

The Brookings Institution

OPPORTUNITY 08

NATIONAL SECURITY AT HOME AND ABROAD

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Speakers:

HEATHER BURNS

Director, Nevada Student Affairs, UNV

STROBE TALBOTT

President, The Brookings Institution

Moderator:

DAVID CHALIAN

Political Director, ABC News

Panelists:

ZOE BAIRD

President, Markle Foundation

KENNETH DUBERSTEIN

Co-Chair, Opportunity 08

THOMAS E. DONILON

Co-Chair, Opportunity 08

MARTIN S. INDYK

Director, The Brookings Institution

CARLOS PASCUAL

Vice President and Director, The Brookings Institution

PETER W. RODMAN

Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution

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PROCEEDINGS

MS. BURNS: Hello, my name is Heather Burns. I'm the Nevada Student Affairs Director for UN, and all these (inaudible) June government. And behalf of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, welcome.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, it is an honor to have the Brookings Institute here with us today to lead a panel discussion on topics relevant to the upcoming election. First, I'd like to thank our sponsors, Channel 8, Eye Witness News, Las Vegas One, Las Vegas Now, Las Vegas Sun, The Brookings Institute, UNLV, CSUN, Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies, Association of Students in Communications, and UNLV-TV, because without their help this would not have been possible.

Now, it is my pleasure to introduce an esteemed figure in American affairs, Strobe Talbott. Strobe Talbott is president of The Brookings Institution. Talbott, whose career spans journalism, government service, and academia, is an expert on U.S. foreign policy with specialties on Europe, Russia, South Asia, and nuclear arms control. As Deputy Secretary of State in the Clinton administration, Talbott was deeply involved in both the conduct of U.S. policy abroad and the management of executive branch relations with Congress.

Please welcome Mr. Strobe Talbott.

(Applause)

MR. TALBOTT: Thanks so much, Heather. Thanks to our trustee, Brian Greenspun, and Myra and the Greenspun family. I'm going

to have to update my CV. I'm not going to claim to be an expert on Las Vegas, but I'm certainly going to add to my CV that I'm an enthusiast for so much that's going on here. And I would like to just add my own thanks to the thanks that Heather expressed to the cosponsors, our partners, in bringing you this Opportunity 08 here today.

Those of us who were honored to be actually in the Cox Pavilion last night in order to watch the Democratic candidates debate had a chance before the candidates actually came onto the stage to hear the warm-up ceremony, which included a lot of justified pride on the part of city leaders, state leaders, and regional leaders in the fact that Nevada is finally getting recognized for the important role that it should play in the democratic process of choosing our president.

Yesterday before the debate, Bruce Katz and some of our Brookings colleagues from our Center on Metropolitan Policy unveiled a very good presentation, which you may have read about in The Sun, about the Blueprint for American progress, which focuses very much on the Intermountain West Region.

Today we're bringing to Las Vegas one of the signature programs of Brookings during the year ahead. And this is not the first time that we've come to Nevada. In August, at that other University of Nevada up in Reno we hosted two discussions, some of which were captured in the short film clip that you saw a moment ago: one on national security and the other on education.

We've also done events in Manchester, New Hampshire, Iowa City, and we have an upcoming event in Charleston, South Carolina.

Let me just add to what you heard from my colleagues on the screen a little bit more on the background of the idea or the premise behind Opportunity 08. The first colleague that you heard from on the screen was the one you saw in person, Bill Antholis, and he mentioned in

the film clip that this is the first time in 80 years that we have not had an incumbent president or vice president seeking the nomination in either party.

There's another interesting fact out there which is this is the first time in 56 years since 1952 that there will be neither an incumbent president nor an incumbent vice president on the ballot on either side. Now that is more than just an interesting but rather esoteric fact. It actually conveys some real substance because it means -- at least we think, and there are certainly polling to support this -- that the minds both of the candidates and of the citizens and voters are more open to fresh ideas than they would be if the contending tickets were to include people who were heavily invested in the current administration.

In other words, America's mind is more open than is usually the case when an election comes along. And fresh ideas grounded in independent research are our stock in trade at The Brookings Institution. And I might say that the same could be said of a great university like this one.

Let me say just a quick word of introduction about the moderator of our event today. David Chalian is the political director for ABC News, and ABC News is our national media partner in Opportunity 08. It has been an excellent partner indeed. We very much appreciate the willingness of George Stephanopoulos, Rick Kline, Torie Clark, and Martha Raddatz to be involved in previous events that we've done under the banner of Opportunity 08. And we're very grateful to David for being with us today.

He covered the 2004 elections from the first caucus in Iowa through election night, as well as the 2006 midterm elections. He knows the issues, the candidates, the national and regional context. So he's just the right person for you to hear from next.

David, over to you.

(Applause)

MR. CHALIAN: I'll walk here as Ken is coming up and introduce him. Our first panel's going to be a little more on the politics side than the policy side, but I'm sure you are all familiar with Ken Duberstein, whose claim to fame other than being the co-chair of The Brookings Institution Opportunity 08 Project, he served as President Reagan's Chief of Staff and managed the transition of the presidency to George H.W. Bush, and he's currently the chairman and CEO of The Duberstein Group. A round of applause for Ken Duberstein.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Thank you.

MR. CHALIAN: And we're going to tap Ken's political expertise both in the Democratic contest and Republican contest. And we're going to start with the Democrats, Ken, because last night's debate was a big event. There was a drumbeat of rough coverage for Hillary Clinton going into the event, and then it seemed that the expectations were that she had a hot bar to meet to try to alter the story line that had been out there from the previous debate that the Democrats had in Philadelphia. How did she do, and what was your overall takeaway from the debate?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: First of all, let me be in the tradition of all the candidates last night, and so before I answer your question --

MR. CHALIAN: Yes.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: -- let me say it's great to be back in Nevada, and thank you all for participating in Opportunity 08. I think it is fundamentally important to the whole dialogue and the conversation that we were having in America that leads up to November, 2008.

Last night, as David said, the lead up the last two weeks coming out of Philadelphia was, to say the least, not good terrain for Mrs.

Clinton, for Senator Clinton. I think last night she did everything that she had to do. She was strong, she was concise, she was direct, and I think Bill Clinton would say "she handled the boys." She was in command last night. This really stops all the narratives of the last two weeks: Is she up to the job? Can she handle it?

Interestingly, I think Barak Obama last night was okay, but "okay" is not sufficient. I think John Edwards was a minus last night. He didn't project, he still came across as angry, and I think he got very little traction. Interestingly, I think Joe Biden and Chris Dodd did exceptionally well. Joe Biden probably submits that his role is perhaps the next Secretary of State if Mrs. Clinton gets elected. Chris Dodd, I think, distinguished himself quite well last night.

Dennis Kucinich is still looking for UFOs. And I would suggest that Bill Richardson's campaign, not simply for the presidency but also the vice presidency, ended last night in Nevada.

MR. CHALIAN: And why do you think that?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: For the simple reason that he made a fundamental "Jimmy Carteresque" comment, which he said that human rights is more important than the national security of the United States. As Chris Dodd and then Mrs. Clinton said last night, the first job of the president of the United States is to preserve, protect, and defend America. You cannot then do human rights first, then national security second. I can only see the sound bites if Bill Richardson gets on the ticket, and that will be the whole thing that will blow him up.

MR. CHALIAN: It reminded me of the first debate in Orangeburg, South Carolina, that the Democrats had back in April where they had a similar question, and all the coverage out of that debate was that Senator Clinton kind of passed that commander in chief test by reasserting that there's no more important task for a president than to

protect and defend the country.

It was shocking to hear Bill Richardson say it in a way as inartfully as he did.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Well, as he said it -- and I watched it with several trustees of Brookings last night, I almost said, "Put those words back in your mouth." But he's on record, and, you know, Obama tried to have it both ways in his response to that question, too. Not to the extent that Bill Richardson being so clearly black and white. But I think it really hurt Bill Richardson and took him out of the running.

MR. CHALIAN: And you said Barak Obama was "okay," but you need to be better than okay. He was -- he was taking advantage for a moment this week of the opportunity that Senator Clinton was getting roughed up a bit. He had a very big Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner outing in Iowa last weekend. I was there, you know, I thought it was one of the best speeches I'd seen him give since the '04 Convention, and yet what does it speak about his ability as a presidential candidate if he can't consistently deliver at that level?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I think it speaks very little to his abilities, because presidents usually don't get into formal debates. And the debate form is not one that Obama seems to do very well. And he does very well with speeches and off-the-cuff comments, but in a debate format doesn't seem to stack up very well.

MR. CHALIAN: And his answer on drivers' licenses for illegal immigrants, which was an issue that that's what tripped up Senator Clinton back in Philadelphia. What did you learn from -- about Barak Obama in the way that he answered that question with Wolf Blitzer last night, who tried to elicit a yes or no answer from --

MR. CHALIAN: Several times.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: -- Barak Obama and was not able to do

so. Having been involved in debate preparation for many candidates, the idea that they did not anticipate that question boggles the mind. They clearly had to think -- somebody had to know that it was coming in light of both Governor Spitzer, but also Mrs. Clinton's comment back in Philadelphia.

The answer that he gave, the rambling answer that he gave said, "I can't give a yes or no," which is probably the correct answer, but not over a two-minute period.

MR. CHALIAN: And then he came down on "yes" eventually --

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Yes.

MR. CHALIAN: -- which is a position that seven-to-one voters against in Ohio, or, you know, six-to-one against New York.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: It said that he wasn't prepared to answer the question. He had not thought it through carefully enough.

MR. CHALIAN: Having said that, now I just want to go beyond the debate and look broader here before we turn to the Republicans for a bit. You see that -- do you think that Senator Clinton has this nomination race locked up?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: No.

MR. CHALIAN: Why?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I still think it is very fluid in the Democratic Party. I think Iowa is the first and real test before we get to Nevada, and all the polling that I have seen -- and you're a better source than I am on that -- says that Obama is within striking distance -- and Edwards. It's almost a three-way race. And so the day after the Iowa primary -- the Iowa caucus -- if, in fact, Obama comes within a couple points of Mrs. Clinton, the headline on ABC News will not be Mrs. Clinton; it will be that Obama came within striking distance in Iowa because they'll

show the vulnerability of Mrs. Clinton. That's what's going on, and that's why things are not locked up.

Does she have the upper hand? Is she in the driver's seat? Yes, with a license. It is hers now to lose, but she's still fully capable of losing it.

MR. CHALIAN: And you touched on Senator Edwards' anger. You said he seemed a little angry, and it's interesting because I heard him say several times last night -- and I pressed his aides about this after the debate -- "There's nothing personal here. This is not personal."

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Yes, but, of course, it is.

MR. CHALIAN: Which is an immediate tell that what he -- you know, so I was wondering and I was pressing them. They say none of their polling indicates that he's being perceived as a tad too angry right now; it's simply passion and what have you.

