: We are living with the results of delusionary attitudes towards warfare. We can't have wars like the Serbian war, the great war from 25,000 feet where no Americans were killed and you couldn't see anybody on the ground getting killed or maimed. This is a much different activity.

Afghanistan and Iraq are both instances where we, the mightiest power on earth, have not at all intimidated our enemies. They looked up after the war in Afghanistan and after the initial war in Iraq and said, we survived this one, we rode it out, it didn't bother us. To me, Abu Ghraib is the natural consequence of 20 years of not wanting to behave in a way that would show the American people that wars are necessarily about killing.

The whole question of the prisoner program at Guantanamo is a direct result of two things: first, not wanting to talk about the nature of war, and, second, the law-enforcement mentality – thinking that, if somehow we get enough information from this one guy in prison, we're going to be able to capture Osama bin Laden and that's going to be the end of the day. It's wrong, but it's not something that came up under this administration. For the last 20 years we've been trying to conduct foreign policy through the U.S. courts.

DR. LIEVEN: This is a point that I've been making for many years concerning also the Russian experience in Grozny and, indeed, the American experience in Mogadishu – the very ugly nature of this kind of warfare. A report in *The Economist* about U.S. troops in Ramadi recalls almost word for word what Russian soldiers said to me about their experiences in Grozny and how they reacted. If you think you're going to be shot when you go into a house, you're going to chuck a grenade in first and ask questions later.

On Gonzales and the officially sanctioned torture of prisoners: compared to many Muslim regimes, America has behaved with relative restraint, historically speaking. What makes this so bad, and indeed grotesque, is that this administration has combined such policies with rhetoric, at least of bringing democracy and human rights to the Muslim world. That, frankly, is a sick joke. The administration had a chance to distance itself from what had happened, but the choice of Gonzales is a slap in the face, not only to democrats in the Middle East, but also to Europeans who would like to cooperate with America in trying to bring some democratic progress to the region.

COL. LANG: Killing people in combat and on a large scale, which is a necessary part of warfare, gets very rough. But I think there's a very great difference between the application of massive force to effect legitimate military objectives and treating somebody like a dirty dog in a prison by taking their clothes off, heaping them up in stacks and enjoying taking pictures of them. This should be dealt with as a disciplinary matter. If this behavior was encouraged by the administration by its laxity and its attitude toward people's rights, including enemy combatants' rights, that's a great shame. But I don't think it's a good idea to go around talking about this kind of warfare and that kind of warfare. I've been in a number of these wars, and people behaved themselves a lot better than this, in fact.



If you want to see how bad this can get, you should read Paul Aussaresses's *The Battle of the Casbah*. He was the French intelligence officer who destroyed the FLN apparatus in Algiers. When they arrested suspects, they tortured them until they confessed, and then they shot them immediately. They killed 800 or 1,000 Algerians in a series of nights over a period of four or five months. If you start saying, this is a tough fight, so we're justified doing this or that, you're going to end up in that bag. I don't think the United States wants to be there.

AMB. FREEMAN: But the questioner is asking the administration to acknowledge mistakes and repent of its sins, and it does not acknowledge that it has made any mistakes or that it has any sins to repent of. Those who argued against the intervention in Iraq, and who have made some of the points about a more effective conduct of the war on terror that have been made by the panelists, have been dismissed from the second term. Those who advocated the policies to which you object and about which many of us have grave doubts have been held on in office.

It's a political judgment on the part of the White House, and it's consistent across the board. Judge Alberto "Torquemada" Gonzales is not an exception any more than he's in the mold of the "Ayatollah" Ashcroft, whom he's succeeding. I would argue that the United States is on much better ground when we aspire to a higher standard and when we have the capacity to inspire others by our example than when we sink to the level that others may have attained – the French in the Casbah.

Q: When al-Qaeda clones act together in Iraq or in Chechnya, are those planned mobilizations or anomalies? And what kind of gravity does Osama bin Laden have with a separate node that has its own leader and its own set of goals?

