

A Brookings Iraq Series Briefing

**THE SECOND UN RESOLUTION:
A BATTLE FOR PUBLIC OPINION**

**The Brookings Institution
Stein Room
February 26, 2003**



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MR. JAMES B. STEINBERG: Good afternoon and welcome to Brookings, another in our series of briefings on Iraq.

As you can tell, there's a new look in many respects to today. It's Wednesday, not Thursday. It's the Stein Room and not the Falk Auditorium. But the one thing that seems to be in common is that it's snowing outside. [Laughter]

We're going to do today's briefing in two parts. We're going to begin by talking about public opinion and the politics surrounding Iraq and to discuss that we have two distinguished Senior Fellows here at Brookings, Tom Mann from Governance Studies and Jim Lindsay from Foreign Policy Studies. They'll look at that. And then because Tom has an appointment we're going to actually take some questions from you all on that dimension first, and then we'll turn to the international side with Ivo Daalder to talk a little bit about the dynamic at the UN and the two competing resolutions and what to look for there. And Omer Taspinar who's a visitor here, one of our very distinguished visitors who comes with a personal perspective from Turkey to talk about some of the issues taking place in terms of the dynamic of Turkey's support for the effort in Iraq, particularly in light of the recent decision of Turkey to host U.S. forces and what Turkey's perspective and objectives will be, and how the Turkish government sees both its relationship with the U.S. concerning possible military action and its own interests.

So let's begin on the domestic side. We'll begin with Jim talking about public opinion and how we should think about all the polls that we've been seeing, and then Tom will give him his wisdom into the domestic politics and congressional politics of Iraq.



MR. JAMES M. LINDSAY: Thank you Jim, and thank all of you who braved Washington's snow to come today.

I'm going to try to keep my remarks fairly brief and focus specifically on the question of polls. I'd really like to make four broad points about American public attitude towards potential war in Iraq.

The first basic point, if you look at public opinion as it considers the idea of war in the abstract, the American public is slightly pro-war and that attitude has been relatively stable over the last six months.

The best way to look at that is with trend data, the same question asked over time. Gallup has been very good about regularly asking would you favor or oppose invading Iraq with U.S. ground troops in an attempt to remove Saddam Hussein from power. The responses they've found since last summer have really bumped between a low of 52 percent in favor to a high of 59 percent. Basically a very narrow range. The one exception was the week right after Secretary

Powell's speech at the United Nations where it briefly went up to 63 percent, but it's back down now in the 50s once again.

By the same token, opposition to the war has been in a fairly tight, narrow band between about 35 percent opposed and 43 percent opposed.

Not surprisingly when you break the numbers down you discover that Republicans are much more supportive of a war in Iraq than Democrats are by a margin of about 75 percent to 40 percent. You discover that younger Americans tend to be much more supportive of a war than older Americans. The age group about 18 to 29, you find on average six out of ten young Americans favor the war. If you look at Americans over the age of 65 you find support is down to about four or five out of ten.

This is actually not surprising because of the Vietnam War. Contrary to everybody's memories of the protests, young Americans during the '60s tended to be more supportive of Vietnam than older Americans.

Likewise, if you look at the major demographic groups that are opposed to the war, there are only three major groups that show majority opposition. They are African-Americans, Democrats, and people with post-graduate degrees. [Laughter]

One thing that's really striking is the attitudes of Hispanic-Americans in these polls. There's been a lot of people talking about the influx of Latinos into the United States, talking about the potential affect it might have on American foreign policy. That people who trace their roots to Latin America rather than Europe would want to shift American focus away from things over there and to focus America's tensions south of its border. What is clear is that Hispanic-Americans are supportive of the war and actually more supportive of the war than the American public overall.

Point number two is that the public may support the war but its support is ambivalent. When you look at the polling questions that asks would it accept the Administration contention that the threat from Iraq is imminent, only one-third agree. If you ask a different question than the basic Gallup question I mentioned before, that is you give people a choice besides for war or against war, and you offer them for example the question of would you prefer to give inspectors more time, you find that option actually trumps the option of going to war.

The question about support for the war also drops if you ask people whether, if you apply to the scenario in which the UN refuses to give its support, if you talk about military casualties being substantial. So to a great extent the public evaluation of war depends upon the context.

Here I want to flag something about questions dealing with the public being interested in

UN authorizations. I think those questions tend to be misrepresented in a lot of the reporting on it.

It's sometimes suggested that that question really taps into a belief of the American public that war would only be legitimate if the United Nations authorizes an invasion of Iraq. I think that's a misreading of what the public thinks it is saying when it answers that question. Rather for the public that question is more a proxy about whether the United States should act by itself or have others on board. Indeed for many Americans it's really a proxy as to the wisdom of the war. If you can't persuade others to go along with you maybe it isn't terribly sensible policy.

When pollsters have asked a slightly different question, that is would you favor going to war if the United Nations refuses to give its authorization but the President can put together a coalition of the willing and bring allies on board, you get majority support for war in that circumstance.

Point number three, public opinion on Iraq that we might call permissive. The public is wary of a war but believes the President knows that it is willing for now to defer to White House leadership.

Gallup in its polling has found that when you look at the 55 to 60 percent of those who favor going to war and you ask them a follow-up question, what if the President decides not to go to war, would you be upset? What you discover is half of those people say no. So you really only have using the Gallup numbers about 30 percent of the public which is strongly in favor of a war in Iraq.

The LA Times did a very interesting poll in which one of the questions it asked people was why they approved George Bush. Look at the general question, do you approve of the way George Bush is handling his job? Then they said what are the reasons why you support him? It turns out that Bush's policy in Iraq is at the bottom of the battle. Fewer than one in ten of those people who supported the President's job performance said I like the President because of what he's doing on Iraq.

On the whole I would argue that if you look at the American public and its attitudes on Iraq it really breaks down into three very identifiable camps. About 30 percent of the American public is gung-ho on this war, thinks it's the right thing to do, want to get it done. On the other hand you have about 30 percent of the public which is strongly opposed to the war and indeed it's consistent regardless of the way you phrase the question, would argue the United States should not invade Iraq. And in the middle you have that big 40 percent who have answered these questions really comes down to it depends. That is they can imagine situations under which war would be a sensible and responsible thing to do. They're not demanding it. They would not be upset if the President didn't go to war. But they certainly are willing to tolerate war as an option.

I should point out when you have this sort of movable middle that can, depending upon context be for or against the war, a lot depends on whether there's anyone out there to mobilize that sentiment. And right now there is a real lopsided debate going on. The President clearly is trying to mobilize people in favor of war, and there is no coherent, very visible national figure to mobilize anti-war sentiment. The Democrats, I think as Tom is going to discuss, are clearly split on the wisdom of the war. The most well-known are the eight presidential contenders in the Democratic party, not only for the war but have publicly voted for authorizing the President to wage war. The other candidates who have expressed concerns about the war are far less visible, far less known nationally and don't have the stature or the time really to mobilize an anti-war movement.

If you look at the Democrats, clearly they are split partly on the merits of the issue, whether the war itself is wise, but also on the question of whether it makes sense politically for Democrats to be opposed to the President on Iraq.

The reality is for the White House that they know that that 40 percent in the middle is theirs for the taking.

A final point. All of these pre-war public opinion polls cease to matter the moment a bomb begins to fall. The President of the United States has tremendous freedom of action in terms of American domestic politics and he should proceed vis-à-vis Iraq. The White House knows what history shows and that is victory breeds success. If the war in Iraq goes well, Americans will not care if the UN did not bless it. By the same token, if the war goes badly it won't matter if the UN did authorize it. The White House obviously believes the war will result in an American victory, but it's worth pointing out there is a real political risk to the Administration and that is it not only matters if the United States wins, but that it wins relatively easily.