But do you think there is a moment where you just cross a threshold and he will be seen as only angry? Or do you think that out and all right now, or do you think that out and all right now this guy can make a case for change?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I think he can make a case for change.

MR. CHALIAN: Why?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: He is coming across as too ready to duke it out. He's too angry, he's too hot. You understand it better than I. On TV he comes across shrill, and that ultimately unwinds you, you know. He's not campaigning on we have two Americas, but he is. And so I think you're going to start seeing Edwards diminish a little bit in the polling data.

MR. CHALIAN: And you mentioned Bill Clinton, who might say when he's campaigning for his wife today in New Hampshire, another early state, that she handled the boys. He may say something like that.

Gender came up last night, and Senator Clinton was asked

specifically about whether or not she was playing the gender card, and, of course, she said, no, she was -- you know, these folks were ganging up on her because she's winning, not because she's a woman. And that went over --

MR. DUBERSTEIN: And again, I guarantee you that was a rehearsed line.

MR. CHALIAN: No doubt.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I watched that, and I thought of the 1984 debate with Fritz Mondale and Ronald Reagan when Reagan said, "I am not going to raise your age."

MR. CHALIAN: Well, and she pitted immediately to then talking about how proud she's -- can she play the gender card and say that she's not playing the gender card?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Of course, and she's a very good politician. She's very good at it. Mrs. Clinton is a formidable candidate. For those who don't think she's electable, I disagree. I think she's electable, I didn't say she'd be elected. But I think she is electable. I think she is becoming less unacceptable than she was several months ago. I think a debate like last night helps her become ever more less unacceptable. She has lots of tests yet ahead.

MR. CHALIAN: Let me ask you something else. Do you think she's past the commander-in-chief test? Do you think she can already be seen as something who can be commander-in-chief of, you know, American Armed Forces?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I think she has passed it as far as the Democratic primaries and caucuses are concerned, but not necessarily for the general election because she, right now, doesn't have the Republicans to get her and you don't have a Republican candidate. And then you're going to start on national security, foreign policy, terrorism, and it's going

to be Democratic party versus Republican party. So I think she has an issue. That doesn't say that she can't address it, but she has an issue, a hurdle that she has yet to overcome.

MR. CHALIAN: Let's pivot to the Republican field. They didn't debate here last night, but I am curious to get your take. One thing that is fascinating me covering the Republican race this cycle is a strategic point: You have Mitt Romney leading in these early states, and that has been a proven, tested kind of strategy to get the nomination. You build up the needs in early states, he's campaigning here today in Las Vegas, you take that momentum and you ride it in later contests to the nomination.

Rudy Giuliani has taken his national stature and his lead to say, "I'll play in these early states. I don't necessarily need to win them," and when we get to where the delegates really count, and then it's all about getting, you know, 50 percent plus one delegate for the nomination - - Florida on January 29th, or 23 states will vote on February 5 in an almost national primary, that's his path to the nomination.

Both candidates, people will tell you, they don't know which one is really going to work. I'm curious to hear your take on the two different paths to the nomination that these guys are fighting.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: First of all, the Democratic campaign is fluid. The Republican Party's is chaos, and anybody who tells you today that they know who's going to win is lying, because it is totally wide open. If we were sitting here six months ago, we both would have predicted, I'll bet, that Rudy Giuliani would not have been able to sustain where he is today. He's a strong -- and he's coming across as the front runner.

You know, nobody is ambivalent about Rudy Giuliani: You either love him or he hates you.

(Applause)

MR. CHALIAN: His own aides say that.

(Applause)

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I didn't want to give you my sources.

MR. CHALIAN: I covered him in New York City when he was mayor.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I've known him as U.S. Attorney, so it's a true comment. Rudy has become a change agent inside the Republican party. Yes, he is 9/11 and Joe Biden's great line, "the noun, the verb, and 9/11 in any sentence that Rudy issues. But it is more than 9/11, it is more than the hero; he has also become a change agent. Change agent in large measure because of social issues, but it distinguishes him from George W. Bush and what this administration is doing that gives Rudy a bit of an upper hand.

If you go through the rest of the candidates, Fred Thompson. For those of us who are political junkies, watching Fred campaign makes you kind of wish that Bill Frist had run for president, slow-walking, not running, for the presidency. And so I don't think Fred gets very much traction.

MR. CHALIAN: Let me ask you something: Do you think he stays into Iowa?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Yes. Huckabee all of a sudden in Iowa has caught fire. If, in fact, Obama come close to Hillary in Iowa, the headline is Obama, not Hillary. If Huckabee comes very close to Mitt Romney, who has invested a fortune in organization and TV, and Huckabee comes within shouting distance, Huckabee becomes the issue - - become the story.

MR. CHALIAN: Do you think Huckabee can win the general election or -- excuse me -- the nomination?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: No way. But it becomes all of a sudden knocking down Mitt Romney. And then Mitt Romney has a huge problem

on the strategy that you laid out that he's following.

I think New Hampshire is very much up in the air. As much as Romney is a hit right now, I would not dismiss John McCain. In full disclosure, I supported John McCain in 2000; I am not supporting any of the Republicans right now. I think John McCain has a chance in New Hampshire where he doesn't in Iowa, he doesn't here. He has an uphill in South Carolina. He's lost a little bit of his mojo; he's lost his money. If he doesn't win New Hampshire, it's over for John McCain, and it may be.

So you come back to Romney and Giuliani. I think Romney has an issue with the flip-flopping. He has become in the Republican Party that counterpart to John Kerry in 2004. It seems that whatever position is based on whatever office he's running for, and I think the Republicans really value consistency. And so I think it is uphill for Romney, even if he looks like he's ahead right now in Iowa and New Hampshire and is very much in the race in South Carolina.

Can Rudy pull this off? Right now he's in the driver's seat, not as strongly as Mrs. Clinton is in the Democratic race, but I would not dismiss out of hand Rudy's chances of getting the nomination.

MR. CHALIAN: In your experience with such a fluid field, does that increase the likelihood of nastiness in outside group spending in Iowa and New Hampshire coming in negative ads themselves and kind of -- I'm troubled seeing them on both sides, but I'm wondering if you think that's a -- the fluidity you speak of will make it that much more of a negative campaign atmosphere?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I am afraid that there is that danger. And McCain is now sworn off and asked all these groups not to campaign on his behalf, these 527 groups. They're going to do it anyway. Having been a veteran of the South Carolina primary Bush versus McCain in 2000, I never thought I would see something this low in politics, and I think

the stakes are so high, especially in Iowa more so than New Hampshire, because I think in New Hampshire it backfires on you. In Iowa, you may get into a very nasty situation coming up.

But let me just also, just since we're talking both parties here, usually, the race is between confidence, Republican, and compassion, Democrat. This time it is confidence and change, and who can get it? And this is where you get your pivot off of George W. Bush, the confidence issue which the Republicans have, fundamentally, lost. That's why Rudy is talking about all his experience running the city, 9/11, et cetera. But he's also having to fight for change. I'm reminded that in 1988 when the Democrats were about to nominate Dukakis against George Herbert Walker Bush, I went in the Oval Office one day and said that Dukakis was yelling, "It's time for a change. It's time for a change."

And Reagan, emphatically, threw down his glasses and said, "We are the change." And what he did was decide to write his convention speech, handing the baton to George Herbert Walker Bush on how George Herbert Walker Bush was the change, even though he was his incumbent vice president. How are things going to be handled, competently, in the future? How do you handle a changing world? How do you handle the changes in education and health care, et cetera? And he set the table.

And so for those who argue that the Republican Party cannot be a change party, I would fundamentally reject that. I didn't say it would win; what I'm saying is I think that's what the argument's going to be as we go forward in this next year.

MR. CHALIAN: What we see -- I mean, Mitt Romney in his ads, "Change begins with us." I mean that's the line --

MR. DUBERSTEIN: That's it.

MR. CHALIAN: -- and that's clearly both sides see that they

have to be agents of change, that the country is hungry for that.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: But competence now is an important issue.

MR. CHALIAN: And on that -- and then we'll start taking some questions because I know that there must be excellent questions out here for you. How much, then, in a world where there's a Republican nominee and a Democratic nominee, if the Republican is fighting to be also an agent of change and a competent one at that, how much distancing from George W. Bush needs to go on for the Republican nominee, or how much can George W. Bush have a moment that you just described that Ronald Reagan had in 1988? Is there a way that George W. Bush with his current standing can actually help implement for the Republican nominee that sense of this guy's the change agent?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: The advantage that Ronald Reagan had is the time he uttered that comment. He had come back from 37 percent in the polls, so it was about 55 percent in the polls. It is much easier to do it 55 percent in the polls than it is a 28, or 30, or 32 percent in the polls. I think it is very difficult for Bush to be a major help on the change agent side. That doesn't mean the Republican presidential candidates are going to be going around denouncing him on Iraq, et cetera. But you're going to see more of making Don Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney into four-letter words. And you're going to -- talking about blaming others and not the president of the United States.

MR. CHALIAN: Let's turn now, I believe there are microphones on either -- in either aisle here, so if you have a question, if you could step up to the microphone, I note some of our students here have questions as well. Do you have a question there?

SPEAKER: Good morning, sir. Thank you for joining us. Earlier in your comments you stated that the first responsibility of a

president is to defend the nation. With that in mind, sir, I think -- and correct me if I'm wrong -- I believe the oath that the next president will be taking will be to support and defend the Constitution. And vital to that Constitution is the Bill of Rights, so in your mind, how does that balance out between the first priority of protecting so-called national security versus human rights when I submit, my personal opinion, that actually if the Constitution is not defended, then there is nothing else worth in the nation defending.

The idea of protecting symbols of whether they be buildings or the flag behind you to the right, I think that's a misconception that that's what's really important when, in fact, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights is what defends America. And I believe, sir, that that should be the first priority in the president's duty is, discharging that.

So while Bill Richardson may not be the top candidate on my list of candidate to be support, I think that took a lot of courage in this particular climate of the debate between human rights and national security.

MR. CHALIAN: I just want to make sure, was there a question in that?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: No, it was a statement, and I accept that. And I would only respond to you that, uncharacteristically, I agree with Hillary Clinton.

MR. CHALIAN: I didn't know, I wanted to give you the opportunity to have an actual -- did you want to get to a question there, or are we to understand your statement?

SPEAKER: I guess where -- what is your personal opinion or your take on the balance between defending constitutional rights of Americans versus national security?

MR. CHALIAN: I think Ken just answered that, but I think --

MR. DUBERSTEIN: That is my answer. Thank you.

MR. CHALIAN: Thank you. And if you can make sure to get you a question, it would help facilitate the conversation as much as possible.