DR. BYMAN: When it comes to the individuality of the various nodes and when they come together and when they don't, this is an idea that Bin Laden has promulgated. If you look at the state of the various Muslim resistance movements in 1992, you had many nodes that were all going in different directions and had different goals. He gradually tried to bring them together. In part, that was operational; in part, it was ideological. He wanted to say, you have common goals; you should move towards them. In part it was, if you need a logistics cell, you should all go to this guy because he can help you. It was very effective. We've seen the movement shift in that way, and since September 11, return a bit more to the pre-9/11 era, when its component parts become more important.

The desire almost always is to have larger groups acting in concert. And that isn't only in relatively absurd think-tank games. Do you really want swarms of individuals acting on their own? Almost any political leader will tell you that coherent organized action is the key to success and al-Qaeda has done that to some degree.

But what Bin Laden does, as Mike pointed out earlier, is try to get five guys in a café who haven't thought of themselves as warriors to think of themselves as warriors and organize to act and join a broader movement. Moving different groups together and inspiring new ones are important parts of what he's about.

DR. LIEVEN: Clones is the wrong idea. These groups grew up autonomously, some of them long predating al-Qaeda, as we've heard. I think Dan has given exactly the right picture of how this has worked. A critical question in this regard is the spread of technology – above all, technology of mass destruction. If it spreads sufficiently far in the future, the power even of relatively small groups to carry out catastrophic attacks will be enormously increased. Although I'm very critical of this administration, I would agree with Professor Byman that breaking up this al-Qaeda attempt at a degree of centralization has been relatively successful and certainly quite important.

MR. SCHEUER: I think Bin Laden made a decision early on that unity and control were neither wise nor possible to obtain. In some ways, he has given a hostage to fortune because he doesn't have



direct control over events. Madrid probably caused him a little bit of angst. If it had come off as it was supposed to, there would have been many more casualties. The last thing al-Qaeda wants to do is to be the agent of transatlantic reconciliation, and a big attack in Europe might accomplish that. I'm convinced that he doesn't mind the swarms of people doing things. As long as they're doing them against the West and against the Americans and their allies, it's all moving in Bin Laden's direction. His concern on command and control is within the military component of al-Qaeda.

AMB. FREEMAN: But I'm sure you would not argue, Mike, that all this was about Osama bin Laden. We've succeeded in beatifying him within the ranks of the Islamic extremists by giving him so much attention.

MR. SCHEUER: No, I think that's wrong, Mr. Ambassador. I think that's the silliness that was hatched under Clinton, who decided – and now this government has also – that somehow, if we didn't talk about this guy, he would go away. I think he's extraordinarily important, not only because of his own character and behavior rhetoric, but because the Islamic world is bereft of leadership. He's a hero. He's cut from the mold of Islamic heroes.

AMB. FREEMAN: That of course gets to the point about his efforts to form a pan-Islamic resistance – a political movement.

MR. SCHEUER: Clearly, al-Qaeda is the strategic threat to the United States in the near term. At some point, we're going to have to decide how many of these offshoot insurgencies we want to fight or need to fight.

AMB. FREEMAN: I think that is a fundamental point, because some would argue that, in fact, we have broadened the struggle to such an extent that we are uniting many enemies against us who would not otherwise take that role.

Q: My question has to do with the moral responsibility of the military officers today, especially the active-duty ones and not just the retired ones, and also the strategic culture in our military. Why weren't fundamental questions asked? Like, what are our war and peace aims? Who is the enemy? How are you going to fight against terrorism, which is a method like psychological warfare – you're not going to defeat it? What I see is the passivity among our military officers and this lack of even thinking with love of our own men after what some of us went through in Vietnam.