Here I think it's important to our comparison to what may soon be called the first Gulf War. Going into that war, a lot of public surveys done, it was clear that many Americans believed there was a very high probability that thousands of American soldiers would die. In that sense the American public was prepared to spill a lot of American blood. As the war unfolded, the casualty rate for American soldiers was remarkably low. Rather than the tens of thousands some people predicted, we were talking in the roughly 150 range. In that respect it made the liberation of Kuwait even more impressive. It made it much more popular in the American public.

Going into this war, Americans actually have in the back of their minds a comparison point. Not Vietnam, as was the case going into the first Gulf War, but rather the ease with which we won the first Gulf War and the relative ease and certainly very little loss of American life in

the Afghanistan war.

Of course what that suggests is if the United States wins, and I think there's no doubt we would win a military conflict with Iraq, but that it turns out not to be the cakewalk that Iraqi hawks have promised, that the Administration could find itself having not just a small rally around the flag effect, but one that dissipates very quickly.

I'll turn it over to Tom.



MR. THOMAS E. MANN: I think Jim's got the public opinion picture just right. To me, it reinforces the gulf between domestic public opinion and international public opinion on the war. Everything Jim said is consistent with what the President is doing and what we have every belief he will do in the next couple of weeks which is lead our nation with some willing allies into a military engagement in Iraq.

The fact of the matter is that, while there is no demand for such action on the part of the American public there is an ambivalence and sense of foreboding about it, there is also basically a deference to the President. And frankly, a belief that he's already decided and it's inevitable that we're going. So the vast majority of Americans are now in that position, even though they are quite apprehensive, even though there is a real sense of foreboding here. The segment of the population that is prepared to mobilize to try to stop it remains relatively small.

By contrast, the publics in the U.K, in Spain, in Italy, in Turkey, in China, in Korea, you name it, have a very very different view of this world. In fact, those of us who have traveled around the world in recent weeks have all been struck by the return of the "Ugly American," the perception of the bully President who doesn't really say what he actually thinks on these matters but simply says what needs to be said to try to build public support.

That makes it all the more incumbent on the Bush Administration to make this last try with the second UN resolution, to try to provide the cover and political basis for other leaders to move in concert with us.

Jim is also, it seems to me, exactly right about when we move from the public to elite actors in the U.S. Basically, the Congress weighed in on this matter last fall and there's nothing else to be done. What seems silly are the efforts of Senator Byrd and Senator Kennedy and some others to get another vote in the Congress. Another vote would not produce the outcome they seek. To the contrary, it would almost certainly weaken the position of those who have doubts about what's going on and strengthen the hand of the President.

The same thing is evident in the democratic presidential nominating politics thus far. The major candidates who supported, strongly supported in the case of some like Gephardt and Lieberman, the original congressional authorization have focused their criticisms primarily on post-war planning, on domestic preparations, and on the poor job in their view the President has done in mobilizing broad international support—but not about the action itself.

If you parse Howard Dean's words and speeches, you will find him not far, actually, from that position. The only real sort of anti-war sentiment is coming from Dennis Kucinich and Al Sharpton.

I believe the environment is genuinely permissive for the President. I believe if it were less permissive, he would still go forward because of Jim's final point – the public opinion meter moves to zero as soon as the war begins, and then the reaction is predicated on the engagement itself, how well it goes, what the reaction is throughout the Middle East and around the world, what we learn about the cost and benefits of having taken this move.

I think in many respects Americans are not fully prepared for this, so there's some real risk to it. I had occasion to chat with a general engaged in all of this, and his sense was that Americans don't appreciate just how intensely violent this will be, and not necessarily American casualties but casualties on the other side. Nor do they appreciate the extent to which, while the U.S. will almost certainly prevail, the uncertainties that could develop along the way and the difficult situations that have to be managed. All of which is to say there is no guarantee of a sustained rally effect in public opinion and there is no guarantee that Democrats who supported the resolution, supported the engagement, will be shy about criticizing the Administration over any aspects of the engagement itself or the post-war efforts.

In fact, the sentiment on Capitol Hill is so ugly, it's so now intensely partisan and poisonous, it's almost certain that if anything goes awry, the Democratic party will be quick to seize the opportunity.

No such opportunity may arise. We may have "a success" that is widely acknowledge as such. If we do and the Administration anticipates that, the question becomes what that means for the President's domestic agenda and for his broader political standing moving into the 2004 presidential election.

What I propose to do is give a very short answer to those two questions and stop.

As far as his domestic agenda, I believe it will mean nothing. There is not, to the best of my knowledge, a shred of evidence that presidential popularity amassed as a result of military engagements and war has been translated into political muscle and advancing a domestic

political agenda. It's almost just the opposite, that in fact popularity is associated with the specific military engagement and the expectation for a leader are to unite the country and bring the opposition party on board.

I think in this case the President's domestic agenda will continue to be controversial and difficult to achieve because of the substance of the agenda. Not because of the distraction of the war. It's because the President is a conservative who is advancing his view of economic and social policy that is not the view of the median voter and certainly not the view of the Democratic party, and there will be battles fought over this that will be as intense after a successful war in Iraq as there would have been without any such military engagement.

As far as the longer term impact on the President's standing, better a successful outcome in Iraq than an unsuccessful one. How's that for a profound and really risky statement? But again, the caution here is that everything we know leads us to believe that this is the first engagement of a much longer-term struggle to deal with a set of national security problems. And, while many people imagine that as soon as the uncertainty of Iraq dissipates in the face of a military engagement that comes to an end, the economy will begin booming again. The safest bet is that once again the fundamentals of that domestic and global economic situation will have their way, and that probably means a period of less than optimal growth, of continuing job loss, and some real uncertainties for the President's political prospects moving into next year.

Thank you.

MR. STEINBERG: Thank you both. Before I turn to the audience for questions in this area let me ask one or two myself.

Jim, you said the American people want others to be with us. Tom has described how little at least the publics are with us abroad. How much does that matter? And how are the American people thinking about this incredibly intense and vocal level of opposition that they're seeing around the world?

MR. LINDSAY: Two points. Number one, Americans are actually noticing. I think it's important if you look at the polls done recently and this growing acknowledgement in the polls that people realize we're becoming very unpopular overseas.

I think point number two, it's clear from a lot of the polling data that Americans are worried about it and it plays into the apprehension that Tom talked about.

I think part of the question though in terms of the political salience of that recognition among the public is going to be whether there are any consequences that people can see in their lives from that growing sense of resentment against the United States. If it merely remains sort of

theoretical with protest marches, this unflattering article that's in Ramon or in the Gardian, I don't think it will have much political salience here at home.

But if people see that this opposition abroad leads to boycotts of American products or opposition to the United States on other things, the real cost of that, I think it could further help undercut public support for the President's policy. What's interesting in looking at public opinions is the President's overall public approval rating is higher than his approval rating on foreign policy which is in turn higher than his approval rating generally in Iraq. So I think there's a real sense of apprehension or angst over this issue.

MR. MANN: I think what we're seeing is targeted anger at specific countries like France, but a generalized uneasiness over why everyone in the world is against us, and what's going on here?

I think again, in the short term, it's not going to change any actions on the part of our government, but over the longer haul, it seems to me it opens a line of attack for the Democratic opposition. If in the course of trying to enhance our security we weaken our position around the globe, that may well diminish our ability to deal effectively with the terrorists, which after all is what brought us into this in the first place.

MR. STEINBERG: We're on the eve of what looks to be another of our classic guns and butter debates. I was at dinner with a senior aerospace and defense industry official the other night who was worried that when the time came to pay the bill that this was going to come out of the procurement budget of the Pentagon. We've heard talk among at least some Democrats on the Hill about trying to use this as leverage to defer the tax cut or at least to not enact elements of the President's proposal on the tax cut.