SPEAKER: I have a quick and immediate question here: Do you feel that the U.S. has lost its credibility in the international world? And, if so, what can the next president do to rectify that problem?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Several months ago I had breakfast with 12 foreign ambassadors. Everybody -- ambassadors from the Congo, from New Zealand, from Portugal, around the world, and each of them to a person said to me, "What's missing today is the leadership of the United States of America." That doesn't mean that we will always agree with America but certainly we will not, but we really need that shining example called "America."

I -- frankly, it brought tears to my eyes -- because I remember the Reagan years, and what we did to restore respect for America throughout the world. And I am afraid because of a unilateral foreign policy because we have not respected other nations' interests that, in fact, we have sacrificed some of that high moral ground. I think a president has to be a coalition-builder, and the president has to be a leader of a grand world coalition.

The United States still is Number One, but we have to do it not with a strong thumb but, rather, with open arms. And I think that's what the next president has to do regardless of who wins.

MR. CHALIAN: Question there?

MR. TOWNSTONE: I do. How are you doing, sir? My name is Robert Townstone, and I moved to Nevada 14 months ago. And I have a question for you. I watched the debate here last night, too, and you mentioned that you think John Edwards came across as angry, and I

don't quite understand why you think that's a bad thing, because I want to tell you that I've been home -- I was homeless for almost 365 days, okay? I got out of that situation about a month ago, and there are a lot of people in this city in the same boat assessed to me to be over 20,000. And there are a lot of angry people in this town in particular.

And I think we need someone, quite frankly, who is a little angry because this country is going in the wrong direction and it's going downhill fast. We've lost the respect around the world, like you said, and I just don't understand why can't we have a candidate who maybe has a little fire and brimstone in him, because I think the American people would support someone who actually stood up for something instead of just telling them what they wanted to hear.

(Applause)

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Well, I want to answer this in part by asking David a question, and that is how heat plays on TV. Because is what, evidently -- this is exactly what the debate was about last night.

MR. CHALIAN: I -- I mean too angry and you will turn off viewers, purely tactically I'm talking about here. And, obviously, that's part of what these candidates have to consider on a debate stage is employing the right tactics to be able to get their message out.

I think your premise is right. I think there's room for anger. I do think there's an angry electorate, and I think there's room for a candidate -- John Edwards is certainly trying to do that -- to tap into that a bit. But from a performance point of view and how that reads on television, there's a danger, politically, for you, for somebody, I think, to provide too much anger. You may end up turning people off.

But anger might -- could be used to his political advantage to some degree.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Absolutely. But he's tapping into a vein

-- look, Barak Obama has distinguished himself in this campaign because he has not talked about playing to people's fears but to people's hopes. That I think plays for better than white-hot anger day in and day out. If you only know one speed, speed kills. And I think that's the problem that John Edwards has.

That doesn't mean that his arguments aren't sound, it doesn't mean that he's not fighting for a great cause and an important cause; it is the way he portrays it that I think undermines some of his arguments.

MR. CHALIAN: Thank you for your question.

MR. TOWNSTONE: Thank you.

MR. CHALIAN: Here?

SPEAKER: Mr. Duberstein, do you feel that there are any issues that presidential candidates should be addressing in their platforms that they currently are not?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I think we have to spend far more time talking about the education system in America, and they all have given lip service to it, and I think they need to spend much more time talking about education and not simply genuflecting to the teachers' union, as we heard last night. I think a lot more discussion on energy, security and energy independence, even though many of them have come out with a program. Let's get into the details of it and what is doable. Those are the two that I would focus on most importantly.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. CHALIAN: A couple more.

SPEAKER: Good morning. Do you feel the Bush administration's effort to protect the U.S. citizens by the provisions of the Patriot Act has -- are putting at risk the constitutional rights of the American people? And, if so, what policy should the next president

implement to secure the sanctity of these rights?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I think it is a terrific question. I think it is important, one, that the Congress has the debate, and I think the national political campaigns, whoever gets nominated, are certainly going to argue about the Patriot Act. I think there is legitimate -- there are legitimate reasons for a strong Patriot Act, but I'm not sure that it is not gone a bit too far.

We have to live in some -- the first question asked on our Bill of Rights, and it concerns me that we may be nibbling at some of the big edges of it.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

SPEAKER: Good morning. With the first caucus less than three months away, what issue do you feel has the potential to galvanize the voting public?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: What do you mean "galvanizing"? For or against? Look, I think --

SPEAKER: (Off mike)

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I think -- for example, I think what happens on Iran in the next three months has the potential to galvanize people one way or the other.

Now, I would hope that we don't start talking about military action or going forward with military action. But if there are more rumbles out of Washington and the administration, that can galvanize an awful lot of people on both sides of the aisle. That is one issue that clearly comes to mind immediately.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. CHALIAN: Question there?

SPEAKER: I have another question. Last night during the debate when the gentleman got up and talked about racial profiling and

how he had experienced it since 9/11 or since the USA Patriot Act, and Dennis Kucinich had made reference to him being the only one who had not voted for the USA Patriot Act. When then Joe Biden got up and said that racial profiling was not a part of the USA Patriot Act.

Many Americans, including myself, have not read the USA Patriot Act, and would hostages take those candidates on their word? Is there any way you can kind of detail or say why Mr. Kucinich might have said what he said, and then Joe Biden came back?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: To be honest with you, I got lost on my way to the room during that question. I got lost in the casino, but I was keep going.

Now -- and I don't know the answer --

SPEAKER: Easy to do here.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: -- why Kucinich said what he said.

SPEAKER: Okay.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: I just don't know.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: It may have been a UFO.

SPEAKER: Good morning. Mr. Duberstein, I do respectfully disagree with the overall -- importance on education. I cannot disagree with that. I don't really think it's about energy so much anymore as it is about water. I think it's awfully telling that the veto was on a water issue.

I kid around, and I say as concerning heat on TV, the average serial murderer has had poor anger management classes. I submit that anger is merely fear demonstrated, and that's why it doesn't play awfully well on TV.

Now, I'll have your comments. Thank you.

MR. CHALIAN: I think we will just take your comment on that --

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Right, exactly.

MR. CHALIAN: -- as a specific question there. Do you have a question?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: And I agree with you on water --

MR. CHALIAN: Yes.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: -- anyway, yes.

SPEAKER: Yeah, my question was regarding the military. With our presence the Middle East and also our presence in the Horn of Africa and some other areas of concern, with our military being at an all-time low, do you think that we're stretching ourselves too thin?

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Yes.

(Laughter)

MR. CHALIAN: Reserved to just one-word answer.

SPEAKER: Yes, well prepared.

MR. CHALIAN: Well, thank you very much for doing this. It's so great to get your thoughts. We appreciate it. We're going to take a quick break, and --

(Applause)

MR. CHALIAN: We're going to take a quick break, and when we come back, we're going to go beyond the politics of this and get into the issues, a lot of which you guys started bringing up, but I think we can have a deeper conversation about some of the issues that are driving the presidential race in terms of foreign policy. Thank you.

MR. DUBERSTEIN: Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. CHALIAN: We have a very distinguished panel here of foreign policy experts, and you all are very lucky, as am I, to hear their thoughts about the major driving issues of foreign policy, how they're effecting the presidential race, and how they will sort of drive both in the

nomination fights and in November of 2008, what the country is looking for and what the candidates are presenting vis-à-vis foreign policy.

Let me introduce -- we'll start closest to me here with Peter Rodman, who is a Brookings Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy. He's an expert on regional policies relating to Europe, East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and the Persian Gulf. A former Assistant Secretary of Defense and Advisor to the National Security Council and State Department, Rodman held post in the Administrations of President Nixon, Ford, Reagan, Bush, and Bush.

Next to Peter is Zoe Baird, the President of the Markle Foundation, which is a private philanthropy that focuses on using information and communications technologies to address critical public needs, particularly in the areas of health care and national security. She was Associate Council to President Jimmy Carter and an attorney in the Office of Legal Council for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Next to Zoe is Martin Indyk, a Brookings Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy, former Ambassador to Israel, and Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs during the Clinton Administration. Indyk directs the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings. And then finally, all the way on your left, my right, Carlos Pascual, a Brookings Vice President and Director of Foreign Policy at Brookings, a former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, Senior Director of the National Security Council staff. Carlos focuses on post-conflict stabilization, international security policy, non-proliferation and economic development, and has served under Presidents Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Clinton, and George W. Bush. Please, a big round of applause for this distinguished panel. Thank you.

SPEAKER: We're going to begin with you, Peter.

And I guess I want to pivot off of where one discussion, one question that we got was about America's reputation in the world and how

that -- we see it in our polling all the time, that is something of critical importance to both Democrats and Republicans right now. And, obviously, Iraq has been a driving issue, and as Ken just alluded to in that point, that Iran, depending what happens in the next several months, could be a real galvanizing issue in the campaign. Why don't you take that from there and let me know if you agree that that would be a galvanizing issue and how that plays into the reputation of America around the world.

MR. RODMAN: Let me thank you, David, for the introduction, and I'm happy to be here. I'm the Republican in this group, and I'm here to offer some friendly, unsolicited advice to the candidates, all of the presidential candidates, about what I think -- what I venture to predict the foreign policy of the next president is going to look like, whether he or she knows it or not, and secondly, what I think the world expects from the United States in the foreign policy of the next president, because I think there are some clichés being bandied about, which I disagree with, about what the world actually wants from us and expects from us.

Now, on the first point, I venture the shocking prediction that the foreign policy of the next administration, whoever leads it, is going to be amazingly similar to the present foreign policy of President Bush.

Now, I emphasis present, because I think there were -- we know what the great controversies were three or four years ago. But the reality of the day-to-day foreign policy right now, I don't -- is I think driven by our national interest, and I think the next president, whoever he or she is, is going to find that these national interests don't change 14 to 15 months from now.

Let's take Iraq, I think whatever the desire, the impulse that we saw in the Democratic debate, the next president is not going to be able to do something precipitate to pull out of Iraq without regard to the consequences, because the stakes are too great, the vital interest of the

United States is too much engaged. And so the job of the next president will be to find some way of controlled disengagement, to reduce our involvement there, turn over responsibility to the Iraqis in a way that preserves very important national interest we have in the region, and that's going to be -- that's what confronts the next president, whoever it is.

Just to go around the world, I dealt a lot when I was in the government with the Far East. The big phenomenon in the Far East is the rise of China. That's what's on peoples' minds. Now, this Administration I think has managed a fairly constructive relationship with China, as have several past presidents, and I think the next several presidents.

But at the same time, particularly when I was in the Pentagon and we deal with the countries around the periphery of China, all of them are concerned about China and have been tightening and strengthening their defense cooperation with the United States.

