

A Brookings Iraq Series Briefing

IRAQ: DEBATING WAR, PREPARING FOR RECONSTRUCTION



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MR. JAMES B. STEINBERG: Thank you all for coming. It's a good turnout this morning. At least it's rain and not snow this week, so a little improvement.

Today we're going to talk about both the state of play and the diplomacy and the military preparations, but also focus as the Administration has also urged us to think about is the challenges of what happens after the war. Both the issues and the choices we have in terms of how the operation should be run, what are the problems we need to deal with.

We have today our usual distinguished group including three representatives here from Brookings. On my far left, Martin Indyk who is the Director of the Saban Center on Middle East Policy and a Senior Fellow here at Brookings. Phil Gordon, the Director of the Center for U.S. and France. I suppose you can't imagine why France would be relevant to our conversation. And Ken Pollack, the Director of Research at the Saban Center, a Senior Fellow here. And we're pleased to welcome Bathsheba Crocker who is an International Affairs Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations working this year at CSIS on their post-conference reconstruction project which is obviously very relevant to the questions here. Before taking this fellowship at the council Sheba's had a very distinguished career in government, working at the White House and the Political Advisor's Office in the State Department. We're glad to have you here.

We're going to start with the diplomacy and the state of play in New York, such as it is, and then talk about some of the broader diplomatic challenges, and then we'll turn to the post-conflict issues.

Phil?



MR. PHILIP GORDON: Having, like Jim, just returned from New York I thought I would try to begin by giving a sense, as best I understand it, of the diplomacy there because we have now finally entered the end game after many many weeks and months of process and diplomacy. I think we really are in the final stages.

The way it's mostly seen in the press from the discussion here is that the U.K.-U.S.-Spanish resolution on the table that says they haven't fully complied and it's time for serious consequences, and the question is whether that will get nine votes and whether the French and Russians will veto it. That is the basic situation, but it is in fact a lot more complicated than that. I'll return to that basic scenario in a minute, and whether I do think it will get nine votes and whether I do think the French will veto it, but I just want to begin by reminding us that as we've seen over the past several months it would be a great mistake to assume that things are static and nothing is going to interfere with this process.

For example, before we even know whether this resolution is going to get nine votes or whether someone will veto, let's consider the British situation who, after all, are probably the main reason we're going back to the UN to try to get a second resolution. Tony Blair desperately needs UN support and backing because he's still isolated at home.

The British are going to face a very difficult decision in the coming days if especially they don't believe they're going to get a majority vote for this resolution. And the British are going to have to decide, let's say they do think either that they won't get the nine votes or that the French and Russians will veto it as the French and Russians implied yesterday. Tony Blair is going to have to decide which he prefers -- withdrawing the resolution and supporting the war without any second resolution which he's been promising his people that he would get and he told the House of Commons the other day that they would have a chance to vote on this. Does he prefer that scenario, or does he prefer acting in the face of a possible veto? That's going to be a tough call for Tony Blair and it could lead to a new British idea, and we've already started to hear some signs of that from the British.

For example, some mix of what people are calling a Canadian proposal of giving more time, something resembling an ultimatum where Blair, if he's afraid of this scenario whereby he either has to act without a resolution at all or fly in the face of a veto, he could put forward something else in the next week that says all right, finally benchmark this amount of time, give the French a chance to get on board, and that's a whole new scenario which could lead us to another couple of weeks, possibly, of bargaining on what that might look like, presuming the Americans are willing to play along as they might be if they think that more time would help them get Turkey on board. So that's one way in which our basic standard scenario could significantly change in the coming week or two.

Another way is if the French and Russians decide to try to amend this resolution or put forward a new one. I've always been confident that the Americans could get nine votes for what they have on the table now, not only because we're very good at twisting some of these arms of the undecided six, but also because I think it's factually difficult to vote against this resolution.

If the resolution simply says that they have not fully complied with 1441, well most countries seem to think that. Even the French have been quite clear that the declaration was inadequate and they haven't fully complied. So it does look like you could get nine votes for such a simple, straight forward resolution.

But what if the French came forward and proposed a slight amendment to that resolution that said okay, fine, they have not fully complied but we believe that more time for inspections is necessary. There are plenty of countries among those undecided six that would have a hard time arguing that they don't support more time for inspections. So that's another thing that could throw a wrench into the current plan that would put us on a different course and possibly move

us away from the standard scenario.

Having said that, what about the standard scenario, and I'll sort of end with this scenario and then turn it to Martin who will tell us what to do about it, given all of this uncertainty.

I still believe that after the Blix report, and again, I'm talking about many uncertainties. The one thing we can be certain of is that this report is going to say there's been some cooperation but there hasn't been total cooperation and therefore it will allow both sides, the Americans and the French, to make the argument that this confirms where they are and they need to go forward on that basis.

If we do get nine votes to pass the resolution on that basis will the French and Russians veto, as they have implied?

The first point is I obviously have no idea. There are some reports coming out of France now that there have been internal meetings where the French leaders have indicated that they would not veto because they were too concerned about the Trans-Atlantic risk. And the prevailing opinion here seems to be that France in the end is in a strategy of deterrence of the resolution with the veto, but when push comes to shove they won't veto.

That might be right, but I just want to stress that there is an alternative argument and remind people that whereas we think because they would be afraid of undermining the Security Council, the logic in France, as I understand it right now, is quite the opposite. It is to say if after everything we've said over the past weeks we then decide to go along with the Americans, we have turned the Security Council into a rubber stamp. That would be basically saying we've said it's not time for war, we've said there's no justification for war, but at the end of the day if the Americans want to go ahead, fine, the Security Council doesn't mean anything.

That is not the logic of their current position. Their current position, the logic of, is much more to say no. The Security Council matters. We believe in the Security Council, and the Americans can't do whatever they want if major countries and Security Council members are against it. So I think based on the logic of their position their veto threat is quite credible, which takes me back to where I began which is the dilemma for Tony Blair and the dilemma for the Americans.

I'll end with that package of scenarios and again give Martin the hard part of saying how we deal with it. The only part I would add to it is whereas this is all very important I think for diplomacy and relations among allies, it probably is not very important at all to whether we go to war in the next couple of weeks which the Bush Administration seems determined, however this comes out, to do.

Martin?



MR. MARTIN S. INDYK: Thank you.

The short answer is I have no idea how to deal with this dilemma, but I do know that it didn't have to be like this. That the Bush Administration seems determined to do the right thing, in my view, which is to disarm Saddam Hussein. Probably the only way to do that is to remove him. But they're determined to do the right thing in all the wrong ways. When you think about the diplomatic triumph of 1441 and as somebody who's had the searing experience of having to negotiate resolutions on Iraq with the French and the Russians. 1441 was a huge achievement and we have squandered it completely. In the process we also managed to bungle the Turkish vote and allowed a French-German-Russian, and some of you may have heard it's now French-German-Russian and Chinese alliance to form against us.

Already the knives are out over who lost Turkey. I think that that's the wrong question. We need, in order to find a way out of this dilemma, to understand why we lost the Turkish vote, why we lost Russia in the diplomacy, why it matters to try to correct the situation before we launch war, and how we might go about it.