How do you see Congress facing this issue? It's going to be a large bill. There's nothing in the President's budget to cover this war.

MR. MANN: It's fascinating. By the way, the public opinion on this is actually pretty clear. In order to pay for the cost of war, Americans would prefer to forego additional tax cuts, including presumably ones approved but not yet implemented, as against either increasing the deficit or reducing other spending. But that's broad public opinion. How it actually plays out in the Congress is quite another matter.

It was very interesting when Lawrence Lindsey last year suggested the costs of the war could be \$100 billion or up to \$200 billion, it was considered politically incorrect within the Administration. Now we've had a figure float of \$95 billion for the initial stage, which doesn't really deal with much of the cost of post-war reconstruction.

There is no money in the budget that was submitted. The Administration is already planning a supplemental. And it looks as if it will include matters like the funds for Turkey, and probably additional homeland security funding as a way of cutting off a line of attack that Democrats have sharpened in recent weeks and months.

The difficulty for those who would like to make the trade between taxes and the cost of the war is that they will be separated in the legislative process. The budget committees will move forward with a fiscal 2004 budget, and those budget committees will have a mark in there for big, big tax cuts. There won't be any need to deal with the cost of war in that setting because it will be off in a supplemental.

So the best bet is we'll get some tax cuts and a lot of additional appropriations for war.

MR. STEINBERG: Let me turn to the audience for questions for Jim and Tom for a few minutes and then we'll turn to the international part of the agenda.

QUESTION: Jim Matlock with the American Foreign Service Committee.

You were getting into the area that I was going to question at the end which is to say there's a front cost for fighting the war, and then the problems and responsibilities begin in Iraq. If we assume victory in some form is declared, then we're responsible for what happens in Iraq, both the immediate humanitarian and the short and long term humanitarian, reconstruction of the society and so on. What I greatly worry about is the profile of U.S. involvement in any number of conflicts in the 20th Century, not World War II but in other cases.

We invested billions in Central America to fight wars and in the aftermath begrudged millions for genuine aid for the humanitarian and the reconstruction, the rehabilitation of those societies, and the results of that are evident now in Central America. In Iraq that tag is going to be a big price tag.

How do you see any ability to sustain support for meeting those responsibilities, both politically and fiscally, as this may play out?

MR. MANN: It's made more difficult by the weakened prospects this time around for substantial financial contributions from other countries. The way in which we have taken hold of this and said we're going with you or without you is not exactly a basis for persuading the Germans and the French and the others to pony up substantial amounts of money.

I think morally we assume the responsibility ourselves. The question then becomes, how committed will the Administration be to substantial amounts of funding, and will it fight for those funds with the Congress? Or will it try to finance this effort with the management of Iraqi

oil resources? I think some in the Administration expect that much of the bill can be paid in that fashion.

I will tell you, I don't think it will be an easy sell over time on Capitol Hill. Right now Democrats are criticizing the Administration for not making the commitment, but it will be another matter to say let's spend that money as opposed to money on education and health care in this country.

So it will take an enormous effort to deliver on the promise that the President is now beginning to make more forthrightly, and that he will apparently make with gusto this evening, to invest substantially in moving toward democracy in Iraq and the rest of the Middle East.

MR. LINDSAY: I would jump in here and actually go back to the question of guns versus butter embedded in the broader debate. I think when facing the choice between guns and butter Congress will do what it always does which is choose both and we'll just run up a deficit to cover it. I don't think they're going to steal money from the Defense Department, though perhaps the Defense Department may not get some of the out-year increases that it's hoping for.

But I think the one place where you can clearly see the need to demonstrate austerity is going to be on the issue of reconstruction of Iraq. It's sort of hard to assess how that will unfold on Capitol Hill because as Tom points out, a lot of it will depend on how the war is fought, what kind of state the Iraqi oil industry is in at the end of the war. It's one thing if the oilfields are working fine. It is another thing if they have been lit on fire and it's going to take two, three, four, five years to get them up and running again.

But even going beyond that, I think what will happen is at that point the political dynamics on Capitol Hill will change. That is if you look at public opinion data on this precise question, support for Iraq, rebuilding Iraq, what you discover is 75 percent of Americans don't think the United States should pay for rebuilding Iraq. Now partly that's an artifact of the way the question is asked. Or ask the same question, should the United States along with other countries participate in rebuilding Iraq, I would probably get majority support. But this gets back into the question of if we're talking about reconstructing Iraq to what extent is it perceived, it's not reality here, but perception that other countries are also helping pay for the reconstruction of Iraq.

Here what will become interesting is you really see sort of a flip-flop on Capitol Hill. That is right now it is the Democrats who are running around talking about unilateralism, and how the United States shouldn't go it alone on Iraq. In the case of the post-war reconstruction scenario, you're likely to see Republicans saying we shouldn't pay for, we shouldn't be the only ones to pay for this. It's time for the rest of the international community to belly up to the bar and play its role. Then we'll get down to really an issue of how well each side frames the issue for the American public. Whether Americans believe that A, they have a stake in this; and B, others are

pulling their fair share which would be presumably the argument that those who want to reconstruct Iraq would make; or whether they can see the argument as gee whiz, those ungrateful allies not only wouldn't they help fight the war, they don't want to help pay for the war. We have other problems here at home.

Now the pivotal player in all of this is obviously the President. The President has the bully pulpit. If the President wants to expend his political capital he can frame the debate. Interestingly enough in this debate if it is for rebuilding Iraq, even it being a Republican President, is in common cause with Democrats on the Hill, particularly the United States Senate, to make that happen. But that's a big if. The big if there is the President willing to spend his political capital. I would say, if I were asked to bet, I would not bet that the President at the end of the day is going to decide that Iraq is worth more of its political capital than his tax cuts or other elements of his agenda.

QUESTION: [Inaudible]

My question is are there any signs in the American polls that U.S. taxpayers are prepared to pay the cost, direct or indirect costs of the war? For instance in the gas prices already have been a sharp increase. It's really a burden on the consumers for that, or otherwise the consumers or American taxpayers feel that effect as a very temporary effect?

MR. MANN: My view is that Americans would be prepared to pay a cost if they were asked to by their leaders. But they've been asked to take tax cuts and to do everything else possible to get the economy moving again.

So I think the important point here is that Americans when called upon to contribute to defend the security of the United States will do what's necessary. We are a patriotic and ultimately generous country, and when our leaders convince us that something has to be done to achieve this overriding objective, Americans would pony up and do it. But because of the sluggish economy and because of the broader public philosophy and ideology of this President, the country is not being asked to do that. They will probably see it only in gasoline price increases and natural gas prices increases and not in terms of being asked to pay higher taxes.

MR. LINDSAY: In all fairness I probably should point out that an increase in gas prices probably has more to do with supply disruption in Venezuela than the Middle East. The natural gas price has a lot to do with colder than expected temperatures. Apparently natural gas was up 38 percent the other day. I don't want to see my gas bill.

But on the issue of how much the American public is going to be willing to bear, I think for most Americans the real issue is going to be in terms of American lives lost rather than dollars spent. When the New York Times or the Washington Post runs a story saying the cost of

war is \$90 billion I'm not sure the average American, whether they are in Purchase, New York or Iowa City, Iowa, or Mexican Hat, Arizona, that that number has any meaning to them. I think where it will come down is in terms of the sort of what we lose in blood in terms of treasure, whether it requires us to forego anything else. I think a lot of that will depend upon contact.

If the American public believes that things have gone well, good things are happening in the President's policy, he's reproducing the benefits that he and his advisors talked about, I think Americans are more than happy to share the burden of, bear the cost. If it is the case that the policy unfolds and it doesn't go the way the President thought. There are very obvious costs. Then I think they would begin to become less supportive.