India, or Japan, or Australia, or even Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, Mongolia, what these countries want is American strength, they count on us, and that's not going to change. And now Europe, Europe is where we had all these controversies a few years ago. But you look, new leaders in Germany, new leaders in France, good relations with Britain. Our relations with Europe I think are what they should be. And Russia is on the rise, and Russia is getting back on its feet again. I think you will see a further strengthening of U.S./European relations.

So that gets me to the second point, what is it the world expects from us? Listening to the Democratic debate, you get a sense that the world is waiting for the next president to apologize and humble herself or himself, and you know, solve a great orgy of self-flagellation and self-abasement. That is not what the world wants from us.

The world counts on American strength, and any kind of, you know, strenuous exertion of self-abasement is going to be profoundly

unnerving to the countries all over the world who count on us to be strong, who wanted to know that the next president is going to be, you know, committed to America's defense, I mean to the defense of America's allies and interests.

And I worry that our domestic debate in the last year has gotten a little bit -- a little too rambunctious. And I know in the Arab world, for example, or in the Middle East, our Arab friends and Israeli friends are all worried about the threat of Iran, and they look at Iraq in that context. They want to know, is the United States, you know, collapsing in the Middle East. They want to know that we're strong, that we're taking the lead, I mean on the Palestinian issue, which I'm sure Martin will talk about. But most fundamentally, they want to know that America is not going to abandon the region and collapse in Iraq, because they see that as a test of our credibility. So that's what America I think will want the next president to demonstrate courage and strength and commitment, and that's, again, that's true whoever takes office.

MR. CHALIAN: And let me just press you very quickly.

MR. RODMAN: Sure.

MR. CHALIAN: Do you -- in the presidential candidates that you see in both fields right now, potential presidents I mean, the major front running candidates in both fields, do you see anyone that doesn't have the ability to project that strength and courage?

MR. RODMAN: Well, I don't want to get -- no, I don't want to get into individuals. In fact, I think I tend to discount campaign rhetoric anyway. I think whoever is in the Oval Office will confront reality and the campaign rhetoric will sort of be relegated to the dust bin and reality will impose itself.

MR. CHALIAN: Let's go to Martin about the Arab/Israeli conflict. And I guess we have this Annapolis session coming up potentially,

where there will be a great meeting on the Arab/Israeli conflict, though I don't think a date has been set for that officially yet. I guess what I think about when I listen to the candidates, I don't find that they discuss the Arab/Israeli conflict very often on the campaign trail. And I'm wondering if -- is there a way to have a conversation about it in the campaign while Iraq is still sort of what Iraq is, a central dominant foreign policy issue, or does the Iraq issue just over crowd the Palestinian and Israeli conflict in a way that we won't be able to get to that issue until Iraq is cleared to the side a little bit?

MR. INDYK: Thank you, David, and thank you to the University of Nevada of Las Vegas for hosting Brookings here today. What struck me last night, and I don't know whether you felt the same way, was that actually Iraq really wasn't much on the agenda, it was brought into the discussion by one of the candidates.

But I think, as Ken Duberstein suggested, Iran is much more. But either way, Arab/Israeli issues, peace process issues, are not likely to be on the agenda, they probably won't get on the agenda until the candidates get into the New York Primary. That's just the reality. And they all have to kind of lay up their position on the Israeli issue, because of a large Jewish constituency in New York.

But before that, it's hard to see it becoming an issue, and I think part of the reason for that is a certain attitude on the part of the American public more generally, that it's all hog -- when it comes to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. First of all, there was this effort seven years ago, at the end of the Bush Administration, to try to resolve a major effort by President --

SPEAKER: End of the Clinton Administration.

MR. INDYK: -- Clinton Administration, sorry, a major effort by President Clinton that failed, and then violence resulted from that. And then for the last seven miserable years we've had violence, terrorism, and that I

think has kind of turned people off, and said, well, they're never going to be able to resolve it.

And I think people kind of have a question mark about why the Secretary of State is actually -- actually putting so much energy into what to the general public seems like a hopeless mission impossible. So that's I think part of the reason why it's not there.

But to say more broadly, and in a way, to respond to what Peter says, diplomacy did come up in the debate last night. Hilary Clinton talked about aggressive diplomacy, which was I think her way of making clear that you can talk about diplomacy without appearing to be a wimp, because essentially, diplomacy had gotten a bad name during the Bush Administration, it was seen as a weak response. Now I think that generally, and certainly on the Democratic side of the political spectrum, diplomacy is seen as the panacea, the answer that -- Winston Churchill used to say it's better to jaw-jaw than war-war. Well, the Bush Administration tried war-war and we saw where that ended up. So now there's a tendency to believe that jaw-jawing is the only way to go. And there is a strong view on the Democratic side that we need to be doing more diplomacy.

I think in reality, we come to leave the politics aside for a moment and look at the policy. The Bush Administration itself has come around to diplomacy, whether it's on North Korea or on the Israeli/Palestinian Arab/Israeli front, or actually on Iran, where -- has tried diplomacy, is actually actively engaged in trying to get negotiations going.

And that I think reflects two things, one is a recognition on the part of the Bush Administration that diplomacy has its uses, and secondly, a decline in the ability of the United States to get its own way, which I would say after 911 was very high, but it produced a hubris, an arrogance, and a kind of attitude of it's my way or the highway that President Bush himself manifested so many times.

And that basically didn't work. And now, as a result, America's reputation has suffered. America's ability to influence a situation in any of these particular crisis areas has also suffered. And it now becomes important for the United States to work with our allies and potential partners in any particular diplomacy. And so what I would add to what Peter said is, there needs to be, yes, American strength, and people around the world do count on American strength, but there also needs to be humility, and that combination can be quite effective.

The fact that the Bush Administration has come around to diplomacy now, particularly in the Arab/Israeli arena, after the -- position was not to touch this issue, to just sit back and let the two sides kill each other, now their active engagement actually has the potential not for a break through to peace, but to put the Israeli/Palestinian negotiating process back on track.

What Annapolis will do, and they haven't set a date, but it looks like it will be the end of this month, very soon, if it succeeds, and I think it will, it will put the final status negotiations of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict back on track. It will launch and bless a final status negotiation.

And if -- can actually succeed in doing that, it will be an important contribution, because then the next president, Republican or Democrat, can and should pick it up quickly, at the beginning of her term, possibly his term, and there is --

SPEAKER: You're showing your strength.

MR. INDYK: -- there is a good chance that, in fact, with that combination of strength and humility, and the influence that we can still bring to bear in the Middle East, that we could achieve an end to the Arab/Israeli conflict in the next Administration.

SPEAKER: Carlos, we were talking a little bit earlier about this concept of America's reputation in the world; do you think that just the

change of president and administration, irrespective of party, can actually instantly alter America's reputation in the world and how we're seen?

MR. PASCUAL: David, thanks, it's a great question, and thank you for joining us here, and thank you to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, for hosting us in this exchange. No, absolutely not; just simply a change in leadership, whether it's Republican or Democratic office, is simply not going to change the perceptions of American leadership.

And I'm glad you raised that, and one of the questioners earlier raised the question about American leadership. I think for the next U.S. President, the biggest central challenge is going to be to restore American credibility and leadership in order to establish effective global and international partners, and that is going to be fundamental to securing American national security interest overseas.

And it's not for the purpose of unilateral American action, but it's, in fact, to be able to have the leadership that is necessary to build the partnerships that are necessary to advance our interest; let me tell you why. Whoever the next president is is going to face a series of crisis, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, North Korea, Middle East Peace Process, Pakistan, we're going to face a whole series of geopolitical challenges, rise of India and China, Russia being resurgent and more authoritarian, questions related to Turkey, for example, structural military issues that were raised earlier in the discussions.

And then there are a series of wider, almost existential structural systemic questions that we face in the world that we live in today, issues of energy security, and climate change, non-proliferation, proliferation of nuclear weapons in particular, transnational terrorism, global poverty.

And there's no way that the United States alone can deal with these issues. The only way that we could do this is to effectively establish the kinds of partnerships with an international community that trusts one

another and works by a rule system.

And so in order to do this, and coming back to specifically the point that you raise, it's not an issue of self-flagellation. I would disagree with Peter here; I don't think the Democratic party or the candidates are engaged in self-flagellation. They're raising the question of, what has to happen to restore America's image and commitment to the rule based international system, and to restore the credibility that we actually abide by values in the way that we conduct our foreign policy. And so I think that whoever that president is, that they're going to have to have an aggressive agenda that demonstrates a change in American behavior, that we're willing to say close Guantanamo, that we're willing to stop flirting with the definition of torture, that we will uphold the Geneva Conventions, that we'll seek the ratification of the comprehensive Task -- Treaty, that we'll advance a strong and aggressive agenda on climate change, because it's by acting in a way that starts to demonstrate that the United States, one, has values, and two, is committed to a rule based international system, that we'll start to convince the international community that we're not unilateralists, and that we're, in fact -- that we're committed to a global international system, we're not just looking after America's interest, but we're recognizing that the best way to look after America is to engage in effective partnerships with others.

SPEAKER: Thank you. One of the topics that gets talked about a lot among political partners is, you know, the intangible, unexpected event that could, you know, effect a presidential election, such as another terrorist attack on the country, and that, let's talk through in crude political terms, just, you know, who that will benefit and how that would play out politically. And, Zoe, I wonder, in this campaign, you know, we've seen in the past, if we're attacked, there's a rally around the flag effect and in the country, but I wonder if we were attacked now, and the president where he is with the standing, and with the Democratic congress investigating so many

different things about wire tapping or other Intelligence issues that are out there, I'm wondering if you think that, and again, God forbid we were attacked, but that the connecting of the dots and the Intelligence system would actually get far more scrutinized than it did perhaps after the 911 attack, and how you think that might infiltrate the political debate.

MS. BAIRD: That's a very interesting question. Let me first say that it's terrific to be here in the west. I grew up in the west, in Washington State, and went to one of the great land grant colleges out here, and it's really wonderful. But you have disengagement in the political process, because those of us who live in the east aren't sure that anyone outside of the east coast cares.

So it's great that there is this deep passion for these issues which we're hearing in the students' questions and certainly heard last night from the undecided voters when they were questioning the candidates. We forget that often in the east.

Let me just point out that 12 years ago, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Congress commissioned -- set up a commission, and the leaders in Congress were members of this commission, to look at the future roles and missions of the Intelligence community. What did we need intelligence for, what kind of dots were we trying to connect? And in that charter, there was not a single mention of terrorism. And I point that out because 12 years is a very short time in the life span of government, it's my son's entire life span, but it's a very short time in the life span of government, and in that period of time, we have figured out that terrorism is one of the great national security threats, we've figured out that it's a threat abroad, but we have learned to our surprise that it's a threat here at home.

And most of our infrastructure in government, our government agencies have been developed to protect us outside our borders and to keep

things from coming into the U.S. But we have never really developed a domestic intelligence collection capability or an ability beyond law enforcement, which is after the fact, to prevent threats here at home.

