AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

[H.A.S.C. No. 110–78]

A THIRD WAY: ALTERNATIVES FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE (PART 3 OF 4)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
JULY 25, 2007

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

38–758 WASHINGTON : 2008

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

VIC SNYDER, Arkansas *Chairman*

JOHN SPRATT, South Carolina
LORETTA SANCHEZ, California
ELLEN O. TAUSCHER, California
ROBERT ANDREWS, New Jersey
SUSAN A. DAVIS, California
JIM COOPER, Tennessee
HANK JOHNSON, Georgia
JOE SESTAK, Pennsylvania

W. TODD AKIN, Missouri
ROSCOE G. BARTLETT, Maryland
WALTER B. JONES, North Carolina
JEFF MILLER, Florida
PHIL GINGREY, Georgia
K. MICHAEL CONAWAY, Texas
GEOFF DAVIS, Kentucky

GREG MARCHAND, *Professional Staff Member*
THOMAS HAWLEY, *Professional Staff Member*
ROGER ZAKHEIM, *Professional Staff Member*
SASHA ROGERS, *Research Assistant*

CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF HEARINGS

2007

Page

HEARING:

Wednesday, July 25, 2007, A Third Way: Alternatives for Iraq's Future (Part 3 of 4) 1

APPENDIX:

Wednesday, July 25, 2007 47

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2007

A THIRD WAY: ALTERNATIVES FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE (PART 3 OF 4)

STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

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

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

WITNESSES

Biddle, Dr. Stephen, Senior Fellow for Defense Policy, Council on Foreign Relations 4

Eaton, Maj. Gen. Paul D., (Ret.), Former Commander, Coalition Military Assistance Training Team, Iraq, U.S. Army 8

Hughes, Col. Paul, (Ret.), Senior Program Officer, Center for Post-Conflict Peace and Stability Operations, United States Institute of Peace, U.S. Army 6

West, Hon. Francis J. "Bing", former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs 10

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENTS:

Akin, Hon. W. Todd 53

Biddle, Dr. Stephen 71

Eaton, Maj. Gen. Paul D., (Ret.) 59

Hughes, Col. Paul (Ret.) 64

Snyder, Hon. Vic 51

West, Hon. Francis J. 56

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:

[There were no Documents submitted.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:

[There were no Questions submitted.]

A THIRD WAY: ALTERNATIVES FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE (PART 3 OF 4)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, July 25, 2007.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:05 a.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Vic Snyder (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

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

Dr. SNYDER. The hearing will come to order.

Good morning, and welcome to the third in a series of four hearings we are holding during the month of July, that the Subcommittee on Oversight Investigations is holding, on alternative strategies for Iraq.

We are holding these hearings because Mr. Akin and I and others have been frustrated by the tone of the debate and discussions about Iraq we have heard for the rest of the past few months of this year and the polarization that has occurred in this Congress and in this country.

We wanted to have a series of hearings in which we invited smart, experienced people—granted, with different backgrounds—to help us identify and develop what should be the appropriate approaches for Iraq, looking toward: Are there approaches other than the ones that we have been hearing in the debate on the House and Senate floor?

Our intent is less to critique current or past policies, but more to focus on the future. And we hope through these hearings to enhance the public debate and inform the full committee deliberations.

I think we are off to an excellent start. I think the other committee members do, too.

Over the past two weeks, we have heard from retired senior military officers, defense policy experts, and academics who specialize on the Middle East, including General Wesley Clark, Max Boot of the Council on Foreign Relations, Dr. Muqtedar Khan of the University of Delaware and Brookings, and Dr. Daniel Byman of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

At the same time, the full committee has held hearings on trends and recent security developments in Iraq, and this afternoon, will hold a joint session with the Permanent Select Committee on Intel-

ligence to receive testimony regarding implications of the recent NIE with respect to al Qaeda.

We have asked our witnesses to look forward rather than backward. We are not intent on a rehashing how we got to where we are. They have been asked to address alternative strategies, and have been given guidance that should allow the subcommittee and the public to draw comparisons in key areas.

Each witness today has provided us with a written statement, and I think it is clear from these statements that we have a variety of backgrounds, perspectives and ideas. And I hope that today will bring a vigorous discussion not only between the subcommittee members and the witnesses, but between the witnesses themselves. Anyone who was here two weeks ago for our first hearing will tell you that is the kind of productive exchange that we had and are looking for.

Today's hearing will begin with a statement from the Honorable Bing West, an award-winning author, correspondent for the Atlantic Monthly, former Marine Combat Commander, and Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs during the Reagan Administration.

Mr. West will be followed by Major General Paul Eaton, who retired from the Army in 2006 after 33 years of military service, including command of the initial effort to develop a new Iraqi army in 2003 and 2004.

Our third witness is Colonel Paul Hughes, whose resume includes a distinguished military career and also, since retiring from the Army, work on the Iraq Study Group's military and security expert working group.

Finally, we have with us Dr. Stephen Biddle, a senior fellow for defense policy and the top analyst on Iraq at the Council on Foreign Relations.

We welcome you all.

And Mr. Akin is recognized for any opening comments he would like to make.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Snyder can be found in the Appendix on page 51.]

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

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning to the witnesses, and thank you for joining us here today.

The hearing is the third in the series aimed at breaking out of the false construct about Iraq, and that is to look at it either while we have a choice of a precipitous withdrawal or stay the course. We think there are going to be some better alternatives.

While these hearings have been constructive, I would like to emphasize and reiterate the purpose of the exercise: that we are here to discuss alternatives that truly offer a different plan to the current strategy. Just critiquing the current approach is not the point of this hearing, and it is helpful only as it suggests other possibilities.

So I look forward to hearing the witnesses discuss and define alternatives plans, if you think that one is appropriate.

After reviewing our witnesses' testimonials, it is clear that some advocate departing from the current strategy. General Eaton, Colonel Hughes do not endorse pursuing a plan that emphasizes U.S. combat forces going door-to-door, performing a counter-insurgency mission aimed at securing and holding Iraqi neighborhoods. Dr. Biddle's testimony acknowledges that the current plan has a chance of success but believes the likeliest outcome of the surge is eventual failure. Only Mr. West would seem to argue in favor of the current strategy.

I have a couple of questions I would like our witnesses to address over the course of the hearing.

Those who advocate departing from the current strategy emphasize the need for improving the readiness of the Army and Marine Corps. While I think all members agree that this is an important issue and a vital priority, I am curious how your alternative will allow U.S. troops to carry out the following military roles and missions: one, training Iraqi security forces; two, deterring conventional militants from intervening in Iraq; three, supporting al Qaeda's enemies; and four, conducting direct strike missions.

Almost all of the experts who have testified before this subcommittee on this subject agree that continuing these roles and missions in Iraq is important.

Finally, according to previous witnesses, increased violence, humanitarian tragedy, a failed state, emboldened terrorists and regional actors will all result in the wake of the withdrawal or significant drawdown of American forces. I would like to know how our witnesses will ensure that their plan will not make the situation worse.

For those concerned about readiness, how will we ensure that, subsequent to withdrawal, the U.S. will not find itself in a situation where U.S. forces will have to return to Iraq in five or ten years?

I would also appreciate it if you would take some time this morning to discuss how the U.S. should manage the consequences of withdrawal.

Thank you again for being here.

Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Akin can be found in the Appendix on page 53.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Akin.

All four of you have submitted written statements, and, without objection, they will be made a part of the record of the subcommittee hearing.

We will use the light system. You will see a green light go on, and at some point, you will see a little flashing yellow and then the red light. That is the five-minute notice. If you need more time, then take it, but it is just to give you an idea of where you are at. And hopefully, we will be fairly close to that so we can get into our questions.

I also want to give you fair notice of what my first question will be, which is—Mr. Akin and I put ourselves on the five-minute clock, which we try to follow pretty strictly, but I will ask each of

you to critique anything you hear from other members or their written statements in the spirit of a full and spirited discussion. So you may want to pay attention both to what you hear and what you say, because you may be critiqued for it by your colleagues.

So, Dr. Biddle, let us start with you, and I think we will just go down the line.

We appreciate you all very much for you being here and appreciate you all having your written statements in in a timely fashion.

Dr. Biddle.

STATEMENT OF DR. STEPHEN BIDDLE, SENIOR FELLOW FOR DEFENSE POLICY, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Dr. BIDDLE. Let me thank the committee for this opportunity to talk with you about this rather important set of issues.

I think the first observation I would make is that there aren't any good options for Iraq, either at the extremes or the middle. There is nothing that looks like an opportunity at this point with high probability to secure all U.S. interests in the region.

Four years of mistakes eventually can leave you in a position where you don't have good alternatives, and I think that is where we find ourselves now.

Unfortunately, that is true for the extremes of surge and withdrawal. I think it is also true for most of the in-between options that people have talked about as alternatives to those extremes.

I think when you look across the set of possibilities that have been raised in the public debate to date, I think one can characterize them as a group as tending, by and large, to reduce our ability to control the environment militarily in Iraq but still leaving, more or less by definition, tens of thousands of Americans in the country to act as targets.

What that creates, I think, is a danger that, over several years after initiating such a posture, what we are likely to see is continued U.S. casualties, again, in an environment we have difficulty controlling militarily and less ability than we have now to stabilize the country or improve conditions around the U.S. deployment. And I think what that is likely to do is create very powerful pressures a couple of years down the road to go all the way to zero.

And I think if we are going to go all the way to zero within a couple of years anyway, the case to be made for saving the lives in between that would be lost and beginning resetting of the American military a couple of years sooner than we would otherwise be able to do, to deal with some of the other challenges and contingencies that are going to face us in the world with or without success or failure in Iraq.

Now, the formal statement that I provided looks in some detail at four particular in-between options: a partial withdrawal of U.S. troops and a reorientation of those that remain to training and supporting the ISF; a partial withdrawal of U.S. troops and reorientations of those that remain to hunting al Qaeda; a retreat of U.S. forces from the center part of the country into Kurdistan.

And I think when you look—rather than trying to pick up each of these in detail, perhaps what I will do with the two minutes that remain is spend a little bit more time talking about one of them, and then I would be happy, obviously, to take questions referring

to the others, and speak just a little bit more about the option of partial withdrawing of U.S. forces and a reorientation of what remains to training and supporting the ISF.

Right now, the U.S. troop presence in Iraq isn't enough to control the environment completely or stabilize the country, but it does cap the level of violence. If you substantially withdraw the U.S. combat presence, you can reasonably expect the level of violence to increase.

If we are going to take seriously the prospect of training and advising the ISF, that means we are not going to have the trainers sequestered somewhere safely in the rear in a classroom. They are going to be out with the ISF, advising them, operating with them, serving as mentors to them. If the environment they are operating in gets less secure, one can reasonably expect that the vulnerability of those advisors is going to go up, and they are going to continue to suffer casualties as a result.

Second, though, and perhaps just as important, the smaller our combat presence in the country, the harder we make the training and advising mission. There are a lot of constraints facing our ability to train, advise and create a capable asset. Arguably, the binding constraint among them, however, is political rather than proficiency. It is sectarianism in the Iraqi security forces.

As the country around them breaks up into factions, it is very difficult to hermetically seal a military organization from the society from which it is drawn. And what is pulling the country apart into factions is the sectarian violence level in the country.

If the reduction of the U.S. combat presence causes the level of sectarian violence to increase, the centrifugal pressures on the society are going to increase as well. And that, in turn, is going to make the job of creating a disinterested nationalist security entity that can defend the interest of all Iraqis harder, not easier.

Now, what that does is create a risk of self-fulfilling prophecy where, the smaller our combat effort, the harder we make the training effort and the more difficult it becomes to switch from the one to the other.

I think if we judge that the surge is too unlikely to succeed—and again, I am a pessimist on the prospects for this surge. I don't think it is impossible it could succeed, but I think it is a long shot.

If you think the odds of that long-shot are too long, I think a stronger case can be made for going to the opposite extreme and totally withdrawing the U.S. presence from Iraq on a timetable of ten months to two years. People vary on how long it would take to get out everything that we have deployed to the country, and beginning the reset sooner and cutting our losses in the process.

The one other recommendation that I would offer to the committee is I think it is terribly important that not just the management of a withdrawal but also the investigation of various partial withdrawal options be undertaken in the serious, rigorous way that only properly staffed, military planning process can do.

And I am afraid that, right now, the perceived politics of the situation are such that it is very difficult for military staffs to plan out any of these options in the level of detail that is necessary, especially given so many of the issues involved are diplomatic, politi-

cal, economic and regional in ways that will inevitably tax the skill set and the capabilities of any orthodox military planning staff.

In an environment where people are worried that an effort to plan out something other than Plan A could be viewed as a sign of disloyalty, it makes that planning effort very, very difficult for the military to conduct.

One thing that I think would be of particular value for the U.S. Congress to do is to remove the political Hobson's Choice associated with the sort of planning by mandating by law and by requiring that military staffs, whether in theater or in the Pentagon, develop, with a proper level of rigor and detail, a set of alternative plans for either partial or complete withdrawal alternatives to the surge, not mandating that they be executed, but mandating that they be planned out in a way that can permit full evaluation of their pros and cons by those outside the planning process itself.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Biddle can be found in the Appendix on page 71.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Dr. Biddle.

Colonel Hughes.

STATEMENT OF COL. PAUL HUGHES (RET.), SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER, CENTER FOR POST-CONFLICT PEACE AND STABILITY OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE, U.S. ARMY

Colonel HUGHES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me to present my thoughts about what I call consolidating gains in Iraq.

While I remain very engaged in Iraq through my work at the United States Institute of Peace, what I present today reflects my own personal views based on almost 30 years of service in the United States Army and the time that I have spent in Iraq, where I served with the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, the coalition provisional authority. I advised General Eaton on the organization of the Iraqi military and served as my institute's chief of party on two separate occasions. My comments do not reflect the policies of the institute, which does not take policy positions.

As you well know, the Nation is seized with the war in Iraq, one of the most complex wars it has ever fought. This complexity can be characterized in many ways, but one fundamental aspect that must be understood for the United States to successfully interact over the long term with the Muslim world is that we need to understand this war involves issues rooted in power redistribution among groups of people who have never experienced the dynamic processes that the United States now demands that they implement quickly, namely those of political reconciliation.

By saying that, I want people to understand that the notion that this is purely a sectarian war is a false notion. There are other causes here that are more related to power redistribution.

Understanding this fundamental nature of the war is crucial to the development of our war aims and our national interests. So far, there have been several changes in both, and these changes have only served to confuse our regional friends and worldwide allies as

to our ultimate goals. Additionally, this confusion has opened the door for our enemies to exploit.

Today, the interests and the goals of the United States are usually reduced into soundbytes rather than studied in their true nature. They are complex and very demanding. As described in the national strategy document, "Victory in Iraq," they are outlined into non-specific type periods, such as short-term, medium-term and long-term, with just as non-specific components that all parties accept as important to the long-term well-being of the Republic of Iraq.

In reviewing these goals, it appears less likely that these can be attained over what America views as the short term. In fact, many of these suggest they will be generational efforts. The complex nature of the short-term goals suggest some of its components are not feasible and should be pushed back on the strategy's timeline.

The obvious shortfalls in the short term related to political progress and democratic institution-building has hindered progress toward the medium- and long-term goals. These requirements lie outside the vast expertise and capabilities of the Department of Defense.

Without progress in these two specific areas, political reconciliation and democratic institution-building, our military can continue to fight and occupy more of Iraq's cities and towns but will never fully secure those areas for a handover to Iraqi security forces. And absent that degree of security and handover, our military's eventual departure will simply open the door for the return of chaos.

This assessment implies our military force may need more time to achieve their operational goals, as some of our commanders have recently suggested. Yet, their requests have to be balanced with the political realities of our country and its long-term national security interests.

We are engaged in what some call a "long war" and others refer to as a "global war." If this is true, then we must place both Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns in their proper perspectives. They are campaigns in a long, global war against extremists of all stripes that threaten our interests.

Perhaps now it is time for us to recognize that we have achieved change in Iraq and that we should consolidate our gains and take a strategic pause in order to refocus our strategic gains, regroup and replenish our forces, repair our alliances, and regain the support of the American people before going back on the offense.

I use the term "consolidate" from the perspective of a soldier. When soldiers consolidate on their objective, they organize and strengthen it so that they can make maximum use of their new gains position. In the case of Iraq, consolidating our gains will be messy and uncertain. It will require more time and resources to help the emerging Iraqi government organize and strengthen itself.

But we do not need to continue expending the immense amount of resources used in our ground war in Iraq when we need them for our efforts elsewhere in the world. The challenge facing the United States is how it should best manage its involvement in Iraq while retaining capabilities of meeting its broader global security responsibilities.

To meet those challenges, the United States should reassess its strategic goals in light of its regional and global interests. It should announce a date certain for beginning the redeployment of forces from Iraq. It should conclude a status-of-forces agreement with the government of Iraq. It should resource and invigorate a comprehensive, political reconciliation program in Iraq.

It should immediately act to restore and increase both the size of the Army and Marine Corps refit and reset units that have been in combat, ensure our special operations forces are being properly resourced, and care for the families of our military personnel.

The United States should also repair damage done to our relations with our allies and special partners, and it must more clearly articulate U.S. policy in order to regain the confidence and support of the American people.

In conclusion, we must maintain our focus on our primary challenges: the proliferation of WMD and the threat from extremists who threaten our homeland. We should not allow ourselves to expend our military forces, national credibility and treasure on a ground war that does not deal with our primary threats.

Thank you for your attention and time.

[The prepared statement of Colonel Hughes can be found in the Appendix on page 64.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Colonel Hughes.

General Eaton.

STATEMENT OF MAJ. GEN. PAUL D. EATON (RET.), FORMER COMMANDER, COALITION MILITARY ASSISTANCE TRAINING TEAM, IRAQ, U.S. ARMY

General EATON. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the invitation to speak here.

I can't leave this room without commenting on the state of the American Army. I am going to talk about the American Army, the Iraqi army, current operations in Iraq, and the deficient diplomatic efforts that we have in the region.

First, the American Army: We are under-funded, we are undermanned, and we are overextended. And we have to correct all three of those points.

We have to grow the Army and the Marine Corps to meet the foreign-policy demands of our country. We have to commit the resources necessary to rebuild, refit our equipment, and to properly equip our forces both in the theater of operations and in training right now. We are having to shuffle equipment back and forth from units to conduct the training for deployment. So we have to correct that situation.

The Iraqi army: We started the Iraqi army program to recruit nationally, make the army representative nationally, ethnically and religious, and to employ locally. The original plan was that we would recruit these men to defend the Nation from enemies from without. And that evolved into what we have to do right now in a counter-insurgency environment.

The Iraqi army is still not properly equipped, and we still don't have enough men under arms to meet the demands placed upon the Iraqi army.

And we have departed from a nationally unifying system. Originally, the army would have been a nationally unifying force, an instrument to provide for the unification and the integration of the country. We have departed from that, and I am not sure that is a good decision.

My last information is that we are talking about reinstituting what we did with the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC), locally recruited, locally employed, which gives us basically militias under a national uniform.

Current operations: I think that what General Petraeus is doing right now is absolutely on the mark. It follows a very good article by Lieutenant Colonel Doug Ollivant about inserting forces into the region, into the neighborhoods, into the communities that need the security operations, and a departure from these very large forward-operating bases that heretofore we had been restricted to.

I think what General Petraeus is doing is absolutely on the mark. The surge was very small, and it was actually a compromise with the Army because that is all we could do. We have not grown the Army to meet the requirements in Iraq or elsewhere. So the surge was a compromise, and the Army cannot sustain it.

The Army status right now drives us to a reduction in forces in theater, and we have to lay it out. And I think that a 24-month period is about right to draw down combat forces in theater.

If we don't do it and if we don't start it now, we are going to go back to something that General "Shy" Meyer talked about back in the 1970's, the hollow army. And his comment recently is, "You may not know the Army is broken until after the Army is broken." The real issue is we have not surged diplomatically in order to meet the military surge, the military increase.