I think at the end of the day what the public is interested in is less the question of cost than the question of value. That is, is it worth it?

MR. STEINBERG: Let me take this occasion to pause and thank Tom for joining us and let him go off to his next appointment. We'll turn to the second part of our briefing.

We're now going to talk a little bit about what's going on at the UN and what's going on in Turkey. Let me just say a little bit more about Omer who is our Visiting Fellow here at the Foreign Policy Studies program at Brookings. He's also an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University, SAIS. He completed his Doctorate on Political Islam and Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey at the European Studies Department of SAIS and he's written extensively on issues in this area of the world. We're grateful to have him here.

Let me ask you to begin, Ivo. We've got two resolutions. We've got four on each side for the resolutions. Where do they stand and what's going to happen?



MR. IVO H. DAALDER: Actually there are two big developments in the last six days, five days I guess. One is the fact that we have two new resolutions, or at least one resolution and a memorandum. Competing approaches of how to resolve the issue with regard to whether and when one ought to go to war. There is the U.S.-U.K.-Spanish draft supported apparently by Bulgaria, though they have not said so publicly, which basically is a reiteration of Resolution 1441 passed last November. Its operative paragraph is sweet and short, perhaps in the hope that the war that follows would be equally sweet and short. It basically says that Iraq has failed to grasp the final opportunity that was granted it under Resolution 1441 and it says then that the Security Council decides to remain [ceased] with the matter.

Implicit here is the notion that 1441 gave Iraq a final opportunity to disarm. Iraq did not take that. And the "serious consequences mentioned in Resolution 1441 will now befall Iraq."

That is to say the authorization for war is not in the second resolution, it was in the first resolution. Consistent with the argument the United States and Britain have made from the very beginning.

Why then a second resolution one can ask? I think the only answer to that is the politics - not here, but abroad, and particularly in Great Britain, and to some extent among all the other European countries that do support the United States, at least their governments support the United States with regard to this issue.

Tony Blair has been very, very, very clear. He has said that he will go to war only if there is a second resolution, and he will go to war without a second resolution only if in case there is a clear material breach, there is an "unreasonable veto" from presumably an unreasonable country or set of countries. He needs the second resolution. He is now down in the polls below the level he has ever been. Way back two years ago he was down in the polls at 37 percent because of the gasoline strike. He's now below that.

I didn't have a chance, but there was a debate today in Parliament, I don't know exactly what the outcome was, but the expectation was that up to 100 Labor MPs would vote against him. He can't lose the vote because the opposition supports him on the issue. It's a very strange internal political battle going on here, but he has in terms of his public -- the public opinion in Britain is very much like it is in the United States except I think the salience is higher, which is to say low support for war if there is no UN resolution; more measured in some polls, a majority support for war if there is a resolution.

So a resolution is really important for Tony Blair. It's also important for the Spanish government, for the Italian government, for other European governments. Hence the second resolution.

The competing memorandum was submitted by France, Germany and Russia and apparently supported by China and basically sets out in some greater detail a need to continue and beef up the inspection regime and sets a 120 day time limit. What happens after the 120 days is not spelled out. But it gives 120 days to resolve the outstanding questions that Mr. Blix has reported upon to the Security Council and will report upon presumably in his report coming on Saturday which he is going to submit according to the resolutions that were passed back in 1999, and will talk to the Council about next Friday, on March 7th.

So you have these two competing positions. One, the U.S.-U.K.-Spanish position supported by Bulgaria which says we're going to go to war, final opportunity is over. The second, let's give the inspectors more time supported by France, Russia, Germany, China and Syria.

You then have in between those two positions six countries which will determine the fate of at least the UN process. I don't think they will determine the fate of whether there will be a war or not. Those countries are Angola, Cameroon, Chile, Guinea, Pakistan and Mexico. By all accounts Pakistan will either vote against authorizing war or abstain. Which means that for the United States to get the nine votes one needs in order to have a resolution passed, assuming no veto, the five outstanding members have to support the United States. That is a high hurdle for even as skilled a politician as George Bush to jump over.

The key here, one of the keys is going to be the outcome of the second big development which we had which was the decision by Mr. Blix last Friday to order the destruction of the Al Samoud 2 ballistic missiles, the ballistic missiles that he told us two weeks ago were in excess of the 150 kilometer range that was allowed under the original ceasefire resolution back in April 1991, and he has said one, this is a violation; and two, therefore these missiles, their components and the infrastructure that produces them have to be destroyed and that Iraq will have to tell the UN Commission by March 1st, that is by Saturday, how it is going to do it and then start that process.

These are very clear benchmarks. If there is a destruction of the missiles or if there is no destruction of the missiles will have a very, very important impact on the politics of the UN resolution, and on how the competing approaches are going to play out.

If Saddam, contrary to what he told Dan Rather, decides to destroy the weapons and start this full cooperation with UNMOVIC starting on March 1st, the argument of the French, the Germans, and the Russians is going to be that the inspections are working. "We found out he had something he wasn't supposed to have, we told him to destroy it, he's destroying it. Let's continue down this process. Why go to war?" I think that is going to be an argument that is going to sway at least some of the six or five votes that are still outstanding with regard to the resolution.

In contrast, if Saddam in fact told Dan Rather the truth which is he doesn't think these missiles are a violation and therefore he will not destroy them, then it is clearly going to strengthen the hand of Washington and London who would argue "listen, even in this case there is no cooperation." It's not a question of not having full and complete and total cooperation at large, but in this case when Blix sets a deadline that's very clear, Saddam once again flaunts what happens. At that point you may see the people swaying towards the U.S. line and you might get possibly even support from some of those who would have threatened a veto.

So that's where we are right now. March 1st is going to be an important day for us to look at. What is Iraq going to do? If I were Saddam I know what I would do, but Saddam is quite unpredictable. If I were a betting man, which I'm not, I would bet that he would destroy these missiles. I think it's the smart thing to do. A hundred or so missiles is not going to allow him to defeat the United States in a war, but, their destruction may allow him to at least postpone the

question of war or even defeat the United States diplomatically.

That gets you to the final question. Will the United States, can the United States go to war if, there is no second resolution; or, worse, the second resolution fails to get nine votes? What happens if the United States, having introduced the resolution, either does not call for a vote because they don't have the votes, or decides to go for a vote and loses and then go to war under those circumstances?

I have little doubt that under those circumstances this President will go to war. He believes that under 1441 he doesn't need a second resolution, he has the legal and political and strategic reasons to go to war. I do think that that possibility is going to be highly damaging for him in Europe. Particularly among our allies who have up to this point supported him. And it may be so damaging to Tony Blair who at that point has to fundamentally choose between supporting the President and perhaps losing his job, which is now on the line, or not supporting the President, maintaining his job, but losing all credibility with the United States. This is not a position you want to put your friends in and yet that is one of the possibilities we are facing in the next week or so. And the same is true for Mr. Berlusconi, the same is true for Mr. Azner. These are good friends who have stood by the United States in the hope that you would get a UN process to get you to war. But if the UN process doesn't work and war still comes, they have a fundamental choice to make, and in Mr. Blair's case, perhaps even between his political career on the one hand and failing to support the President on the other hand. This is a hard choice that is out there.

The final point only underscores that the diplomacy that has been going on in the last month or so by the Administration has been singularly inept because you don't want to get yourself in the situation that we are now in. A second resolution on the table that may not make it. It would have been much better if early on the advice which is usually not followed by this Administration by many of us at Brookings had been followed, which is we should have set a deadline, should have had a very clear period in which Saddam would have had to comply, whether it's six weeks or eight weeks or two months or whatever it was, with very clear criteria that had to be met for disarmament and link that to the authorization of war. That was clearly the path that was open to us in late January. I don't think that path is open any more because of the way the diplomacy has played out. That's why, as some have put it, we are now in a potential diplomatic train wreck with severe political consequences for some of our best friends and closest supporters abroad.