We lost the first two rounds here I think for one simple reason. It's called hubris. An overweening arrogance that is a product of a combination of righteousness, pride and passion. We lost Turkey because in our rush to promote democracy in the Middle East we forgot to consider the impact of public opinion in existing democracies. Indeed it's ironic if you think about it, that if we had democracies in Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait today, we wouldn't have access to their bases either. [Laughter]

The massive demonstrations across Europe and in Turkey four weeks ago should have been a wakeup call for us, but in our hubris we didn't recognize it. And by then I suspect it was too late to undo the damage of two years of willful neglect of international public opinion, but we should at least have calculated that it would impact on everything we were trying to do with our allies and in the Security Council.

IN the Turkey case, we thought it was a matter of money. We fail to understand by portraying it in that way we not only hurt the pride of the Turkish leaders in front of their people, but we also made life more difficult for them with their public since we made it look as if they were selling out their public opinion for the Yankee dollar.

In the Russian case we also thought it was a matter of money. Don't worry, Administration officials would tell anybody who asked, they would say it very comfortably, we

have the Russians in our pocket. We have bought them with promises of debt repayments and the honoring of contracts and a few things on Chechnyan terrorist groups which was done last week, we'll have them. And taking the Russians for granted at the very time we were running after the Turks with money I think was a big mistake. When you think about it, how many phone calls did the President make with President Putin, his good friend, over the last four weeks? I think at least if we go on the public record, the answer is one. How many high-level envoys did we send to Moscow or invite to Washington?

When Putin turned up in Paris instead of Crawford, Texas two weeks ago, that should have been our warning signal yet all we did was send John Baldwin, the Under Secretary, over there and plan a trip by Condolleeza Rice for this week, maybe next week.

The reason that Russia matters in this case is that in the UN Security Council the math is very simple. There are five permanent members who have vetoes. We have two -- Britain and the United States. We have to bring one of the other three over to our side. Then we have a majority and it creates a momentum for us. On the other hand if we don't get one over to our side then we are in the minority and we have a problem, especially with what they call the undecided six, the non-permanent members, in a situations where the permanent members are split.

Traditionally we always worked on the French to bring them over because the Russians were in Saddam Hussein's pocket, but that has changed dramatically in the last two years to the credit of President Bush. So the Russians were our best chance. By ignoring them we solidified the Russian-French connection and it then became inevitable, in my view, that the Chinese would go with them as they have announced this morning.

Again, we were confidently told we have the Chinese in our pocket, too. So much for the effect of hubris.

Once we lost the Russians, in my view, we had no chance of getting the nine votes, and once they stood up yesterday and made clear that they will vote -- and if you read the language there's nothing implied about it. It's quite exquisite that there will be a French and Russian veto.

So we face not only the problem of not getting nine votes, we face the problem of now three vetoes which is devastating for our diplomacy.

What do we have to do about this situation? First of all let me come back to Turkey. Turkey matters because of the northern front. People that tell you oh, we have a Plan B, let's just say are slightly exaggerating. Maybe Ken has a different view of this. We don't have a good alternative in Northern Iraq to putting our troops on the ground via Turkey. It becomes risky and highly problematic over time, especially if something goes wrong.

The reason that we need our troops in Northern Iraq is not so much because we need a second front to open up to advance on Baghdad. It's to control the situation in the north where there is an inherent competition, rivalry between the Kurds of Iraq and the Turkish government over who is going to control Northern Iraq, and in particular who's going to get to Kirkuk first if we're not in there to control the situation. If we don't have the access and we don't have control of the north we face a very difficult situation where the Kurds who already sensed that through this bargaining with the Turks that we're going to betray them, are now looking to how they preserve their interests. If we are not in there the Turks will assume that they have to go in to stop the Kurds from acting and we could end up with a very serious unstable situation in the North exploding as we are trying to take Saddam Hussein out in Baghdad.

Why does it matter so much that we get the Russians on board? Because if we have a problem in the north with the Turks and the Kurds, we're going to have a problem in the Security Council unless we devise a strategy for getting some kind of support from the Security Council. So I've already outlined why that matters, particularly for the British, the Spanish, even for our Arab friends who are more stalwart than anybody else at the moment. It matters. The only way I think we can win a reasonable resolution in the Security Council is by bringing the Russians on board.

How do we do that and quickly finish up? I think that the way we can resolve our dilemma here is by sitting down with the Russians and negotiating with the Russians -- and by the way, not with their UN perm rep [Lavrov], the very sophisticated diplomat that he is, but the air they breathe up in New York is different. We need to be sitting down with Putin. The President needs to be sitting down with Putin and Powell needs to be sitting down with Ivanov and working out the terms of a Security Council resolution that would take Blix's benchmark that he will outline tomorrow in terms of chemical weapons and VX and all the other things that Saddam Hussein has not produced, and put that into an ultimatum resolution that gives Saddam Hussein two weeks, the two weeks that we need to get the Turkish vote -- by the way the Turks announced today that they would have a revote. Get the Turkish vote through, get the Turks on board. That would give Saddam two weeks to fulfill all of these requirements. Not half of them, not partially, but full completion of these tasks in the two weeks and get the Russians on board for that language. If we have that, we have broken the alliance that has formed against us, we have a chance, at this point it's only a chance, that we can get a resolution through the Security Council. In the mean time get the Turks back on board and right this shaky ship.

The bottom line here is in case of war you always know where to start but don't know where it ends, and we cannot simply go in confident that it's going to be all over in a few days by pulverizing Baghdad.

Our margin of error now has narrowed significantly. If we go with the Security Council split, international public opinion against us, it will play into American public opinion and if

something goes wrong we will find ourselves in a much more difficult situation.

MR. STEINBERG: Before I turn it over to Ken and Sheba, let me just add my two cent's worth on this because I think it's worth a little further elaboration. The question is why didn't the United States do what Martin suggested earlier? Some of us argued back both at the time of the December 7th full and final declaration and also at the time of the June 28th report that that's what we should do. That was a way of shifting the burden back on Saddam which we seemed to be moving away from.

I think the reason is because the Administration still remains very leery of taking that [train] and that there is the risk that Saddam will do those things or at least come close enough that whatever argument we have for going forward will be gone.

I think as we've seen in the last week or so, the Administration has, let me take it back further. Before the President went to the UN on September 12th the rationale for taking military action was a very expansive one, focusing on regime change, focusing on the broader benefits of removing Saddam. When the President made the decision to go into the UN he had to recast the argument in terms of the only legal doctrine that was relevant in the UN discussion was disarmament -- 687 and its successors. So by moving in that direction the Administration sought on the one hand to gain the international legitimacy of moving to the Security Council, but then had to narrow the grounds for its use of military force and run the risk that Saddam ultimately would comply.

As we now get to this end game I think the Administration has sort of looked down at the prospect that something like this might happen and has decided there's just simply too much at stake at this point to allow the answer to be yes and therefore has once again shifted back its rationale for what it wants to achieve to the broader goals that the President outlined in his speech.

So while from a diplomatic perspective what Martin suggested seems to me to make a great deal of sense, it really does put back into question the inevitability of the military action which I think the Administration now wants to continue to focus on. So I think it will be very difficult for them to accept the trajectory that Martin has proposed, although I certainly agree that it would make a lot of sense in terms of our long-run interests.

The second thing I would say in terms of the veto is, notwithstanding the language that the French and the Russians have used, this is a very complex game. Neither the French nor the Russians will want to veto. It is an enormously consequential step for them. Phil has outlined all the reasons why the logic of the French position would lead to a veto, but I don't think one can begin to calculate the harm that would come to Franco-American relations were there to be a veto in a situation where the United States was then going to go to war in any event.