A case study is up in the northern part of Iraq. The three northern provinces have their own economy, have their own government, have their own security forces. The Kurdish region is stable. What is not stable is outside the borders of the Kurdish region. We have a very large number of Turkish units massed on the borders, and that is a source of concern.

We have to regionally divide Iraq and identify strong actors internal and strong actors external, bring them to a Camp David-type situation and hammer our the requirements to keep the entities outside and inside from falling apart.

So that would mean you bring Barzani, Talabani, and the presidents of Iran and Turkey into the room and hash out the interests that both parties have, repeat that process with the Sunni region and Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan, repeat that with the Shia region and Iran.

Regional debate, regional meetings orchestrated by the United States—that type of diplomatic surge is overdue and is the only way out.

The best article I have seen lately is, "The Road Out of Iraq Goes Through Tehran," and this Administration has heretofore refused to talk to Tehran. We have something going on right now, but our road out is through Tehran.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Eaton can be found in the Appendix on page 59.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, General Eaton.

Secretary West.

STATEMENT OF HON. FRANCIS J. "BING" WEST, FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

Secretary WEST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I don't see a way out of this polarization, Mr. Chairman. There are two views, and you heard them now, of Iraq.

View one is what I call the sectarian camp that says the essential problem in Iraq is the antagonism and the hatred between Sunni and Shia, and that is going to persist regardless of what we do. And therefore, the situation, in essence, is hopeless and, as Mr. Biddle was saying, if you believe that, better get out now than later.

The other alternative is the alternative that General Patraeus and others say, that the root cause of the problem here is the terror driven by al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). And because al Qaeda in Iraq kills, slaughters so many of the Shiites, that they keep the cycle of violence going. And if you can break AQI, you can break the cycle of violence.

There is no compromise between those two positions. You believe one or the other.

So, in the end, what we are talking about here is a military judgment about what is happening in Iraq. And none of us really are in the position that General Patraeus, General Odierno and General Gaskin are to give you their straight-from-the-shoulder, and I think they are going to in the September evaluation of that essential issue.

And I know that they are going to bring it up as the essential issue. I can say with full confidence, being back there in May and coming forward and the e-mails I get from the field, I never believed I would see Anbar swing the way Anbar has swung.

I mean, when you are in the middle of a war, the question is, who is winning and who is losing? And right now, AQI is on the defense, not on the offense.

I believe that if you would have this hearing in June of 2008 on the current course, you would probably see that we have a substantial number of combat units out, probably pushed up the number of advisors we have, and those advisors, as was pointed out by the other members, would be in combat. They wouldn't be in the rear. So that we would be in Iraq for several years, as we are in Afghanistan, but we wouldn't be pushed out of Iraq.

And I think that is the essential issue that this is going to come down to. Does one believe it is hopeless and we are losing, or does one believe that we can prevail and get our troops out? That, sir, in the end, I believe is a military judgment.

The word that I have heard—and watching it for myself over there, I am really surprised by what I saw in Anbar. And Anbar was the toughest nut. AQI has been pushed back now out of Anbar. They said they were going to go to Baghdad. They lost some fights in Baghdad, and now they are up in Diyala.

The nature of this war is the highway system. AQI has a darn good way of communicating with one another, and no one controls

those highways, and can move 400, 600 kilometers in 1 day, and they do. And we were fighting them in Fallujah in April of 2004. They moved out and went to Ramadi, 60 miles away. When we went back in with the Marines in November of 2004, they went to Mosul, 300 miles away, and did it in 3 days because you can just drive up and down the highways.

So in order to keep after AQI, you have to stay on them and stay on them and stay on them. And that is what I believe General Petraeus is doing now.

I don't believe we intend to keep the kinds of troops we have over there for the long haul, but I am really interested in what he is going to say in September because I think he can give us a better military judgment than any of us can.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary West can be found in the Appendix on page 56.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, gentlemen, for your thoughtfulness in being here and thoughtfulness of your statements.

Members, what I suggest we do—and in the other hearings, we have been pretty flexible in our five minutes. We have eight members here. I know of at least one other member coming. I would suggest that we are fairly strict about the five minutes so we can circle around and go through a second or even a third round if we get to it.

What we will do is, if I start my questions, which is already apparently on, I have got five minutes. If I ask one question and you all get to respond to it, if you each take three minutes, we get to one-and-a-half of you. If you all could limit your answers to about one minute, given that we have got some flexibility here, but if can get to the point, then we will be able to get more of the thoughts out there.

My question is, in the time that we have left, if you all—I just want to give you a chance to respond in the spirit of intellectual exchange here on anything you have either read from the opening statements or have heard today from the folks at the panel you think need to be fleshed out a little bit more or that concern you or that you agree with.

Let us start with you, Dr. Biddle, and just go down the line again.

Dr. BIDDLE. Okay, well, with a minute I will respond mostly to Secretary West, with whom I am in a surprising degree of agreement.

I don't think things are hopeless. I mean, the written statement, to a greater degree than I was able to do in the spoken statements, says there are two defensible alternatives, and they are either/and.

Where I think I probably disagree is over how much better than hopeless it is. I think it is an extreme long-shot.

AQI is not the totality of the problem. The President doesn't think that totality is the problem either. It is an accelerator of sectarian violence and factionalism. Unfortunately, sectarian violence and factionalism is a bit like the toothpaste in the tube. Once you have created a condition of radical fear among groups, it is then very difficult to overcome that and reverse the process.

I don't think it is hopeless. I think the Anbar tribal rebellion is actually a model that provides such a glimmer of hope as we can get in Iraq. I think the way forward, if we are going to stay, should be oriented around maximizing the chance that we can replicate that model elsewhere.

But we have to do that a lot. There are a lot of factions that need bilateral negotiations to settle ceasefires with. To do that across the whole country is not impossible, but it is a very tall order.

Given that, what I think we are looking at is a long-shot, not a zero prospect, but a long-shot.

Dr. SNYDER. Colonel Hughes.

Colonel HUGHES. The idea that this war is essentially a military war, if anybody holds that, they are just wrong. This really does require a political settlement by the Iraqis.

But as I said earlier, we are asking the Iraqis to undertake something that they have never had to do in three generations, and that is reconcile with one another. In the days of Saddam, if you had a difference with somebody, you just shot the person and you drugged their body through the streets. Now we are expecting them to figure out how to sit down and work together in a society where the entire lifestyle has been zero-sum gains. That is a very difficult proposition to demand of them.

Now, my institute is working with some of the EPRTs, embedded provincial reconstruction teams, to help alleviate or to kick-start some of the local-level negotiations necessary to bring some fruit to this process. But it is a challenge. It is a challenge because the EPRTs are not properly resourced or funded to do this kind of work. Certainly we are not. But you also have the challenge of security there. And sometimes, if you let the Iraqis settle the security issue, you let their local solutions kick in, it is amazing what you can get done.

And I will just hold it there.

Dr. SNYDER. General Eaton.

General EATON. We have to provide a forcing function for General Petraeus to get the government of Iraq to move forward. And the only thing that I see is the diplomatic efforts that I talked about elsewhere, but a timeline for departure, lay it out so he is able to tell the Iraqis that the end is coming, and that the patience of the American people are going to drive this, and that we lay out, as has been discussed previously this morning, the Plan B that illustrates to Iraq that there is a draw-down and it is going to be orderly and it is going to be predictable.

And the message on all that is not to the enemy, it is to the people of Iraq and its government.

Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Secretary West.

Secretary WEST. It is absolutely a political local settlement. It will be settled locally in Haditha and Al Qaim and Baghdad, et cetera, which causes me to think that that feckless, poor, ill-performing senior government can be allowed to be feckless, poor and ill-performing for another ten years if you get some of the local conditions right and we won't have all of our troops there.

So I see no contradiction between saying you can still have a mess but it won't be our mess as much because we won't be there. It will just be another messy government.

But the key is, in my judgment, fracturing al Qaeda, and we are well on our way to doing that.

In terms of keeping some sort of peace among the sectarian groups, I don't see that as being that much of a problem, because, unfortunately, they have already separated themselves to a large extent.

The key is our advisory effort, because our advisors in essence are looking over everyone's shoulder, every single police chief, every single battalion. So the issue becomes, is the new agreement we are going to have with Iraq in December that goes before the United Nations, will there be an agreement with Iraq that we are going to continue with the current advisory system as we have it? Because these advisors are the enforcers of non-sectarianism.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you all.

And you hit exactly five minutes, so we appreciate that.

It turns out, I don't think our clock system is working, so I will give kind of a gentle tap with the end here, Mr. Akin, when we get to the five minutes, if it doesn't work.

Mr. Akin, for five minutes.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you.

I think we have heard from quite a number of different witnesses—and I appreciate your comments, Mr. West.

The concern that I have is, first of all, it seems like it may be a both end. The first issue, you have a military peace, that has to be taken care of. But you also have sort of a political peace, and that has to be dealt with as well.

My sense is, is that from the brief we got from General Petraeus and also Ambassador Crocker was that they had really analyzed the whole situation and understood the nations around it really with internal politics going on, and they had a plan, and they are balancing and putting things together to make that work.

My concern is not so much being able to break the AQI—which, I think if we keep denying them territory, there is going to come a point where there is no safe place for them. My concern is, though, the political peace that, seems to me, I wouldn't assume the politics is necessarily going to straighten out even if we do get the military side. I think it is a both end situation.

And my question is, have we given so much authority away to the Iraqis that they get it all messed up, we are kind of sitting on the sidelines, helpless? Or are we in a position—I mean, when Douglas MacArthur was in Japan, he let the Japanese write their constitution. They screwed it up, so he said, "That is no good. I will write one for you." He said, "Use this one."

Are we in a position where—I mean, one of the things that could work very well on Iraq is federalism, which they don't understand but could allow a lot of autonomy to these different areas. We could limit the Federal Government to very specific functions.

Are we in a position to make those kind of political changes? Are we kind of off on the side and not really involved to the degree that we should be politically?

Secretary WEST. Mr. Congressman, General Eaton began a system with the advisors on the military side that is now working terrific. All the way down to every single company, there is an American advisor but he is also a conscience.

The State Department, as General indicated, lagged badly, and it has only been under Ambassador Crocker that they have begun to insert some smart guys at different levels to say, so-and-so is a bum and you have to get rid of him. But they have begun that.

I think if you had a classified hearing and brought some of them in and say, "Do you know who the bad apples are at the top that have to go?", they could say, "Yes."

My feeling is that Maliki isn't that strong. But I think you are going to have a lot of sloppiness at the top if you don't have this level of violence.

General Eaton is right. We are behind it in terms of the diplomacy and struggling to catch up. But I think you can tolerate that if we don't have 135,000 Americans in the country.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you.

Anybody else want to comment on the same question?

Dr. BIDDLE. Sir, the issue of federalism is something that is part of their constitution. It focuses on the idea of federalism. The issue is the mechanics and the implementing laws that provide for that sort of thing.

And that is being worked out through the constitutional reform committee's work, which has recently reported back to the council of representatives and has again been given some more homework assignments to work. But that is a very active issue among the Iraqi government right now.

Mr. AKIN. Are they starting to get the concept? Because when I talked to the State Department three years ago on a couple tours back, they said the whole idea of federalism under these guys is just like somebody from Mars. They just didn't—everything was top-down from their point of view.

Dr. BIDDLE. Correct.

Mr. AKIN. But you take a look at the Kurds and the Shia and Sunni, it seems like it is ready-made for a central constitution that says, "All we are going to do is this, this and this, and everything else is going to be regional." I should think that would help a lot.

Dr. BIDDLE. The constitution recognizes just one Federal entity at this time, and that is the Kurdish regional government. It does provide for the creation of other regional governments, but the implementing laws have yet to be worked out.

But the U.S. Institute of Peace has worked at it for many years now with the national government, and we are as frustrated as anybody with the results that we are seeing. And that is why now we are pushing out into the provinces.

And, for example, the work I did in March with the Baghdad provincial council was astonishing. It taught me an important lesson that we all need to understand. The Iraqis do not possess the tools with which to tackle these kinds of issues. And so they need the training. They need the mentoring in political reconciliation and the ideas of working through these various issues.

But the provincial council members soaked this up like a sponge. It was amazing to me.

Afterwards, I had the district council representatives from Sadr City and from Adhamiya—the adjoining predominantly Sunni district—those come to us and say, "We want more of this training, and we want to do it together." And for the very first time in their history, Sadr City and Adhamiya sat down at the same table and started talking about issues.

So at the grassroots level, there is hope, but it just needs to become a principal focus of what we are doing over there.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Akin.

Mrs. Davis for five minutes.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for being here.

I wanted to go back to the Anbar situation a little bit, because I think one of the important things that was said that, rather than focusing on top leadership necessarily in Iraq, that it may be through the grassroots efforts that more change is going to occur.

But I also have felt a great concern from a few who believe that our working with the militias there might in the short term be a good idea but further out, that there is a real down side to doing that. And that it may work in areas where you have more homogeneity, but as you move through different areas of Iraq that that is going to be a problem.

Could you all comment on that and whether you think there is a significant down side that maybe not necessarily ignored like now but perhaps not being addressed in the way that it should?

Secretary WEST. I would simply say that each tribe in Anbar knows exactly where its boundaries are, and every one of them wants to push out, and every time they do now, the other tribes are pushing back.

Really, one of the reasons for the awakening spreading among all the tribes was that it only began with about 16 of the 23 tribes. But the other seven quickly said, "Wait a minute, we are going to start losing some of our smuggling. We are going to start losing some of these goodies that they are offering if we don't get on the bandwagon." So in self-defense they are going onboard.

The tribes take care of the tribal sectors and are very jealous of the other tribe coming in. What I don't see out of the Anbar situation is that these tribes somehow would come together and be a threat to Baghdad. They are much more parochial, extremely parochial people. And they are interested in their tribal areas.

General EATON. My position is any ally you can find is worth having, and the original relationship that we had with them was very positive. They were very helpful and they were very willing to go to great lengths to expose themselves to some risk by coming into the Iraqi army.

So the pursuit of alliances with the tribal factions and with militias, I think, is a very positive move on our part.

Dr. BIDDLE. What we are presented with in Anbar right now is both a window of opportunity and a window of vulnerability.

With the tribes banding together to push AQI, they are now trying to be brought into the recognized Iraqi police and military forces in the province.

The question remains, how will the central government deal with these new approaches? Will they accept these new tribesmen in for training and such, or will they reject them because they are tribesmen and perceived to be a militia? That is a major concern right now.

The prime minister, he feels that our activities in aligning with tribes and local groups is creating more militias that could potentially become a long-term threat to his rule. So I don't have a good answer for it right now because I am——

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Any sense to how the Shia population perceives that at all?

Dr. BIDDLE. I am sure the Shia population—the political parties, let us call them that—that the Shia-dominated political parties do not like this development.

But then again, let us recognize that the supreme Islamic council for Iraq, whatever they are calling themselves today, had the organization which was completely folded into the ministry of interior.

General EATON. Clearly, there are important risks either in arming local factions or simply in tolerating the continuance of local armed factions that they agree to fight people we like and stop fighting people that we would rather they not.

I think at this point in Iraq, though, we are beyond the point which we have the option of turning to something that is low-risk, low-cost, high probability of success. I think if we decide for whatever reason we are going to continue and that we are going to give it our best shot, I think, at this point, our best shot lies through some program of exploiting something like the Anbar awakening through a series of bilateral cease-fire negotiations with local actors which we hope will accumulate around the country.

That the day in which we could hope to prevail in Iraq, by creating a government monopoly of force, and reducing the strength of all non-government actors to the point where they are marginal and unimportant, I don't think that is a realistic hope at this point.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Where would you all put this strategy in terms of priorities and, I guess, hopes for the future? Is this a strategy that you think has high hopes for trying to turn the situation around or do you think it has relatively low? I got a sense from you, Colonel.

Colonel HUGHES. Well, in Anbar, it is a de facto, it is already done and now moving to other areas. I don't know how it will do in other areas, but I mean, in Anbar, this is yesterday's news. It is done, settled, they have moved on.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Go beyond that for me, in terms of that as a model.

General EATON. It doesn't always work out. The Fallujah Brigade, our efforts back in April didn't work out terribly well. But it was worth a try, and I think that we may not be a 100 percent success, but again, I think that any enemy that we can turn, whatever organization is effective in providing security, to bring them into the fold.

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Gingrey for five minutes.

Dr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

And I thank all the witnesses.

I want to first of all say welcome to the committee to General Eaton in particular, who was former commander of Fort Benning, home of the infantry, and I represented that area in Columbus, Georgia.

I like you better as a general than I do as a civilian. General Eaton, I have to say that. I wish you were still in the military. I don't agree with everything that you have said since you have gotten out.

I want to ask a couple of questions.

And first of all, to General Eaton and to the Colonel and to Dr. Biddle, it seems that all three of you in your testimony, your presentations to us here this morning take a pretty dim view of the current situation and that you are in favor of getting out ASAP.

I think the comment has been made, General Eaton, you said the road to withdrawal is through Tehran, through Iran. I would suggest the road of withdrawal will be through Kuwait, and on the highway of death. I think you understand that very well, General Eaton.

And I would like to ask the three of you to comment on that in regard to the mass casualties that could occur with 160,000 of our troops with all of their equipment going from Baghdad to Kuwait, trying to get out of that country.

And also, General Eaton, you said very clearly that you think that we need to lay out the draw-down plan, not to give it to the enemy but to give it to the Iraqi people. How do you think the enemy is not going to obtain that plan as well and make it even more devastating? So comment on that for you, if you will.

And then to Secretary West, who I am very much in agreement with, I would ask you what are your thoughts about permanent basing in Iraq. That bill is going to be probably presented to the House to vote on later this week in regard to whether or not we should have permanent basing, particularly in light of the embassy that we have there now.

General EATON. Congressman, thank you very much.

And I will tell you the retirement has been liberating. I have enjoyed myself a lot here. And I have said some things that are fairly difficult to state, particularly with two sons in the Army.

First, I do not advocate a precipitous withdrawal. I advocate a very methodical and very measured withdrawal of combat forces. The missions providing for the development of the Iraqi army and security forces and providing for the security of those men and women, I believe, is a continuing effort that we need to maintain.

Second, I advocate that we lay this out for the Iraqi people, and the message is really to the Iraqi government to get their house in order, to fulfill the benchmarks that they said they would fill, and to get this thing moving forward. And the message is not to the enemy that we are leaving precipitously; the message is to the Iraqi people, we have to discipline the process. If we don't, we will be dragging through this for years and years, and we have got to have a force in function.

As far as the withdrawal of troops, if you don't plan your way out of something, it will look a lot like Dunkirk, and any time you go in, you have to plan for your extraction. And the extraction

while you are under pressure, while you are in contact, is very difficult indeed. And we are very exposed right now.

If the Iranians thought that it would be in their interest to attack in great numbers, we would have a very, very difficult situation. I am confident that we have plans on the shelf right now to avoid that.

Dr. GINGREY. General Eaton, thank you.

With apologies to the other two witnesses, I am going to shift to Secretary West because I want the answer—and my time is running out—I want the answer in regards to your opinion on the basing.

Secretary WEST. Sir, I think it would be so incendiary I would see no reason to even discuss permanent bases. By definition, our embassy is a permanent base, the way we are putting that thing up.

But beyond that, I cannot imagine us not being in Iraq for about as long as we are going to be in Afghanistan. But we don't have to wave a huge flag about it. It is just going to be a fact of life.

Dr. GINGREY. And we can go to the other two witnesses regarding the other question.

Dr. BIDDLE. Sir, one of the things I said in my statement is that any withdrawal, any redeployment discussion of U.S. forces from Iraq must be done in close consultations with the Iraqis and regional partners, and that we would have a remaining element there, as Secretary West just indicated. Because we still need to do the training and the equipping of the Iraqi military.

Just as important, we need to be able to conduct counter-terrorism operations. And the Iraqi military is not going to be set to actually provide surveillance or security along their borders for many years if they are going to be tied down fighting internal insurgency.