MR. STEINBERG: Before I turn to Omer, just one question. If you think about Blair's dilemma if this comes about, could he be successful in arguing to the British people that it was all because of the French that he didn't get his resolution and draw on the suspicions that the British have about continental Europe and basically find his way to square the circle that way?

MR. DAALDER: Clearly if you get a veto and you lose because of a French veto, that's one thing. Actually that may help you in Britain and it certainly helps you here.

The problem that Blair has is we may not get nine votes and it's the nine votes that is key. If you say okay, we've got nine votes and the French or these unreasonable people are vetoing this, that's one thing. That is actually I think an eminently sellable proposition. So the key becomes can the President of the United States convince these five countries in one way or another to support the U.S. position?

I don't know what the outcome is. I have no idea. The amount of pressure that is being put on these countries is tremendous, is unheard of. But if Saddam does what Blix has asked him to do it becomes that much more difficult for them to say at this point, well there is cooperation but it's just not enough and we're going to go with Washington. That's the dilemma that Blair and everybody else finds themselves in.

MR. STEINBERG: Omer, notwithstanding what appears to be widespread Turkish opposition to a military campaign, a deal seems to have been struck. There are reports that 60,000 or more U.S. troops will be based in Turkey. How does the Turkish government see this? How much of a political problem is this for them? What are their objectives?



MR. OMER TASPINAR: Probably the first thing to say is the Parliament has still not approved this, so it's not a done deal yet. The Cabinet decided to send the draft measure to Parliament, but Mr. Erdogan is busy today trying to convince his party group to vote yes. So it's not a done deal yet and I'll try to explain why this bargaining has taken so long. First I'll try to explain this and then I'll try to get into the details of the Turkish public opinion by focusing on the domestic situation in Turkey.

The reason why this has taken so long and it may still take some more time, is because both parties, both the United States and Turkey believe that they have a strong hand and the other party cannot afford to say no. Turkey knows that a northern front is indispensable for a quick U.S. victory. Absence of a northern front won't be a showstopper for the U.S., but its absence is still very important. It will have implications for the length of war and U.S. casualties and Iraqi casualties.

Alternatives to using Turkey as a staging area for a northern front are not very good. One alternative could be dropping airborne divisions, a couple of brigades, to secure the oilfields of Northern Iraq before presumably Saddam decides to torch them up. But it's not a very easy scenario.

Another scenario would be to send the 4th Division to Kuwait. That would be a 500 mile

sprint to the north which would take probably days. So it's clearly the long way. Turkey feels that it has a strong hand.

On the other hand for the U.S., the loss of Turkish territory as a staging area would also greatly hinder the resupply of American forces with ammunition, food and fuel. All these things travel with greater efficiency by ground transportation.

On the political ground, the absence of a northern front would mean that the Turks and Kurds can seriously clash in Northern Iraq with the absence of American troops. That may become a big mess that the United States will have to take care of eventually. So the U.S. presence is also crucial for keeping not only the Kurdish faction from potentially fighting but also to keep essentially the Turks and Kurds from racing towards Kirkuk. Kirkuk is a big question here of course.

So all these are important issues and Americans are probably aware that these are important, but for all these reasons Turkey believes that it is an indispensable country so it wants to bargain hard. Yet the Americans are also aware that Turkey will be losing a lot by saying no. So there are serious consequences for Turkey in case the Parliament decides not to ratify this.

First of all, the war would probably take place even if Turkey says no to the U.S. troops in Northern Iraq, and the next result for Turkey will be a war with no compensation. No money will come from the United States. This has serious implications for the Turkish economy. I will talk about the situation between Turkey and IMF because it's at a very critical stage. The Turkish economy is in a recession, very high inflation, high unemployment rate. Turkey desperately needs the money in fact.

Another issue for Turkey would be that the Kurds in the absence of a U.S. presence in Iraq may make a move to Kirkuk and Mosul in order to seize oilfields there. There will for sure be bloodshed between Turkey and the forces of [Talabani] and Barzani. So this is another situation that Turkey has to think about if it says no to U.S. forces.

Most importantly, Turkey by saying no to the U.S. won't have a strong voice in post-Saddam Iraq. It won't have a bargaining power in the future of Iraq to the degree that it would have if it allows the United States to use its territory. So it won't be at the table for the future of the Kurds or forcing the territorial integrity of Iraq or forcing for a situation which would not be conducive to a Kurdish ethnic federation in Northern Iraq.

On the political side, the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Turkey will be severely damaged. The U.S. trust in Turkey would be severely shaken with all the implications of support for Turkey in crucial areas such as IMF support, support on the European Union issues, on Cyprus, for potential agreements on preferential trade issues.

But interestingly also for the government to say no to the United States would mean that the military, the Turkish military will be seeing this as a major problem between the civilian government and the U.S. and since the military is not very sympathetic to this Islamic government in Turkey and they're not very happy about the United States projecting a Turkish model based on a softer kind of secularism which has proven popular with this Administration. With the arrival of a political crisis, probably the military won't be very sad. The Turkish press is using terms such as they will be shedding crocodile tears if this government has trouble with the United States. In that sense it's interesting to see the difference between the military and the government. So the military of course will try to do damage control later on but they don't want to see a major, very deep strategic partnership developing between this government with Islamic credentials and the United States. Traditionally the military has been the privileged partner of the Pentagon.

On the domestic side, 94 percent of the Turkish public opinion is opposed to war. So it's very hard for this government, for the Parliament especially to pass this. It will have to rely on party discipline. They have the majority, the government has the majority in the Parliament. It can easily pass this if they can establish party discipline over parliamentarians. This remains to be seen. People are not a hundred percent sure that it will be a smooth ride. The modernization of bases, the former resolution, passed the Parliament passed smoothly, there was no problem. But this one is a major issue.

The political situation of the government is not very good. The honeymoon is over basically in Turkey. For the first four months interest rates were going down, and the stock exchange had picked up. But what's happened in the last two months related to political risk over Iraq is that real interest rates have skyrocketed in Turkey. The economic situation is bad. There is no deal with IMF. The country is already in recession. The perception of this government in Turkey is that it is not very strong in economic policy and in foreign policy. There is much pressure to have a deal on Cyprus and Iraq. And the deal that the government had with the EU can be interpreted as another not very good one. So this government desperately needs to show that it does its best, that it did its best in order to avoid war. The regional conference in Istanbul was partly about that, trying to show that they tried to do their best at the regional initiative to avert war. And financial and political bargaining is also part of this.

So it's not easy, but the government also believes that the fact that NATO, the European Union and the UN itself appears to be divided on this issue, on the issue of war, translates into time being on Turkey's side so they can bargain. They don't want to get ahead of the curve when they see such division within the Western Alliance. Why should they just say yes immediately when they see that the Western Alliance is divided? And the more it is divided the more indispensable becomes Turkey for the United States.

It is interesting that there wasn't a very sensationalist reaction in the Turkish press when

NATO decided, when Belgium, France and Germany decided not to come to Turkey's help immediately. So in that sense division is perceived as strengthening Turkey's hand in bargaining with the United States.

There are major problems in the negotiations of course and I want to say a couple of words about the Kurdish issue. The Kurdish issue is definitely crucial for Turkey. The Turkish government and the Military have concerns about what could happen during the war and after the war.

During the war they're concerned about Mosul and Kirkuk. They want to have guarantees that the Kurds won't infiltrate Mosul and Kirkuk, the oil-rich cities of Northern Iraq. And when the Americans are willing to give guarantees they always say yes you gave guarantees in Afghanistan as well about the Northern Alliance not entering Kabul but you couldn't do anything when the Northern Alliance entered Kabul. So what if we have the Talabani and Barzan forces entering Mosul and Kirkuk and we have a de facto situation where Kurds are holding the oilfields?