COL. LANG: The article that Ambassador Freeman talked about that I wrote for *Middle East Policy*, "Drinking the Kool-Aid," was about this issue, this whole phenomenon of our run-up to the war. The leaders of both the intelligence community and the armed forces did not, in my opinion, honor their obligation, which was to stand up to these people and say no. If you're fired, so what? What are you there for if not to be fired? When I was the defense intelligence officer for the Middle East, I worked for a guy who used to tell us every day at meetings of the Board of Defense Intelligence Officers, "Remember, you're here today to act as though it is your last day." The standard of performance of military officers – and I think this extends in large part to civilian intelligence as well – is such that you have a primary obligation to the people of the United States and the Constitution which goes far beyond your personal interests. If you're not willing to stand up and be counted, then you become just another faceless bureaucrat. I am told by former associates and students of mine now serving in both Iraq and Afghanistan that the attitude prevails there, that even though people who know better tell the boss what the real deal is, the general atmosphere is such that they are not allowed to believe that is the case, because they have guidance from above. That's a real failure of the professional ethic, certainly in the military services.

AMB. FREEMAN: When the civilian leadership is deaf to professional military advice and punishes dissent that is reality-based, we have to admit that the problem goes beyond the military.

MR. SCHEUER: This issue cuts to the heart of America's problems. In the years ahead, we will see



that the Graham Commission and then the 9/11 Commission were abject failures because they were never willing to take a look at personal culpability in terms of how we got to 9/11, to mention just one issue, which I can speak to with some degree of experience.

Ralph Peters has written that the senior levels of our military and intelligence services are populated by "minor con men." Unfortunately, over the course of my career, that has grown to be very true. There is no willingness to tell the emperor that he has no clothes. There was a tremendous argument, for example, within the agency over the formation of the Terrorist Threat Intelligence Center, which is an absurdity in terms of the intelligence community at the moment, but it was blessed. It was bipartisan. Andrew Card was on one side and Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) was on the other side. So it had to be a sacred, foolproof institution. But it is a voyeur, an organization that looks around for threats. It's now a big organization, but as Colonel Lang will tell you, every other intelligence component in the community also "does threat."

What they've done is to siphon off a great number of the officers who were actually supporting operations overseas, whether military or clandestine, to put into this TTIC. Tenet didn't stand up; no one stood up and said, Wait a minute, you're going to weaken our attack against the enemy by doing this. We shouldn't have to tell the president every day that there's a threat. This is a war. That is the most recent example, but I've seen this repeatedly. For any number of reasons – most of them career reasons and the pot of gold that's at the end of the road with consulting firms now for generals and SIS officers and the intelligence community – there is a clear lack of willingness to buck the system and no willingness to resign.

AMB. FREEMAN: There have been some exceptions, some from the Foreign Service – Brady Kiesling and others – who did what I think is the right thing when one has a fundamental problem with policy and can't, in good conscience, implement it: namely, to resign and publicly state the reasons for doing so. In recent history we've seen, in connection with this terrorist business, one chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force, Ron Fogleman, resign on principle rather than allow his subordinates to be subjected to a witch hunt. And we have the case of the retired generals who have criticized the appointment of Mr. Gonzales as attorney general, although it is easier to do that from retirement, admittedly, than from active duty. Nevertheless, I think they see themselves as setting a standard and an example. But I think you raise a very profound point and one that's deeply troubling to many in the military as well as in the career civil service ranks at the agency, at the State Department and elsewhere. It's not going to go away and it shows no signs of improving.

Q: Is there any indication, now that we're in Iraq and this is not quite what we expected, that anything has changed within the inner circle?

COL. LANG: As you may have guessed, I'm not in the inner circle, but everything I hear indicates to me that nothing at all has changed. The basic judgments remain very largely the same. It's just gotten so messy in Iraq now that they have sent General Luck over to try to figure out how to fix this without having to say it needs fixing.

AMB. FREEMAN: I would say that Gary Luck, whom I know, has the great merit of being blunt and honest. He does not allow himself to be fooled very easily. He's also a hell of a killer – not disturbed by death. The question is, will those in Washington who made the decisions that have turned out so poorly in practice be willing to consider some arguments about changing course? So far the answer is no.

COL. LANG: It is a common misconception that some of our military officers out there have a weak stomach for killing. Not so, in fact. There are very few like that, and they are always thought of as misfits in the armed forces.