So what we woke up on 9-12 and said to ourselves was, there was a lot of information out there, a lot of intelligence, we knew that two terrorists had come into the U.S., the CIA had warned the FBI to look for them. We had lots of information about people learning to fly planes without caring about taking off and landing. A lot of concerns out there in random bits and pieces, but we weren't able to protect the country. And what we did at Markle, and with a collection of national security experts and civil liberty experts was, we turned to someone here in Las Vegas, who was writing software, homeless, in his van, working for the casinos, who was able to tell the casinos from publicly available information who everybody was who walked in.

When they got off the plane, the casinos were all alerted to who was there, who were the high rollers, who were the people who had been risks, on and on. And we said to him, okay, take these two people and tell us how many of the 19 terrorists you could find who were on those planes, and he found every one of them, all 19, and he found them using things like common former addresses.

And I could go through it, but I won't take the time now. But some of them even used the same frequent flyer number, which one, shows a lot of gall, but you kind of wonder who was going to use the mileage.

But it was really a remarkable thing to see, and so a lot of us began to work together on what became the 911 commission recommendations, which effectively said, we need to have a virtual reorganization of government, we need to be able to understand, if we're going to prevent attacks, and I'm getting to your specific question, we need to be able to understand, if we learn from a foreign intelligence collection that a

terrorist is looking at shopping malls in the U.S., and some local people at Mall of America have been wondering about some people who have been taking pictures at the mall, somehow those people have to get together and see if there's any commonality and if they can figure out what's happening and who else needs to be working with them to do that.

It doesn't mean we need to take all the information about everyone in the world and put it into a single big data base and start doing some, you know, data mining of this data, but it means that we need to virtually, like, you know, you and I do when we shop or when we, you know, look for information about what movies are worth seeing, we need to create communities of interest that can find each other and work with each other when they have questions.

Now, it's really, really important we do this before the next attack, because to the two questions that were asked earlier, you know, my own belief is that this country isn't worth protecting if we can't protect civil liberties. And it is not human rights or national security. We can be very strong and deeply committed to a rule of law.

Rule of laws are strength, it's not the wimp side of America, it's not a choice of, you know, do we put national security first or human rights first. You know, I like to think of it as America's moral competitive edge. I mean what are we strong for and why should people follow us, but it's our values. And so I believe that what's been missing in these last few years, and the reason we're having this very foolish polarizing conversation is because in order to take the steps the administrations wanted to take, they've been concerned that if they're worried about privacy or worried about human rights or created the public dialogue we need before anyone will trust having a domestic intelligence capability, that they won't be in control, they won't be able to do what they want to do, and I think that's a very big mistake.

We need a very serious dialogue about where we want to fall. And I think most people in this country want us to be strong and want us to ensure their security, but to do it in a way where we know what the rules are, to make sure that information is used because I have a predicate of reason to know and a suspicion of something, not because I'm doing a Google search just because anybody in the private sector can.

The government doesn't operate that way. We need to empower government officials by giving them both boundaries, as well as authority, because no one in government wants to sit there and break the law, I don't believe it, I don't think that's what government officials are about.

So I don't think it's -- and to the questions of the audience about whether it's one or the other, the first question that was asked, I don't think you got an answer, and I think the answer is that what America is all about is it's both, and they don't fight each other, they're both completely compatible.

SPEAKER: Thank you. We were talking a little bit about how Iraq has receded a bit from the front page and the lead of evening broadcasts as violence seems to have been tamped down a bit in Iraq right now, and yet it's still the underlying foreign policy debate happening in the campaign, especially now, as Ken Duberstein was saying about these rumblings about Iraq.

Let me ask you, there are two, Peter, there are two issues in Iran, right, there's the nuclear issue, and then there's the issue of weapons being sent into Iraq, right, those are two different tracks that the administration seems to be focused on? Can the administration go down the road, in the middle of a political campaign season right now, and actually rally support, especially President Bush had 30 percent, rally public support for military action against Iran, do you think that's feasible in this country right now?

MR. RODMAN: Well, let me start out by saying, we have an Iran problem, it's an objective reality, it's not a -- George Bush and Dick Chaney didn't concoct this, some cabalistic ritual. And the next administration is going to have to deal with Iran, as previous administrations have had to deal with it. The problem is, I think it's more than just Iraq and the nuclear program. Iran I think is a revolutionary power seeking to dominate the Gulf, I think its nuclear weapons program is part of this ambition, I think it's an ideological threat, it's going after Lebanon, I mean its role in Lebanon is very disturbing to our friends in the Middle East, its role in the Palestinian -- radicalizing the Palestinians is disturbing to our friends. So we have a big Iran problem.

I am saddened by the fact that I think the Iraq experience has poisoned the discussion in this country. I mean the discussion in this country about how to deal with Iran, you know, ought to be unemotional and analytical and just, you know, dispassionate. Unfortunately, it's colored and distorted by the unfortunate, you know, controversies over Iraq.

I am not -- I'm certainly not a fan of military options, and I don't think that's what even is happening right now. What I think is happening right now is a major effort by the United States and its European allies to use the economic weapon, the economic pressures, and even some of the more melodramatic talk about war.

I mean some of it came from the French government. And I think you have the Americans and the French trying to light a fire under the diplomats, and light a fire under other Europeans, light a fire maybe possibly under Russia and China to say, if we don't mobilize non-military pressures, then we're going to be stuck with the most horrendous option. So I think the focus of this administration is on the diplomacy, the focus is on mobilizing economic pressures outside of the U.N. Security Council, things that the U.S. Treasury Department is organizing, private banks in Europe, a coalition of

the willing of the Americans, Europeans, Japanese and others to intensify economic pressure, to impose economic costs on Iran. So even some of the war scare I think is designed to stimulate that.

And just the last point, I read some of Ahmedinajad's speeches, which is a great experience, but lately he's been acknowledging the fact that there's a debate going on in Iran. He says, oh, there are people in our country who want to make concessions on the nuclear thing because they're afraid of war. And he rebuts it, he says, oh, no, God is on our side, so we don't have to worry about that.

But on at least two occasions he's acknowledged the fact that there's some debate going on. I think that is a sign that we're doing the right thing. We have to give Iranians a reason to say to each other, hey, this may not be the smartest thing for us to do, because it's going to cost us, it's going to hurt Iran. But we have to give them ammunition, so to speak, by showing that there are economic pressures and risks that Iran is going to run.

SPEAKER: Let me just follow up. Did you -- you know, one of the issues about Iran that came up in the debate last night was this vote on the Kyle Liberman declaring the Iran Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organization.

MR. RODMAN: Yeah.

SPEAKER: Hilary Clinton, as many of you I'm sure know, voted for that resolution. All her Democratic opponents --

MR. RODMAN: Yeah.

SPEAKER: -- in the Senate voted against it -- Barack Obama said he would have voted against it. In fact, last night was the first time he said it was a mistake to have missed the vote, to not go back and vote against it. What -- did you see anything in that bill that is a step towards war?

MR. RODMAN: No, it's a ridiculous discussion. I mean I'm not

a neutral observer, but I made it on the face of it, this is a terrorist organization that's colluding, among other things, in the killing of Americans, and to impose economic penalties on it is the least we should be doing.

I mean what I'm happy -- one of the good things of the last year is, as part of the new policy related to the surge, the president also decided that we would play hard ball with these Iranians that we capture in Iraq, and that's why we rounded up a bunch of people earlier in the year, we detained a lot of them until recently. These are people -- this is a -- for us, and this is an arm over the regime that is now actively, or has been actively involved in the killing of Americans, and you know, to designate them on a Treasury Department list is the least we should be doing against these bastards.

SPEAKER: Can I just jump in on this, David? I think that what Peter says about the IRGC and the -- forces is correct, they are really -- but what the debate last night tells you is that there is just a fundamental distrust of this president when it comes to dealing with Iran, particularly on the Democratic side, and that's what's fueling this particular debate.

I think Hilary Clinton's vote was a perfectly logical vote on its merits, but the resolution was seen as laying the groundwork for a way. And I think a lot of people in America are convinced that President Bush, before he leaves office, is going to go to war with Iran.

I tell you, sitting where we sit in Washington, inside the beltway, there's no indication -- it's day and night in terms of the difference between the run up to the war in Iraq, where six months before it was very clear he intended to go to war, and what's happening here.

But the distrust is the issue, and it shows how much credibility the president has lost, that at least half the nation I think just doesn't believe him when he says we're focused on diplomacy.

SPEAKER: But I have to say, look, it would be a -- the

Democrats would make a big mistake if they came out on the wrong side of this issue and said, oh, George Bush made me do it, that's not leadership and that -- again, I actually think the next president, whoever it is, is going to deal with this in a dispassionate way and intelligent way.

SPEAKER: He said he would sit down with -- at the beginning, within the first --

SPEAKER: Well, here's what this difference actually comes down to, because as I said, the Secretary of State has actually put forward a fairly generous offer to the Iranians, they're just not interested in it.

The difference between what she would do and what the Democratic candidates are saying they would do is that, the current offer is contingent on Iran suspending its nuclear enrichment program. And that is actually a U.N. Security Council position, as well. And I think what the Democrats are saying is, we are going to put that condition aside and get into the negotiation, and through the negotiation, we're going to see whether we can get a suspension of enrichment.

And it's a very -- it's actually a tactical issue when you look at the substantive policy question. But it has now become so fraught, so burdened by the Iraq experience that it doesn't lend itself to a rational policy discussion.

SPEAKER: Carlos, do you see any lead up -- do you sense anymore drum beat or do you agree with Martin that inside the beltway, there really is no difference between this and what it sounded like in 2002?

MR. PASCUAL: No, I do agree with Martin. I think that focusing on the vote, on a sanctions vote, and indicating that that was something as a run up to war is actually a misdirection of the issue, in fact, it's actually the opposite of that, which is the extent to which one can begin to utilize other instruments such as economic sanctions as alternatives that one is putting on the table, a whole ray of diplomatic tools.

The question in my mind shouldn't have been whether that is a run up to the war, is whether or not, in fact, that's the right diplomatic tool, whether it's the right strategy, and I think there there's a reasonable debate to be had.

One of our colleagues at Brookings is Ann Maloney, who is a specialist in Iran and has been analyzing these issues, has pointed out that actually the discontent within Iran toward Ahmed Neshad is not because of the sanctions. I mean let's remember, Iran has been getting close to \$60 billion a year in oil revenues, these sanctions aren't doing that much.

The discontent has been the mismanagement – Ahmedinajad's mismanagement of Iran's oil well, the fact that he has been distributing it in a populist way, the fact that he hasn't tackled corruption, the fact that there's increased inflation within the country. Iranians are saying, do we like this person as an economic leader? And so in that sense, the irony is that in some cases, sanctions actually galvanize the Iranian and nationalistic Iranian population, but the outside world is against our leader, so we actually have to stand up for him.