So this very complex game is going on because the French have an interest in persuading the undecided, the [E-10s] that they will veto because for them the worst outcome of all is to vote with the United States in the face of profound opposition in their country. Think about Mexico or Pakistan, and then still have the resolution vetoed so that their vote in favor, in effect, does little in terms of bringing the Security Council to a consensus but causes them all the domestic/political opposition that they will face.

So for them the prospect that France and Russia might veto makes it much harder for them to vote yes, and that's exactly what France and Russia want. Because if the others aren't prepared to vote for this and the U.S. doesn't get nine, then France and Russia don't have to veto.

It's an enormously complicated game and the Administration is going to have to calculate some very complex and difficult odds as it makes the decision next week whether to go forward or not. Miscalculating could be just another one of these very dangerous situations in which you force France and Russia to decide whether or not to veto, force the other members of the Council, the elected 10, to walk the plank, either way it's very problematic for them. Then we find ourselves in a very messy situation if we have to go to war.

So I think this is really a profound moment for us to think about whether it is time to step back and pursue the direction that Martin has suggested, even at the risk that Saddam will do something that looks like complying.

Since most of us doubt that that will happen I think it's timely and relevant, particularly in light of the discussion the Administration has launched about what happens on the day after and the day after and the day after, to begin to explore some of those issues.

Let me begin by turning to Ken.

MR. KENNETH M. POLLACK: Thank you, Jim.



Let me start in talking a little bit about the consequence of the war over the reconstruction by giving the Bush Administration some credit. My own sense is that the public perception is still very much that the U.S. government really hasn't done a great deal of work on reconstruction, that there is still far more undone than was done. I think those criticisms are unfair. The U.S. government has actually been working very very hard on the question of reconstruction. There are a lot of people being assigned to the task who have been working on it for months, and they may not have all the answers but they're at least working hard on it, have been

working hard on it,
and have been coming up with answers.

The second bit of credit I want to give to the Administration is that I think a very fundamental and very important shift took place in the Administration's rhetoric on reconstruction over the past three, four, even six months.

You'll remember that during the summer of 2002 most of what you were hearing from the Administration was that the reconstruction of Iraq, the occupation of Iraq, what would come after Saddam Hussein would probably look very much like Afghanistan. That we would cobble something together, pardon the pun, that we would have a Bonn Conference, we'd find some leaders somewhere and we'd find a consensus government and they'd effectively run the show by themselves and of course there were still comments out there that we'd empower a transitional government led by the Iraqi opposition, install them, and they'd pretty much be able to handle it by themselves and it really wouldn't require a great deal of effort from the United States.

In the testimony that you're seeing from senior administration officials, it's pretty clear that at least in the rhetorical sense, and I think also in their planning as well, that they have moved away from that idea. They do recognize that Iraq can't be handled as they handled Afghanistan. I think there's even some evidence out there that they're reexamining Afghanistan and believing that perhaps they were a little bit too hasty in Afghanistan, that they should have made a much greater effort towards reconstruction in Afghanistan.

They won't use the word nation-building in Iraq but they're doing everything except it. I think they do recognize that it's going to be necessary to do nation-building in Iraq and those are very positive steps. But there's obviously a lot more to it. There are gaps in what they're doing and Sheba's going to talk about those, but there are also some very important problems in the how, and actually this is very much along the lines of what Martin was suggesting which is, I fully agree with Martin's point, but I think ultimately the Administration is going to do the right thing, what I think is the right thing for the situation, but they have bungled it in any number of ways in terms of the diplomacy and the public diplomacy, and I'm still concerned that they're going to do the same thing with the reconstruction of Iraq. While I do think they've got the right answer in terms of they do need to make a long-term commitment for the reconstruction of Iraq, but Iraq is too important to simply be allowed to free-flow, to slide into chaos or warlordism. I don't think they've quite yet got the how right.

There are still possibilities out there, and there are a variety of different issues here but I just want to concentrate on one and that is the role of the United Nations in the reconstruction of Iraq which I regard as crucial. I will also admit that the Administration's statements won what role for the UN there might be has been ambiguous. There are people who have said, they've categorically stated the UN isn't going to be part of it. Then they've come back and said that's not

actually what we said, and if you look at their statements that's true. It's not categorical. There is a degree of ambiguity in the statement, but nevertheless the body language does seem to be leaning very much in the direction that if the UN is brought in it probably isn't going to be brought in for awhile and I think that would be a big mistake. It gets to the same kinds of problems that Martin was identifying in terms of their treatment of diplomacy and public diplomacy in the lead-up to the war because the how is extremely important.

Let me make three points about the importance of the United Nations.

First, the United Nations is extraordinarily important in terms of the reconstruction of Iraq because we do have all of these problems stemming from our core management of the diplomacy and the public diplomacy in the lead-up to the war. A great majority of the Arab world and plenty of people in Europe, and I would say, I didn't come back from New York but I did just come back from Chicago, and what I heard in Chicago in the heartland was all these people saying you're doing this for oil. The Bush Administration is doing this for oil. It's about this, it's about that, it's about oil. I think there are a lot of people around the world and even in our won country who are still deeply suspicious of what the United States motives are. I think this is deeply problematic for us particularly in the Arab world because there is a sense there that the United States is only interested in coming into Iraq, stealing Iraq's oil wells, colonizing the country in some way, shape, or form, setting up some sort of facade government that is not going to benefit the Iraqi people. That is a tremendously dangerous problem for us. [Inaudible] may have a great deal of reluctance and a great deal of resistance from the other Arab states, from the Arab populations, and possibly even from the population of Iraq itself. And of course this is one of the great unknowns out there.

We just don't know what the Iraqi people think and there are conflicting reports about how they feel about a long-term occupation.

I think the great majority of the evidence we have is that the Iraqi people are desperate to be rid of Saddam Hussein, and in fact I think most of the evidence also suggests that they also believe that awful as the war will be it will be the only way to get rid of Saddam. But I also think that most of the evidence out there suggests that the Iraqis are quite suspicious of what U.S. motives are. I think there are a lot of Iraqis who if they see the United States come in and set up a military governorship of Iraq, some kind of a U.S.-led occupation of Iraq in which there is no end date and no soon end date -- and saying two years is also like saying two eons, two eternities. Two years is an enormous amount of time. If there isn't a much shorter time line attached to it, I think you're going to have a lot of Iraqis as well assuming that the United States was coming in only to seize its oil wealth. And while they may be glad to be rid of Saddam Hussein, I don't think they will necessarily be happy to have us if they believe that that is what our goal is.

So I think it is critical that at least there be the imprimatur of the United Nations over this operation, to reassure the people of the Middle East, the people of Iraq, the people of the rest of the world that this isn't intended to be for simply the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

I think a second reason, an obvious one that people have already talked about is of course that the reconstruction of Iraq is going to be long, it's going to be difficult, and it's going to be costly. And the United States should not be in the business of having to pay for that all by itself. Certainly not if there is a better alternative out there. It would be much better for the United States if we could have contributions from a large number of countries around the world. It would be treat to have resources and money put up by countries, peacekeepers put up by others, humanitarian aid workers put up by others. It would be much better for the United States if we could have the entire world working together.