MR. SCHEUER: One of the tragic things that has happened because of the Iraq war is that the



American people have come away believing that the intelligence community, on both the operational side and the analytic side, are bumbling fools. From within the office charged with attacking terrorism at the CIA, there is a universal belief that war in Iraq will undo most of what we have done since 1996. As far as I know, that was written down. The question then becomes, did it get to the president? Leaving aside the question, would it have made a difference, there's no way of knowing whether that analytic view or operational perspective ever reached the president. Within the agency since Mr. Casey died, there's been a steady retreat from taking substantive experts to talk to the president or the secretary of defense or the secretary of state. Under George Tenet, Mr. Tenet became the briefer-in-chief to the president. He was there every day for the first time in the history of the CIA.

So much of the damage done to the agency and to the other analytic components of the intelligence community is unknowable because we don't know what the president was told. The ability to avoid these situations was there all along. The question lies with these "minor con men." What did they tell the president and the secretary of defense, not just under this president but under the past several presidents?

AMB. FREEMAN: One can waste a lot of time trying to figure out why it was that we launched a war which was so widely opposed by the uniformed military, the intelligence service and the diplomatic service. And there's no question that the bureaucracies were very skeptical and by and large opposed to the course of action that our political leadership decided upon. But that's done. We're there. Now how we get out is the operative issue: how we get out with honor and without compounding some obvious errors that have been made, and how we get out in a way that helps rather than hurts the security of our country.

Unfortunately, we just went through a presidential campaign in which there was absolutely no discussion of this key issue. We had our moment to redefine our purposes and our course of action, and neither candidate stepped up to that issue. So here we are in 2005 waiting for the debacle to become so obvious that even those who operate on the basis of hallucinatory optimism are unable to continue to do so. That is a sad situation to be in.

Q: In the '60s and '70s in the Middle East, we had terrorists mostly aligned with the secular left. In the '80s, we had some mostly concentrated in Shia sections of the Middle East. Now we've got the Sunnis. Are we chasing the wind, or are the events chasing us? My other question is mostly directed to Michael Scheuer. How does he see the Afghanistan situation?

DR. LIEVEN: It's a fascinating phenomenon which I also observed in the former Soviet Union, that people who would be political entrepreneurs or opportunists and, in the past would certainly have adopted the language of left-wing national liberation, in the '90s adopted Muslim or Islamist terms. In some cases, they tried this and it didn't really stick, so they dropped it and it went away. In other cases, it did stick and this identity became more and more important. It's a very complex process.

What we definitely have to beware of is something that Zbigniew Brzezinski has warned about repeatedly – uniting our enemies rather than dividing them. It should be obvious to everybody who knows the Middle East that there are, indeed, many different strands of discontent in the anti-Western or anti-American feeling in that part of the world. Unfortunately, so much of what we've done has had the tendency to drive these trends together. One can imagine the possibility, if this administration does what some of its members would like to do and really goes after Iran and Hezbollah, that you will see the regrowth of Shia terrorism, and that Palestinian nationalist terrorism will internationalize itself again. That would be quite a triumph for us in the war against terror – to have started out with one enemy after 9/11 and to have created three.

Regarding Afghanistan, I too would say that things are a bit better in Afghanistan than I had



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predicted. One thing about the present position of the Taliban in Afghanistan is I think worth noting because it's a bit complex. Over very wide areas of the Pashtun countryside, the Taliban are completely protected. The people there are certainly not informing on them; they're sheltering them, whether for clan reasons, family reasons or, to some extent, religious and cultural reasons. But there is an important difference between sheltering people in your village and allowing them to use that village for attacks on American forces or on Pakistani forces or on the Afghan government, which could well bring the B-52s down on your head.