The armament of the Kurds is another problem. The United States is willing to distribute light weaponry to the Kurds so this is another issue for the Turkish government. They don't want the Kurds to receive anti-aircraft missiles, so only light weaponry, and they want total demilitarization after the war.

Again after the war they want no ethnic federation in Iraq. Territorial integrity of Iraq should be based on a unitary state is Ankara's line. And Mosul and Kirkuk should be under the authority of the central government in Baghdad. Oil and gas resources should be controlled by Baghdad.

Another issue related to Northern Iraq is how many Turkish troops will enter Northern Iraq and the Turkish logic for entering Northern Iraq. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chief of [Staff] want to make it clear that they are entering for humanitarian reasons. That there may be a refugee problem. That in fact there will be a refugee problem and they have to be on the ground facing waves of refugees. This does not sound very credible to the Kurds. They are concerned that Turkey wants to enter Northern Iraq itself, because it's not sure about U.S. intentions. They want to be on the ground themselves.

The U.S. is very much concerned about such a Turkish penetration because of many reasons. First of all, it can also let Iran to think about having some presence in the region, or it can also create problems between Turkish and Kurdish forces, and the PKK. The PKK is the Kurdish separatist movement which was very active in Turkey in the 1990s. Turkey was basically fighting a civil war against it. The PKK is not dead in the eyes of the Turkish establishment. There are still 5,000 to 10,000 PKK guerrillas active in Northern Iraq, but they

want to use this PKK argument also in intervening in this region.

Potentially another problem is the Turkmen issue. The numbers of Turkmen in Northern Iraq are not clear. The last ethnic census I think was taken in the early '60s. According to the Turkish establishment, the number of Turkmen in Iraq are around 2.5 to 3 million, so they consider the Turkmen as one of the constituents, ethnic groups of Iraq. The American sources and the Iraqi sources and the Kurdish sources think that the number is around 500,000 to one million maximum.

Turkey can use the Turkman card in intervening in Northern Iraq, and can also push for the Turkmen to have a strong voice in the future of Iraq. So this is another issue which complicates negotiations

Overall, I just want to finish with a couple of larger strategic questions for Turkey. The fact that Turkey is also on track to become hopefully one day a member of the European Union is a very crucial question for Turkish foreign policy. When the dust settles over Iraq, when there is hopefully a peaceful resolution to the problem, or even after war, time will come for Turkey to make a strategic choice probably between the United States and the European Union. It won't be very easy to balance these two, especially this kind of trans-Atlantic division makes Turkey's path very difficult. Turkey's role in NATO and in ESDP is also a major issue that will have to be addressed.

These are all strategic questions and there is a sense that Turkey will have to decide whether it stands with Germany, France on major issues because it wants to be part of the European Union, or whether it will be part of new Europe, so to speak, whether it will be like Britain counterpart in Eastern Europe as being very pro-U.S. and trying to negotiate within the EU for U.S. interests.

So these are very important issues which will have to be addressed.

On the Kurdish issue, it's crucial to understand the concerns of the Kurds. The Kurds have never had it better in their history. In the 1990s, the first half of the 1990s there were divisions, but after 1996 the Kurds established a viable de facto state in Northern Iraq. It has its sovereignty, its own parliament, a reasonable parliamentary system and they are very happy with what they have. And they're very concerned that a post-Saddam Iraq under the influence of Turkey will have to become more unitarian, will not assure the kind of political freedom that they presently enjoy and they are very reluctant to see Turkish troops in Northern Iraq.

So for Turkey, the interesting dilemma is that the status quo in Northern Iraq is not very good. For Turkey, traditional Iraq policy has been a strong Baghdad. Ankara wants to see a strong Baghdad which can establish its authority over the Kurds. It doesn't want to see an ethnic

federation in Northern Iraq.

So whether Turkey can project its own unitarian model, its model which is based on no ethnic federation towards the future of Iraq remains to be seen, but it's a hard proposition, especially for a country like the United States which wants to prove that Iraq can become a model of democracy.

If you take this rhetoric seriously, Iraq will have to be a federation. The Kurds won't be willing to have less freedom than before Saddam.

So these are very important issues and there are no easy answers for Turkey.

MR. STEINBERG: Thank you, Omer. The answer to your first question is we're going to find out whether Turkey is [bien élevé] or not. [Laughter]

Let's turn to the audience for questions.

QUESTION: Christopher Ronnenberg from the Norwegian Embassy.

I have a question I guess primarily for James Lindsay on the role of the media in forming public opinion in the U.S..

My observation is there's a big difference in how this matter is taken up in the European and the U.S. media. For example, the humanitarian aspect is taken up much more frequently in the European media. An example is the quote from [inaudible] from 1995 about a half million Iraqi deaths in the civilian population which is, as far as I can see, missing from the American media scene.

So I have actually two questions. One, how important is the humanitarian aspect in forming public opinion? And two, why is this aspect missing in the American media scene?

MR. LINDSAY: Underlying your question is the whole thorny set of issues as to what extent media shape public opinion or themselves reflect public opinion. This is not a graduate class on mass media. I'll spare you all of that and simply remark that broadly speaking I think the American news media is focusing on issues that the American public worries about. Issues of are we likely to do this? Who is likely to go along with us? What are the consequences likely to be? For the simple reason that those are the issues that are most likely to affect Americans.

In Scandinavia, Sweden is not intending to send people into this conflict. You can have a whole different set of issues to worry about. I think that when you, it's not the case the media has not covered these issues. It in fact has and there have been a number of meetings like this in this

town to attract press attention to it. I think that once war begins those questions will come increasingly to the forefront. But I think if you look at the Washington Post and the New York Times as trendsetters, it's not the case they've ignored these issues.

MR. STEINBERG: When people look back on the battle of public diplomacy here I think there's going to be an interesting debate about whether focusing on disarmament versus focusing on the human rights reasons for undertaking this war is going to be a real interesting discussion.

It's particularly interesting that the conservatives, the neocons in the United States are actually critical of the Bush Administration for not putting more emphasis on this. I don't think he'd mind my using his name, but I was also talking to Richard Perle the other day who has been strongly making the argument that the reason there has not been more traction is because there has not been more focus on how abominable the regime is in Iraq and that that would really make a much stronger case both for the U.S. public and for the European public, is why we're going to do it.

The problem of course is that for centrist practitioners of foreign policy that ends up becoming a very expansive rationale for regime change. If you're going to go after governments that are significant human rights abusers, there are a whole lot of countries that fall into that list. Not that Iraq doesn't come out very high on it. I completely agree with the proposition that in the great scheme of things Iraq is very high in terms of the brutality of the regime as a rationale, but there are lots of others beginning with North Korea and others, so that there's been a reluctance even by the Administration to articulate a rationale or to rely as a motive on the type of arguments which would lead to a much more expansive notion about when you have to use force to change. And I think there is going to be a lot of debate in the aftermath about whether, worrying about the slippery slope has disabled the Administration from making what is otherwise a very powerful argument. I think it's a close question.

From an international law point of view, there seems to be a stronger case to focus on disarmament. You have the predicate of the Security Council resolution and that sort of gives you a rationale for the use of force and the invasion on sovereignty even to the point of regime change which you can then sort of keep in a small box. But it is not very powerful, especially outside the United States. In the United States at least there is some sense of the security threat posed by Saddam. There's almost none of that outside the United States, so the absence of that part of the discourse here has made it even harder to reach I think European and other audiences.

QUESTION: My name is Olivia Scheller from [inaudible], and I have a question for Mr. Lindsay.