So I am not in favor of a precipitous withdrawal. This does have to be methodically based.

In fact, as the withdrawal is planned or as the redeployment is planned, I would even suspect that there would need to be an increase of U.S. force structure to provide security along that particular avenue you just described.

Colonel HUGHES. Two very quick points. The first is, I think either of the two extremes are defensible. I mean, I don't think there is a clear case for withdrawal precipitous or otherwise. I think you can also make a case that a one-in-ten long-shot—and I think that is kind of the ballpark of the odds here—is worth taking if you think the costs of failure are high enough. It is the middle-ground options that I think are the weakest on the analytics.

As far as the withdrawal itself goes, I don't think anyone would support a precipitous withdrawal, but if one is going to argue for withdrawal—and, again, I think it is a defensible case, I think we have to expect that we are going to have to fight our way out. And that withdrawal for it to be other than a rout is going to be a slow process.

Again, I have heard estimates ranging from ten months to two years. I think the case of withdrawal, if one is going to make it, is you are going to face that sooner or later anyway. I mean, if the surge is, let us say, a one-in-ten long-shot, that means you have got

a nine-in-ten chance that whether you like it or not, this is where you are going to end up in a few years.

The issue, in all likelihood, is you want to do it later or do you want to do it sooner, and what does it cost you to defer it?

Dr. GINGREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Our last person for questions who was here at the time the gavel went down is Mr. Bartlett for five minutes. And then we will go to Mr. Sestak, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much.

Colonel Hughes, you mentioned that this was not a war that we are involved in, it is a couple of campaigns in a war. It seems to me that the enemy that we now fight in Iraq is very different than the enemy we went there to fight.

As I remember, the reasons for going to Iraq, which I had some concerns with and was called to the White House because I had those concerns, was there were weapons of mass destruction there. I saw no way they could get them to us. They could walk to Germany and France. And I made the argument if our allies weren't concerned about the threats, I had trouble understanding why we should be concerned about the threats.

And Saddam Hussein was there. There were no weapons of mass destruction and Saddam Hussein has been deposed. And so the enemy there now is violence and al Qaeda.

And in the second round, I want to come to the violence part of it. But as far as I know and judged from all of the testimony that we have had, that there was little or no al Qaeda before we went there. And so now the big fight is with al Qaeda.

Did they arise de novo, or did they come in from another country? How did they get there in these large numbers?

Colonel HUGHES. When we entered Iraq in 2003, there were two organizations that we saw with General Garner that you could say were terrorist organizations. One was the mujanedin-e Knalq (NEK), which was the passively sponsored or supported or at least recognized force of Iranians that were based in Iraq that would conduct operations into Iran. And that force has been policed up. The other one was based in the Kurdish north on a mountain top that was very difficult to get to that could have been taken out without us having to invade Iraq.

But without getting into history, what we see in Iraq with AQI now, al Qaeda in Iraq, is an Iraqi organization that has grown up—this is predominantly Iraqi now. It did begin with foreign leaders and foreign support, but today it is predominantly Iraqi. Today it is under a great deal of stress because of Iraqis, because Iraqi tribes are attacking them, because Iraqi citizens are reporting on their activities, and because the multi-national force is pursuing them.

The question is, what is the threat to the United States? Is AQI a threat to the United States? Or is al Qaeda currently residing in Pakistan the threat? And I would submit that al Qaeda in Iraq is not the threat to our homeland. It is al Qaeda in Pakistan right now that is the threat to our homeland. And that is the issue we need to be taking care of.

I mentioned that this is a campaign, just as we had World War II with many campaigns and Vietnam with many campaigns. And even in Desert Storm, we had three separate campaigns. You know, you can have varying levels of success in a campaign and still win the war, as long as you have strategic thought and guidance and vision about what you ultimately want to achieve.

If we are going to focus on fighting a ground war in Iraq, I have to ask, what does this contribute to our ability to dissuade Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons or from getting after AQI in Pakistan?

If the al Qaeda like any that we are fighting in Iraq is not a threat to our homeland, their goal is simply to get us out of Iraq. Their goal is to force us out. There were 33 insurgency groups that have been identified in Iraq, and the one common identifier among all of them is get the foreign occupation out of Iraq.

Once the Americans leave, there could be a lot of gun-play between these guys, and I suspect there will be. But principally, they and all the other groups, want us out of Iraq because we are a foreign occupation force. And that has been a traditional earmark of Iraqi nationalism for many, many decades. I mean, just ask the British.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will yield back and wait until the second round for my next question. Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Sestak for five minutes.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you.

Let me tell you what I heard that fell upon me.

First, Dr. Biddle, you said, as well as the general, our leaving is going to be challenging if not done deliberately. You remember, General, it took us to get out of Somalia, 6 months after Blackhawk Down, 6,300 troops, and we inserted another 19,000 personnel. The 160,000 troops in Iraq and over 100,000 contractors, anyone who thinks we are going to turn around tomorrow and not do it an a deliberate way without a turkey shoot on that one road, that is what fell upon me here, is a timetable withdrawal can't be precipitous.

Then you spoke about training, and so did you, Dr. West. We have about 48,000 combat troops out of the 160,000 that is over there. That is all. We have got 8,000 advisors over there. Do we really think we are going to come down to 60,000 troops and build up the 20,000 advisors and have how many combat troops to prevent another Blackhawk Down?

And that is what I heard from you. The head of the National Intelligence Council told us the other day that it is an art, not a skill, to determine which of those Iraqi forces would be loyal or motivated to protect our troops once embedded there.

So those who want to leave behind a touch back, sort of like immigration touch back, you know, you kind of give it—okay, we will leave some training troops behind. Well, I tell you, that really worries me after watching Somalia.

And then, I step back and I hear, sir, about Al Anbar province and been there. That started before this surge started. They were coming over to us, those tribal chiefs after watching their 15-year-

old sons being run over 15 times as they stood the families there, and they said, enough is enough.

But when they look to the East, nobody in Baghdad, despite the more stable, security situation, militarily, saying come on in and be all you can be in our government.

So I step back and come back to you, General, for my real question because I think the key is from you.

The key, the road out of Iraq is through Tehran. And the National Intelligence council tells us that is we precipitously withdraw in 18 months a year ago, there would be instability in that country and chaos. But when asked, if Iran were to be involved in the negotiations, would it be a different outcome? They said tough question to answer but yeah, probably.

So tell me, how do we get a safe redeployment with the, what I believe is my major concern, the strategic readiness of our military, improperly engaged throughout this world already here at home to have a better security for America via Iran, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. So from a military man who is saying it is diplomatic diplomacy I gather, how?

General EATON. Seventy percent of the Iranian population is supportive of normalization of relations between Iran and the united States. Iran occupies a terrific amount of boarder with Iraq. They are, in fact, astride our line of communication to Kuwait. Were they to embark upon an ambitious dismounted light infantry attack, they would have a terrific opportunity to cause us great harm.

We are beginning to negotiate from a position of weakness and that is never a great position to be in when you are negotiating with somebody who is locally strong.

Putting in a couple of aircraft carriers off the Iranian shores is a pretty good start. And the commitment to sit down and hash out what their interests are, what our interests are, and getting after a negotiated agreement or a best alternative to a negotiated agreement——

Mr. SESTAK. If I could, General.

Yesterday in a meeting at the White House, Stephen Hadley said, private meeting—not private, it was private to be talked about but it was a small group—said, well, it is hard to negotiate with Iran because, A, we are in position of weakness; B, like Crocker said yesterday, they are involved destructively. They are fighting our people. It is almost as a going-in position.

Do you agree with that part of it, that we have to have them seize their destruction before we negotiate this?

General EATON. We have allowed ourselves to be in a position of weakness. There are a great number of ways to get after Iran to improve the odds of success negotiations, and without violence. The international community, I believe, would be very helpful. And we are about out of my expertise right now, but very capable people can figure out incentives and disincentives to bring to the table with this President.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you. I am out of time. But I honestly believe that doubling down a bad military bet isn't the answer and diplomacy as we redeploy is the key with those nations who have influence. Why don't we use it?

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Andrews, five minutes.

Mr. ANDREWS. I thank the witnesses for your excellent testimony this morning.

Secretary West, I think you have exactly captured the dichotomy of public opinion between those who believe that the Islamist terrorists are the principal problem in Iraq versus those who believe sectarian violence is the principal problem. I think that is exactly right.

I want to explore your analysis and your conclusion. With did AQI come into existence?

Secretary WEST. I would probably say it was the battle of Fallujah was what really made AQI. When we backed out of Fallujah, that is when Zarqawi gathered so much strength that we had these weirdos and coyotes and wolves coming from all over the place for the next battle. And that was the turning point.

Mr. ANDREWS. When would you date the emergence of AQI as a viable force to create disruption in Iraq, what date would you put on that?

Secretary WEST. Oh, August of 2003.

Mr. ANDREWS. When would you say——

Secretary WEST. From then on they were a force to be reckoned with.

Mr. ANDREWS. Well, when would you say they reached a point where their strength increased considerably?

Secretary WEST. They became, in my judgment, the dominant force among all the different elements after they were able to regroup in Mosul in November of 2004 after they had been——

Mr. ANDREWS. Okay.

Secretary WEST [continuing]. Kicked out of Fallujah.

Mr. ANDREWS. And prior to November of 2004, the average attacks per month in Iraq were just shy of, I won't say average, the height were around 3,000, the lowest were 1,800 so the average is going to be 2,300 or 2,400 attacks a month, who was engaging in those attacks, if AQI was not yet a significant force.

Secretary WEST. The psychology of beginning to perceive you don't have anything to lose by striking at somebody and you have a high degree of testosterone, you are out there with different kids, would cause practically anyone to pick up a weapon, go out and start shooting.

Mr. ANDREWS. I appreciate that.

Secretary WEST. So the number of incidents——

Mr. ANDREWS. My time is limited. I wanted to ask you to answer my question, though, which was that prior to November of 2004, who was propagating these 1,800 attacks per month? AQI wasn't much of a force——

Secretary WEST. Correct. AQI was not the dominant force. You had many different insurgent groups who were hostile to the Americans.

Mr. ANDREWS. Do these insurgent groups still exist. Have they gone away? Have they evaporated?

Secretary WEST. That is the interesting thing, sir, that if you look at Anbar where most of the attacks took place, over 50 percent of them, the attacks now from last year in July at 400 have dropped to 100. So it is the same tribes that were on the other side

shooting that now are no longer shooting but they haven't come over as individual insurgent groups.

Mr. ANDREWS. I wanted to ask General Eaton and Colonel Hughes, if I read your testimony correctly, I think that you think that the prospects for political settlement are enhanced with some kind of orderly withdrawal by the United States. Did I correctly state that in both of your cases?

Okay.

General EATON. Correct here.

Mr. ANDREWS. General Eaton, what do you think that political settlement might look like?

General EATON. Political settlement. Are you talking about the government of Iraq?

Mr. ANDREWS. Yes.

General EATON. We have heard discussion today and pretty articulately laid out that a relatively weak federalist approach to governing Iraq is probably the way out with strong local governments.

Mr. ANDREWS. What do you do about the problem of mass internal migration of Shia Iraqis from central Iraq which is predominantly Sunni area, what do you do about the people who are living in integrated neighborhoods and towns?

General EATON. Facilitate that.

Mr. ANDREWS. Facilitate the migration——

General EATON. It is happening right now in a brutal way.

I believe our efforts to facilitate the migration or re-migration as we are watching right now with the northern part of Iraq near the Kurdish boarders——

Mr. ANDREWS. In my remaining time I would ask Colonel Hughes or Dr. Biddle how they think the government of Saudi Arabia would react to such a plan where there was the existence of a large Shiite republic or large Shiite quasi-state on its borders?

Dr. BIDDLE. In my contacts with the Saudis, they would not view that as favorable to their security interests. But I would like to revisit this issue to what some have referred to as "soft partitioning of Iraq." I think that would be a very, very dangerous path for the United States to engage in.

The fact, the history, remains that soft partitions don't happen. All we have to do is look at Africa. We can look at India. We can look at Pakistan. We can look at the Balkans. And let me remind you that the level of violence and destruction in Iraq today doesn't even come close in a per capita sense what occurred in Bosnia. Not even close.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you very much for your testimony. I appreciate it.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Jones for five minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

And General Eaton, I want to say that I appreciate your service when you were in the military. But I appreciate you even more now because of your honesty and integrity.

I wish my friend from Georgia was still here to hear me say that but I mean that most sincerely.

I want to thank you, General Batiste, General Zinni, General McCaffrey, and anyone else I have left out by name for being will-

ing to stand up and try to inform the Congress and the American people about the truth.

If you will give me a yes or not to this, and I have got one other question.

General Batiste in an ad in April this year—I have always said—this is General Batiste—I have always said—excuse me—Mr. President, I have always said that I will listen to the request from my commanders on the ground. General John Batiste. Mr. President, you did not listen.

Is he listening now in your opinion?

General EATON. No, sir, he is not.

Mr. JONES. Okay, thank you.

The second part and because of your comment and maybe others if you want to add, please feel free to do so without me calling you by name, I have Camp Lejeune Marine Base in my district. I have great love and respect for those in uniform no matter which branch. In April of this year, there was in a North Carolina paper the heading, "Deployed, Depleted, Desperate." There is a question for those would will support President Bush's strategy to stretch out the Iraq war until after he has left office and for those who think we should be prepared to continue our bloody operations of Iraq for five to ten years.

Are you ready to support—this is the article, not be speaking, this is the article—are you ready to support reinstating selective service, the draft, even if that means your sons and daughters or your grandchildren will have to put on the uniform and go hold these cities and towns of a nation in the middle of a civil war?

A couple other points and then I am going to stop.

The President's strategy of adding 30,000 or more troops in Iraq may be the straw that breaks the camel's back. They were not 30,000 extra troops sitting around doing nothing when the call came.

Last point. The demands of the war on our troops and their aging, worn-out equipment already has pushed the annual cost of enlistment and re-enlistment bonuses above $1 billion and advertising to about $120 million annually.

Do we have five years before the Marines and the Army are broken?

I will go to you first, General Eaton, and then anybody who would like to speak.

General EATON. No, sir, we do not. And one of the appeals that we have that Generals Batiste and others is we have got to grow the armed forces to meet the foreign policy demands. We are funding cold war systems to an extravagant degree.

Now, the theory of control of the commons with large navies and air forces, all that we have to manage. But we are shortchanging the Army, shortchanging the Marine Corps, and our numbers of personnel whoa recommitted to doing the hard work of today, and we are not funding these services properly in order to re-arm and refit.

The outcome of that is that—my firstborn son is now in his sixth month of a 15-month deployment. We are using a backdoor draft. I don't yet endorse the draft. I have to state because this came up, my wife endorses the draft because she told me to say that.

But I will tell you the draft, you get into the tyranny of large numbers and you will compromise the very technologically and training-proficient force that we have.

Mr. JONES. Real quickly, I would like to go to each one.

Do you support Senator Webb and Senator Hagel's positions that these men and women in uniform need more time to rest and be home before they are sent back over. And if I could start with you, Secretary West and go right down, yes or no?

Secretary WEST. No, sir, I do not.

The big difference on this panel is starts with General Gaskin whom I admire tremendously. I am sure you do from Camp Lejeune. He said we turned the corner in Anbar. I do not believe I agree entirely with pushing more infantry, agree entirely that the Army and marine Corps need more.

But I do not believe that we are going to be seeing this surge indefinitely at this level.

I think the big difference here is that Mr. Biddle said he gave it a one in ten chance. When I came back in April, I said it was a 50/50 bet. From what I have heard from my e-mails from the marines, I now put that as a six in ten chance that we can pull this off.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Secretary, I need to get an answer to the question about Senator Webb and Hagel. Yes or no would do it for me since my time is up.

General EATON. I support the Senator Webb, Senator Hagel approach.

Dr. BIDDLE. I do, too, sir.

Colonel HUGHES. I do not.

Mr. JONES. Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

Mr. Cooper for five minutes.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your holding this extraordinary series of hearings. If only we had had a similar level of scrutiny years ago, Members of Congress would understand a lot more about the problem.

I would like to ask which ever panelist would like to respond, for those who point to progress in recent news in Iraq, how can we be sure that progress will be lasting given what seems like an inevitable troop reduction?

For example, if you look at things like the progress that apparently has been made in Anbar, if you withdraw those troops, how do we know the tribes will not switch allegiance again or change their behavior? Sadr is dealing with the Maliki government, how do we know those won't change substantially once we reduce our presence? Enforcement of things like, you know, the remarkably tenuous oil law that seem almost too much to hope for. The sectarian or terrorist violence, however you want to characterize it. You move a lot of the checkpoints and oversight, what happens then?

I wonder, and we trained, what, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi troops. They leave one week a month to go back home, deposit their pay. We don't really know where they go and what they do. We don't know if they are part of the reason for the spike in violence.

So it is a remarkably confusing situation for any policy maker but if you could help enlighten me on that issue, I would appreciate it.

Dr. BIDDLE. I think it is very hard to make progress lasting after a complete departure of U.S. troops. Historical analogies are always problematic but I think the best analogy to the situation we have in Iraq are civil wars back in the Balkans where the route to civil war termination is negotiate some sort of settlement among the parties but because the parties don't trust each other with guns, a third party to act as peacekeeper is required for those deals one reached to be stable so the spoilers don't blow them up within a week of the ink drying.

And I think unless, if one takes seriously the idea that we are going to stay, do our best to produce stability, the route to it is going to be through bi-lateral deals through something like the Anbar Awakening. I think the implication of all that is to make it stable is going to require a third party presence over a generational duration as it has in other situations where we have seen similar ethnic, sectarian, and other civil conflicts.

Mr. COOPER. The reducing our forces might make it more sustainable because there would be less op tempo stress or——

Dr. BIDDLE. Reducing our forces enables us to reset our forces faster. Reducing our forces removes one of the primary caps on the violence levels in Iraq if we do it prior to negotiated settlements through some significant fraction of the country. Reducing our forces to the point where they cannot act as effective peacekeepers following a negotiated settlement to the conflict makes that very negotiated settlement of the conflict unstable and unlikely to persist.

Colonel HUGHES. Sir, the notion that the United States can be a peacekeeper in Iraq is weak because we are a belligerent and Iraqi people see us as belligerent. The notion that the United States can assist, for example, in the demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration of insurgence back in the civil society is faulty on the same basis. We need a third party. I agree with Dr. Biddle, but it cannot be the United State because we have as much blood on our hands as any of the insurgent groups have over there.

Mr. COOPER. I just have a moment remaining. I am not sure if anyone has asked the warfare and information age question yet. But I worry that we have made the al Qaeda brand unintentionally and that encourages their almost automatic network franchising that is something that perhaps our military is not as adept at dealing with as they should be. Am I mistaken in the view?

Dr. BIDDLE. I am not sure we understand your question, sir.

Mr. COOPER. By focusing on a few people in Pakistan, that we apparently did not succeed in routing out in Tora Bora and the massive worldwide publicity, gave a certain celebrity status——

Dr. BIDDLE. Yes.

Mr. COOPER [continuing]. To those folks. And then, even European countries claim some association or affinity through the Internet with these folks, claim training techniques and others. Then all of a sudden we have metastasized the problem. So in today's information-age world, brand is important and a lot of people get self-fulfillment and identity in that.

And then, you add the free franchising capability——

Dr. BIDDLE. Right.

Mr. COOPER [continuing]. No payment is due. All they have to do is claim affinity then somehow there own self-esteem is bolstered by this.

Is this a different way of dealing with the enemy?

Dr. BIDDLE. You are correct in your understanding of that, sir. They are very savvy in their ability to handle the media.

Mr. COOPER. But are there any effective U.S. countermeasures to that? We recognize what they are doing but how do we oppose that? It almost seems like beyond the comprehension of——

Dr. BIDDLE. Well, one possible approach to this at the level of national foreign policy and strategy is with the enemy we have declared war on in this conflict is very ill-defined. Al Qaeda is the best-known brand, if you like, within this vaguely-defined group.