It is an absolutely central part of the Pashtun culture not to surrender relatives to outside forces, particularly infidel ones like the Americans. It's a rather different matter to allow your guests to endanger you and your family by actually carrying out active policies. That, I think, explains this curious situation where, on the one hand, we're not making headway in tracking down the Taliban, but, on the other hand, the Taliban has been strikingly unsuccessful, in proportion to their numbers, in attacking us. How this will go in the future, however, God alone knows. Karzai has been elected as somebody who can put a veneer of unity over these ethnic differences in Afghanistan. If he goes, I would not like to predict how that country will develop.

MR. SCHEUER: There are many different kinds of Islam, not only Sunni and Shia, but sects within each and tendencies within each. The syncretic nature of Islam in the Far East is also an issue. Not to deify Osama bin Laden, but the one thing Bin Laden has seen is that these cultural and sectarian differences are so great that it's very difficult to find a force within Islam to unite all of these people. Across the spectrum, what he can use is American foreign policy, though that in itself was not enough. What is enough is the combination of American foreign policy and satellite television. So every day, the Chechen mujahedin can see what's happening in the West Bank, and the boys in southern Thailand are having a view of what's going on in Ramadi. The combination of hatred for U.S. policies and the daily televising of the immediate, on-the-ground repercussions of those policies is an extraordinarily effective glue for our enemy.

On Afghanistan, I've been in that vineyard for close to two decades, and I have a tremendous respect for the Afghan people; they're going to do what they want to do at the end of the day. There was never a more altruistic covert-action program than the U.S. program in Afghanistan, not because we wanted it to be, but simply because the Afghans would never do what you told them to do, no matter how much money you gave them. If they were going to do something that you wanted done, they might change their mind just so you didn't think they did it for you.

The ethnicity problems in the tribal society of Afghanistan are such that the present situation is a very temporary one. I think the Afghans would sort of find their own water if they were left alone, but the real legacy of the Soviet invasion is that it's now a cockpit for so many countries to compete in that I suspect we've not seen the end of fairly broad violence in Afghanistan.

DR. BYMAN: In terms of why this particular challenge at this particular moment, a lot has to do with the failure of alternatives. We've seen throughout the region that we've gone through different intellectual streams of thought, whether socialism or Arab nationalism or crony capitalism. It's not terribly surprising that something that has tremendous legitimacy and appeal – the idea of Islam – has been married up with political action. Added to this are the superior organizational resources of those who could tap into Islam. It enables you to draw on a broad social network in countries where the governments have made it a matter of policy to destroy independent civil society. So there's an organizational reason and also a broader ideological one, in that alternatives have failed.

COL. LANG: I think it's very much a question of the light that failed. In the post-colonial area, these populations tended to look to ideas that had been imported from the metropole, heavily socialist in character. People tried them out to see if they would solve their problems, and they



failed, largely. Underneath you have the structure of the really indigenous culture, which is essentially Islamic, and people tend to turn to this when new ideas fail. It's quite natural that we would work our way through to bedrock emotional and cultural structures.

With regard to Afghanistan, I think we have settled in there for the long term. I don't find it at all unnatural that, of the 18,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, most of them aren't doing anything in particular except being part of the landscape. We have become really part of the longstanding structure of tribal struggle and warfare, in which the government is one of the tribes. We will probably be there for a long time. This is a natural phenomenon; we're another one of the tribes.

AMB. FREEMAN: You're just full of good news.

COL. LANG: That depends on who you are. If I were a Special Forces captain today, as I was once upon a time, I would think that Afghanistan is probably the greatest thing that ever happened on earth. Generations of people like that will learn their trade in Afghanistan in the eastern mountains. This is different than being engaged in Iraq, at the very center of the Islamic world, Islamic culture, civilization and dynamism. Afghanistan is a peripheral area.

MR. SCHEUER: America won't be there as long as it wants to. America will be there as long as the Afghans want them to. There will be a point at which the Tajik, Uzbek, Shia, Sunni and Pashtun will decide that they didn't trade a Soviet master for an American one. Even the people who are today our allies or Karzai's allies will turn against us at some point in the future. I was always wrong when I tried to guess about Afghanistan, because their idea of time is extraordinarily different from ours. But familiarity with foreigners breeds contempt like nothing else in Afghanistan, and I think we're not the master of that situation unless we want to kill a lot of people.