We do point to examples where we've been able to handle it pretty much by ourselves, and you can look at Panama. We handled the reconstruction of Panama pretty much by ourselves. Iraq is not Panama. Iraq is a much bigger country, and the kinds of devastation that we're inflicting on Panama are likely to be orders of magnitude greater in Iraq, not because of the war itself but because of the 20 years of warring sanctions that went before it. Iraq is going to be a much bigger country in a much tougher position and if the United States is not going to have to bear these kinds of costs we're going to need a lot of allies. I think it's pretty clear that we're going to need the imprimatur of the United Nations to makes sure that we do get that kind of assistance.

And there I don't necessarily mean that we won't have countries signing up. My own conversations with Europeans and our other allies is that once the war is over we're probably going to get all of them coming on board in some way, shape or form. But I think what will be different is that if the United States is leading the effort we will have the enthusiasm of those countries rather than their grudging participation. I think that's important.

When we go to a country like Germany and we ask the Germans for two brigades of troops and \$5 billion commitment, I'd like to get two brigades of troops and \$5 billion, not a battalion and a billion dollars. I think those kinds of differences are very important, and I think whether or not the United Nations is seen to be leading this operation is going to be important in that difference.

The final one and I think there are others but I will just stop with this one, is that we are desperately going to need the assistance, the participation of the non-governmental organizations, that full range of humanitarian organizations which the Bush Administration has said they want involved in the reconstruction of Iraq, very rightly so. Because when you talk to our military personnel as I've been doing over the last few weeks, the ones who are going to have to do the reconstruction of Iraq, what they will say right up front is they need to see NGOs

because they don't have the skilled manpower to handle the reconstruction all by themselves. And in talking to the folks from the NGOs themselves, what they say is they are deeply concerned that if the United Nations isn't seen to be running this operation we're not going to get the assistance of the NGOs. It really is going to be a "made in the United States" operation, it is going to be just the U.S. military and I'm not certain that we're going to be able to pull that off. We may be able to but I think it certainly would be a lot harder, and that's kind of the bottom line of all of this.

It may be that if we go without the United Nations we may be able to pull it off. It might look like Japan. We might be able to do it all by ourselves and come up with a pretty good result, but it will certainly be much harder and much riskier.

As a final point, I also don't necessarily think that this is an either/or proposition as some at least in the Administration and some outside have been suggesting. That it's either run by the United Nations or by the United States. They will argue that because the United Nations is feckless and corrupt and it's anti-American, why on earth would we want to trust them with this kind of an operation. I don't think that's the case at all. I think there are plenty of hybrid solutions we can come up with. I would actually argue that Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor, these are all hybrid solutions. You didn't have just the UN or just the U.S. running any of these operations and I think in the case of Iraq as well we can come up with a good hybrid solution where the United States is there in force, providing a lot of the resources, and with a strong backbone, but on top of it all you have a UN umbrella which will make possible all of these other things which are critical I think to making sure that reconstruction proceeds as smoothly as possible.



MS. BATHSHEBA N. CROCKER: I think I'll just sort of lead off of that and say although it's true that the Administration has been ambiguous in its statements about the role of the UN, it is also true that we've seen a little bit this week in terms of efforts by the Administration to engage the UN. I think it's too little, too late.

We have seen a report that the UN is actually doing a lot of contingency planning on its own for what role it might play in the post-conflict, not only the humanitarian which we had seen about a month ago, but also in the idea of sort of a civil administration reconstruction of Iraq post-war.

I think the Administration's problem is that because it has not engaged the UN earlier, and I agree with Ken completely that we should be engaging the UN for this post-war effort, that they're running into a problem now where there's a complete disconnect between the UN's plans and the U.S. plans and I think that that could cause a problem in the long term.

Getting back to the Administration's plans as we've seen them articulated over the past few weeks, I will as Ken said, talk about the three main areas that I see are still missing in the Administration's plans. I think it is good that we have seen a good deal of planning, they have set up this structure in the Pentagon, this office of reconstruction and humanitarian assistance which I think is a good development and suggests that they're farther along in their planning than we have been in some previous post-conflict situations, but I still see sort of three main areas where the Administration has not yet at least publicly adequately addressed. Of course we don't know what may be going on behind the scenes, but I thought it might be useful to identify those particular areas.

The one is on the issue of what they're going to do about a post-conflict security force or a stabilization force. We have all seen this sort of back and forth between Shinseki and Wolfowitz about how many troops will be needed in Iraq post-war and how many troops they plan to keep on the ground for the reconstruction effort. It suggests that there's still a good deal of confusion in the Administration about what they're thinking about doing as a post-conflict security force.

As we've seen in previous situations, it's actually very critical that there be a stabilization force that is something different from the combat force, and it's just not clear that the Administration is sort of focusing on the need to train up U.S. forces or work with our allies to get their forces who could go in and play the sort of joint law enforcement, military role, a so-called constabulary role that you often need in these situations, which is to say that it's going to be important that the same troops who are sort of rolling through the streets of Baghdad are not the one who then have to sort of kind of try to change their uniform and walk the streets as beat cops after the war to just keep the Iraqis safe and secure. So I think that's one area where -- Again, it may be that there's a lot of behind-the-scenes stuff that the Administration hasn't said on this but from their public statements it suggests that they're not necessarily focusing on the need for that, or they haven't come to terms with what they're going to do with that. And of course it's not something that can sort of be shoved off into the future because the need for these types of troops in Iraqi towns and cities is going to be immediate, the minute that the fighting stops.

Another area where I think there's a lot of confusion which Ken touched on is the area of what they're going to do about the governance or the civil administration. It's clear to everyone that Franks is going to be running the country for some period of time. What's not clear is how long that time is going to be. It has been suggested that it will be about three months and then he will turn it over to Lieutenant General Garner who is heading this office in the Pentagon. And Garner will run it as a civilian administrator for some period of time. But then there may be an international, and then they will turn it over to the Iraqis at some point.

There was a *Time Magazine* report though that suggests that in fact the Pentagon is not

comfortable with this notion of sort of two change of commands, and their idea is that Franks is going to run it for the entire time, and if Garner goes in he will go in sort of a coordinating role. And it's not clear under any of these scenarios how they fit in the role of the UN at all. They continue to mention that they desire for an international civilian administrator to come in and run Iraq in the way that we had in Kosovo and East Timor.

The UN's plans are something completely different. So what the UN is saying is that they are planning for an assistance mission that would look more like the assistance mission in Afghanistan. It's particularly difficult to see how if we have a U.S. military occupation the UN goes in with that kind of assistance mission. What UN folks have told me is they will be in for the humanitarian stuff and the U.S. has also been very clear that they want the UN in for the humanitarian side, and in fact we have given some money for this and we've just pledged this week to give I think \$40 million more to the UN for humanitarian planning. But it's unclear how we're going to sort of square the circle of what the UN thinks it should do because the UN has said under no circumstances do we want to run Iraq in the way that we ran Kosovo. It's too big of a country, and we don't have the capacity to do this.

So I think there is still some work that needs to be done there which also suggests that had the U.S. been engaging the UN earlier in this effort it would have obviously been very helpful.

I think the third main area where there's still a lot of open questions is in sort of the funding and the resource side. So I think there are a number of things that could be talked about. One is that it's not, the Administration has not yet requested any money from the Congress for what it's going to do on the reconstruction side. There was nothing in the President's budget submission about it. I've heard that they're working on an emergency funding request for some money for Garner's office. There's an enormous AID team that is being put together. They will have some money to give to NGOs but they're going to need some money immediately to start paying for immediate reconstruction needs and to continue paying the salaries of Iraqi civil servants so you don't have a situation where sort of hundreds of thousands of people are all of a sudden without work and lights aren't turned on and trash isn't picked up. In all of these previous situations these things have happened very slowly and it's caused problems. So they will need some money for that, whether it's U.S. money, whether it's in the form of having a donor's conference to try to solicit this money from someone else, it just needs to happen and it again needs to happen before the conflict ends.