But we have thrown the net very broadly over a large collection of terrorist organizations that might or might not have thought beforehand that they are allies of al Qaeda.

Arguably what we have done to make this problem, you know, worse than it might be, is by creating a very recognizable brand and then encouraging lots of others who weren't—I don't know how far I want to force this marketing metaphor—who weren't necessarily part of the company before to think about becoming affiliates because what we have told them essentially is the only difference we see between you, Hamas, Hezbollah, whomever else in al Qaeda is the ordering which we mean to destroy you.

That makes that brand of al Qaeda substantially more appealing to organizations that normally have a great deal of difficulty collaborating with one another.

If we were clearer on the definition of the enemy in the war, perhaps we could affect not necessarily the salience of the brand per se but the attractiveness of the brand in bringing in marginal and infra-marginal actors that might otherwise be disinclined to cooperate with them.

Mr. COOPER. My time has long since expired.

Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Sanchez for five minutes.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I am sorry I arrived late. I had a Homeland Security Committee at the same time. And so excuse me, gentlemen, if I ask a question maybe you answered earlier.

I did read your testimonies and, you know, I personally I believe we are getting out of Iraq. We just don't have the resources to stay there much longer and it is just a matter of time so I think these hearings are incredibly important.

And I say that, you know, having, you know, looking at the leadership that we have out there that we keep touting, Petraeus, Odierno, and all of these others and I just have to say, you know, I was there the day after we caught Saddam in Iraq and I asked General Odierno, how many insurgents are left and he said, oh, we have turned the corner. We are done. We have just got a few left, Congresswoman. So how many would just a few be? We went back and forth and finally he told me 357. So Odierno is the general out there running some of this stuff and Petraeus. Petraeus was there

when I was there and he was training up the Iraqi and doing the Iraqification of the army.

It hasn't gone anywhere. And recently, I was out there and saw General Petraeus's operating engineer in Baghdad and the four provinces there, and I said, "Well, how many policemen and Iraqi army do you have in your provinces?" And he told me, "About 36,000." I said, "I think you are completely wrong." And an hour later, I saw Petraeus, and Patraeus said, "He is completely wrong. It is double that."

I mean, I, quite frankly, don't think even the people on the ground know what is really up out there. It is just a matter of time.

So here is my question—because we are going to get out—what are we going to leave? How are we going to leave? I think that is what much of this we are all grappling with, what is the best plan?

And we go back to this whole intent, I look at, Dr. Biddle, your testimony said each of Iraq's neighbors have vital interests in Iraq. Syria and Iran. How do we get them into talks to make them understand we need to leave to leave this place without it going to hell? Or do you just think that they want to see that happen?

And maybe we can start with Dr. Biddle and go down the list?

Dr. BIDDLE. Well, with respect to Syria and Iran, but also the neighbors generally, each of them, obviously has vital interest in Iraq. They also have some degree of shared interest with us and some degree of conflicting interest with us.

The ideal outcome for Syria, Iran, and Iraq is not the same as our ideal outcome. But at the same token, none of us wants chaos and ongoing condition of anarchy in the country.

But the challenge in diplomacy with respect to the Syrians and Iranians is to take the bit of this where our interests and their interests converge—nobody wants anarchy—and somehow or another deal with the parts where our interests are in conflict. Iran wants a safe proxy with a Shiite-dominated government in Iraq for example, and we would prefer not to have an Iranian proxy in the form of the Iraqi government.

That is a very challenging diplomatic problem in part because of all the other problems in our relationships with these two countries and the natural temptation on the part of both Syria and Iran to use our interests in Iraq to extort from us things that they want in other areas. And given that our leverage over them is weak, we have already been trying to apply leverage to Syria and Iran to change their policies on all sorts of things for a generation. We have shot most of our ammunition in that sense.

Given that we don't have a lot of easy alternatives to turn to, economic sanctions, for example, I think what we are probably going to face is a situation where if we really want them to come a long way in our direction in this negotiation, it is probably going to require quid pro quos on other issues that we are likely to find very expensive. I think some of the more important dimensions of quid pro quo are, for example, the nuclear program for Iran, and for the Syrians, for example, influence in Lebanon.

I think it is terribly important that we engage them diplomatically as a way of exploring just how big is the common interest zone, if you like, in this bargaining space as opposed to the conflict-

ing interest zone. Maybe we can find some more shared interests in there that we can exploit by talking with them.

At the end of the day, it is far from clear to me how much of the two really important quid pro quos this Administration is willing to yield in order to get their assistance in Iraq. And even if they did, how much their assistance in Iraq is worth.

Clearly, Iran, for example, has been tremendously unhelpful in Iraq. But at the same token Iran's proxies in Iraq don't share Iran's interests completely either whether they can get them to do what we want them to do isn't clear either. So we should talk but it is an expensive and fraught process.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Anybody else on the panel?

General EATON. Egypt did not recognize Israel out of the goodness of Anwar Sadat's heart. He didn't wake up one day and fall in love with the Jewish state. It became a very expensive endeavor on the part of the United Stated to bring him along.

That kind of negotiation is simply hard work among diplomats to work out what Dr. Biddle alluded to.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Ms. Sanchez.

Gentlemen, we are going to start a second round. It will be the same format.

And I will begin for five minutes.

I wanted to ask the question with regard to what could come if things don't go well with regard to the United States troops present. What can go wrong with regard to the Iraqis. I think that, Dr. Biddle, you referred to that we are capping the violence.

There have been a variety of different predictions about what could happen if we did a precipitous withdrawal or just left in the current situation. Last week, we heard from Dr. Daniel Byman, and in his written statement, and he followed up with it when we asked him about it. And he said that if—he reluctantly has concluded that we need to leave. But his conclusion is the result will be hundreds of thousands, if not millions of deaths. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions of deaths.

And I pursued it with him and said, you know, substantial numbers of that are going to be kids. Are you saying that when we leave, that there will be hundreds of thousands, if not millions of deaths of children? And he acknowledged that is his prediction based on studying of civil wars and everything like that.

My question is, where do you all foresee or see from your different perspectives our responsibility as a nation as the group that took out Saddam Hussein, took out a police state. They had their own kind of violence but it was a different kind of violence that didn't result in the kind of numbers in recent years as Mr. Byman predicted.

What is our responsibility or morality? We used to talk about Secretary Powell's statement, if you break it you own it. And we, I think, we and our military, General Eaton, and the Congress, and the American people, if we saw million of people, including millions of civilians die in a fairly short period of time, that may do something to our psyche as a nations.

So my question is, where is our responsibility or morality regardless of what you think about the different options out there? Secretary West.

Secretary WEST. Again, I am the odd one out here because I don't see the degree of the pessimism but if you start with your quitting, if you start with we are leaving because we consider a civil war inevitable and therefore, we are just packing up and going. Once you have quit, you have no control over what happens after you quit.

And I think we would, in this country, look at ourselves the way we did after Vietnam and it would be a bad time for us for about five years, both in our own self-esteem, how others look at it, and some of us would argue that we had a moral responsibility that we let down on unnecessarily and other would argue, no, we had done all we could and we have a bitter debate but we wouldn't have a national consensus about our moral responsibility.

Dr. SNYDER. General Eaton.

General EATON. Nations have interest that don't have friends. If it is a vital interest, nations will act. The argument based on moral grounds didn't with respect to Vietnam. We basically allowed South Vietnam to go down in flames because we withdrew support for the South Vietnamese army.

It is different in Iraq. I think the outcome can be very detrimental to this nation's vital interests and certainly to a lot of other nations dependent upon the oil coming out of that region. Because I think the whole place will collapse if we have a disaster in Iraq.

Dr. SNYDER. Go ahead, Colonel Hughes.

Colonel HUGHES. Sir, the American people bear a moral responsibility to the people of Iraq for what has gone on over there. And it transcends the scientific, almost theological discussion about vital security interests.

One thing that we can do to help mitigate whatever occurs is to fix the refugee admission issue here with the United States. There are many Iraqis who are fleeing the country, predominantly are Damascus and Amon but now it is growing in Cairo. And all of my contacts throughout the Middle East tell me this is viewed with great concern that this could become another destabilizing factor in the Middle East just as the Palestinian refugee issue destabilized so many places in the Middle East.

We need to fix the refugee situation and make it easier for the United States to fulfill its obligation to those Iraqis who have worked with us and bring them into the country.

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. Biddle.

Dr. BIDDLE. I think we have a terribly important moral responsibility to Iraqis that as moral philosophers would put it, aught implies can. You only have a moral responsibility to do things that are possible.

The question of whether or not it is possible for us to stabilize the country is debatable at this point. I think it is possible but improbable. How improbable it has to be before you decide you can no longer effect this in trying only magnifies the moral problem by increasing the death toll associated with the effort is a judgment call, which again, is partly why, I think, either of the two extremes is a defensible position.

One place where ought——

Dr. SNYDER. Let me interrupt and we will go to Mr. Akin. You have been very clear that you feel U.S. troops are currently capping the violence.

Dr. BIDDLE. Yes.

Dr. SNYDER. Currently.

Dr. BIDDLE. Yes. And we could——

Dr. SNYDER. And do that for a sustained period of time.

Dr. BIDDLE. Well, the challenge is how long can we continue to that before you get what perhaps is the inevitable.

Dr. SNYDER. Right.

Dr. BIDDLE. And the act of continuing postpones the deaths of some Iraqis in exchange for accelerating the deaths of some Americans. So the moral calculus isn't obvious either way.

Once place where ought and can come together, though, as Colonel Hughes is pointing out with respect to the refugee problem. There is an areas where our responsibility can be addressed by things that we can control. And I would agree with him forcefully that I think that is an area where we need to take action.

Dr. SNYDER. Although we should not think that amending our immigration laws to deal with probably tens of thousands of Iraqis is somehow going to take care of any responsibility we may feel as a nations toward a civil war in a country of 25 million people.

Mr. Akin for five minutes.

Mr. AKIN. I appreciate all of your perspectives in helping us on these interesting questions.

I would ask you now to—let us stand way back away from the whole situation. Some of us have sat on the Armed Services Committee here for a number of years. And I guess what I am interested in is what is the take-away? What have we learned? Let us assume this problem was either fixed or we ran away from it and was a disaster, either which way, but what are the things that we should learn?

Now, my impression, I guess, sometimes we get to ask questions or we can also give answers. You know, my impression is, is that some—I guess it was almost 20 years ago this committee met with three different militaries that represented the United States. One was called the Air Force. One was called the Navy. One was called Army. And we said we want you guys to be one. We called it Goldwater Nichols. We talked about jointness.

That has been, by most people's assessment, highly successful.

My sense is the take-away here is we need to carry jointness beyond just the military but perhaps to state and commerce and the other groups or at least have these different, what do you call them, Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams (EPRTs) or whatever they are, but the group that can go in and deal the banking question or oil question or hospital or whatever it is and beyond just specifically military things.

That is my take-away. We need to have jointness but I am open-minded. Everybody gets a minute shot here. What is the number one take-away?

Secretary WEST. Sir, I will start at this end of the table and just go down it.

To me it is in the society at this particular point in time, wars, regardless of the tiny level of casualties compared to others or com-

pared to anything like drunk drivers killing people, or something, is still so horrendous how we view things that I would say it is the notion that we must a belief in ourselves that causes a joint sacrifice by the entire nation before we ask our sons and daughters to go to war. And we did not have this time.

Mr. AKIN. Joint consensus?

Secretary WEST. Joint, sir, in that it is the Nation as a whole that says, we are in this as a nation and we will sacrifice as a nation because this interest is vital. Ann if a President can, say you can't do it on the cheap and if the President says, I don't think I have to bother about that, then I don't think we should go to war.

So my great lesson would be, if you can't get the country to unite for a sacrifice, don't do it.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you.

General EATON. That was pretty eloquent.

I would also offer that our state department is not properly organized nor is it properly resourced nor are its personnel policies appropriate for the world we live in today.

Regional commands are working very well in the Department of Defense. I would go after a regional command approach for the State Department. They need a bigger budget and they need different personnel policies so that we can direct their people to do the things that we are asking them to do today they are not doing in the EPRTs.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you.

Colonel HUGHES. Sir, as you know, I worked on the Iraq study group and in doing the work, the big lesson that came out is exactly what Secretary West just raised. You have to have a national discussion about why the Nation wants to go to war before the first deployment occurs connected to those operations.

We did not have that. it should have occurred in 2002. The Iraq study group was almost retroactive in restarting that debate. And that is the lesson all of Americans need to hear and take to heart.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you.

Dr. BIDDLE. And one lesson we should learn and one that we probably will but shouldn't, the one that we should—although, again, as Colonel Hughes said, the importance of dissent in an open marketplace of ideas. It is not clear that the Defense Department in 2003 was sufficiently opened to a diversity views to allow them to make good decisions in extremely complex environments.

The lesson I am afraid we will learn that I don't think we should is that we went from a single-minded focus on major combat as the only primary mission for the U.S. military. And it ill-served us in Iraq, so we should now go to a single-minded focus on counter-insurgency and conflict as the only mission we should organize the U.S. military around.

The future, I suspect, is more diverse than that. The sheer difficulty of simultaneously doing two or three things very well should not be underestimated. The danger that is enormously great that that will become a recipe for mediocrity at many things altogether as once. The business of avoiding single-minded focus on any single military challenge is organizationally and culturally much harder than it looks and I am concerned that the single-minded focus that

we had before could be replaced by one that will serve the United States no better.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. We have been joined by Mr. Saxton, and without judgment, he will be allowed to participate in the questions at the end of this round.

Mrs. Davis for five minutes.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

Thank you, gentlemen, again, for being here.

And I appreciate the fact that you brought up, you know, are we a military at war are we a nation at war? The veterans in my community ask me that question and I think that it is something we need to address and we somehow kind of pushed that aside and had we approached it differently, perhaps we would be in a different spot today. I don't know if any of us know that.

I wonder if you could continue perhaps a little of the comments you just made because I think the lessons learned is something certainly in the services that we know is applied. And what do you feel that the Congress has really missed in all this?

Is there some opportunity here to address issues whether it is the leaving, the part of leaving and I think Secretary West, I think you mentioned that the Congress plays a role in this obviously, in the way that we talk about it.

At the same time, we have an issue of whether any way that we talk about it is a sign of weakness. I think, Dr. Biddle, you mentioned Congress should mandate it.

What is it that we need to do that perhaps different from the conversation, the discussion today?

Dr. BIDDLE. Maybe I will start at this end this time.

I think the perception that discussion and debate is weakness is much more sustainable when there is not much discussion and debate going on. If it is an ongoing every-day feature, the national dialogue about national security, then it doesn't get represented as because it is something that only happens when failure is apparently looming, it is therefore a signal of failure.

I think a healthy debate at all times in which people's patriotism is not called into question by their willingness to question the very complex subject matter at take here, is terribly, terribly important.

But again, both within the Congress, but within the executive branch. One of the difficulties we have now is because this debate has been muted until fairly recently, there is now a great deal of concern within the executive branch that thinking through all the alternatives in the rigorous, well-supported, carefully staffed out diverse ideas represented way we would like it to be done, will be read as a sign of lack of confidence in their own policy.

We have gotten ourselves into this fix because we have not heretofore been examining all possibilities with the degree of rigor and intensity that they deserve. At the moment, again, I think the way to get us out of this fix is for the Congress to legislate something so that it no longer becomes an apparent sign of lack of confidence.

I think more broadly, we just need a healthier debate at moments prior to looming potential catastrophe. And there are two

points in time I thing where we made mistakes as a nation, as a people, and the Administration made a mistake.

The first one was, in 2002, when Congress issued the blanket authorization for the use of force. Rather than demanding that consideration be given for a formal declaration of war or the invoking of the War Powers Act. The War Powers Act, I am not a constitutional expert, but it sure seems to me that it is a fig leaf for people to hide behind rather than to try and actually make something useful come from it.

And I think that there ought to be some healthy debate within the halls of Congress about its responsibilities as the body that is supposed to, you know, authorize the use of military force and take the Nation and the people it represents to war.

General EATON. The executive branch has gotten too strong. The commander-in-chief notion that the President is commander-in-chief was seen by the founding fathers as the number one general, not the man who would decide that the entire nation would go to war.

We have a concentration of power, had a concentration of power in the hands of the President and Vice-President and the Secretary of Defense. Congress went mute and allowed it to happen. And the generals stayed silent as well.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Secretary West, did you want to comment?

Secretary WEST. I think Steve is really on to something. It is just a question of how it would be done. We know it is inevitable that General Odierno and the others in the next couple of months are going to be talking about a Plan B.

Having a discussion that is fairly open, Steve may be onto something. I just don't know how to work it out. I will say this much. I do know the House Armed Services Committee is trusted more than any other committee in either branch down at this end. So if anybody could do it, it would be the House Armed Services Committee. But I am not sure exactly how it would be done.

But he is right. If there could be a more open discussion of these things before it was decided, it would make a vast difference.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Bartlett for five minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you.

Secretary West, relevant to your observations that there are different reactions to a death depending upon how it occurred, it takes cigarettes just about three days, in fact a bit less than three days, to kill more people than all the people that we have lost in the multi-year war. And there is no outrage to that.

I would like for you, if you will, to help me in a little poll survey that I am doing. You each have something to write with and a piece of paper?

If you will write down four things for me on that piece of paper. The first one is, they hate each other hate al Qaeda, they hate us, and something else.

So four lines, hate each other, hate al Qaeda, hate us, and something else.

Now, if you will put down—there is a lot of violence in Iraq—if you will put down the percent of the violence in Iraq that you think is engendered by each of those.

Now, in a prior hearing, one of our witnesses thought this was an essay test. This is just some numbers.

Okay.

Hopefully, they will add up to a hundred.

We will trust you that you will read what you have written on your paper, not be influenced by what the others have written down.

Secretary West, what are your number? Hate each other? How much? what percent?

Secretary WEST. Thirty percent, sir.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thirty percent because they hate each other. All right.

They hate al Qaeda?

Secretary WEST. One percent, sir.

Mr. BARTLETT. One percent. Wow.

Secretary WEST. This is the violence. When you say hate al Qaeda, how many kill al Qaeda because they hate al Qaeda?

Mr. BARTLETT. No, I mean how much of the violence is Iraq is engendered because——

Secretary WEST. Oh, because of al Qaeda.

Mr. BARTLETT. Yes, sir.

Secretary WEST. Oh, oh, I am sorry. Then, basically, 40 percent is al Qaeda driven.

Mr. BARTLETT. And 30 percent is——

Secretary WEST. Hate us.

Mr. BARTLETT [continuing]. Rethink the 30?

Secretary WEST. Are opposed to us.

Mr. BARTLETT. Okay.

Secretary WEST. Thirty percent against us, 30 percent against each other, and al Qaeda is 40.

Mr. BARTLETT. How much they hate us is how much?

Secretary WEST. I am sorry, sir, 30 percent.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thirty percent.

Okay, they may mean something else in your world, okay, good. Thirty, 40, 30.

General Eaton.

General EATON. Fifty, 10, 40.

Mr. BARTLETT. Fifty?

General EATON. Hate each other.

Mr. BARTLETT. Ten, forty.

General EATON [continuing]. Al Qaeda 40 percent hate us.

Mr. BARTLETT. Colonel Hughes.

Colonel HUGHES. I guess I am the odd man out, sir. Five percent hate each other.

Mr. BARTLETT. All right.

Colonel HUGHES. Forty percent hate al Qaeda. Forty percent hate us. And 15 percent is due to something else and that something else is crime.

Mr. BARTLETT. Crime? Okay.

Secretary WEST. Good point.

General EATON. Very good point.

Mr. BARTLETT. Okay, Dr. Biddle.

Dr. BIDDLE. I would say 55 percent on hate each other, 25 percent on al Qaeda, 20 percent on hate us. And I would also add at least 10 percent on something else, chiefly crime.

Mr. BARTLETT. Crime.

Dr. BIDDLE. And add personal vendettas and other things in that category.

Mr. BARTLETT. Okay.

So roughly, a third of the violence would go away if we leave if I average out your numbers.