COL. LANG: That depends on how contemptible the foreigners are, I suppose.

Q: What would each of you do if you were the president of the United States in terms of Iraq at this point? And what was Bin Laden's calculation in endorsing Zarqawi in Iraq? Some people have said they thought that might have been a mistake, particularly in losing control. Zarqawi can now act, in a sense, in his name.

DR. BYMAN: On Zarqawi, I think the calculation was relatively straightforward. We have always played up the risk that Zarqawi could be the new Bin Laden and could overshadow him. This is something that Bin Laden, almost uniquely among leaders of a major terrorist organization, has not been concerned about: the idea that there would be some new giant who would replace him.

It's always dangerous to be the armchair psychologist, but Bin Laden has long assumed he'd be dead by now. The idea that there would be someone else out there is a comfort to him, not a challenge. He has not built up the cult of personality that we've seen many similar organizations develop. So the idea of having someone you can pass a franchise off to in the local area is perfectly logical from Bin Laden's point of view, and this is flourishing. You would want to get al-Qaeda's imprimatur on this. Then you can bolster it and draw the legitimacy benefits from it. Iraq is one of the great franchises to have in the jihadist world today.

MR. SCHEUER: I would concur with Professor Byman and make one other point. The discussions between Zarqawi and Bin Laden were probably quite extensive and difficult. The one thing Bin Laden could not brook was Zarqawi's willy-nilly killing of Shias. Bin Laden has always said, when this is over, when the Americans are gone from the region, we'll settle with our Shia brothers. But not now; it's a distraction. Zarqawi was responsible for those two big explosions in Karbala and Najaf that killed Shia by the score. As we watched them dicker over whether or not to join together, it seemed to me that it was a good point to assess who was stronger. Was Zarqawi courting Bin Laden or was Bin Laden courting Zarqawi? The terms of the agreement include something about Zarqawi not killing Shia simply because they're Shia.



Just before the announcement from Bin Laden that, "he's my amir now in Iraq," there was another small set of explosions in Karbala and Najaf that killed some Shia. Within hours, Zarqawi was on the Internet with a formal announcement saying, We didn't do this; this was not us; we're not killing Shia willy-nilly. I think Zarqawi's allegiance to al-Qaeda shows there's still very much value in that kind of an association for these offshoot groups.

COL. LANG: We try to define these guys' motivations in terms that we understand: that they're struggling for power, for reputation, for control. I don't think that's true at all. They see themselves as violent saints. So if a way can be worked out to coordinate their efforts against the infidel in Iraq, they're going to find it. As to whether or not they will or will not be violent against the Shia, let's wait and see how the election comes out before we predict what the Sunni Arabs will do.

AMB. FREEMAN: Let us turn to the subject of Iraq briefly. Pat, why don't you lead on that? Tell us what, if you were president, you would now do.

COL. LANG: Once the car goes off the cliff, you have to try to make arrangements as best you can on the way down. We need simply to accept the fact that we're going to be engaged there for a number of years. We need a much larger force in Iraq, in fact, because we need to form a shield behind which whatever government emerges from the elections – which we are obviously going to bless – can create itself and form a new society in Iraq. This is going to be a very tough thing; and it's going to last a long time. But we did it to ourselves, so now we're responsible. You can't just walk away from these things.

DR. LIEVEN: I'd agree with that. I also very strongly opposed this war, but I believe that now we have no choice but to stay for a considerable period. It's obvious that without American, and to a much lesser extent British, troops it will be impossible for any kind of orderly and halfway civilized regime, let alone a democracy, to take shape. I would say in that regard, though, that any kind of long-term stability in Iraq, and in Afghanistan as well, will depend very heavily on the establishment of some kind of consensus in the region in support of that stability and in support of the Iraqi order. Our problem is that we rigidly and deliberately excluded two of the key players in this regard – Iran and Syria – despite the fact that, after 9/11, for their own very good reasons, there were serious overtures, something that Seymour Hersh has written a lot about, from both Syria and Iran. Both of them had an absolutely pathological hatred and fear of al-Qaeda and its allies in the Sunni extremist Islamist world.