Another sort of crucial area is the issue of the Iraqi debt. The Iraqi debt and the claims burden. This is something that the Administration has not picked up on at all. The one mention of it that I've seen was I think from either Feith or Wolfowitz saying that that's something they're going to address in the longer term.

The problem with thinking about addressing it in the longer term is that in the immediate

term we also seem to have this great plan that we're going to take Iraq's oil wells to pay for the reconstruction, which will be nice and I imagine will actually happen at some point, but again, it's not going to happen immediately.

So immediately we will need money. Immediately we will need money not only for reconstruction but also to resuscitate Iraq's oil industry. But then there's also going to be this problem that if all these countries -- Russia, France, and surrounding countries who have claims left over related to the Gulf War, are going to come in and start demanding their money immediately, demanding being paid back on the debt, there's no way that Iraq's oil wells can be used only for the benefit of the Iraqi people which is what the Administration is saying should happen, and which I obviously agree should happen.

So this is a question that needs to be addressed not only by the U.S. because we actually don't own a lot of the debt, but I think we should be sort of leading the charge in pressing the international community to start thinking about what it's going to do with Iraq's debt.

The debt is on an order that is, it's completely crippling. The notion that we could start reconstructing Iraq's economy without dealing with the debt question immediately, it's just not going to happen. So I think that's another critical sort of area in the resource area that we just have not dealt with yet.

MR. STEINBERG: Thanks Sheba.

I would just underscore one other issue that I don't think we've heard much from the Administration about which Sheba mentioned, is the issue of paying all the civil servants. But there's a deeper question of what do you do about them. This is a country that's been run by the Ba'th party, has a strong pervasiveness throughout the society and the civil administration. And while there's been some hint of discussion about war crimes for the top leaders we have no sense about whether the Administration believes that the large majority of the infrastructure, the public administration infrastructure, which is a creature of the Ba'th party is something that they're going to leave in place, whether they're going to try to review or wholesale eliminate the influence of the Ba'th party right away, or whether they think this is something that can be done in the long term.

We've seen even in the context of Central and Eastern Europe how wrenching this was for the societies to try to come to grips with these questions. However obnoxious and repressive the communist parties were in those societies it doesn't come anywhere near the kind of violence and deep social challenges that dealing with the role of the Ba'th path in Iraq is going to present, and it's going to be something that has to be dealt with very quickly because if the Administration doesn't give a clear indication of what its plans are to do with this it's going to create a lot of uncertainty, a lot of anxiety and a great deal of potential for reprisal. So I think

that's another thing we ought to be looking for.

In response to Martin's criticism of the Administration's handling, President Bush has announced just now that he's going to hold a press conference to rebut your -- [Laughter] -- tonight at 8:00 o'clock. Perhaps he'll turn around and embrace your suggestion of how to proceed.

MR. INDYK: More likely he's going to declare war.[Laughter]

MR. STEINBERG: We'll have a chance to hear more from the President tonight. But now is the chance to hear from you and put your questions to our panelists.

QUESTION: Peter Yantz, Partnership for Effective Peace Operations.

The question I have is estimates of cost of the post-conflict reconstruction which I know can range all over the place, but the reason, just as a side comment, there was a qualification that perhaps there were behind-the-scene things going on with regard to post-conflict reconstruction and the security force. But those things should be out in the open I think because this is going to be a big bill for Congress to swallow and if you just sort of thrust it on them right off the bat it's not going to work very well.

MS. CROCKER: I would completely agree with that point. I think the fact that the Administration has not been able to put any numbers on this is very troubling. They have this argument that they don't want to put numbers on it because there's such a range of possible outcomes, so then I think they should be giving the range. And it's for precisely the point that I was making earlier which is they're going to need this money immediately. It's not going to be feasible after the fact to give Congress this enormous bill. Congress is already grumbling about the fact that the Administration hasn't given them anything in the way of numbers, both with respect to how much it's going to cost to pay for any forces that we have in there but also any of these other issues.

The numbers that are being thrown out are right now anywhere from \$60 or \$95 billion. It is an enormous bill and it's something that people should be talking about sooner rather than later.

MR. STEINBERG: I think the other thing to underscore is there's a lot of talk about, assuming the debt and other problems can be solved, about the Iraqi oil being available for this. But the reality is that the Iraqi oil now is being used to meet the basic needs of the citizens at a very subsistence level. There isn't going to be more of it. So it's not as if there's an additional pot of money around that can be tapped that isn't already significantly being used. Some of it obviously goes to Saddam and his leadership, but we're talking about less than tens of billions of

dollars compared with needs of the order that Sheba's talked about.

QUESTION: Hi, I'm Tim Matlock with the American Friends Service Committee. I'm one of the NGO reps who through the interaction coordinating office have sat with Administration counterparts since November to try to talk about the reconstruction stage. And though there's been good faith from AID and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, the history of that conversation has been enormously frustrating because in the essence the plans have been in the Pentagon and only gradually and begrudgingly has information come forward to allow the NGOs to do the best preparation and planning to be ready if possible.

When they finally created the office that had responsibility in this area, as noted, it was in the Pentagon. And as Bathsheba will know from the very fine study that CSIS put forward, the basic recommendation for a post-conflict situation would have civilian leadership in that role, particularly for the reconstruction stage, not the immediate post-conflict security. But even for the policing function it makes a difference if it's directly reporting to the U.S. military, in effect, or if it's under UN or some international control.

So the perception, as you said Bathsheba, too little, too late. There's some good faith effort going on this Administration, but they simply are not ready and by their own choices have made others less ready to face the costs, the challenges, the policy decisions, and the sheer difficulty of moving staff and supplies in to meet what will be immediate needs of the Iraqi civilian population after the conflict.

MS. CROCKER: A point on that that we did raise in our report, but I think is noteworthy is the question of what the Administration is doing about the sanctions that we have. One problem that the NGOs are having is the U.S. NGOs, anyway, cannot go into Iraq to preposition anything because of our sanctions regime that requires licenses. The NGOs have been complaining about this since October. It's only now that the State Department is finally pushing the Treasury Department, as I understand it, to cut through the bureaucracy and get these licenses. So again, it's just happening way too late.

The Defense Department and this Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance is saying we want the NGOs to be in there sort of leading the charge on doing this humanitarian stuff and we'll secure the place, then the NGOs need to go in. The problem is the NGOs are saying you haven't coordinated with us enough and furthermore, we don't even have the stuff in there that we need. We're not going to have the people, we're not going to have the supplies in there in time because you haven't even granted us these basic licenses that we need to get into the country.

TIM MATLOCK: One further indication of the problem. When they finally announced the office in the Pentagon at one of these joint meetings with the representatives of interaction,

everybody said well give us an idea of what the mandate is, how is this going to function? They said sorry, we can't do that. That's classified. [Laughter] And it remained classified for two weeks before they could get a one-pager that was declassified to say how the office was going to function.