Dr. BIDDLE. Well, provided they don't try to kill somebody else.

Mr. BARTLETT. Yes. Okay.

But at least for three of you, the hate each other was a pretty big number. And our leaving is not going to change that, is it?

Dr. BIDDLE. No. The percentage may change if we leave.

Mr. BARTLETT. Oh, they will because we are not there any more so those who hate us will be hating somebody else.

Dr. BIDDLE. Yes. I would be careful about the inference that they hate us percentage of the violence will disappear and be replaced by peace and tranquility——

Mr. BARTLETT. Right.

Dr. BIDDLE [continuing]. If we left.

Mr. BARTLETT. I thank you very much. I am just trying to get some feel as to what the experts think the climate is over there and this little survey helps me get some feel for that.

I am adding that to my growing list. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Sanchez for five minutes.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to go back and ask Major General Eaton, you said that the State Department was not structured correctly for the types of challenges that we have like Iraq, maybe Bosnia and Kosovo, I don't know, going back to your experience, or for the future. Can you, having been a general, and having seen this transition that we do, what do you think we need to do to restructure that State Department so that they can do more of this transition, some call it nation building, I mean, I don't know what to call it, I just know, you know, once the military has done its job, we really should get them out. We shouldn't ask the Army to build the nation, if you will.

From your standpoint, having watched now, much of this happen in different areas, what do we need to do to change this State Department to better adapt for the future?

General EATON. First, the Department of Defense does not manage language foreign area specialists particularly well. We have a tendency to train and then grind them off. The State Department sees that——

Ms. SANCHEZ. Go back to that. So the Department of Defense, are you talking about local people that we are using or people in the military that we are using for language or State Department type of people that we are using for language purposes?

General EATON. The Department of Defense does not see language proficiency for an area officer proficiency as important enough to do what we need to do within the military to——

Ms. SANCHEZ. To have that type of capability within the military.

Are you suggesting that our military should have some of thee capabilities so that they, in fact, do some of that nation building?

General EATON. The military justifiably does not see that as its main responsibility. The responsibility of the military is to fight and win the nation's wars. The State Department sees that as a primary requirement, as a primary effort.

Ms. SANCHEZ. For the Department of Defense or the State Department primary?

General EATON. State Department.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Okay.

General EATON. That is, diplomats learn languages——

Ms. SANCHEZ. Right.

General EATON. Diplomats learn how to swim in the environments where they are.

The organizational issue for the State Department is we have the Department of Defense organized in regional commands. Every square inch of this planet now belongs to a four-star admiral and general.

I believe that a similar approach, perhaps overlaid on existing boundaries, needs to happen within the State Department.

Two, they are not resourced to meet the expectations that we have, that the military has of the State Department.

And their personnel policies allow members of the State Department to say no to an assignment.

Ms. SANCHEZ. So somebody that we think is the best-qualified to go into Iraq can actually turn down that assignment.

General EATON. Secretary Rice cannot direct people within State Department to go fill the EPRTs who we have right now. Hence, those are being filled by military.

Ms. SANCHEZ. As opposed to your experience where you can send wherever the service tells you to go or you get out.

General EATON. That is right.

Well, you don't even have that. I mean, you go to jail.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Some cases you get out. You just said you retired.

So would you advocate then that the Department of Defense bleed over into some of the skill set or are you advocating more that we really put the line in between what the Department of Defense does what Department of State does and that we actually resource and change the way it is structured and the requirements of the State Department?

General EATON. I would not change the main effort of the Department of the Defense to fight and win the nation's wars. I would increase the capability of the State Department to be aggressive actors in the theaters of operations where they are not aggressive actors today.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, General.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Saxton for five minutes and then we will go to Mr. Sestak.

Mr. SAXTON. First, Mr. Chairman, let me thank you for making it possible for me to be here today. I happen to, as all of you do, I am sure think that this is one of the most important periods of

time that our country has faced in a long time so I appreciate being able to be part of this discussion.

Gentlemen, each of you have expressed yourselves in the last few minutes since I have been here—I apologize for not being able to make it earlier but I was interested in something Dr. Biddle said in that before we enter into a situation like this again, conflict or whatever, that we ought to have a national discussion and "examine all the possibilities." I think that is great advice.

And a few minutes later, Secretary West talked about our military leaders and all of us here in the Administration and in Congress considering a Plan B.

And I guess by question would be this. In terms of examining all possibilities as we move forward from the point we are in, which we obviously can't do anything about now. We are where we are. It would seem to me that we ought to have a discussion and I suggested this to my colleagues previously about where we go from here in examining all the possibilities including the recognition that Iraq does not exist in a vacuum, including the recognition that the country to its east, Iran, has demonstrated that it has aspirations to do some things that involve Syria and that involve Hezbolla, that involve perhaps the Shia majority in Iraq, that perhaps involve the state of Israel, and their support of terrorism may by a subject that even involves the United States.

So I guess my questions is, in examining all the possibilities for decisions that we are about potentially about to make and recognizing the Iraq government doesn't exist in a vacuum, and recognizing that the other factors are, in fact, factors that we ought to be talking about, give us a quick one minute or two or whatever it is, each of you if you would, be kind enough to, on your assessment of what are our decisions we make, what are the ramifications of the decision we may make?

Secretary WEST. Excuse me, sir, you mean relative to the Iranian dimension of the whole problem?

Mr. SAXTON. Relative to the what decisions we have to make about Iraq and the other factors that I mentioned?

Secretary WEST. I will just touch on two and quickly move.

You did mention, sir, that I think you should keep an eye on. And that is that the United States and Iraq together have to come to terms before December and go to the United Nations with the United Nations Security Council will then issue in December a statement about the role of the occupying power. That is going to be very interesting to see how we in Iraq work out our differences to go before the U.N.

Separate statement about Iran, I think we have been tiptoeing around the tulips too long. If they are killing Americans, there should be a punishment for killing Americans. That may be easy for me to say versus the President, but if anything, I think, sure, I am perfectly willing to talk to them, smile genially like President Reagan did and at the same time say, gee, I am sorry, but you just lost the place where those bombs were coming from.

General EATON. We need a powerful diplomatic engagement. Essentially, Iraq is a protectorate right now and we are its protector. We need to distribute that to other nations of interest.

And with respect to Iran, we suffered significant casualties during the Vietnam war at the hands of Soviet weapons and Soviet Proxy forces. Yet we maintained aggressive diplomatic action with the Soviet Union.

I would endorse aggressive diplomatic action with Iran. And it is not necessarily all done by diplomats.

Colonel HUGHES. There are two vital interests that the United States has to deal with today and that is the proliferation of WMD and the issue of terrorism. You know, when it comes to WMD, we have accepted North Korea holding onto a stockpile of plutonium even though they are now shutting down a reactor they no longer need.

We have allowed the Russians to continue to support for the Iranian nuclear reactor.

We are allowing the Iranians to move on producing plutonium for their uses. And we are not doing much about it except with some feeble diplomatic initiatives.

We are not bringing all of our national power to bear on this. And that needs to be fixed. It is difficult for the United States to fix it, though, when it is mired in a ground war that doesn't have any relationship to this particular problem. And the United States needs to resolve its presence in Iraq one way or another. In doing so, that will allow us to repair the alliances that have been fractured by this war and our partnerships with special friends.

It will also allow us time to fix our military so that it is capable of doing the job when it is called to, again, do whatever the Congress wants it to do.

Dr. BIDDLE. I think we have a number of profound interests at stake in Iraq, some humanitarian, some of them security. Among the security interests, I would highlight one that we have created for ourselves through the war in Iraq, which is the danger, not a certainty, but the anger of a possible regional conflict spanning the major energy producing countries of the Mideast if our policy in Iraq fails.

The challenge is sufficiently grave as a threat to American national interest but I think it warrants the most intensive analytic effort we can provide to figure out how to mitigate it, particularly because migrating will require an unusually close marriage of diplomatic, political, economic, and military tools in ways that we have historically not done all that well all that consistently.

And I think when I talk about the need for healthy U.S. debate on this kind of question, an essential piece of that debate is bringing together very, very different kinds of expertise that will almost never reside in single individuals. And somehow or another, getting the people who know regional politics in the Mideast, diplomatic instruments and tools and potentialities, the economic implications at stake here, and the detailed military problems, not just strategic but logistical, tactical, operational, and all the rest, in a way that allows them to hammer out some sort of integrated strategy for dealing with this conundrum.

That is not an easy thing to organize. And I think unless we have very self-aware by organizing it, we run the risk of confronting this risk with the kin of tunnel-vision approach that is easy

and natural but would be very unfortunate as a response to this problem.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Sestak for five minutes.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you, sir.

One quick comment and then I have two questions. I least I will get one in.

If I could, General, in your comment, I always remembered General Shalikashvili saying, I can't just hang out a sign in front of the Pentagon saying we only do the big ones.

And I think the key point I think in the debate between you and Ms. Sanchez was that in the military, there is U.S. force. And there are U.S. forces. The force is really meant for why you all exist, to fight and win our nation's war, hopefully, because of that ability to deter them.

But there are forces that at times can be helpful to the nation-building process from logistics to civil affairs units and all. And we never want the second to overtake the first I think is your overarching point. And that is what I took it.

My second one though is, if I can build off of what you just said, Doctor, and what I think Mr. Saxton said well. I am a date certain guy for my own reasons. But set that aside and enough time because if anybody thinks they can get out tomorrow they just don't understand the military situation or diplomatic, I think.

My take on it, though, is, while ending this war is necessary, it is insufficient. How we end it in the means by which we do so is actually more important because it has to do with the safety of our troops and for our overall security.

The aftermath, we will own. We will own because by first of all, the dog may catch the car soon, and something maybe implemented.

I honestly think Democrats have to turn, if they are, away from pure opposition to this war into trying to address in a bi-partisan way a war that is not Bush's war. It is America's war because the consequences of the aftermath are so great.

With that as background, I understand what you said, each of individually what we should do. What should Congress do in the months to come because we need the Republicans and they need us in a sense end this tragic misadventure in the right way.

What and how? As I watch Senator Lugar, as I watch what happened on the Senate side, I didn't see them go to the next step for probably good reasons over there. But this is our war.

And I am so worried about the Army with not one active unit Reserve, Guard, that can state of readiness to help those 30,000 troops sitting in South Korea if they were attacked tomorrow because they are not in condition and everywhere around.

What should Congress do? I mean like now.

Dr. BIDDLE. Well, there are a couple of different ways to think about what congress can do.

One thing Congress can do is mandate troop withdrawals through control of the purse, for example. So there is a great deal of interest in the Congress at trying to find a middle ground, troop presence in Iraq figure that perhaps would allow for bi-partisan compromise, or perhaps would be a slow way to ease into a total withdrawal.

I actually think the most useful role that Congress can play at this point is causing ideas to be discussed that otherwise won't be. And again, I don't want to return to the same idea too often but in an extremely complex subject matter problem like how in the world do we mitigate the costs of either total or partial withdrawal from Iraq, the natural tendency of the government, especially in a situation as polarized as this, is not going to be to examine an all possibilities with the kind of rigorous, multi-disciplinary approach that we would all like.

The political catch-22 in doing that kind of planning can be overcome by law and that notion of creating ideas and information around which policy can be made, not just for lawmakers but also, for officers and strategic planners and people in the executive branch. I think that is a way that Congress can at this point in time, help us move forward in addition to just thinking about should we get out, should we not, what should the force level be.

Colonel HUGHES. Sir, that is an excellent question and I am glad you asked that.

The biggest issue that confronts General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker today is how do you wrap your arms around the political reconciliation issues of Iraq? And this nation lacks that ability because you don't have an Office of Political Reconciliation in the Department of State Foreign USAID. There are certain entities in the town and maybe this is a shameless advancement for my own institute but that is what we do.

You need to empower entities like the Institute of Peace that do political reconciliation work so we can get out there and, you know, have a broader net to cast over Iraq and its provinces. We are seeing progress there but it is slow and it is very, very consuming in terms of resources for us.

General EATON. The issue before Congress is the President of the United States and his stubbornness and unwillingness to deviate from stay the course.

That is the drama. I hear too much about the commanding general in Iraq and less about the Combatant Commander Fallon. Admiral Fallon has the entire region. He has all the countries that have a factor on the problem.

The President of the United States will not shift off his definition of victory. His definition of victory is not going to happen. It is going to be something else crafted with the countries of interest around Iraq. You have got to reach out to the Republican Party to help the President shift off of his notion of victory.

Mr. SESTAK. I agree.

Secretary WEST. I believe, sir, that the House Armed Services Committee, as I said earlier, is probably the only committee that really has the credibility inside the military. That if you were to say why don't we have some fulsome discussion about Plan B that you could get it.

Mr. SESTAK. You are saying we should be saying that.

Secretary WEST. I believe you could do that, sir.

Mr. SESTAK. That is——

Secretary WEST. I think this committee is probably the only committee that could do that.

Dr. SNYDER. We have some votes coming up but we will give members, if anybody has any other questions.

Mr. Bartlett. Okay.

Ms. Davis, any follow-up questions?

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Yes. Just——

Dr. SNYDER. You have the microphone for five minutes.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

I think going back a little ways to our discussion about al Qaeda, I think it has been clear that I know several of you at least feel that that is central to what is happening today and yet, we really need to involve the neighbors.

What impact do they then have on what al Qaeda continues, how they continue to grow or how they continue to create the situation there and even as we project here in the states? What influence do they really have?

What are the costs then of trying to work with them as well? I think, Colonel Hughes, you addressed this or Dr. Biddle, the cost invoked and whether it is a nuclear or whatever it is, vis-a-vis Iran, how do you asses that?

If al Qaeda is so central, and we need to work with Iraq's neighbors, what impact do they rally have on all of that?

Colonel HUGHES. If I could say something. Let us be specific. Al Qaeda in Iraq is al Qaeda in Iraq. They don't have allegiance with any of the neighbors. The foreign fighters who come in do not come predominantly except in one case from one particular neighbor. Saudi Arabia has a lot of people that have come in. We are seeing a growing number of foreign fighters coming from North Africa. We also have Chechnyans coming in but you don't have Iranians coming in. You do have some of the bleed over from some of the other neighbors as I said.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Would you say just al Qaeda rather than al Qaeda in Iraq then. Is there something that we are trying to a way of working with the neighbors that would impact al Qaeda?

Colonel HUGHES. If we could forge a common stand among the neighbors and Iraq against al Qaeda, I think everybody would benefit from that. Nobody in that region likes Osama bin Laden and what he stands for because he is a threat to every one of them. You know, so nobody has an interest in supporting al Qaeda in Pakistan or al Qaeda in Iraq. It is not in their best interests.

General EATON. I believe there are two al Qaedas. There is the al Qaeda of the private soldier, the foot soldier, the guy who can do basic infantry work. And then, there is the al Qaeda that was able to do the low-tech, high-concept attack on the United States on 9/11.

Those are very different——

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Right.

General EATON [continuing]. Entities. And our problem is the silent majority, the silent majority of Muslim nations unwilling, as we are discussing here, to step forward and say enough and to eliminate that issue in their countries.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. I guess just to follow up on that though. Do we have a strategy for doing that whether it is in the hyperspace——

General EATON. I would go back to the diplomacy issue and convincing Saudi Arabia that it is not in their interest to continue a blind eye of developing this al Qaeda fighters and sending them into Iraq.

Secretary WEST. Technically, Syria is allowing about 70 foreign fighters, 85 percent of them being suicide bombers to come through per month through the airport at Damascus.

Iraq is averaging one suicide bomber a day, which is equivalent to one thinking cruise missile murderous bastard a day just killing hundred and hundreds of people. This is what causes many people to believe that if al Qaeda in Iraq that is doing this could be stopped from doing it, you could stop the cycle of violence.

But our influence over Syria to cause them—and they could shut down the Damascus airport any time they want—but we don't have the leverage with them to persuade them to do it. One a day are coming in and just massively killing in Iraq.

Dr. BIDDLE. Again, I think the central problem is leverage and again there are mixed motives on all parts. But the Syrians, just like everyone else, are threatened by global al Qaeda. I mean, global al Qaeda's primary target are secular authoritarian regimes in the Mideast. Well, Syria would be fairly high on that list if you were just to look at they are most opposed to and the kinds of governments are available.

The trouble is, on the one hand, they don't show interest with al Qaeda. On the other had, they don't show interest with us either. And at the moment, in some ways, our policy in the region is more threatening to them than Osama bin Laden's.

The challenge in dealing with all these countries in diplomatic interchange is to try and expand the current range of common interests and deal with the areas where what the want in Iraq is different from what we want.

My concern is the areas where what they want and we want are different for both large and very, very important to these states, who after all, are neighbors of Iraq, who have absolutely viral national security interests and what that country looks like in five to ten years.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Sestak, we are going to give you the last word but it better be a reasonably quick word since we have a vote underway.

Mr. SESTAK. Yes, sir.

I have one question that gets back to Iran. Traveling through Iran with Iraq with Senator Hagel for three days. Being with that senator was the best three days I have had in Congress.

I was taken where everyone said the influence of Iran is undo. It is there. It is pervasive. And they talked about Syria, too. Saudi. And having always believed that, though not as well stated as the road out to Iran—I am going to use that from now on.

General EATON. As a footnote, Congressman, I didn't invent that.

Mr. SESTAK. I got it.

I am taken with incentives, incentives that change behavior. You reduce taxes and it changes your behavior. I am also taken with that saying in the Middle East, having been there lots of times, imshala, God willing tomorrow. It seems to me there needs to be

incentive that change the behavior of Iran from destructive to trying to get influence to be constructive.

General Eikenberry and his departure from Afghanistan said to us in a hearing when asked, does an end work toward our interest in Afghanistan? The answer was yes, not because he wants the same interest, he would want Taliban, he would want al Qaeda there, put half-a-million dollars in roads. There are some common interests.

I am trying to find those Venn diagrams where things overlap, what are those incentives? Because I do believe engagement should be with consequences. Diplomacy can be tough, sanctions, whatever. What are those incentives—even withdrawing troops could be an incentive. What are some incentives, positive and negative, very quickly, that you think could bring about parties to the table to help facilitate an aftermath that is more accommodating toward stability, particularly with Iran?

Dr. BIDDLE. I think with Iran, the critical common interest is nobody wants anarchy. The problem is the kind of non-anarchy they want and we want is very, very different and getting them to accept something that looks like more like our version of non-anarchy, something other than a Shiite dictatorship that will follow the wishes of Iran, is going to be something that is going to require us to sweeten the deal with the Iranians because I think at the end of the day, they think they are in the ascendancy here. We are in decline. They have the arrows in the quiver. We don't.

Their willingness to compromise with us simply is a way of avoiding chaos is going down not up because they think they can avoid that without our help. In an environment in which at the moment, they think they are holding the cards and it is just a matter of waiting it out until the United States leaves so they get the version of non-anarchy they prefer, rather than the version we prefer, we are probably going to have to give them something else that is in our power to give that they actually care about, which is primarily, I suspect, their nuclear program. Secondarily and somewhat more broadly, the sense of respect from the Untied States.

Those are the two things they want from us that we haven't given them and we don't particularly want to give them either of those, especially ground on their nuclear program. But I have a feeling we will have to if we are going to make any headway.

Colonel HUGHES. You need to look at Iran in its total complexity. If we keep think about Iran merely as a supportive factor to an insurgency and growing civil was in Iraq, we are missing the boat. The Iranian government is stressed. They are severely overstretched in a number of things. There are riots all the time in the north. There are reports of public shootings of Kurds all the time. They have got gas and fuel crisis. They claim they need the nuclear energy because their oil infrastructure is collapsing.

You know, so there are a lot of different things we need to look at and understand about what makes Iran tick today and then see how we can turn those into leverage points that would help us influence their behavior in Iraq.

Mr. SESTAK. General.

General EATON. I would only add that, excellently stated, we have a military problem right now with Iran. We are at a conven-

tional military disadvantage right now because of their geography and our poor structure tie down. Diplomatically, politically, economically, we can generate the upper hand, particularly in the international community very quickly to leverage them.