Of course, the establishment of any such regional consensus in support of an Iraqi settlement will be very difficult. Like Afghanistan, Iraq is an obvious cockpit where there are so many different powers involved: Turkey, Iran, Syria, the Arab nationalists, Saudi Arabia. Not enough has been made of the rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran in recent years. There may be a possibility, given that all the regimes in the region are threatened both by Sunni Islamist extremism now and by the prospect of chaos and civil war in Iraq. They're particularly threatened in some of their vital interests by the prospect of a full-scale civil war between Shia and Sunni Arab forces, perhaps involving the Kurds.

A more intelligent geopolitical strategy on the part of America – and many of us have pointed to the Nixon-Kissinger opening to China in this regard – would stand some chance of putting the building blocks in place that could sustain at least an Iraq that isn't a complete nightmare after we eventually withdraw. I'm not being naively optimistic about that, but without it we have absolutely no chance at all in the long run of creating any kind of stable order in Iraq that won't be based, in the end, on some kind of Shia-Kurdish alliance to crush the Sunni Arabs – with everything that that would mean for the alienation of the rest of the Sunni Arab world.

MR. SCHEUER: I always worry when honor and face saving and that kind of thing creep into the discussion. Any further involvement in Iraq is just simply reinforcing defeat. We're beaten there,



and that's the point. We'll have to leave sooner rather than later because the American people, once they realize what we've gotten into, are going to demand that. Maybe a three-stage federal system, maybe a civil war, but at some point we have to get down to what's in America's interests, and there really isn't much there that's an American interest at the moment. I hate to sound cold-blooded, but there's no sense, in my mind, of greatly expanding a force that's going to get beaten in the long run anyway. It's just a waste. I would argue that virtually every soldier who's died there has been a waste so far, because we've accomplished virtually nothing except to make matters worse. So I'm for getting out as quickly as possible and not about whatever we call honor and saving face.

DR. BYMAN: I think our current level of commitment is probably the worst of all worlds. It's not remotely enough of what we need to have some chance of victory, but it's doing a lot of damage. And, as people in this room know better than I, it is staggeringly expensive, both in terms of lives and dollars. I would say it is unsustainable for that reason. I'm not sure escalating the size and effort, and changing the mission appropriately, is feasible. I don't think there's the political will in this country. If that is true, my biggest concern is preventing Iraq from degenerating into chaos that will destroy the country. That would be horrible for the Iraqis, and from a U.S. point of view, it would create a haven for jihadists. This would force the United States to invade the country again in 10 years to extirpate this presence.

I would call for considering a significant draw-down, but not departure, of U.S. forces in order to maintain influence, to play kingmaker, and to show that the United States is not an occupying power. The United States would be a tremendous influence in the country, but would not be running the show. That might be best for all concerned.

COL. LANG: You run the risk of defeat in detail if you start withdrawing part of the force. This is a great risk from a military point of view. We don't have overwhelming force there now. And I would argue that the result of our recent national election points to the fact that the American people do not yet accept the idea that we are not going to prevail in Iraq at all. They have elected this administration without any evidence of a change of policy on its part, so to say that we should withdraw from there is just politically unreal at this point. We're going to be there for several more years anyway; in that context, I think we'd better try to reinforce our position there and create a real government. I don't know what else we can do.

AMB. FREEMAN: So, Pat, you're offering a professional military judgment about what is required; you're not making a political statement about Iraq.

COL. LANG: I'm saying, I don't think people in this country are prepared to accept the idea of defeat in Iraq.

AMB. FREEMAN: I would agree that we're not there politically. It may be apparent to those on the panel that things are going very badly – far worse than the press reports – but that is not the perception in the country at large. I think this has to be accepted as a fact.