MR. POLLACK: Sheba's absolutely right. Logistically we're not in a position to be ready to start the occupation, and it's important to remember the day after an Iraq doesn't start the day Saddam falls, it starts the day that we liberate the first town in Iraq. The moment that we've got our hands on, whether it's Basrah or Ajuber or whatever it is, that's when the day after starts. That's when we have to be ready to start turning on this massive project.

It argues for, and actually the point I want to make is you're seeing this real tension between what Martin was talking about before which is that the Administration I think has finally come to the conclusion or the reality that the longer this process drags on diplomatically the harder it is to build a coalition to go to war, not easier. But on the other and in terms of the reconstruction and also I'd say on the military side as well, we actually are not quite ready to go to war. Tommy Franks is right. We want to go to war, if the President says go to war tomorrow he can go. He can probably beat Saddam. But there's another issue out there which is the security of Iraq afterwards.

Looking at the forces that we've got in place right now, we totally do have the forces that are needed to beat Saddam Hussein. We totally do have an adequate force to drive on Baghdad, defeat the Republican Guard, invest Baghdad, take down the city.

But we have a bigger problem which is the moment it goes, the moment Saddam falls, given the forces that we have available, we fully don't have the kind of forces we would want to immediately then spread out across the country and establish the kind of security blanket that we're going to lay across Iraq to reassure the Iraqi people, to prevent retribution against Ba'hist officials as Jim was suggesting, to prevent different clans, different warlords, different militias from starting against each other.

If you look at the forces we have now my guess is by the time we get to Baghdad we're going to have a thin line of troops running up the two river valleys and not much else in the rest of the country, not much else available for the rest of the country. So unless the war happens to be a very long war, and obviously then you get into other problems, we can bring in some of these other divisions which have just been alerted.

The force we have now, as I said, is totally adequate for the military campaign itself but not adequate in terms of immediately establishing the kind of security blanket we want for Iraq.

QUESTION: Bruce McClaury from Brookings.

My question is whether the very informative presentation by the panel isn't an [inaudible] function? That is diplomacy and then reconstruction. I didn't hear any linkage between the two at all. My question is, isn't there going to be some implications for how the reconstruction goes with respect to the NGOs. Whether the UN is in, whether the U.S. is in, and whether or not we are going ahead unilaterally without the votes or whether we're going with the votes.

MR. INDYK: It doesn't necessarily follow that if we don't get a Security Council resolution that the United Nations won't be with us afterwards. I think that in some ways if we don't have the votes pulling the resolutions, basing our actions on the authorization in the earlier resolution which had plenty of cover in my opinion, would still enable us to go to the United Nations and get their support. But there is a problem of timing here because as Ken and Bathsheba have suggested, we need to be doing that now. The UN is doing its planning but it's separated from what our planners are doing and that's part of the problem.

There's also a question here that the other panelists haven't touched on of UNMOVIC. We're going to need UNMOVIC as well afterwards. We're going to need them to deal with that other argument. Some will say we're going in to take the oil. Others will say he never had the weapons of mass destruction, you just faked the evidence. We need UNMOVIC to in effect verify and disarm Iraq. That process as well.

Again, as we go in, if we break the UNMOVIC process we may have trouble preserving it for the day after.

MR. GORDON: Let me just add something on both of those points, and I think Martin's absolutely right on the latter. We don't talk about that enough. It's going to take a lot of people an awfully long time to go in and ferret out and actually find the answer to the questions about the WMD.

On the link between the two things, there are very different views of this on both sides of the Atlantic. It's interesting. The American assumption or the Bush Administration assumption is that it doesn't matter at all whether we go in with a UN mandate or whatever. The international community and the Europeans especially will be knocking on the door to participate in the stabilization of Iraq. Once we achieve this quick and impressive victory they will want to help, they'll want to bring stability and they'll want to take part.

The European calculation is precisely the opposite. Once we do this and are stretched thin as Ken suggested, and are spending \$100 billion as Sheba suggested, we're going to be desperate for international support, European support, and we'll be coming to them.

Who's right? I think there's going to be some mix in this in the sense that I do believe the

Europeans will have their own interest in seeing a stable Iraq, especially obviously, it depends on how it goes, it will be our job first to bring stability. But if and when that happens they will have an interest in doing it but I think the Europeans will be in a position to play much more hardball on that than they have been on the question of the UN resolution and the war itself, and I don't think we can expect them to simply just lie down and say okay, we didn't support this war but we're with you all the way and here's the \$5 billion two brigade scenario. It's rather going to be there are conditions for this, thank you very much. You need us now more than we need you, unless of course you want to occupy Iraq yourselves for the next ten years.

I think we've already seen some hint of that, Chris Patten, the Commission for External Relations has said that the EU will not be operating under American military command for its role and they will have a significant amount of leverage to us when it comes time for reconstruction regardless of how the diplomacy happens on the way in.

MR. INDYK: Let me just add one point here. There are some who would argue let's in effect break the Security Council. Who needs it anyway? Let's force it to a vote, force a veto, even if we don't even get nine voters let's just shove it through, go down, show how useless this organization, institution is, and then go on our own. The kind of attitude that was expressed by one Pentagon official to me was if it's an empty vessel, what does it matter if you break it?

If we do that then getting the UN involved afterwards can become much more complicated.

MR. GORDON: There's also the opposite way that it affects which is I think that one of the reasons why you've seen so much opposition in Europe to this is because they don't think that we've really articulated both a full-scale plan for the reconstruction of Iraq and are very nervous about that, and also because they are nervous that we're planning to do this on our own, a Japan model. We're going to exclude the United Nations. And I think that paradoxically if we were doing more to reassure the Iraqis, the Arabs, the Europeans about what our plans were for post-war Iraq, I think it actually could be helping with our diplomacy right now.

MS. CROCKER: I might just, drawing on what Martin was saying, in addition to UNMOVIC I think there are at least three areas where we will very much need the UN to act, the UN Security Council to act for the post-war. One would be, and we're already starting apparently drafting a resolution about this right now, what to do about the oil for food program. As Jim was saying, right now the Iraqi government is providing basic services for 60 percent of the population and there is an acknowledgement on the part of the U.S. and others that this is going to have to continue and we're going to have to do something about the oil for food mechanism, at least in the short term, to ensure that the Iraqis can continue to get fed. So that's one thing they're going to need the UN for.

Another is going to be if they want to do anything about dealing with the UN Claims Commission. There are still about \$170 billion in unpaid claims from the Gulf War. If there is any desire to do something about this, to put a moratorium on paying back those claims or to sort of at least ramp down expectations of how much might get paid back, again, they're going to need the Security Council.

Finally, if there is a desire to have a UN civilian administration in Iraq post-war, they're going to need a Security Council resolution.

So those are just sort of three examples of very particular ways that we will need the UN for the post-conflict period.

MR. STEINBERG: I agree with all of my colleagues, but let me just put one countervailing consideration which is the President is staking his entire presidency on the outcome of this operation, and this is an Administration which has essentially no faith in the ability of the UN to take on a task of this size.

The President can't afford to have Iraq not be a success. So the instinct, I believe, is going to be whatever we're hearing now and what all of these considerations say, we're going to be held responsible for this and therefore we need to retain the authority to do what we think is necessary to get it done.

So I think there's going to be huge pressure for them to hold the reins here because they're going to say look, if we're going to get blamed or praised for this thing we might as well be the ones who do it.