Mr. SESTAK. Sir.

Secretary WEST. Cause them pain. We are the greatest country in the world and the most powerful country in the world and they are in a position where they are training, equipping, and planning the deaths of Americans. I would figure out a way of putting a stop to that and put the fear of god in them.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Secretary West, General Eaton, Colonel Hughes, and Dr. Biddle, we appreciate you being here. I think it is the kind of discussion that this committee likes to have and needs to have and will be an ongoing discussion for months and years to come.

Thank you so much for being here.

The committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:28 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JULY 25, 2007

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JULY 25, 2007

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

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

July 25, 2007

The hearing will come to order.

Good afternoon, and welcome to the third in a series of four hearings that the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations is holding this month on alternative strategies for Iraq.

As I have stated previously, we are holding these hearings because my colleague, Mr. Akin, and I have both been frustrated by the tone of the debate about Iraq this year, and the polarization that has occurred. We wanted to have a series of hearings in which we invited smart, experienced people to help us identify and develop alternative approaches for Iraq. Our intent is not to critique current or past policies, but to focus on the future. Through these hearings, we hope to enhance the public debate and inform full committee deliberations.

I think we are off to an excellent start. Over the past two weeks, we have heard from retired senior military officers, defense policy experts, and academics who specialize on the Middle East, including General Wesley Clark, Max Boot of the Council on Foreign Relations, Dr. Muqtedar Khan of the University of Delaware and Brookings Institute, and Dr. Daniel Byman of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. At the same time, the full committee has held hearings on trends and recent security developments in Iraq, and this afternoon, will hold a joint session with the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to receive testimony regarding implications of the recent National Intelligence Estimate with respect to Al-Qaeda.

We have asked our witnesses to look forward rather than backward. We are not intent on rehashing how we got to where we are. Instead, the witnesses have been asked to address alternative strategies, and have been given guidance that should allow the subcommittee and the public to draw comparisons in key areas. Each witness today has provided us with a written statement, and I think it is clear we have a real variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and ideas. I hope that today will bring a vigorous discussion not only between the subcommittee members and the witnesses, but between the witnesses themselves. Anyone who was here two weeks ago for our first hearing, (the audio from that session which is available on the Armed Services website) will tell you that is exactly the kind of productive exchange we are looking for.

Today's hearing will begin with a statement from the Honorable Bing West, an award-winning author, correspondent for the *Atlantic Monthly*, former Marine combat

commander, and Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs during the Reagan Administration.

Mr West will be followed by Major General Paul Eaton, who retired from the Army in 2006 after 33 years of military service, including command of the initial effort to develop a New Iraqi Army in 2003-2004.

Our third witness is Colonel Paul Hughes, whose resume includes both a distinguished military career and, since retiring from the Army, work on the Iraq Study Group's Military and Security expert working group.

Finally, we have with us Dr. Stephen Biddle, a senior fellow for defense policy and the top analyst on Iraq at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Welcome to all of you.

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

Subcommittee Hearing on A Third Way: Alternatives for Iraq
Part 3 of 4

July 25, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning to our witnesses; thank you for being here today.

Today's hearing is the third in a series aimed at breaking out of the false construct of talking about Iraq in terms constrained to "precipitous withdrawal" or "stay the course". While these hearings have been constructive, I want to reiterate the purpose of this exercise: we are here to discuss alternatives that truly offer a different plan to the current strategy. Simply critiquing the current approach is not the point of this hearing and is not helpful. So, I look forward to hearing the witnesses discuss and define an alternative plan.

After reviewing our witnesses' testimonies, it is clear that some advocate departing from the current strategy. General Eaton and Colonel Hughes do not endorse pursuing a plan that emphasizes U.S. combat forces going "door to door" performing a counterinsurgency mission aimed at securing and holding Iraqi neighborhoods. Dr. Biddle's testimony acknowledges that the current plan has a chance of success, but believes "the likeliest outcome of the surge is eventual failure." Only Mr. West would seem to argue in favor of the current strategy. I have a couple of questions that I'd like our witnesses to address over the course of this hearing.

Those who advocate departing from the current strategy emphasize the need for improving the readiness of the Army and Marine Corps. While I think all members agree that this is an important issue and a vital priority, I'm curious how your alternative will allow U.S. troops to carry out the following military roles and missions: (1) training Iraqi forces; (2) deterring conventional militaries from intervening in Iraq; (3) supporting al Qaeda's enemies; and (4) conducting direct strike missions? Almost all of the experts who have testified before this subcommittee on this subject agree that continuing these roles and missions in Iraq is important.

Finally, according to previous witnesses, increased violence, humanitarian tragedy, a failed state, emboldened terrorists and regional actors will all result in the wake of the withdrawal or significant drawdown of American forces. I'd like to know how our witnesses will ensure that their plan will not to make the situation worse. For those concerned about readiness, how will we ensure that subsequent to withdrawal the U.S. will not find itself in a situation where U.S. forces will have to return to Iraq in five or ten years? I would also appreciate it if you would take some time this morning to discuss how the U.S. should manage the consequences of withdrawal.

Again, thank you for being here today.

[Yield Back to Chairman Snyder]

Statement of The Honorable Francis J. West, former Assistant Secretary of Defense, before the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations
Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives
July 25, 2007

Chairman Snyder, Ranking Member Akin and Members:

It is an honor to appear before this subcommittee. I have been to Iraq 13 times in the past four years, embedding with more than 50 Iraqi and American battalions. I know from firsthand experience that the men and women of our Armed Forces serving in Iraq and Afghanistan have benefited greatly from your untiring efforts on their behalf and from your unstinting determination to insure those on the front lines receive the equipment and services they so richly deserve.

The subject today is "Alternatives for Iraq". The President and the Congress agree about the desirability of a withdrawal of US forces; the issue is under what conditions. It makes a vast difference to our self-esteem as a nation, to our reputation around the world and to the morale of our enemies whether we say we are withdrawing because the Iraqi forces have improved or because we have given up.

That issue towers above any discussion of tactics, logistics diplomacy or even timing. The Iraqi Study Group and former Secretary of State Kissinger have suggested that negotiations might yield an honorable withdrawal - some sort of compromise that extracts American soldiers while not precipitating a collapse inside Iraq. But it's not clear what convergence of interests with Iran or Syria would persuade them to cease supporting insurgents. And inside Iraq, the Jesh al Mahdi extremists and al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) must be destroyed, not placated.

Separate from AQI, though, there are a dozen other Iraqi insurgent groups. At the local level, there have been productive negotiations with the tribes, undoubtedly including some of these insurgents. These bottom-up understandings, focused against AQI, occurred because military action changed the calculus of the tribes about who was going to win. Successful negotiations flowed from battlefield success, not the other way around.

In Anbar, our commander, Major General Walt Gaskin, believes we have turned the corner, with weekly incidents dropping from 428 in July of '06 to 98 in July of '07. In Baghdad and its outskirts, that's exactly what General Petraeus intends to do with his surge strategy - bring security to the local level and break the cycle of violence.

America is divided between two schools of thought about Iraq. The first school - let's call them the Anti-Terror Camp - identifies the jihadists as the main enemy. General Petraeus has said that "Iraq is the central front of al Qaeda's global campaign." AQI is "public enemy number one" because it slaughters thousands

of innocent Shiites in order to provoke a civil war. CIA Director Gen. Michael Hayden believes that a US failure in Iraq will result "in a safe haven (for al Qaeda) from which then to plan and conduct attacks against the West".

Although AQI is a minority insurgent faction, it is unmatched in savagery. I watched Fallujah descend into hell when the Marines pulled back in May of 2004. Our troops called it the "M & I" campaign: Murder and Intimidation on an astonishing scale. In this war, the moral is to the physical as 20 to one. Most of the Iraqi forces and the tribes don't have yet the self-confidence and experience to stand alone against those killers.

Al Qaeda, however, is losing heavily in Anbar, is on the defense in Baghdad and is fleeing north toward Baqubah. The Anti-Terror Camp believes that fracturing AQI and the Jesh al Mahdi death squads will set the conditions that enable US withdrawal, leaving Iraqi forces to enforce reasonable stability, albeit with continued violence. Based on my observations in a half dozen Sunni cities and in Baghdad over the years, I subscribe to the Anti-Terror Camp.

The Sectarian Camp, on the other hand, believes Iraq is being torn apart by religion, not terrorism. Removing the terrorists will not remove the root cause of the violence. An intransigent hostility between the Shiites and Sunnis will lead inevitably to a full civil war and sweeping ethnic cleansings - regardless of the current surge. So we should get out, because the situation is hopeless.

It is problematic whether the sectarian conflict has metastasized into the body polity, and the top levels of the Iraqi government have certainly performed poorly. But if we declare we're leaving on that account, chaos will ensue. When President Thieu in 1975 pulled back just one division, the whole country erupted in panic. If we pull out because we say the Iraqi government has failed, Prime Minister Maliki will pull back and retrench his forces. When he does, the potential for panic flashing across the country in a few days is real.

Iraq has a wide-open highway network that facilitates spontaneous mass movement. In April of 2004, I was with the task force of 200 armored vehicles that General Mattis sent 200 miles, from north of Ramadi all the way around Baghdad, in order to stop the pandemonium and armed bands spontaneously cascading down the highways. This will happen again if we leave before the Iraqi Army is ready to take over.

Conversely, if we believe the Iraqi forces are dominating the insurgents and can contain the centrifugal forces of the Shiite militias, then we'll withdraw combat units beginning in 2008 -- but leave a hefty presence behind. I am referring to advisers, logisticians and anti-terror combat units. We have 24,000 soldiers in Afghanistan; we would need many more than that in Iraq for years to come. Personally, I'd like to see us say we plan on having American troops in Iraq indefinitely - and repeat that every time we withdrew some of our troops. I'd like

to undercut AQI's morale by saying, we're going to continue killing and imprisoning you until there are none of you left.

In summary, I would make four points.

First, General Petraeus is our wartime leader. He has a smart, experienced staff. He will provide to you a fulsome, balanced assessment in September - far superior to anything you will hear in the interim.

Second, how you, our elected leaders, depict our withdrawal will have profound consequences. To a very large extent, you will shape the narrative, determining how our great nation is perceived and how friends and enemies respond to us.

Third, if the rationale for withdrawal is because Iraq seems hopeless, then leaving behind a residual force is fraught with peril. You cannot quit, and expect to manage what happens after you quit. Iraq, if it perceives it is being abandoned, could fly apart quickly.

Fourth, the rationale for withdrawal drives everything that comes thereafter. Why are we withdrawing? Is it because we as a nation have given up, concluding that full-scale civil war is inevitable; or has our military succeeded, allowing Iraqi forces to maintain stability?

I do not see a compromise "middle ground" between these two rationales.

Thank you.

MG Paul D. Eaton, USA (Ret.)

Testimony before the House Armed Services Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee

July 25, 2007

I am Paul D. Eaton, retired now 18 months from the United States Army in the rank of Major General. My last operational assignment was Commander of the organization missioned to rebuild the Iraqi Security Forces from 2003 to 2004.

My remarks will focus upon the United States Army, the Iraqi Army, current Iraq operational approach and State Department efforts in the Middle East.

First, the American Army, the most important Army on the planet. We are under funded, under strength and are poorly supported by this administration - all the while given a critical mission that this President insists on executing on the cheap. Our depots continue to operate under strength and under funded, with huge quantities of materiel awaiting rebuild while units go without. We have failed to meet deployed leaders' demands for bomb resistant vehicles, solution the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP), while continuing the funding of Cold War legacy equipment best illustrated by the F22, JSF and the Virginia Class submarine. We have failed to put this country on a war footing to support the equipping of the American Soldier to ensure he is properly equipped for training while he is properly equipped for war. Our industrial performance during World War II was far more impressive than what we see today. Our ability in the Pentagon to meet acquisition requirements in a timely fashion remains a significant weakness.

Recently, in order to meet the requirements of our Foreign Policy, Secretary Gates increased deployment time to fifteen months. Eighteen month deployments are not out of the question. This isn't like WWII where our men fought battles, then retired to safe zones to rearm, refit. This is constant, grinding attrition warfare. We must immediately embark upon a massive, focused increase in the size of the Army and Marine ground forces. Figures range from 70K to 100K for Army; 15K to 20K USMC. To this date, my local recruiting stations have not received increased recruiting quotas although six months ago, the Secretary of Defense stated the need for an increase, endorsed by the President. The joke in the Pentagon is that a vision without resources is a hallucination. Preparing for a near peer competitor twenty years from now is interesting but we are at risk of losing the near fight.

This President is an unsupportive Commander in Chief for our Army and Marine Corps. He has resisted until early this year, to grow our Armed Forces to meet his Foreign Policy objectives – admittedly so advised by his former Secretary of Defense and current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pace. Unlike war presidents before him, he has failed to put this country on a war footing to meet fiscal and personnel demands of the current and growing threat to our Nation. Finally, he has recently shown himself callous before the needs of our troops with the denial of your proposed pay raise and the abject failure of the Veterans Administration before the needs of our returning wounded.

Recently, retired Army Chief of Staff, General Edward 'Shy' Myer, one of our last truly candid Generals, notable for his warning on the hollow Army of the seventies, warned that you may not know the Army is broken until well after the event has occurred. Many signs indicate we are there. One of the canaries in the mine is the wife of a serving Army officer, former Special Forces Sergeant, who tells me she cannot recommend Army service for her oldest son. She is

not alone and her feelings are based on the belief that the President she voted for has abandoned the Army.

Recommendations:

1. Immediately do a bottom up requirements review to grasp the true extent of the budgetary needs of the Army and the Marine Corps. You can still properly fund this war while prudently paring down Cold War weapons programs to increase the Army and Navy budgets to meet current demands. The F22 by the way is useless in Iraq and is suspect in Korea. Our traditional 24% of the TOA is inadequate. Raise and Maintain the Army is a Congressional duty.
2. Immediately direct an increase in the Army and Marine Corps endstrength. Move to limit tour lengths to one year. Move to mandate minimum 24 month home station rotations. These are current Army objective personnel standards.
3. Move to contain or limit this President's corrosive impact on the health of the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps by properly managing budgetary support.

Next, the second most important Army on the planet, the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Security Forces(ISF). Again, this administration has treated the ISF as an afterthought. This force is as well under funded, has a flawed personnel policy and lacks the moral strength an Army enjoys when it believes in its government. The result is Iraqi Forces remain under equipped after more than four years of effort. The initial policy of a nationally recruited, nationally representative and locally employed force was abandoned after my departure resulting in many ethnically pure and unreliable forces. The original unifying force of the Iraqi Army has become a contributor to sectarian violence. The pro-shiite government of Mr. Al Maliki robs the Army of a sense of legitimacy that the American Army accepts as its birthright.

I am recently informed that there is now thought of locally raised, locally trained and locally employed ISF. This looks like the Police – a failed force and the former Iraqi Civil Defense Corps – also a failed force. Sectarian, partisan and another name for local militia.

Recommendations:

1. Award, track and manage funding for the ISF in a more directive approach. The former Warsaw Pact countries are awash in reasonably good equipment more than prepared to refit all of it for sale to Iraq. South Africa has excellent and reasonably priced bomb resistant vehicles that would add immediate value to the ISF.
2. Encourage with any number of enticements, the Iraqi Government to revisit the notion of an ISF that would provide a unifying influence for the country. The King of Jordan understands how to do this. Consult with him. Consider the Italian carabinieri model.
3. The government issue I will cover in my fourth point, diplomacy.

Current operational concepts seem to follow, very closely, the work of Lieutenant Colonel Doug Ollivant and First Lieutenant Eric Chewning – distributed smaller operating bases and strong integration with the Iraqi Army. If the current operational approach doesn't work, I can't

imagine another that will work. This brings American forces in direct contact with Iraqi troops, role model opportunity of the first order, and direct security to the communities affected. Where employed, it works.

Recommendation:

We must begin a rational, methodical draw down of combat forces on a straight line of 24 months. Withdrawal of forces under contact is difficult and must be executed with significant forethought and planning – currently underway if we are responsibly led. Such a plan will perform as a forcing function to the Al Maliki government to either get their house in order and fulfill the benchmark expectations or abdicate for another, more survivable government approach. Senator Biden's plan is the most rational I have seen.
The current shia dominated government will stall indefinitely if we do not discipline the process with a timeline. The administration's charge that we are aiding and abetting the enemy is specious. They look as we do to January, 2009. We must force the compromise governing solution now.

A diplomatic surge failure. We are treated to a frequent comment that this war cannot be won militarily. This administration has never brought the full power of this Nation to bear on the problem – military, economic, diplomatic and political. It has sought to put the full weight of operations on the shoulder of the Army and the Marine Corps. The State Department has failed to deliver any deal, any assistance to our Department of Defense. Secretary Rice does deliver frequent cameo appearances with zero return on the modest State Department budget. The Army needs help from State.

Recommendation:

The State Department must organize a series of regional engagements between strong internal and strong external actors in the Iraqi area of interest.

The real case study is the Kurdish controlled north of Iraq. They really represent a nation within a nation. Strong actors and a homogenous population have achieved security, economic stability and military prowess. Forces external threaten that security.

The United States must bring the strong internal actors of Iraq, Messrs. Talabani and Barzani, and the leaders of Turkey and Iran into a Camp David type scenario and hammer out the solution, not unlike an earlier era of Egypt and Israel, still at peace. All have interests and vulnerabilities.

That process must be repeated with the strong actors of the Sunni region and the strong external actors of Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Egypt should be invited as well.

And finally, that process should be simultaneously repeated with the Shia and Iran. Prime Minister Al Maliki has allowed himself to be identified already as a partisan stron actor.

The result of all this will look very much like the proposal tendered by Senator Biden in January and the Baker-Hamilton report late last year. None of this is new – all of it ignored by this administration.

You must force, in an asymmetric approach, rational governance by this administration. It is irresponsible for Congress to allow the executive branch of the United States to flail diplomatically when we are faced with an existential threat. The power of the purse can be used with much greater finesse to coerce an this administration into prudent governance.

STATEMENT OF COLONEL (RETIRED) PAUL HUGHES, USA
UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHET & INVESTIGATIONS
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

"CONSOLIDATING GAINS IN IRAQ"
Wednesday, July 25, 2007
Washington, D.C.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me to present my views about "Consolidating Gains in Iraq." While I remain very engaged in Iraq through my work at the United States Institute of Peace, what I present today reflects my own personal views and not those of the Institute, which does not take policy positions.

As you well know, the Nation is seized with the war in Iraq, one of the most complex wars it has ever fought. This complexity can be characterized in many ways but one fundamental aspect must be understood for the United States to successfully interact over the long term with the larger Muslim world. While many Americans view the war in Iraq as a conflict motivated by sectarian hatred, this war involves issues rooted in power re-distribution among groups of people who have never experienced the dynamic processes we now demand they implement quickly, namely those of political reconciliation.

Understanding this fundamental nature of the war is crucial to our development of our war aims and national interests. So far there have been several changes in both and these have only served to confuse our regional friends and worldwide allies as to our ultimate goals. Additionally, this confusion has opened the door for our enemies to exploit.

Today, the interests and goals of the United States are usually reduced into sound bites rather than studied in their true nature. They are complex and very demanding. As described in the national strategy document, Victory in Iraq, they are:

- In the **Short Term**, Iraq makes steady progress in fighting terrorists, meeting political milestones, building democratic institutions, and standing up security forces.
- In the **Medium Term**, Iraq takes the lead in defeating terrorists and providing for its own security, with a fully constitutional government in place, and on its way to achieving its economic potential.
- In the **Longer Term**, Iraq is peaceful, united, stable, and secure, well-integrated into the international community, and a full partner in the war on terrorism.

In reviewing these goals, it appears less likely that these can be attained over what America views as "the short term." In fact, many have suggested this will be a generational effort. The complex nature of the short term goals suggests some of its components are not feasible and should be pushed back on the strategy's time line.