And so one of the things that it raises is, what is the most effective way of demonstrating that there is a unified international community, it's not just the United States, it's not just Europe, but we retain Russia and China, and we widen that to include the Brazil's, and the India's, and the Indonesia's of the world in order to demonstrate that what Iran is doing in developing a nuclear program is unacceptable and reprehensible. And that's the challenge to our diplomacy, is to, in fact, actually widen that base.

SPEAKER: And back to this idea of how the Iraq experience has sort of colored this internal political debate; has the Iraq experience caused it to be more difficult to get that, what you're describing there, a broad based international response?

MR. PASCUAL: Absolutely it has, because what's happened with the international community is exactly what happened last night in the debate, is an assumption that there is another story here that is going on, that something is being done to lay a foundation so that at some stage, the United States might be able to say we've done everything that is possible, and therefore, the only thing that is left to do in order to protect American security interest is to undertake military action.

SPEAKER: Well, let me just follow up --

SPEAKER: Here's the silver lining in this, though; the irony, in a way, is that the belief that is so strongly held internationally and certainly on the Democratic side here that President Bush is actually planning to go to war might actually concentrate the minds of the Iranians in a way that they start to consider maybe it's better to go to the negotiating table, because we've seen two things, Peter referred to one of them, the debate that started where Akmed -- actually acknowledge that there are people there saying, you're going to get us into a war, better cut it out.

And today, as some of you will have seen in the newspaper, an American journal in Iraq is saying the Iranians have actually quite dramatically cut their supply of these explosive bombs that are causing so many American casualties.

So it may be ironically that they're actually -- they actually think we're going to go to war, too, and they're going to pull back as a result.

SPEAKER: Much like a presidential debate, the expectations game has a big impact on the --

SPEAKER: So the Democrats are helping our foreign policy by magnifying the credibility of this war scare.

SPEAKER: But I want to get at the heart of this -- of the Iraq experience, how is my question, how can the impact of the Iraq experience on our relations? You talked about our relations with Europe leaders now

growing; can that expand, and how can we lessen the impact of the Iraq experience as a nation so that we can begin to build these necessary larger coalitions?

Anyone want to take a stab at that?

SPEAKER: Just to start, I think Iraq is stabilizing now, I'll venture that prediction. I mean that's what we've seen, and certainly we all cross our fingers, and that may be why it's less interesting to the Democrats to talk about it, you may hear the Republicans talk more about it if it looks like it's -- the President's strategy is succeeding.

SPEAKER: Rudy Giuliani is saying that he thinks the Democrats will start talking very differently about it.

SPEAKER: But it's good on the merits, I mean it's good for all of us, if Iraq is stabilizing and we're, you know, someone closer to achieving our objective, it hastens the day when we will be able to come out of Iraq in the right conditions. I mean that I think is -- maybe that's the thing to focus on, because if that happens, it certainly eases the passion of our domestic debate, it means we can disengage from Iraq, it means we can preserve our interest in the Middle East, I mean that's the right answer, and to me, that's an argument for, you know, help -- supporting the president's policy right now, to try -- which I think is in the best interest of the next president. The next president I think would be grateful to George Bush if George Bush has left Iraq in as stable a condition as he possibly can achieve.

And the next president has options. The next president can pull the plug if he or she wants to do it, or try to win the war, or begin a kind of controlled disengagement. If this president started -- or if the congress imposed on this president something that accelerated an unraveling, the next president would inherit a situation that would be far worse and would have far fewer options, far fewer good options. So that, again, is my unsolicited advice to the Democratic candidate.

SPEAKER: Do you want to say something about the stability or --

SPEAKER: I do; and I think one of the things -- it should not have been a surprise if there was this massive concentration of U.S. troops in a relatively small and defined area that there can be some short term stability. General Shinseki argued that some time ago, and he was fired for it. And so the administration eventually came back to incorporating that in its strategy. The question is, in July --

SPEAKER: Over Democratic opposition.

SPEAKER: What's that?

SPEAKER: Over Democratic opposition, but anyway, sorry.

SPEAKER: It's a good point and a powerful point. But here's a key issue; in July of next year, the American force level in Iraq is going to be exactly the same as it was in January of this year. And is there anything that's going to make us feel that next July, that force presence is going to be anymore sustainable than it was in January of this year?

And what it comes back to is, is what's being done somehow being sustainable? And so in Anbar Province, we have a reduction in violence, we have it because there's been a cooperation of Sunni's against Al Qaeda with the United States. And so they are not supporting a unified Iraq, they're supporting cooperation of the United States against Al Qaeda.

We have in some areas genuine exhaustion, such as Mosul, and it creates a good foundation for long term stability. We have in southern Iraq a three-way war going on among Shiia militias. Internally, the political system has become more complex, and there are even greater divisions in national politics than we've seen in the past.

The regional situation has become no less complex than it was before. And does any of us give us the sense that, in fact, it's building up to some sort of national Iraq that can, in fact, actually be more stable when

those troop levels are withdrawn? And I personally think that the answer is no. But whether you do or you don't, I think the question that it raises is that, if we are at the maximum troop level that we will ever be at in Iraq now, because there will be no other surge, how do you use that military presence in a way to actually generate a more effective diplomatic and international engagement in order to attempt to seek a viable process for brokering peace?

It may not succeed, it may not be achieved, but if, in fact, when it's going to start pushing that agenda of effective diplomatic negotiation, building to some form of settled agreement among the parties, now is absolutely the time to test it and to do it, and there is effectively no strategy to do it yet. You have ad hoc meetings in the region, in Baghdad, but nothing has mounted to a concerted strategy that could actually even give a chance for a viable brokered political settlement.

SPEAKER: Before we pivot to audience questions, which we will do in a moment, I just want to -- you had mentioned Pakistan earlier, and obviously it's been dominating in the news recently, and we heard the presidential candidate, Senator Clinton, for instance, last night in the debate, that the Bush Administration needs to be more aggressive with Musharaf. I'm wondering if any of you have a sense of what that means, to be more aggressive with Musharaf at this point, and if you think that is the best approach here, to get more aggressive with him, whatever that may mean in your mind; does anyone want to take a stab at Pakistan?

MR. INDYK: Well, I think that what it actually means is to get Musharaf to go ahead with commitments he had previously made about taking his uniform off as president, and therefore, dropping his military role and taking on a presidential role, and having elections in an environment that could enable campaigns to take place in a free and fair way. That's what getting aggressive with him means.

But Musharaf is like other authoritarian leaders in that part of the world and the Middle East, as well, he's fighting for survival. And, you know, President Bush's survival is not on the line in the same way. So we can get aggressive with him, but he's going to do what he can to preserve his power and get into power through an election process, somebody who will cooperate with him.

SPEAKER: Those are not necessarily a realistic call, to say that the United States need to be more aggressive with Musharaf.

MR. INDYK: Well, no, I think --

MS. BAIRD: Martin, before you answer that, doesn't it also include addressing terrorism and the Taliban?

MR. INDYK: Well, the reason this is so complicated and difficult for American diplomacy is precisely because here the issue of national security versus the freedom agenda of promoting elections in Pakistan come up against each other. We, you know, if we look at America's national security interest here, we need a leader in Pakistan who is capable - - willing and capable of going after the Taliban and Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda's operations in the badlands of Pakistan. And the Bush Administration has, in effect, bet on Musharaf to do that, but he's not doing a very good job of it, in fact, you could argue he's doing a lousy job of it.

Now, if he were doing a good job of it, maybe we would say, okay, we're not going to push him so hard on the issue of elections, but since he's not doing a great job on it, maybe a more popular, more legitimate leadership would be more effective. It's a big maybe, though; it's a big question mark as to whether anybody in Pakistan would have the legitimacy in that political environment to actually do what we need them to do against the terrorists.

SPEAKER: Well, there was a stunning article in the New York Times yesterday, the lead article, quoting State Department officials as

saying they're thinking about a post-Musharaf, you know, world, and I have no idea whether this is what the President is thinking, and I have no idea whether the journalists were embellishing, you know, on something that they had heard, but I mean that kind of press report could itself accelerate events in Pakistan. But I think the U.S. government has been trying for many, many, many months, if not a couple years to encourage a deal between Musharaf and Benazir Bhutto, and Musharaf has really bungled it. I mean it was in his own interest to cut such a deal, and to do it when he was in a position of strength, now I think the possibility of that is shattered. At least she's saying she's going to boycott any election, so this is a real mess.

And I think the American government had been giving Musharaf the right advice, but I'm not sure where we go from here. I don't think we have control over this.

SPEAKER: I don't think we have control over this, and this is one of these cases we're actually trying to push for an answer on an issue of, should you be tough or not tough, it's actually a disservice to the problem.

Pakistan is perhaps the most dangerous country in the world. You have blinking red lights about nuclear weapons, terrorist organizations, Islamic groups, conflict on its borders, its neighbors are particularly insecure, you have American troops in Afghanistan, you have Iran next to it, as well, and you can't answer this from a perspective of should you just simply be tough or not be tough. You have to balance all of these issues together. You have to think about, how do you maintain control over their nuclear arsenal, how do you deal with the reality that you have the emergence of a middle class active political group in Pakistan, and you want to give them rise, yet at the same time, if you support them, you'll probably kill them. How do you deal with the reality that whatever authoritarian leader might be in Pakistan, if you don't have that person's cooperation, they can actually shut down those Democratic movements if they don't have the space to actually

be able to operate.

You've got to manage these tensions in an extremely sophisticated way. And so simply saying tough or not tough doesn't really give you an answer to this. You really need the sophistication of strategy and policy that probably, to begin with, starts in a visit between a senior American military leader and a senior Pakistani leader, and you start figuring out, what is the tolerance of the Pakistani military for where they're willing to go; does the Pakistani military understand that if Musharaf stays in power and shuts down these opposition groups, that potentially Pakistan ends up in a situation where the choices are authoritarian, on the one hand, and extremism on the other hand, because the only political groupings are the ones that are going to grow up around the mosque.

And if you start having that dialogue and you start getting the Pakistani military leadership on board, perhaps you might start coming up with ideas that lead Pakistani's to come up with some more viable solution for their political situation, because I can assure you, we are not going to come up with a solution for this, somehow the Pakistani's are going to have to come up with some settlement about their political situation. The best thing that we can do is to be a constructive facilitator by beginning to draw some of the red lines of courses of action that they should take.

SPEAKER: Great, thank you. Let's turn now to your questions. Again, if you could just line up, take a position at one of the microphones. But I see someone here, so --

SPEAKER: Thank you for being here, and I appreciate the sponsors, especially Brian Greenspun. No one up here has been talking really about Russia. Real quickly, in 1917, Lennon ended an election in the Soviet Union and created, you know, an authoritarian government.