I think this is going to create huge tensions in its aftermath. There will be all of these other pressures to say you can't own this, but it will be a risk because we've seen what's happened in other reconstruction situations of halting progress. Look at Kosovo and the like or Bosnia, and nobody can say this has been an enormous success for international administration.

So I think particularly with the prospect of elections in about 18 months after this war takes place, the President's going to have to show a dramatic success out of this which will mean largely trying to retain American control.

MR. GORDON: No doubt, but then it takes you back to where you were before. If we think that somehow we can smash this through the Security Council and then go to other countries and say this is our baby, Tommy Franks is in charge, we need \$5 billion from you, 20,000 troops from you. At that point not only the French will say hang on a minute, there's an international order here.

QUESTION: Evan Thomas from Newsweek.

The common theme here is the ability to think through the problem, and too little, too late.

Talk a little bit if you would about how that happened. Who's fault is this?

Jim, you started to get into this a little bit about if they're betting the presidency on this you would have thought that they would have really thought through the problem. Why haven't they? Is this a Condoleezza Rice problem? Is it a Colin Powell problem? Is it Bush's hubris? Talk a little bit about what happened here and how, and can they get out of it?

MR. STEINBERG: I'll be interested in [inaudible], give a stab at it.

I think the biggest problem has been the deep division within the Administration about both whether to do this and what the objective is and how to do it. It's made it very hard for them to come to grips and to reach decisions about things except when they have to. Everything gets fought absolutely to the final battle in this Administration and then it gets fought again and again even after it's decided.

Take the most glaring one which we've seen most dramatically which is the question of what role will the Iraqis play in the post-conflict environment? Should there be a government in exile? Should it be the parties in exile that do it? Should we go to the Iraqis in Iraq? There are deep divisions within the Administration. They've been fighting over the question of the respective role of the various groups. Of the ISE, of the INA, of the Kurds. And because they can't really come to any conclusion about it they simply defer the decision. I think the same has been true about this question about who owns it afterwards. Should it be military, should it be civilian, should it be U.S. civilian? The State Department has a radically different view about this than the Pentagon. They can't force any of these things to decisions, they can't decide them at lower levels and they can't force everything through decision at the higher levels because they have a tentative truce among the key players about each of the key steps along the way. And even when decisions are made, like the decision to go to the UN, it immediately starts to get attacked from the rear.

So I think because there hasn't been sort of a unity of purpose and unity of objectives, it's very difficult to develop this kind of rich plan that you have when you know what you're going to do, when everybody is marginally on board, and you can begin to work on the details rather than having to have everything be a major dispute.

MR. INDYK: I think that's very right. The divisions are critical. But there's something else to in terms of attitude and that's why I in my opening tack focused on the hubris.

Because it's summed up in this concept invented by the Secretary of Defense but adopted by the Administration of if you lead they will follow. That principle, that maxim which is fundamentally unilateralist in its approach leads to a very problematic diplomacy because they do recognize that we need at least a coalition of the willing if not a much broader one. Therefore there is a willingness to take into account what the coalition of the willing needs I'll give you a couple of examples of this.

Lord Robertson the head of NATO was particularly concerned that NATO should be part of this. Since NATO was not included as a result of our unilateralist [inaudible] in the Afghanistan operation until afterwards. He wanted NATO to be involved at the first.

Okay, he makes enough noise, squeaky wheel, we'll give in, protection of Turkey.

Now because they don't approach it in a multilateralist way they didn't think through the way in which this became a perfect setup for the French to have a trifecta. Screw Turkey, screw the U.S. and screw NATO. [Laughter] And we didn't need to do that. In this case we could have protected Turkey very simply without taking it to NATO.

When the French saw their opportunity, instead of understanding that this was a fight we just didn't need to have, we decided to go at it with them. I was there in Munich, Jim was too. The French and German behavior was appalling, but so was ours. We got down in the sandbox and started throwing sand with them. And that played over directly into the Security Council the next week when the French and Germans decided to carry on again.

It's that kind of thing. Tony Blair wants a Security Council resolution. Okay. We'll do a Security Council resolution. But because there's no commitment to it, there's no follow-through, there's no diplomacy to get the second Security Council resolution. Essentially, the best I can tell, we just dropped the ball because we didn't really care about it. We were just doing that for Blair.

So I think as Jim said, that instinct is an explanation for a lot of the problems.

MR. STEINBERG: The other difficulty I think they're having is that any sense that this is going to be complicated, costly, expensive, not go ideally, it's something that the Administration is very loathe to have seen as part of their own calculations because it fuels the argument of the opposition.

If they say well it's not going to be easy to have [inaudible], it's going to be costly, it may take long, it will require 200,000 troops the way Eric Shinsheki says and not 100,000, would appear to be acknowledging the criticisms of those who are either cautioning or opposing the

action. So there's a special reluctance to sort of look at some of the worst-case scenarios because it simply seems to undercut the rationale.

Now this is not particularly new for this Administration. I think it's generally a problem for policymakers that if they want to do the kind of worst-case planning that they need to do, they're always worried that this will be seen as acknowledging the critics' arguments. But I think particularly in this case, as Martin has said, because they've had to exude such optimism about the really transformational nature of what's going to happen, that if the planning looks like we're planning for something less good to happen then people will say well it's all just a snow job and you're not really serious about this, and why aren't we being more cautious?

MR. INDYK: And we've created an expectation that this is going to be a cakewalk, and when it's not it's going to come back and bite us.

QUESTION: Guy Dinmore from the Financial Times.

I'll try and word this as clearly as I can because it's sort of a broad question for Mr. Indyk.

I understand in a way where France and Germany are coming from on the Security Council. What I'm trying to really understand and I haven't got the answer for it, countries like Cameroon, Guinea, Angola, Chile and Mexico, where the specific question of Iraq doesn't sort of have such an impact on them directly, why is it that the U.S. is having such a terrible problem getting such countries on board? In the sort of broader picture of international U.S. diplomacy over the last year or two? What is that the Bush Administration has done that has so alienated countries that you would expect to have support from on an issue like this?

MR. INDYK: I think it's encapsulated in what I just said. If your attitude is we will lead and you will follow, a lot of countries, even small ones who have some self respect, don't necessarily want to simply sign up, especially in circumstances where their public opinion are against what we want them to do.

These representatives of the international community who are sitting on the Security Council suddenly find themselves in the spotlight. Again we go back to the point that we were making about the division amongst the permanent members which puts them in a situation where they have to choose sides. If they have to choose sides their instinct is to go with the United States, but in an environment in which world public opinion, their own public opinion, some of them in the African countries, Francophone countries that have traditional ties with France, and a split amongst the permanent members, it's a very uncomfortable situation for them to be put in. And each of them has their own bill of particulars against us if you listen to what they say.

The Mexicans also. Lo and behold, what's their complaint against us? That we ignored

them. We took them for granted. We didn't take seriously all of their concerns for the last year. And in one sense they have the leverage because suddenly their vote's become important so this is a moment for them to get our attention, but I think the broader attitude that we have signaled to the world comes back and manifests itself in a surprising reluctance on their part to go along with us.

MR. STEINBERG: One of the things that's really remarkable if you listen to the debate in Washington, which is a very bizarre place to listen to this debate, is that you're hearing among the sort of punditry, this intense attack on these countries for being venal, for wanting something from us in order to get their support. They've said we somehow are critical, we talked about the coalition, the billing, and the whole sense that they're behaving badly because they want something in return. If you step outside the circle, why is it surprising to people? These are countries that have been ignored, their interests have been ignored, and now they're saying well you finally have to pay attention to us. Here is a chance for us to get our point or view across. Somehow that's seen in Washington as bad behavior on their part, that they should simply be grateful and support the United States because we need the support.