You said there is no figure for the anti-war movement. Can you explain to me why there

is actually no figure that could lead this movement in the United States at this moment?

MR. LINDSAY: You mean why there's no national figure?

QUESTION: Yes, no national figure. And then my second question is perhaps you can explain to me what the U.S. has in mind with Saddam Hussein. I have read that he is supposed to be killed perhaps, or not, or should he go to exile and if where? And perhaps you have any information on that. Thank you. [Laughter]

MR. LINDSAY: I do but I can't share it with you. [Laughter]

Let me try to answer the first one. There are politicians of stature who have criticized the President's policy, most notably Senator Byrd and Senator Kennedy have been quite vocal and also quite eloquent on this score. I think it's worth pointing out that neither Senator Kennedy nor Senator Byrd at this stage in their lives has much of an ambition to move on to the White House, and probably don't have the same kind of incentives really to beat the drum on this issue that others might have. I think Governor Dean has been critical. But what's interesting is Governor Dean's argument is not what Tom DeLay mischaracterized it as in his remarks yesterday. I think Governor Dean is actually making the argument this is the wrong war at the wrong time and that he believes the Administration is approaching this wrong war at the wrong time in the wrong way. But it's not a pacifist approach. And indeed Governor Dean runs some risk that he may be perceived as being the anti-war candidate but he isn't the anti-war candidate in the way most people think.

I think also there's a degree of reluctance among many Democratic politicians, many memories of the Democratic party to get on the wrong side of this issue. There is a fear, and you can debate as long as Tom and Clay whether it's a correct fear, but that many Democrats were hurt after the first or what may become the first Gulf War because they voted against the resolution rather than for it. And in this case it's better to be for. It's not simply about politics, there are also I think legitimate policy differences.

On the question of what the United States will do with Saddam I can only repeat back to you what officials have said which is that if he chooses to go into exile we would clap and encourage it, and that if we go to war he is a fair target. I think as a political matter most Americans would say what else would you expect?

MR. DAALDER: Let me just add two things. One is there are a number of presumptions in the American political debate that are widely shared. Saddam is an evil man who runs an evil regime. Iraq has weapons of mass destruction and it's hiding them. The UN Security Council has told Iraq to disarm and Iraq has not done that. So there is widespread agreement that war is a legitimate way to resolve this issue.

The debate in the United States, to the extent there is a debate, is about whether this is the right time to do that. Or whether we should wait or whether we should try to get a coalition together that is a little larger than we have now. That is, the anti-war argument is not an argument that says peace at all costs. It's an argument at most that says not now because there are other things going on. Under those circumstances leading a Schroeder-like anti-war campaign is not going to get any traction politically. The public is not where the European public is, frankly.

MR. STEINBERG: I would just add, there is a kind of flip quality to the notion well if only he'd go into exile that would solve the problem. I don't think that's been very well thought through. The reality is if he leaves, who's going to take over? It's going to be the Sunni generals who are there now. And one, there's no reason to believe for sure that they would give up a WMD program; or two, that they would be a better result given everything that's been gone through.

So there's a natural desire to try to find a way to get the result without war. But in some ways the United States or the coalition is going to be obliged to go in in some level in any event. It's possible and probably the best scenario if you get a coup or he goes into exile and whoever takes over is prepared to invite the United States or UNMOVIC to come in and turn over the weapons of mass destruction and they begin to open up the society. But that's not at all a certainty if he leaves.

I think it's unlikely that he would do it in any event, but it's not necessarily kind of the action that solves all this problem even if he does.

QUESTION: [inaudible] from Al Jazeera Television.

My question is to Mr. Omer. Do you think that the Turkish government managed to convince the Turkish public that they are actually against the war and having the original conference a couple of months ago with the Syrians, Egyptians, Jordanians, and all the other countries surrounding Iraq, attempting to come up with some sort of a statement. Did that actually convince the Turkish public that they are against the war? Especially after the last week negotiations with the U.S. and the amount and the figures and they want more money. That didn't seem to be convincing to the rest of the Middle East, especially the Arabs for who Turkey is playing a double way, you know, both trying to convince the people of something while they are actually saying how much they can get out of the U.S. to allow them to use Turkish territory.

MR. TASPINAR: A good question. The government is trying very hard to convince the public opinion but it's not very successful so far. That's why the public opinion remains to be opposed. And they can't really convince the public opinion because they came to power by saying that they will be a different kind of government, that they can try to find creative

solutions to the economic problems, to international dilemmas, and they were hit by all these problems immediately after coming to power -- EU, Cypress, Iraq, and they are so far unable to formulate any different policies.

What they can try to do, and they're doing this efficiently, to say that they have no leverage over the United States. That this war will happen and it's not Turkey's choice but that it will happen. If it happens, and if we suffer why not try to negotiate hard for financial compensation and for having a voice over the future of Iraq. They are demonizing Saddam effectively and they're trying to convince the Turkish public opinion that Saddam is evil because unlike the rest of the European public opinion, without having Turkey a general perception of Saddam as evil. Because Turks don't feel threatened. They simply don't feel threatened by Saddam and there are no documentaries on Turkish TV showing what kind of regime is Saddam's regime. Turks are obsessed with the Kurdish question and they're concerned about the Kurdish question.

One thing I can't understand is why they are not trying to explain that the status quo in Northern Iraq is not very good for Turkey. If Turkey is concerned about a Kurdish federation, even the current federation for the Kurds in Northern Iraq in a post-Saddam scenario, what we have now in Northern Iraq is a state. Is a de facto state. So they're not willing to basically say this that they want to have a strong Baghdad which will exert policy over the Turks because some of their constituency are urban poor Kurds themselves. People who are supportive of this war in Turkey who are not very vocal are really Kurdish nationalists who know that Saddam is no angel himself and they are pretty much supportive of an American initiative, but they're also concerned that in the future they won't have the same kind of, that their brethren in Northern Iraq won't have the same kind of deal that they have now.

So overall the short answer to your question is no, the public opinion is not convinced. That's why the Parliament faces a major test. If the Parliament had votes in an open session instead of a closed session it would be very hard for parliamentarians to cast their vote. It would probably be a closed session and they will have to be really warned by the leadership, and there has been already a couple of MCs who have been sent to the disciplinary committees for speaking out against the party line. We will see if it's a disciplined government and it is pretty much a disciplined government.

QUESTION: Gary Mitchell.

Jim, I want to ask what might be called a sort of skin in the game question. I was thinking about Jim Lindsay's observation about when the Congress has a choice between guns and butter they'll go with both. I gather when the Congress has a choice between swords versus plowshares they'll go heavy on sword and light on plowshare.

That lead me to the question, I'd be interested in what the panel knows and can say about who has what in this game? The sort of skin in the game question. What are the implications to the coalition, whatever size and whatever countries are actually a part of it, what skin do they have in the game in the war and what skin do they have in the game in the sort of reconstruction? What do we know about that?

Another way of saying it, it's one thing to be for this war, but what does that mean?

MR. DAALDER: I'm struck by the fact that in this coalition that we're building, aside from the United States, I see one person, not a country, but a person who actually agrees with us. And that everybody else is lining up because the relationship to the United States is more important than the particular issue at stake. The one person being Tony Blair. You cannot listen to him without being convinced that he actually believes what he says. I take him at his word. But I don't think that's true for any of the other European politicians, for example.

I think the allies, it's certainly not true for the Turks which we've heard, even \$15 billion is apparently not enough and perhaps occupying most of Northern Iraq may not be enough.

If you look at the Arab countries around them, they want to get rid of Saddam at very low cost. They don't like him. They in fact fear him. That's what is sort of in it for them, but they don't want to do all this other stuff about American occupation that may be coming.