The obvious shortfalls in the short term related to political progress and democratic institution building have hindered progress towards the medium and long term goals. These requirements lie outside the vast expertise and capabilities of the Department of Defense. Without progress in these two specific areas, our military can continue to fight and occupy more of Iraq's cities and towns but will never fully secure these areas for a hand-over to Iraqi security forces. And absent that degree of security and hand-over, our military's departure would simply open the door for the return of chaos.

This assessment implies our military forces may need more time to achieve their operational goals as some of our commanders recently suggested. Yet their requests have to be balanced with the political realities of our country and its long-term national security interests. We are engaged in what some call a "Long War" and others refer to as a "global war." If this is true, then we must place both the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns in their proper perspectives – they are campaigns in this long, global war against extremists of all stripes that threaten our interests. Perhaps now is the time for us to recognize that we have achieved change in Iraq and that we should now consolidate our gains and take a strategic pause in order to refocus our strategic aims, regroup and replenish our forces, repair our alliances, and regain the support of the American people before going back on the offense.

I use the term "consolidate" from the perspective of a soldier. When soldiers consolidate on the objective, they organize and strengthen it so they can make maximum use of their new-gained position. In the case of Iraq, consolidating our gains will be messy and uncertain. It will require more time and resources to help the emerging Iraqi government organize and strengthen itself. But we do not need to continue expending the immense amount of resources used in Iraq at current levels when we need them for our war efforts elsewhere in the world.

Refocus Our Strategic Aims

Our fundamental goals for Iraq remain valid but attaining them remains very problematic. Fundamentally, we must review and refocus our strategic aims to ensure we know where we are headed in this war. This begins with a reassessment of our national interests in the region with the necessary decisions of how best to serve and protect them.

As mentioned earlier, our interests in Iraq have shifted several times since 2003. Such shifts never bode well for any war-effort unless they were purposeful and planned in advance. We began this war with emphasizing the denial of weapons of mass destruction to Saddam. We took military action when we believed that both diplomatic and economic means failed to achieve our goal. Yet we allowed ourselves to become confused as to our ultimate purposes in Iraq, which has only served to blunt and degrade our influence in both the region and the world. Notably, today we are faced with similar challenges with Iran and for the time being are pursuing diplomatic and economic efforts to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

If our principle interests in the region now are to prevent Iran from acquiring WMD and to ensure world access to oil, one must ask how a ground war in Iraq helps us achieve those goals.

If our security interests are realistically discussed and deliberated, they must begin with the fundamental fact that a ground war in Iraq does not serve our regional interests.

Some will raise the specter of another terrorist attack on our homeland – and as a survivor of the 9-11 attack on the Pentagon, I am very sensitive to this issue. But we must ask ourselves if Al Qaeda in Iraq is the likely actor that would stage such an attack. Given the recent development of Iraqi tribes banding together to resist and attack Al Qaeda in Iraq, it is doubtful this terrorist group would be in any shape to attack the United States. Al Qaeda in Pakistan poses a far greater threat to us than those in Iraq do. Again, we must ask ourselves how a ground war in Iraq serves our goal of eliminating Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda organization in Pakistan.

Therefore, we must step back and recognize that the campaign in Iraq is just one of many we will fight over the next 15-20 years. One campaign does not constitute a war in its full scope and complexities; we have succeeded in deposing a dictator, assisted Iraqis in establishing a nascent democracy and emerging civil society organizations. We can no longer ignore other pressing challenges challenging our security.

Announce a Date

Given that we are in Iraq and will likely be for the next two or three years, we can take prudent steps that would begin the redeployment of our forces, help the Iraqi people reconcile their differences, and build effective democratic institutions. Such steps would allow us to reinforce our campaign in Afghanistan, restore American credibility, and dissuade other states from engaging in destabilizing acts, either in this region or elsewhere in the world.

The essential step would be for the United States, in close consultations with Iraq and our regional partners, to announce a date when it would begin redeploying from Iraq military units not needed for the training and support of Iraqi military forces, the conduct of counter-terrorism operations, or the conduct of border surveillance/protection operations. Once this date is announced it must be protected and met. Decisions relative to the withdrawal of the last units would need to be condition-based so as to protect our ability to act to new or resurgent enemy actions should they arise.

By announcing a date for redeployment the United States would regain the strategic initiative in the region by strengthening our diplomatic posture relative to Iraq's neighbors and demonstrating to the Iraqi people that their security remains their ultimate responsibility and not ours.

Department of Defense officials should determine the size of the remaining force. However, we should recall that raw numbers of personnel are not what matters and should not be used to gauge our capabilities. Rather, the force would be best described by the types of units required, such as brigade combat teams, logistics units, and training teams. In addition to these, specifically skilled units that would provide support to the Iraqi Army must also be identified, such as tactical intelligence, medical, fire support, and logistical units.

With the announcement of the initial withdrawal date, the governments of the United States and Iraq should also announce the signing of a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), something that

would help Iraqi opposition parties see that their government is asserting its sovereign authority over foreign troops stationed in Iraq. This particular agreement would be unique because of the on-going insurgency but with careful deliberation and discussion, one could be crafted that would permit continued U.S. military support of Iraqi counter-insurgency and combined counter-terrorism operations. Additionally, a SOFA would possibly eliminate the need for the Iraqi government to continually request a United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing the presence of U.S. military forces in Iraq.

Seek Political Reconciliation

Iraq, a state seized by political violence, rampant crime, fear and unpredictability, faces a long torturous future. Saddam's legacy will live for many years and continue to haunt Iraq, the region and the world. Two generations of Iraqis who have never known how to compromise and peacefully reconcile their differences are now being told they must do so on a variety of critical matters in only the space of a few months. They are also challenged by the dynamics of grass-roots democratic political action, both in terms of its potential and shortcomings. The democratic concept of protecting minority rights remains a foreign concept to most Iraqis, to even some of their most senior leaders. In short, Iraqis lack the tools necessary for reconciling differences and reducing political violence.

Without the necessary assistance to learn how to deal peacefully with political differences, Iraq will remain a danger both to itself and the region. We may have overthrown a brutal dictator but without our active assistance to help Iraqis resolve their political agonies, we may well have replaced one known evil with an unknown and unpredictable one.

The U.S. Army's new counter-insurgency doctrine recognizes the need for political reconciliation and good governance as key elements in terminating an insurgency. Although the Department lacks the necessary skills and resources to provide them, others, like the State Department, USAID and the United States Institute of Peace, should play a more prominent role in this effort. Together with the Department of Defense, a coordinated effort can be created that would bring many skills and resources to assist Iraqis to meet their challenges.

Since 2004, the United States Institute of Peace has been on the ground in Iraq training Iraqis in conflict management skills to increase their capacity for political reconciliation, promote the rule of law, and strengthen civil society. This critically important work has accomplished a great deal but much more should be done. The Institute's unique capabilities are urgently needed yet remain under-resourced.

The Iraqi people, stressed as a society for many years, have de-emphasized their various identity markers, or those characteristics upon which they built common bonds with each other, if those markers did not ensure the security of the individual, his family or clan. The challenge today is to help Iraqis recognize these repressed markers and identify common interest. The identification of common interests will form the basis for political reconciliation and the attendant reduction in political violence. We have seen this dynamic play out in the Balkans and other conflicts and are beginning to see it in some areas of Iraq. But this effort will take time and resources if it is to succeed.

So far, reconciliation efforts have borne little fruit at the national government level for a variety of reasons and are unlikely to succeed in the short term. However, there have been some early signs of success at the provincial council and district levels where results can more easily be seen and felt by Iraqis on the street. These lower level successes should be reinforced so that a gradual groundswell builds to provide a national reconciliation basis for the central government.

Restructure Our Military Presence & Replenish Our Military

The Iraq Study Group recommended a restructuring of our forces in Iraq so that our troops remain committed to training and equipping the new Iraqi Army, conducting counter-terrorism operations, and providing the necessary support to the Iraqi military until it fully matures over time into a force capable of defending its territory. Units redeployed from Iraq could then undergo refit/reset programs before being deployed for new missions.

Careful consideration should be given to calls for the stationing of U.S. forces in the Kurdish region of Iraq. Any decision should take into full account the possible unintended consequences of such a move. The Kurds have been very supportive of the U.S.-led campaign to topple Saddam; however, they have a historical goal from which they have never wavered, the creation of an independent Kurdish state. The current Iraqi constitution gives them many trappings of sovereignty but still falls short of their desire for complete independence. We must recall that the Kurds are the largest nation of people in the region that do not have their own sovereign state. Basing U.S. forces in their federal region of Iraq would place us in a very dangerous position of being the firewall between the Kurds and both an old NATO ally, Turkey, and the state which we should really focus our attention towards, Iran.

As part of the restructuring effort, the United States should also consider forging an agreement with the Government of Iraq that would facilitate a rapid redeployment of U.S. forces into Iraq to deter any external threat to Iraq's territory. Such an agreement should provide for over-flight rights, base access, storage facilities and combined training exercises with Iraqi forces. In addition to deterrence operations, U.S. forces should also initiate civic action programs similar to those our current efforts in Central America. Such programs would help to build a confident relationship between the U.S. military and the Iraqi people.

Military units withdrawn from Iraq will require significant rest and reset when they return to the United States. During this time, the threats from South Asia will not cease; in all likelihood the operations tempo for our military will remain quite high. Efforts to resource and increase the size of both the Army and the Marine Corps must be given high priority, and their training and sustainment bases be rapidly expanded for the long-term. Priority must also be given to the needs of our Special Operations forces – their losses are not generally made public but undoubtedly they too have suffered losses and should receive similar attention.

Replenishing our military must also take into account the sacrifices our military families have made in this war. While they have suffered, their losses remain anonymous to many Americans. We owe them the necessary care and services to keep faith with them for giving up their loved ones for the greater need to protect the Nation.

Repairing Our Alliances

The United States has suffered a tremendous loss of prestige and influence throughout the world as a result of the Iraq war. We have been challenged in new ways around the world but are undeniably fixated on Iraq. North Korea, in spite of closing its nuclear reactor, remains in possession of a significant amount of weapons-grade plutonium; Russia has become the major concern of our European allies and backed out of a major arms-control treaty; Iran continues its drive for nuclear weapons and regional dominance; and Pakistan convulses internally because of the consequences of NATO's inability to defeat both the Taliban and Al Qaeda and stabilize Afghanistan. These are only a few of many examples which have resulted from our uncertain engagement in Iraq.

Repairing our alliances and partnerships must become a priority national interest for the Nation. The United States cannot continue to act without the support of its allies and friends as it deals with these challenges. Repairing our alliances and partnerships will only enhance our diplomatic and economic powers, both of which have not been put to their full use over the last six years.

Regain the Support of the American People

America has never won a war without the solid support of its people. While many Americans have indicated they see little to be gained from the continued war in Iraq, the U.S. military sees itself becoming further distanced from the people it protects at a time when our forces face significant challenges in recruitment and retention of its troops. Parents are dissuading their sons and daughters from joining the services; company grade officers are leaving the military in record numbers; and children of soldiers are under tremendous – and generally unrecognized – stress from repeated deployments of their fathers and mothers.

A new partnership between the Executive and Legislative branches is needed if the military is to regain the support of the people. In the past, these two branches have not communicated well with each other, which resulted in no clear articulation of our war aims to the American people. According to the *Washington Post*, less than 1% of America has served in the military; less than 5% know of someone who has or currently serves. That means upwards of 94% of the American people have no direct stake in this conflict. When both branches work together to articulate policy, this serious gap can be fixed so that our people understand what is at stake, the price being paid and the realistic consequences of failure.

Recommendations

The challenge facing the United States is how it should best manage its involvement in Iraq while remaining capable of meeting its broader global security responsibilities. To meet that challenge, the United States should:

- Reassess its strategic goals in light of its regional and global interests.
- Announce a date certain for beginning the redeployment of forces from Iraq.
- Conclude a Status of Forces Agreement with the Government of Iraq.
- Resource and invigorate a comprehensive political reconciliation program in Iraq.

- Immediately act to resource and increase the size of both the Army and Marine Corps, refit and reset units that have been in combat, ensure our Special Operations forces are being properly resourced, and care for the families of our military personnel.
- Repair the damage done to our relations with our allies and special partners.
- More clearly articulate U.S. policy in order to regain the confidence and support of the American people.

Colonel (Retired) Paul Hughes, U.S. Army, served more than 29 years on active duty. Among his more significant duties, he served as the chief of the Army's National Security Policy division and as the chief of strategic policy for both the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance and the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq. Following his retirement in 2005, he continues to work on Iraq issues with the United States Institute of Peace. The views expressed in this statement are his alone and do not reflect those of the Institute, which does not take policy positions.

Evaluating Options for Partial Withdrawals of US Forces from Iraq

Statement by
Dr. Stephen Biddle
Senior Fellow for Defense Policy
Council on Foreign Relations

Before the
Committee on Armed Services
Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
First Session, 110th Congress

July 25, 2007

Public support for the President's surge policy in Iraq is at a very low ebb. Yet many Americans remain reluctant to withdraw from Iraq altogether. The result has been growing interest in a variety of compromise proposals that would reduce US troop levels but stop short of total withdrawal. Are these sound choices for US policy?

The answer is no. Moderation and centrism are normally the right instincts in American politics. But Iraq is a very unusual policy problem. For Iraq, centrist policies leave us with force postures that reduce our ability to control the environment militarily, but which nonetheless leave tens of thousands of US troops in the country to serve as targets. The result is likely to be the worst of both worlds: even less ability to stabilize Iraq than the surge offers, but with greater casualty exposure than a complete withdrawal would produce. Given this, the strongest case on the military merits lies at either of the two extremes in the current Iraq debate – a stronger analytical argument can be made for either surge or withdrawal than for the moderate proposals in between.

I assess these proposals in seven steps. First, I briefly evaluate the case for the surge. I then consider the case for withdrawal. The remainder of my statement assesses four of the more prominent proposals for centrist options between these two extremes – in particular, I consider arguments for removing US combat brigades and switching to a mission of training and supporting Iraqi Security Forces (ISF); for withdrawing from Iraqi cities and switching to border defense; for withdrawing from Iraqi cities and hunting al Qaeda from remote bases in the Iraqi desert; and for withdrawing from central and southern Iraq and defending Kurdish allies in the north. I conclude with brief summary observations and recommendations – among the most important of which is a call for Congressionally-mandated Defense Department contingency planning for a variety of possible withdrawal scenarios from Iraq.

The Case for the Surge

The surge represents a long shot gamble that is much likelier to fail than to succeed. But the odds of success, although small, are not zero. Given the consequences of failure in Iraq, even a long-shot chance at averting this is a defensible choice.

Iraq is already deep in civil warfare, and has been for at least two years.[1] This civil war is currently being waged at relatively low intensity, and could easily escalate, but it is already a civil war all the same. The policy challenge in Iraq is thus civil war termination, not prevention. Unfortunately, efforts to negotiate peaceful settlements to civil wars rarely succeed prior to the military defeat of the weaker side. James Fearon, for example, who has performed perhaps the most rigorous empirical analysis of this problem, finds that of 54 civil wars since 1945, only about one-fourth ended in a peaceful negotiated settlement.[2] And many of these efforts were not saddled with the legacy of prior misdiagnosis, policy error, and accumulated loss of public confidence that the United States now confronts in Iraq. Taken together, this legacy of error, combined with the inherent difficulty of the undertaking, suggest a poor prognosis for the American project in Iraq.

The odds in Iraq are thus long. But success is not inconceivable. The most common indicators of progress in Iraq are mixed – increases in US casualties, for example, have been accompanied by decreases in sectarian murders. Given the difficulty of the undertaking, great caution is warranted in projecting optimism from such ambiguity. But mixed indicators make it hard to exclude possibilities altogether and assert absolute confidence in any given outcome, including failure.

More important, there are some indications that an unanticipated Sunni tribal rebellion against al Qaeda in Iraq in Anbar Province may be spreading elsewhere in the country. If so, this gives some degree of hope that a strategy of bilateral ceasefire negotiations with individual combatant factions might eventually cumulate into something resembling stability in Iraq.[3] Of course, continued pursuit of stability via negotiation in Iraq is inherently a long shot at this point – certainly the odds are well below the 25 percent success rate for such attempts historically. But to jump from this historical observation to a claim that the chances are zero is very hard to sustain analytically. A more reasonable prognosis is a small – but non-zero – chance of success.

A long shot gamble is never an attractive option, but it can make sense if the costs of failure are high. And failure in Iraq could pose grave risks to American interests. If one defines failure as the total withdrawal of American forces from an unstable Iraq, then

---

[1] The standard definitions of "civil war" in the scholarly literature normally require that such conflicts (a) pit combatant parties internal to a state, (b) involve at least 1000 total battle fatalities, and (c) involve at least 100 fatalities on each side (thus distinguishing civil war from unilateral massacres or genocide): see, e.g., James Fearon and David Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (2003), pp. 75-90. By such criteria Iraq is clearly and unquestionably a civil war today, and has been since long before the Samarra mosque bombing of February 2006 that some now see as the beginning of sectarian warfare in Iraq.

[2] James Fearon, Testimony to US House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations, on "Iraq: Democracy or Civil War," September 15, 2006, p. 3.

[3] For a somewhat more detailed discussion, see Stephen Biddle, "Hard Bargaining," *Boston Globe*, June 3, 2007, pp. C-1ff.

among the likely consequences of this are a major humanitarian disaster and a significant risk that the war could spread to engulf Iraq's neighbors.

The humanitarian consequences, for example, could be quite severe. US forces in Iraq are insufficient to end the violence, but they do cap its intensity. If we withdraw them, the violence will rise accordingly. Most victims of this violence are innocent civilians. The bitter ethnic and sectarian roots of this conflict give every reason to suspect that the scale of killing that could result from US withdrawal could dwarf today's death toll. Some have argued that the ongoing sectarian cleansing of Iraq's mixed neighborhoods will largely exhaust the killing once it is completed and Iraq is, effectively, partitioned. But this is unlikely to end the violence – it will merely redistribute it to the frontiers of the now-cleansed regions as the displaced populations fight to regain their patrimony. Iraq's Sunni heartland in particular is economically unviable; Sunnis driven into Anbar or Salah ad Din by Shiite cleansing of Baghdad or Diyala would not simply accept what they see as a future of Gaza-style impoverishment in the shadow of what they would view as Shiite and Kurdish domination of Iraqi oil wealth. They have already demonstrated their willingness to fight rather than accept this. That fighting is now limited by the American combat presence; were that presence to disappear, the fighting would become a truly zero-sum struggle for survival among groups that see one another as potentially genocidal threats or as would-be agents of oppression and poverty. The resulting death toll could be horrendous.

But the stakes go beyond the humanitarian. Each of Iraq's neighbors have vital interests in Iraq, and those interests create a serious risk that the war could spill over into a regional conflict spanning the entirety of the Middle East's primary energy producing states. This danger of spread increases with time. Civil wars such as Iraq's often take a decade or more to burn themselves out. With some luck, Iraq's war could do this without spreading (and astute US policy could increase the chance of this, albeit only at the margin). But it is also distinctly possible that an increasingly virulent combination of refugee flows into neighboring states; the internal destabilization created by ill-housed, ill-fed, dispossessed and politically radicalized refugee populations; fears of regional domination by Iranian-supported Shiism; cross-border terrorism by Iraqi factions (especially the Kurds); and growing military capacity for intervention fueled by an ongoing regional arms race could eventually produce irresistible pressures for Jordanian, Saudi, Turkish, or Iranian state entry into the war. And if one of these states intervened, the resulting change in the military balance within Iraq would increase the pressures on the others to send troops across the border as well. The result could be a regionwide version of the Iran-Iraq War some time in the next decade, but with some of the combatants (especially Iran) having probable access to weapons of mass destruction by that time. Of course nothing about Iraq is a certainty, and the probability of regionalization is not 1.0. The likeliest case may well be an internal war in Iraq that ends in a deal made possible by mutual war weariness after years of indecisive civil bloodshed. But it would be imprudent to ignore the possibility of a much worse outcome – and the odds of that worse outcome, in the form of a major regional war – grow over time as refugee outflows, terrorist action, and arms racing unfold. Should the worst case of a regional war emerge, the security and economic consequences for the US and our allies could be very grave: the spike one could expect in world oil prices should Mideast production be targeted in such a war could produce a major global economic contraction, imposing suffering on all, but especially on those living

on the margins already, whether in the United States or abroad. And it is entirely possible that if confronted with such a disaster, the United States could be forced to re-intervene militarily in a conflict that will have gotten much harder still to resolve in the interim.