And I see Putin as being a very frustrated, almost like a post-modern, if you will, Lenin, someone whose country was defeated in

Afghanistan, now they're becoming an economic power with oil, they're very frustrated that I can see in terms of their relationship with the U.S., and they are really integrated, well, maybe not integrated, but they are involved in a lot of the countries in the mid East. I worry about what's going to happen with Russia, do you?

SPEAKER: Anyone want to take that? Go ahead. Before you answer, let me make a couple quick housekeeping points just because of time, and I see how much interest there is. Please keep your questions as briefly as you can, keep them tightly constructed, and if you can direct them to someone specifically, great, if not, we'll adjudicate that here.

SPEAKER: We just had at Brookings in the last few days a group of distinguished Europeans, it's a forum that we've had over many years, European diplomats and think tank people, and Russia was almost the dominant topic of the conversation, and so there's a Russia problem.

It's not quite the Soviet foreign policy, it's a classical great power policy, it's a Russia that's getting back on its feet geopolitically and throwing its weight around. But I think there's a silver lining. The Americans and Europeans are discussing this, and I hope we'll have a common approach to it, and as you're suggesting, it takes a form of using energy as a weapon of leverage over its neighbors, it's -- they're bullying Georgia and Ukraine, and they're shielding Iran from some of the pressures that we're trying to put.

So we have a Russia problem. It's a country that's getting back on its feet, that still feels wounded by what happened to them 15 years ago. And I don't think this is anywhere near the Cold War level. And I agree with Robert Gates, I was with him in Germany, we heard Putin speak in February, he gave some ferocious speech, and Gates said, look we had one Cold War and that's enough. And I think this is something we can manage, but it requires, first of all, some good dialogue between us and our allies.

SPEAKER: I'd just add a quick point to this, which is that in the Middle East context, Russia can, indeed, be our partner, and we don't need to get back into a Cold War competition in the Middle East. I don't think that's what Putin is after. I do think he's after respect in this regard rather than advantage.

And on Iran, if we can bring the Russians along in a united international front, the Chinese will then follow, and this will have a powerful impact on the Iranian's, I believe, then they will be isolated. But to do that, we have got to understand how things are connected in the minds of the Russian's. So to do that while poking them in the eye on ballistic missile defense against the threat that could be, at best, ten years off, seems to me to be a failure to understand how to conduct --

We need to engage the Russians in a kind of give and take in a way that I believe can, Peter used the word management, that's what it is, but they can actually be a partner of the Middle East, and they are on the Arab/Israeli front, they are actually a partner.

SPEAKER: I agree with -- if I can just one second. The seriousness of the problem, I agree with the importance of engaging Russia, but let's be very clear about how serious it is. I mean during the time that Putin has been President, he has essentially now been able to appoint governors, he appoints the upper House of Parliament, he has changed the rules for political parties to get into Parliament so he can effectively control the political parties, he controls the broadcast media, he has taken individuals from the Kremlin and has put them in positions where they essentially run the gas, oil, gold, diamonds, railways, transport sectors of the country.

And as a result of that, there's a very concentrated group of people within the Kremlin that have become the absolute center of running the political life and the foreign policy of Russia, and that is an extraordinarily

difficult issue.

And on one hand we're faced with the challenge of, how do we work with Russia on issues where they have a fundamental interest and veto on the U.S. Security Council, issues, as Martin was saying, as Iran and the Middle East, and at the same time, take into account that we're dealing with questions such as -- defense or -- the Vulcans, energy diplomacy or energy power, how they treat Ukraine and Georgia. And so in the end, this is a phenomenal hard problem, because one thing that we do know is that eventually Russians will define what happens in Russia. There's no way that anybody else will. But how do we manage this relationship in a way that begins to give a voice to those within Russia that might actually have a more liberal and open perspective on how that society should be conducted? It is a phenomenal difficult issue that we're facing right now, and I, frankly, don't think that either the United States or Europe actually has a strategy on how to deal with it.

SPEAKER: Yes, sir.

SPEAKER: Yes, this question isn't directed to anyone -- I'm a Marine veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, I don't support the war on any level, but I see both sides of the exit strategy issue. Is there a way to leave Iraq without sort of alienating the troops and making them feel like they're sacrifices have been wasted?

SPEAKER: I think, yes, there is a way. I think the implicit in your question is that we are going to need to leave Iraq. That's critical in the sense that we want to make sure that no more -- no lives are wasted.

One way to ensure that what was done by you and your brave colleagues is not wasted is to make sure that, in my view, that we do get out of Iraq, but that we need to do that in a way that doesn't leave a huge -- behind. And so as we've discussed here already, I think there is underneath all of the heat of the debate consensus emerging about the need to

withdraw, the need to draw down the troops, but the need to leave behind as stable a situation as possible.

SPEAKER: I would -- just let me -- I potentially agree. I would just state it more positively. I think that's precisely why it's essential that we leave in a way that includes accomplishing the mission, so that the sacrifices that have been made have a point.

And we have particularly now when things do seem to be going well, I think it would be a terrible mistake to just walk away from it and precipitate an unraveling and guarantee that the sacrifices will have been in vain when an alternative is available to us.

SPEAKER: Thank you for your question and your observance. Next, over here.

SPEAKER: You've discussed problems that deal with pretty much every branch of the government, but I was wondering what your views were on the fourth estate of the country, journalists, and how you think they're influencing our foreign policy and also the problems across the world?

SPEAKER: Well, actually, sir, go ahead.

MS. BAIRD: Go ahead, Carlos.

MR. PASCUAL: I want to jump in for just a second, because I think actually the media is such an important tool in the conduct of international policy and foreign policy, because even when at times coverage of an issue may focus attention on it in which it may heighten the immediate dramatic elements of a particular question, the importance of the media as an information sharing tool has become absolutely critical in allowing societies to better function and conduct their operations and their political systems.

And if there's one thing that we have learned over time, is that when individuals within a society actually have information about their political systems and how their lives are operating, that that is one of the

most fundamental tools in empowering them and allowing them to act responsibly as citizens.

And so I think one of the things that's important to underscore is that as a fundamental tool in foreign policy, but as a fundamental tool in governance, strengthening the role of the media, increasing its capacity to act responsibly, giving people information is essentially -- is essential to making them good citizens, and I think that's critical here for the United States, I think it's critical abroad.

There are times when we may debate exactly how the media plays into a given issue, but I think broadly, we have to be thankful for its presence and actually seek to strengthen it.

MS. BAIRD: I would just add to that that I think the question is very different than it ever was before, because I think, David, you were saying that -- what was the poll numbers you were telling us this morning about peoples' concern about America's place in the world? Recount that, if you will, so I can -- I don't want to get it wrong.

MR. CHALIAN: I do have this number, but that we see both on Republican and Democratic -- polling, that one of the big questions in the election is, how does America restore its reputation in the world.

MS. BAIRD: Okay. And traditionally, even at time of war, foreign policy concerns aren't one of the front and center issues, and I think one of the reasons that this is happening now is not because more people are watching CBS Evening News or more people are reading the New York Times.

In fact, I think the reason it's happening is that more people are using the internet, getting direct access to information, pictures from people like the gentleman who served in Iraq are being sent home to their families. It's incredible that our soldiers have cameras and they have internet access and that the military has encouraged this. This is a remarkable thing. They

could have done quite the opposite.

And I think you see on YouTube videos, you see, you know, Craig from Craigslist was at the debate last night, you know, you just see a whole different world of people hearing from other people about how they perceive the U.S., and seeing in real time what's going on, not because they're sitting and watching CNN all day like my mother does, but because they're involved on the internet with their own communities of interest. And I think that's the new fourth estate, that is really transformational in our politics, in our sense of ourselves and the people we care about, and that, of course, obviously it's added, too, by the celebrity engagement with the third world and the stories that come back. But again, it's mostly over the internet.

You don't hear people talking about what Angela Jolie did in Africa on CBS Evening News, you see that on the internet. And so I think that the question of, who are the authorities of the fourth estate is a radically different question now, and maybe it's not even a fourth estate anymore.

SPEAKER: Of course, I am obliged to urge you to still tune in -

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SPEAKER: Uniquely qualified.

SPEAKER: I'm being told that we're running short on time, so I want to get to as many as possible, so we'll keep our answers brief and you'll keep your questions brief.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much for holding this session, important questions are being addressed. I think we all have some concern about -- we really didn't think through well our situation in Iraq, and we've had problems because of it.

But I mean the surge seems to be working despite the lack of planning. But there doesn't seem to be a lot of pressure on the Iraqi government to do something. How do we -- I mean we could literally stay there forever without anything happening if we're providing all the security.

How do we address -- how do we force the Iraqi government to get more involved without putting some pressure on them?

MR. INDYK: We don't is my answer, we don't, because we're not going to succeed in that and it's beyond, in my view, it's beyond the mission. We got rid of a hateful dictator, and in the process, because we bungled the aftermath of that, we created a situation in which political reconciliation is going to be incredibly difficult to achieve in any reasonable time frame.

My own view is quite pessimistic on this, looking at it from the view point of some knowledge of Middle Eastern history. It's going to take ten years. Essentially the Shi'as are dominant now as a result of elections that we insisted on, they've been suppressed for 500 years in Iraq, for 14 centuries in the broader Middle East, and now they're in control and they're not going to share it with those who suppressed them, the Sunni's, and the Sunni's aren't going to accept it, and so they're going to duke it out.

Now we're in a situation where we're maintaining a stable situation, but we're also arming both sides, and training both sides, and we're -- basically we don't have the means of effecting reconciliation, and so we should, in a sense, declare victory on this front. We've created the circumstances in which it's now up to the Iraqi's to resolve their own problems, and we'll help them to the extent that they want to resolve them, and we'll try to hold the ring and prevent outsiders to interfere so that they have the best chance of resolving them. But in the end, it is going to be up to them and not up to us, and we shouldn't take on that responsibility.

SPEAKER: How you doing? First of all, I'd like to say I do support the American troops, but I don't support the President's war policy. But having said that, my question is, why is it that the United States feels like it has to be the moral authority for the whole world?

Because just, for instance, with Iran, why can't you accept at

face value that there is -- evidence suggests that their oil fields are going to be depleted? And why can't we accept the fact that they want nuclear power because they're going to have to sustain their energy? Why do we have to say that we know for a fact that they're going to use it for evil purposes? Because I think that's really why a lot of these governments around the world hate us. They don't hate American people --

SPEAKER: I'm just going to pause you, we're out of time.

SPEAKER: -- so my question is, why can't we accept at face value, and I don't want to be an apologist for the President of Iran, but how do you know that they're not going to use it for peaceful purposes?