So what is in it? Yes, it's the oil concessions and that kind of stuff, but nobody is really going to be part of this coalition because of oil concessions, I think. I don't think we're going to go to war because of oil issues. I don't think that's what's driving this issue. I take the President at his word that what is driving the issue is a lower tolerance of risk post-September 11 with regard to Saddam and weapons of mass destruction and that's what we're trying to do. Ultimately then we're trying to remake the Middle East. How we're going to do that, who's going to pay for it are issues that I'm sure even tonight you won't hear about and you'll find out later.

The coalition, this is a really strange coalition. This is not a coalition of conviction. This is a coalition that has to do with the power of the United States and the fact that you don't want to stand up against the United States. Does Estonia really believe that this is an important thing to do? It doesn't, frankly, but it does believe that being a good ally to the United States is fundamental to everything that it is, hence, it signed the letter of ten. That's how I look at it. It's what's strange about this war is what makes the American public, to the extent it is uneasy, uneasy. It's the lack of conviction that this is something that has general support.

MR. STEINBERG: I would just add that if you look at Afghanistan it's actually an interesting test case about how this is likely to play out. You have three different kinds of interests. First of all you have whatever the U.S. interest is, and I think that there is some

division within the Administration about whether this is just to deal with Iraq or part of building a grater Middle East, so how we will see our interests and how we proceed depends on how much the Administration is convinced of the broader vision and whether we're going to use this as kind of an opening wedge to a broader transformation in the Middle East.

But then you have as in Afghanistan, you have the neighbors who have a very particular set of interests and who are going to play very hard. You heard from Omer about where Turkey's coming from but we could have had an equally rich discussion about the Saudis and the Iranians and the Syrians, all of whom are going to have very particular interests just as in Afghanistan the Central Asians and the Iranians and the Pakistanis and the Indians are all playing very hard to reestablish their influence in a post-Taliban Afghanistan. So a lot of the negotiations, and it's going to be less about reconstruction, it's going to be about political influence and control. It will be a very intricate game that's being played by all the neighbors as they jockey vis-à-vis whatever regime is installed in Baghdad and with each other to try to understand what the new balance of power in Southwest Asia is going to be and how they protect their interests, both their interests in those that they have ties to within Iraq but also their power balances vis-à-vis each other. So there will be a set of interests that play out very hard there and they're already positioning themselves. Iranians are being enormously quiet because they want to make sure they have a chance to play. It's very similar to how they played the game in Afghanistan.

Then you have the Europeans who although are deeply disgruntled about their lack of involvement in the initial military operation in Afghanistan decided that they wanted to play because they see that as their mission. Whatever they are on the war side, that they are part of the peace and conflict resolution side. So I believe that both individually European countries and the EU will come in and play. Not at the levels that the U.S. will want in terms of resources or commitment, but you can be sure that this is something that the EU feels it wants to have a voice. It sees itself in this overall role so there will be a significant effort to have EU participation.

I think that gives you a sense of some of the stakes; and how it's played out in Afghanistan is almost I think identical to how structurally it will play out here.

MR. LINDSAY: I want to amplify on your second point about the neighbors. There's a real asymmetry here, and that is I think the United States, it's clear that it has a skin in the war and it has to win the war. It's not as clear to me what kind of skin it has in winning the peace. It's clear that for the neighbors they have a very big stake in shaping what the peace is and what a post-Saddam Iraq looks like and they're going to invest a great deal of energy in that. It's not clear that the Americans have the same stake. There's a difference.

For the neighboring countries, they can't go anywhere. They're stuck with Iraq as a neighbor. Americans can go home. It's not at all clear to me that this Administration is unified in its vision of what it wants to accomplish in Iraq after Saddam. I think the President is going to

give a speech tonight in which he's going to talk at great length about democracy which would seem to at least create the expectation that we're there for the long term. I'm not sure the President will use those words. I'm not sure everybody in the Administration, let alone the Republican party up on Capitol Hill, has bought into that. Indeed I think there is a substantial, there is one cohort in the Administration which I think you and I have referred to as Democratic imperialists who think they should use its power to create a Democratic block in which we're willing to stay there for a long time and make a great investment.

I think there is another faction in the Administration, I'll call them [security] nationalists, who in essence look at it as, to borrow a Secretary Rumsfeld phrase, a rock for the Iraqis. That our big stake is taking out Saddam and after that we can live with a very messy Iraq, one that is not democratic. I think there are many people up on Capitol Hill -- this goes back to the earlier question about staying power and who will support reconstruction -- who won't want to make or want to see heavy investment in Iraq or be there for a very long time, and they'll make a variety of arguments ranging from the burdensharing one to the we're spread too thin, to we have pressing commitments elsewhere, to our presence there is only going to make things worse. So I'm not sure the Administration has decided what stake it has in the peace that comes after the victory.

MR. STEINBERG: Let's take one more question.

QUESTION: Assuming that there's an easy U.S. victory, which everybody seems to assume. At that point what position do you think the governments of Germany and France would take? Are they going to start saying well, you shouldn't have done it, or we're glad you did, or are they going to focus on civilian casualties and sort of continue to fight the war rhetorically? What do you think?

MR. DAALDER: If I knew that -- [Laughter]

I think there is a distinction between the French and the Germans as there continues to be in the run-up to the war. I'm not yet prepared to say that France is not going to support a war. They still have that opening. The Germans closed it. But the French left it open.

I think if it all goes very very cleanly, that is they really can walk around and say I told you so. And if the EU comes along in the way, or most of the EU countries want to go in the way that's been suggested, they'll just be reluctantly participating in the remaking of Iraq. I think the French will slightly less reluctantly try to play on the oil side. The French have some financial interests in Baghdad. They are owed a significant amount of money which they'd like to get back.

So the likelihood is there will be a reluctant engagement, if everything goes

extraordinarily well. If it doesn't go well, that is if our best case assumptions on each and every level with regard to the war don't turn out to be true, and I have yet to see the war where that happens, but this one might be different, then I think there will be a lot of "I told you so" kind of argument, in part because there will still be an incentive to distance from the United States in order to reduce the negative impact of the war, which for the French in particular, and to some extent the Germans, is believed to be extremely high. In terms that the likelihood of being a target for terrorism and in terms of their Muslim population. They have to be careful about this.

One of the things, they have a national interest that leads them to the position that they have. They may have miscalculated part of how they played that game but they have a national interest and the messier the war gets the larger that national interest will look to them and the more they will want to distance themselves from it.

More importantly, I actually think, is not the question of how they relate to Iraq or the United States, it's the debate inside the EU. You now have a European Union, if the war goes along, that is deeply split. You have Brits and Dutch and Spaniards and Italians on the governmental level who resent the way this game has been played by the French and the Germans. And they resent that not only on Iraq, they resent it on the whole EU questions that are out there and how that plays out is going to be very interesting. I think that damage is done no matter what happens with the war.

MR. STEINBERG: Just to underscore your point which I completely agree with. If you think about this in the trans-Atlantic dimension, and particularly in the U.S.-French dimension, there is almost no good outcome at this point. If the war goes well the lesson is going to be that the French were standing on pride, proven wrong, and therefore can be safely ignored in the future. But if the war goes badly I think there's going to be a deep sense in the United States that the reason we got into a bad war is because the French gave Saddam reason to believe that he could hold out and still avoid what came after. I think there's going to be a lot of sense that war could have been avoided, it would have been much more clean and effective if the international community had united behind a clear, unequivocal ultimatum and force him to recognize that he is going to get no support.

So I don't see how from the French point of view or from the Franco-American point of view either result is one that's going to be easily overcome. I think that's really very troublesome and that's why I hope Ivo is right, that the game is not over there. Because I think if the French think this through -- There's really not a winning hand that comes from just playing this out to the end in opposition to the United States

Anyway, on that note I want to thank you all, thank the panel.

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