None of these prospects are certainties. But during the Cold War we worried enough about a very small risk of nuclear aggression by the Soviet Union to spend untold billions to reduce that small risk to an even smaller one. By comparison, the danger that we could catalyze an eventual regional war in the Mideast by failure in Iraq seems much more realistic. There is now no way to avert this risk with certainty, but the surge does offer at least a long shot chance to stabilize the country and thereby head off this prospect. As such it is a defensible, if unattractive, choice.

The Case for Complete Withdrawal

While a long shot chance at averting a possible disaster is defensible, so is the opposite. If the odds of success are now long, we are thus likely to fail anyway even if we try our best to avert this. And the cost of trying is painful: hundreds or thousands of American lives will be lost in the attempt that might otherwise be saved if we cut our losses and withdrew sooner. The likeliest outcome of the surge is eventual failure; this failure would lead to total US withdrawal anyway, but would postpone it until after many additional US fatalities were suffered. An earlier complete withdrawal of US forces ensures the failure but saves the added deaths.

The other chief advantage of complete withdrawal is an earlier recovery for the US military from the damage done by the war. The Army has estimated that it may take 2-3 years to replace or repair the equipment damaged by four years of continuous warfare in Iraq, even with the dedication of some $17 billion a year to the task.[4] Every additional year of fighting not only postpones this rebuilding task, it lengthens it by adding to the backlog of unrepaired damage and deferred maintenance. Whatever the outcome in Iraq, we will need a capable military to respond to other potential threats elsewhere for decades to come. And if the surge does eventually fail we will confront the danger of a possible regional conflagration in the Mideast and its potential for US military involvement. These are serious policy challenges that continued high operating tempos in Iraq make it harder for us to meet. It may well be worth the cost in deferred rebuilding if an extended US effort succeeds and thus averts risks such as a regionalized war. But the likeliest case is that the surge will leave us with these risks and a significant delay in rebuilding the American military to meet them. Given this, an important advantage of complete withdrawal is to hasten the process of resetting our military to deal with the challenges of the post-Iraq security environment.

The Administration has sometimes posed complete withdrawal as the only alternative to a surge, but used withdrawal as a strawman to encourage support for their policy. I agree with them that complete withdrawal is the best alternative to the surge, but I disagree with them on its merits: it *is* defensible, it is not a strawman.

This is not because it is risk-free or low cost. The dangers sketched above in the event of failure are real, and complete withdrawal sacrifices the chance to avert them via US-induced stability in Iraq. Moreover, the withdrawal itself is likely to be long, difficult,

[4] Ann Tyson, "Military is Ill-Prepared for Other Conflicts," *Washington Post*, March 19, 2007, pp. A-1ff.

and dangerous. Even if we decide tomorrow to pull all US forces out of Iraq, it will take months to years simply to remove the many thousands of vehicles, weapons, pieces of equipment, and shipping containers of materiel that the United States has deployed to Iraq over the past four years. As we do so, we can expect to be attacked by Iraqi factions of all persuasions, whose incentives to prove themselves by demonstrating opposition to the defeated Americans will grow once we announce our departure. A United States departure from an unstable Iraq will probably be a fighting withdrawal.

But unless we succeed in stabilizing Iraq, those same difficulties and dangers await whether the withdrawal comes sooner or later. To fight our way out sooner means to avert the deaths we would suffer in a longer stay prior to the withdrawal; to delay is to add to the casualties of withdrawal the losses suffered beforehand.

Some withdrawal advocates claim it can be done without grave risk, either because the consequences of failure in Iraq have been exaggerated, or because US occupation troops are themselves the problem, or because withdrawal itself will motivate Iraqis to settle their differences. As I argue above, I think the risks of failure are real. Neither do I accept the claim that the fighting is chiefly nationalist resistance to foreign occupation and hence that if US troops left this resistance would disappear. The fighting in Iraq has probably never been primarily nationalist, but it certainly has not been for years – it is now profoundly sectarian and ethnic.[5] Hence a removal of foreign occupiers would not satisfy the primary *casus belli* driving Iraq's bloodshed today. Nor would the removal of a US security crutch motivate Iraqi deal-making. Most of Iraq's factions have already concluded that the US is leaving and are busy positioning themselves to wage the all-out version of today's low-intensity civil war that they see coming when we go. Iraqis' inability to compromise is not because they see no need as long as the United States remains – it is because they fear one another so much that compromise looks too risky. This makes US withdrawal a recipe for harder fighting, not quick negotiation. To support complete withdrawal is thus to accept its costs and risks – but also to judge that these are so likely anyway that the best course is to cut our losses en route by saving the lives that would be lost by an extended presence, and to accelerate the reconstruction of the US military capability we will need in the future regardless of the outcome in Iraq.

Partial Withdrawal with Reorientation to Training and Supporting the ISF

One of the most-discussed alternatives to either surge or complete withdrawal is partial withdrawal with the remaining troops reoriented away from combat missions and toward training and supporting the ISF. This is substantially less likely to succeed than the surge, however, and is likely to expose the US forces that remain to significant casualties all the same.

There are two chief problems here. First, since it is the US combat presence that now caps the violence level in Iraq's civil war, reducing that combat presence can be expected to cause the violence to increase accordingly. To be effective, embedded trainers and advisors must live with and operate with the Iraqi soldiers they mentor – they are not lecturers sequestered in some safe classroom. The greater the violence, the riskier their jobs and the heavier their losses.

---

[5] For a more detailed argument on this point, see Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," Foreign Affairs, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (March/April 2006), pp. 2-14.

Second, that same violence reduces their ability to succeed as trainers. There are many barriers to an effective Iraqi security force. But the toughest is sectarian factionalism. Iraq is in the midst of an ongoing communal civil war in which all Iraqis are increasingly forced to take sides for their own survival. Iraq's security forces are necessarily drawn from the same populations that are being pulled apart into factions. No military can be hermetically sealed from its society – the more severe the sectarian violence, the deeper the divisions in Iraqi society become and the harder it gets for Americans to create the kind of disinterested nationalist security force that could stabilize Iraq. Under the best of conditions, it is unrealistic to expect a satisfactory Iraqi security force any time soon, and the more severe the violence, the worse the prospects.

The result is a vicious cycle. The more we shift out of combat missions and into training, the harder we make the trainers' job, and the more exposed they become. It is thus unrealistic to expect that we can pull back to some safe but productive mission of training but not fighting – this would be neither safe nor productive.

Partial Withdrawal with Reorientation to Border Security

Another proposal calls for withdrawing US forces from Iraq's cities, drawing down total US troop strength substantially, then deploying the remainder to Iraq's borders. These border defenses would perform some combination of two missions: preventing Iraq's neighbors from sending troops, weapons, or supplies into Iraq to reinforce sectarian factions; and discouraging Iraqi refugees from leaving the country and thus destabilizing neighboring states.

There are several problems with this option. First, Iraq's borders are not equally defensible. The western frontiers with Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Jordan are long but relatively easy to defend, as they are mostly open desert with a small number of isolated crossing points. The eastern frontier with Iran, however, is long and hard to defend, with much of it in difficult terrain and with a larger number of crossing points, many of which are more populated. With a limited US force stretched very thin to cover such an extended perimeter, it is very unlikely that the difficult eastern border could be defended adequately. The result would be a more porous eastern frontier, with a much greater throughput of weapons and assistance for Iranian efforts to aid their Shiite allies than for Saudi, Syrian, or Jordanian efforts to aid Sunni allies across the better-defended western frontier. Aside from the obvious disadvantage of enabling the Iranians to expand their influence at the expense of America's Sunni allies in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, this would also encourage Iraqi Sunnis to see the US as aligned with their Shiite enemies. After all, the net effect of the US mission would be to create a differential in the rate of external assistance that would systematically strengthen the Shiites relative to the Sunnis over time. And this would tend to drag us back into the conflict, as Sunnis increasingly seek ways to target the American presence whose effects are so disproportionately aiding their enemies. Whether this yields direct attacks on western border defenses (which would be easy for US forces to defeat in such open desert), or indirect attacks on US supply lines between its desert bases and its distant logistical hubs in Kuwait or elsewhere, the result would be an increasing prospect of combat for the reduced US posture left in Iraq.

Second, it is far from clear that US forces could legally prevent Iraqi refugees who wished to leave from doing so. We could encourage them to remain, perhaps by offering

housing and relief aid in large, US-run refugee camps in the border area. But Iraqis who wished to leave would be difficult to detain without creating something that looked a great deal like the Soviet bloc's efforts to prevent Eastern European refugees from fleeing to the West during the Cold War. And if we did persuade large numbers to remain voluntarily in US-run desert refugee camps we would create for ourselves an enormous logistical and security challenge in itself. Historically, refugee camps frequently become bases and recruiting areas for guerillas and terrorists. The inevitable use of US-defended camps as havens for guerilla fighters in Iraq's civil war would draw the US back into the conflict unless we ran them like concentration camps (and possibly even if we did). Moreover the supply lines for isolated desert camps housing potentially thousands to millions of people would run through Iraqi cities in which the war would be raging and from which US troops had been withdrawn.[6] Interdiction of these supply lines could lead to great suffering among large, disaffected refugee populations.

Third, the domestic politics of this option could be very difficult. This plan would leave tens of thousands of heavily armed US troops standing by a few miles away in the desert while Iraq's cities burned down in sectarian violence and thousands of innocent civilians died horrible deaths. The result would make for a very uncomfortable comparison with the Dutch standing by while Serbs slaughtered Muslim civilians at Srebrenica; our ability to sustain such a posture in the midst of such imagery could be very problematic.

Partial Withdrawal with Reorientation to Counter-Terrorism in Iraq

Several proposals call for a withdrawal from Iraqi cities, a reduction in US troops, and a reorientation of the remaining forces to a priority mission of fighting al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in order to reduce the danger of Iraq becoming a terrorist haven. Many have expressed concern that US failure in Iraq could enable al Qaeda to use the country as a base for planning terrorism against Americans; if we cannot stabilize the country at large, then perhaps we can at least prevent its use as a terrorist haven by continuing operations against AQI even as we withdraw the troops now engaged in other missions.

Here, too, there are several problems. First, our ability to fight AQI would diminish significantly if we withdrew our combat forces from Iraqi cities. The real challenge in counter-terrorism is finding the targets. And the chief means of doing this in Iraq is by persistent close contact with Iraqi civilians who have come to trust that US forces will remain to protect them against reprisals from AQI survivors if those civilians tip us off to AQI's locations. This kind of intelligence requires an extensive, long-term US troop presence in and among Iraqi civilians in the cities where they live. If we withdraw from those cities to remote bases in the desert, we thus lose our primary source of targeting information, leaving very few opportunities for those troops to engage AQI.

Second, it is unclear how much of a terror risk AQI really poses, especially for targets in the United States. The relationship between Osama bin Laden's global organization and AQI, whose membership is largely Iraqi and whose focus is on Iraq itself, is complex. It is not clear that an American withdrawal that left behind an escalating civil

[6] Perhaps Iraq's neighbors could be persuaded to permit US-run resupply efforts to connect through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, or Turkey instead. But the risk of bringing the conflict into the neighboring countries in this way could also dissuade some or all from agreeing to this.

war in Iraq would cause AQI to shift its focus from that immediate war in Iraq to terrorism against a distant America. Some have also speculated that al Qaeda outside Iraq would actually find its global campaign against the West undermined in the event of an all-out Sunni-Shiite civil war in Iraq, as its natural recruitment base in the Sunni Mideast turned from anger at the West toward anger at the more proximate Shiite enemy.

Moreover, AQI's ability to operate in Iraq rests on the willingness of Sunni Arabs to protect them with their silence, to provide safe houses and other support, and to tolerate their presence in their midst. If AQI lost this support, they would find it no easier to operate in Iraq than in any other state where they are an illegal organization without widespread support of the population. Yet AQI's support among Sunni Arabs is under challenge with the recent defection of the Sunni tribes that make up the Anbar Salvation Council. If these defections continue, AQI could find itself hard pressed even to sustain its position within Iraq, much less to establish a extensive base infrastructure for mounting attacks against a nation thousands of miles away.

Perhaps the Sunni tribal rebellion will spread to the point where Iraqi Sunnis will become so disaffected with AQI that they will provide us with intelligence even without a sustained US presence in their neighborhoods. If so, then such a withdrawal to the desert might not be as destructive of US intelligence prospects as one might normally suppose. But if so, then it is unclear why any significant ground forces would be needed in Iraq. If we can find the targets then we have plenty of ability to strike them even without significant ground forces nearby – air bases in Kuwait, Qatar, or elsewhere in the region would provide ample firepower for destroying terrorists whose location we can identify. The problem is identifying their locations. A plan to withdraw from Iraqi cities in order to fight AQI from desert bases is thus either impractical (if Iraqi Sunnis prove unwilling to provide intelligence without a promise of protection from nearby American troops) or unnecessary (if they offer intelligence even without the protection). Either way, it is far from clear that retaining substantial but reduced ground forces in Iraq and basing them in the open desert offers a meaningful capability to fight terrorism.

Finally, any plan to withdraw US troops from Iraq's cities and house them instead in desert bases is exposed to the same political disadvantages sketched above: it would leave heavily armed US soldiers standing on the sidelines nearby and watching passively as thousands of defenseless civilians are slaughtered in the cities we just left. To sustain such a posture in the face of the inevitable images on Western televisions could prove harder than we think.

Partial Withdrawal with Redeployment to Kurdistan

A final proposal would withdraw most US combat forces in Iraq but retain enough to defend our Kurdish allies. Kurdistan has been the most peaceful part of Iraq, and is the closest to functioning as a stable democracy. Even if we could not stabilize the rest of the country, perhaps it would make sense to retain enough military power in Iraq to defend this island of relative calm from the turmoil around it.

Here, too, however, there are important problems. As with other options that call for retaining US forces in Iraq but withdrawing them from Iraqi cities, a redeployment to quiet Kurdistan would pose major political challenges as those cities erupt in violence behind us.

Other difficulties are unique to the Kurdistan option. Among the more pressing of these concern US-Turkish relations, which have been deteriorating since prior to the 2003 invasion. A US withdrawal from the rest of Iraq to defend only Kurdistan would take a troubled relationship with Turkey and make it far worse. The Turks are deeply concerned with the threat of Kurdish separatism in southern Turkey. For years, Turkey has also been the target of Kurdish PKK terrorist attacks launched from Iraqi Kurdistan. While *we* might see a US withdrawal to defend only Kurdistan as a deterrent to Kurdish independence and PKK terrorism, *Turkey* is much more likely to see this as US defense for an independent Kurdistan against Turkish invasion; as a means of preventing Turkey from taking action to protect itself against the PKK; and as a major rallying point for Kurdish separatism in southern Turkey. The Turks already suspect that the United States hopes to replace them with an independent Kurdistan as the central American ally in the region; a US policy of abandoning Iraqi Arabs to their fate while establishing a US protectorate for Iraqi Kurds in the north would go a long way toward confirming this fear.

Some may argue that Turkish attitudes should take second place to defending a loyal US ally in Iraqi Kurdistan. Yet Turkey is a nation of 71 million, a NATO ally, and a critical political, economic, and cultural bridge to Islam for the West. The damage to such an important relationship to be done by withdrawing US forces into Kurdistan must be weighed very carefully before turning to this as a means of justifying a middle-ground troop posture for Iraq.

Perhaps most important, however, it is far from clear that such a redeployment could be sustained logistically without Turkish support. Kurdistan is more than 400 miles from the US logistical support base in Kuwait. If US combat forces withdraw from Iraq south of Kirkuk, supplies for forces in Kurdistan would have to be moved over literally hundreds of miles of undefended roads engulfed in bitter internecine civil warfare. This resupply effort would be extremely dangerous and very costly if it could be sustained at all. Without active Turkish support, the only alternative would be to supply the US garrison entirely from the air. But the cost of an open-ended commitment to support tens of thousands of combat troops for years through an airhead hundreds of miles from the nearest US logistical hub would be enormous – and especially so if that garrison came under attack from Iraqi factions reluctant to accept a US protectorate atop one of Iraq's most productive oil regions. Whether we value the US relationship with Turkey or not, the Turks could dramatically increase the cost of a US deployment in Kurdistan simply by refusing to permit us to resupply it across their border. Our ability to ignore their interests could thus have important limits.

Conclusions and Implications

None of these options are attractive or appealing. Four years of errors and missteps have left us in a position where our choices are now severely limited and none offer a high likelihood of success.

Yet some choices are nevertheless worse than others. In particular, the middle ground options of partial withdrawal are largely either self-defeating or unsustainable. If the remaining troops are reoriented to training, then the absence of US combat troops will undermine the training mission. If the remaining troops are reoriented to border defense, they will only be able to seal one side's border, creating a growing incentive for the other

side to attack them. If the remaining troops are reoriented to counter-terrorism, the absence of US population security in Iraqi cities would deny us the intelligence we need to find targets for them. If the remaining troops are withdrawn to Kurdistan, the resulting damage to US-Turkish relations could undermine US interests in the region while possibly leaving us unable to support the garrison logistically.

On the whole, partial withdrawals thus tend to reduce our ability to control the environment militarily or stabilize Iraq – yet while leaving tens of thousands of US troops in the country to act as targets. The result is likely to be several more years of fruitless bloodletting in the midst of a deteriorating Iraq; if 160,000 troops cannot stabilize the country, our ability to do so with perhaps half that number must surely be far less. Partial withdrawal might – or might not – reduce the *rate* of American deaths in Iraq; there would be fewer Americans at risk, but if those who remain try to accomplish something then they could find their vulnerability greater in an environment that grows increasingly violent around them. Either way, however, partial withdrawal would not end American casualties. But it would make it even less likely that the lives we do lose would be lost for any purpose, or in exchange for any improvement in the future of Iraq. And any option that extends the US presence in Iraq also delays the rebuilding of the US military to meet other contingencies elsewhere. If this delay buys us a greater chance for stability in Iraq, then delay is defensible given the dangers of instability; but delays that do not buy us commensurate increases in the odds of success merely postpone US military reconstruction needlessly.

This is not to suggest that the extreme alternatives of surge or total withdrawal can offer a promise of low cost or strong odds for success, either. But the surge at least offers the greatest chances possible that the lives we lose would be lost for a reason. And total withdrawal at least limits the loss of American life to the greatest degree possible if we judge that the odds of success are simply too long. As such they offer advantages that partial withdrawals cannot.

Under the circumstances, perhaps the most important recommendation that can be offered is to urge the Congress to require by law that the Defense Department develop properly detailed, rigorous, comprehensive contingency plans for the possibility of US troop withdrawals from Iraq – whether partial or total. The United States began the occupation of Iraq with inadequate planning; it should not end it the same way. For now, however, it is widely believed that detailed planning for "Plan B" alternatives to the surge would be tantamount to an admission of failure and that the Administration will not support such an effort for fear that it would leak and undermine political support for the war. Such a planning effort, however, is a requirement of prudent policy making. Our best efforts to the contrary notwithstanding, we must face the real prospect of failure in Iraq, and we owe it to the American people to be as carefully prepared as we can be to mitigate the consequences of that possibility should it occur. Such preparation is extremely complex, and cannot be done well on short notice with military staffs that do not ordinarily maintain the kind of deep expertise in regional politics, diplomacy, or economics required to project the likely near- and long-term implications of varying approaches to managing a US departure from Iraq. This process must begin as soon as possible, with the strongest possible planning staff. If the Administration is unable to do this without risking a self-fulfilling prophecy, then the Congress should consider making this decision for them.

○