SPEAKER: Well, the whole world has defined that as the issue. Nobody cares if they have a civilian nuclear energy program. We've - - of course, they're entitled to have a civilian nuclear energy. But the world believes they have a nuclear weapons program, and we're not alone in this, and it's not about America setting itself up, it's about what we and several other allied governments believe.

The issue of America setting itself up is -- what we do for a living as a global power, there are countries around the world who look to us for security, they worry about some local threat or regional threat and they come to us. That's why we're in Europe, that's why we're in Asia, that's why we're in the Middle East, because countries are afraid of some local bully and they come to us as a protector, that's what we do for a living, and it's a very honorable thing.

And we don't impose ourselves. If somebody doesn't want us there, we leave, you know, DeGaulle kicked us out, the Filipinos asked us to leave, we left.

SPEAKER: Iraq didn't want us there and -- there.

SPEAKER: Saddam Hussein didn't want us there, that's correct.

SPEAKER: My turn, okay. Thank you guys once again for being here, and thank you, Zoe, for answering a question that kind of got dodged in the first panel, we really appreciate that. But I'm going to address Peter real quick, if that's okay. You mentioned the importance of re-establishing America's strength, which I agree is very important. But you say going about this is by carrying out the current policy that Bush has been enacting and that's important for the next president to do, as well.

I was living in Europe the year and a half following our war in Iraq, and I would argue that it's not America that anyone is against, but the policies that have been coming out of America. And so my question is, can we not establish -- re-establish strength through humility and admitting that maybe we went about everything the wrong way and fundamentally make a change in the way we're going about things?

MR. RODMAN: Well, we went into Iraq with the support of a number of countries. We didn't have France and Germany on our side and this was very controversial. But as I said in my original remarks, I think our relationship with Europe is quite good right now, and so I don't see any great dramatic change.

Look, there will be a new president regardless of what you think of George Bush. You know, the electoral cycle, you know, renews itself and we'll have a new administration. So whatever happened in this administration, a new president has the chance to start over again as he or she chooses. So I'm not worried about this. I wrote a long essay about anti-Americanism a little while ago, about how a lot of the European unity movement was -- had an anti-American undertone, because we were the sole super power. Once the Soviet Union collapsed, we were number one, and this was something that provoked resentment in a whole lot of places.

But I wrote this essay in 1998 or something, during the Clinton Administration. So some of this is structural. We're the big boy; we're going

to be the focus of resentment no matter what we do. And, sure, Iraq added a lot of passion to this, but we're going to be a focus of resentment because we are strong.

And county -- like the European problem is -- the fact that they are dependent on us is what they resent. And they were hoping at the end of the Cold War that they were free of -- they didn't need the Americans anymore, and they were, you know, hoping to set up Europe as a counter way to American power.

And I think as Russia gets stronger, they're going to realize again they do need the Americans there, and this will be, in its own way, a source of resentment. But that goes with the -- what I'm saying is, to a great extent, this resentment of us goes with the territory and I think it's transitory in any case.

SPEAKER: There's one really important part of this question, though, that's critical, is that the challenge to international security has changed, it's not just a question of the exercise of power and force, it's -- we're dealing with the kinds of problems that are transnational, that have no boundaries and borders. When you deal with not only regional security questions, but international terrorism, question of proliferation of weapons, and a question of climate change dealing with issues like energy security, it's not going to be solved by one country.

And we're not living in a world right now where, despite the fact that we might try on our southern border, we can't build walls around ourselves to simply make us -- ourselves safe. We have to participate in this international community.

And so the challenge here is, how do we establish leadership in a way that allows us to engage effectively with our partners so that we are in international partnerships that are dealing with these kinds of transnational challenges and existential challenges in a way that provide for our greater

security, and I think that that's what the next president is going to have to face fundamentally on his or her agenda.

SPEAKER: Unfortunately, we have more people in line than we have time for the questions. So we're going to get two more questions in here, and then I'm afraid we'll have to wrap. So, sir, yes, sir.

SPEAKER: I mean I think everybody agrees this next election is very important to the American people and to the world. What are the implications of another failed presidency, both domestically and internationally? That question is to anybody.

MR. INDYK: Well, the implications are very bad. You know, the next president is going to have a real challenge digging out from where this president is going to leave things. As I've already suggested, in some ways, and I think Peter is right about this, in some ways, the last year of the Bush presidency may lay the foundation for digging out of that hole. The principal is when you're in a hole, is to stop digging, and I think the Bush Administration is actually doing that.

And so the challenge may not be as great, and the next president will benefit from the fact that he or she is not Bush. For the international community, that will make a difference. But what happens then is really going to be critical.

And I think there are a lot of lessons learned from the last eight years that will be applied whether it's a Republican or a Democratic president, and the most important one I think will be that we -- we're going to be working with other states and organizations in the international community much more than we were prepared to do in this administration. That, combined with what I said, I think lays a foundation of believing that things will actually be better, not worse.

MS. BAIRD: I think the implications are really very fundamental, and we'll just take a minute to say that I think that they relate to

things others here know better than I do, which is the emergence of China and the emergence of other alliances between nations, states, that circumvent the leadership role of the United States.

But I also think that they relate to the fundamental capabilities of the American people, which are built I think in part on a belief that we're a very competent country, that we can do what we set out to do, and that means we can build things, we can manufacture things, we can invent things that we set out to do, and we can be a powerful government if we set out to do that.

Not as much confidence, we can solve social problems and lots and lots of issues about the confidence of individuals. But I do think that there's a -- that if we don't -- the next president isn't really, really competent in using government, then I think that that could be very fundamental and undermining the American confidence, and that pluck is a lot of what makes America succeed.

SPEAKER: Next question.

SPEAKER: How much of our Middle Eastern policy is formed I would say with a relationship with Saudi royal family and what they want?

SPEAKER: When it comes to oil -- and oil is a critical part of our Middle East policy, because a lot of our vital interest there is in the free flow of oil at reasonable prices from the Persian Gulf arena, and Saudi Arabia is the largest producer and is building a capacity to increase its ability to be the swing producer, which means that hopefully it will be in a position to moderate prices in the near future, and so we need Saudi Arabia to play that role.

But what we don't need Saudi Arabia to do is spread a message of intolerance and hate that is tied up with the worst elements of the Wahabi religious establishment in Saudi Arabia. And so we have to find a way to engage with the Saudi's which ensures that they play a constructive

role on the oil front and don't play a destructive role on these other fronts which came back to bite us on 911.

SPEAKER: I just want to say in closing, thank you to all of you, just a fascinating conversation, especially for someone like me who's intimately focused on Iowa's '99 -- and less so on the world at large.

You know, we get a lot of heat in the press for covering the horse race and doing too much about polls and fund raising presidential elections, but as you saw in the video at the top of this, it is the first presidential election in 80 years without an incumbent vice president or president seeking the parties nomination, matched with that, at a time where I don't think the issues or the stakes could be any more important or higher than they are. And so while we do focus on this process, this political running for president process, it is so wonderful to be reminded about what it really is all about. And listening to all of you discuss these issues that are going to fall on the desk immediately of the next president has just been fascinating for me, and I'm sure for all of you, so thank you all so much.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you all for being here. I'm Mike O'Hanlon and I was asked to wrap up in 30 seconds. But I've also been asked to have an encore question, because the event has been so outstanding and we don't want to leave you waiting, and then I'll say one last thing to thank you all again for being here.

Thank you. Mr. Indyk, unintended consequences of unilateral pre-emptive strategy in Iraq will or has led to democratic government in Iraq with the sheer majority actually strengthening Iranian influence in the region. How would a Shi'a Iraq supported by Tehran effect the peace process in Israel?

MR. INDYK: Yeah, it's always a mistake to do an encore question, and I need at least 30 minutes to answer this question. It's a good question, but I'll try to do it very quickly. Essentially, I think what the question

is referring to is the way in which Iran has tried to make a bid for Germany in the region, piggybacking on the fact that, as I said before, we put -- we helped to put a Shiia government in power in Iraq, and the parties in that government are closely associated with Iran, and this created the sense of a Shiia -- that the Sunni Arab leaders of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan have referred to stretching from Iran to the Shiia government in Iraq to the affiliated government in Syria to the Shiia, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and then to Hamas in Gosia, which is Sunni, but it's being supported by the Iranians.

And what this is doing, that perception that David referred to as so important, has created a sense of common interest and common thread between the Sunni Arab states who are the custodians of the status quo in the Middle East and Israel, and the United States, in many ways, the international community, to try to roll back Iran.

And the way to do this, and to try to block its bid for hegemony in the Middle East heartland, they see now is to come together and try to resolve the Palestinian problem, or at least put it back on track, because that becomes the cement that will glue together this kind of virtual alliance between former enemies, Arabs and Israeli's, against Iranians, and that, in essence, is why the meeting in Annapolis that you're going to see in the next couple of weeks will be a limited tactical success because it's for a strategic objective that all of these players share. They're all threatened by Iran, they all have a common interest in showing that negotiations reconciliation, particularly on the hot button issue of the Palestinian, can work rather than defiance and violence and terrorism, which is the message that Iran is putting across. And that's what we're seeing here, is a contest between the kind of message of reconciliation and a message of violence. And that's how to understand the importance of Annapolis, as a way of showing that our way works.

SPEAKER: And to wrap up, first a final quick round of thank

yous to David and everyone at ABC, to all of you for being here, to Brian and Myra Greenspun, to the entire city of Las Vegas, Nevada. We're just delighted to be out here partnering with you folks.

In fact, we also heard from some experts regionally on metropolitan issues including your mayor and your water planning expert. We're interested in involving them more in the project, at least I know I am, and I want to pursue that because we learned a lot out here.

And I also want to say in conclusion, my second point is, please look for and feel free to give us your ideas through the Brookings site or telephone on some future upcoming materials with the Opportunity 08 project. Martha Raddatz, David's colleague, has just been kind enough to do some video filming with us. And I think -- let me just mention very quickly, two of the people that she spoke with just Wednesday, in material that will soon be on our web site, Peter Singer, who wrote with Hady Amr about how to improve relations with the Islamic world, and one of the things they suggest is that the next president should get out there and maybe even do some of their first Summits with Islamic leaders. And there are a number of other provocative ideas in that paper.

And then maybe even more provocative, and I don't fully agree, but in the spirit of this project, we love many ideas, Jeremy Shapiro, my colleague who works on Homeland Security, has said, you know what, we've got to keep doing what Zoe Baird says in improving intelligence, but otherwise, we're actually spending slightly too much money on homeland security.

Al Qaeda is best at airplane attacks and truck bombs, we're getting better at defending against those, let's start to ratchet this thing down and begin, just a little bit, to relax. So in the spirit of provocation and contrarian ideas, I'll call your attention to that one, as well, but mostly I want to thank you all for being here, and it's been a real treat for us.

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