I think there's been the sense that somehow there isn't any mutuality of interest in the way international relations are done. That we should be able to pursue the interests that we want and others should follow us because we're right, even though they have other concerns which we don't want to spend the time and effort to take into account.

I think what we're seeing is an intensification of the division in which we feel, there's sort of a consensus in Washington of anger and resentment against these countries for putting their claims on the table at the time this is coming forward. And they're feeling that for once they have the opportunity to have the United States listen, and somehow they're being criticized for putting these issues forward. That kind of division I think over the long term can leave a very long term negative legacy of this whole process.

MR. GORDON: Let me just reinforce my colleagues' point with one example. The background of course is deep public opposition to war in particular in these countries, 80 to 90 percent of public opinion against. And more broadly, resentment of the U.S. for hegemony and all the treaties they haven't signed and so on. That's the background.

Then we come up with this attitude, the example I want to give. The *Washington Post* quoted a senior Administration official about ten days ago as going to the Security Council and saying this to these particular countries. "You know, you don't actually have to decide on the issue of Iraq. We've already taken that decision and it is final." I'm quoting. "We've already taken that decision and it is final. All you have to decide is whether the Council is going to support us or not."

It seems to me you don't have to be France or Russia to resent being talked to in that way and taken for granted in that way.

And I remind you also in the Turkish case, the parliamentarians who voted against us, despite the billions in aid and the permission for Turkey are heroes now in their constituencies for in a democratic process listening to the free will of the country rather than bowing to the power of the United States. I think that's the situation we've got ourselves in.

MR. INDYK: I don't want to be too much piling on, but just one other example. The Canadians came forward with a reasonable compromise resolution. Now even if the Administration really didn't want to go down that road the way in which the Administration spokesman immediately came out and dissed it with such disrespect for it, just rubbished it completely, that Cretien was so angry he went off to Mexico and started briefing the Mexicans and the Mexican Ambassador in New York then hosted all of the undecided to hear the Canadian proposal. So talk about shooting ourselves in the foot, and the Canadians are with us. They're part of our coalition of the willing.

QUESTION: Ken Burn from Community Development Publication.

Three weeks ago when the entire panel came out much to my shock and supported a war at this time, Dr. Steinberg gave a very interesting recap of the history of why we're where we are and that if this weren't the end of a 12 year process where with goodwill and careful thought we put together a whole series of resolutions to the UN, set up a system that could deal with a rogue leader like Saddam Hussein without going to war. It didn't work. So that's where we are.

Could you trace what you feel are the consequences for the UN as a meaningful structure if we, say the worst case happens. We lost a majority vote and go to war anyway. What's the future?

MR. STEINBERG: I think it's difficult to make a judgment without knowing how the war goes. That is to say that if we go to war without the UN in the worst case where there's a negative vote by the Security Council or it's so obvious the Security Council would oppose it that we've had to pull it back and the war goes reasonably well, then, and you get the best case scenario from the Administration's point of view, a liberation of Baghdad is truly perceived that way by the people of Iraq, clearly discovering significant WMD capability in Iraq that had been hidden, relatively low casualties, not a lot of internal conflict after, in the immediate aftermath of the war, then I think what you will see is a relegation of the Security Council to sort of a secondary or largely irrelevant institution. That it will, the view will be, even among people who were somewhat skeptical in the United States, that events have vindicated the American view, that all of this sort of process and all of this kind of nominal UN type democracy stood in the way of achieving what was obviously something that needed to be achieved and the world is a

greater place for it. I think it will lead to a significant diminishment of the UN and I think it will have a diminishment of the role of other countries as sort of something that the United States ought to spend a lot of time worrying about and pursuing our interests.

If it goes badly, and I think that it is something that none of us would wish for if it ends up happening, it will ironically I think strengthen the UN. There is enough anxiety and uncertainty here in the United States about the Administration going unilaterally that people will say the converse which is that all these reservations were right, that the United States needs to listen to others more, that we have to be prepared to go through these processes and take seriously the views of others, that it is an institution which tried to put its brakes on and had the United States been more responsive and attentive to the value of that as an institution, we would have had a better result.

So I think it's very difficult ex ante to know how this is going to play out and I think that's obviously the reason why the Administration is risking breaking the vessel is because they are sufficiently confident that it's all going to work out that these long-term consequences won't matter. I don't know whether others have a different view.

MR. GORDON: I would only add that the non-functioning of the Security Council has been the norm since it was created, more than -- Once there was no longer a Russian veto in 1990, and during the '90s we more or less made use of it, and in Kosovo we couldn't make use of it again. So really throughout the Cold War it didn't work and it wasn't the forum that legitimized international operations and so on. So there would be a lot of disappointed people that had great hopes in it, but it's not as if it's an unprecedented development to not have a legitimizing Security Council.

QUESTION: Among the many justifications for war that the President has made is that it would help the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Do you agree with that assessment? And also how should the Middle East conflict factor into the reconstruction effort? [Laughter]

MR. STEINBERG: He's been waiting. [Laughter]

MR. INDYK: The President is right, it will help but not in the way that he suggests. He picked the wrong explanation and I think it's quite telling.

What he said if you recall in his speech to the American Enterprise Institute last week was that by cutting Saddam Hussein's support for Palestinian terrorism that would create an opportunity, an opening, for peace.

Well yes, it's true that Saddam Hussein has been paying the families of the so-called martyrs, the suicide bombers, and that's significant money. But it's by no means the most, or the

important source of support for funding for terrorism on the Palestinian side. That support comes -- and the Administration knows this -- comes from Iran, not from Iraq. Iran is aggressively funding through Hezbollah and smuggling arms to Hezbollah and funding Hamas, and now because the new Palestinian Finance Minister is doing a good job of cutting off Palestinian Authority funds to the Fatah, comes in militias, Iran is stepping in and funding them as well.

So that's not where the opportunity lies. The opportunity lies in the dramatic impact that a successful regime change in Iraq, that is to say taking out Saddam Hussein relatively quickly with relatively low casualties, and stabilizing the situation afterwards. If we are able to do that, it will have a dramatic impact on the regional balance of power. We will be the dominant power, much as we were after the last Gulf War. And friends and foes will look to us, we will have influence with both of them. Both the rogues will cower fearing that they'll be next, and the friends will feel strengthened. That applies to the Arab world as well where the four major powers in the Arab world are struggling for dominance -- Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. That balance will shift dramatically into the moderate camp. Egypt and Saudi Arabia will be bolstered significantly by a moderate Iraq rather than a radical Iraq under Saddam Hussein. That therefore bolsters those who would make peace. Give us a great deal of influence for peacemaking and bolsters those Arabs who would support that process. Iraq is taken out of the anti-peace camp and put in the pro-peace camp. That's a significant development.

Therefore what do we do about it? And this is the second problem. Since the opportunity is much larger than the President suggests in my mind, and since there is a [ripeness], a growing [ripeness] in terms of the exhaustion that exists on both the Israeli and the Palestinian side amongst the public, since the economic situation on both sides is now dreadful and getting worse, and since the casualty toll on both sides continues to rise, there is a desire to find a way to get out of this rut, and a willingness on the part of the people on both sides, I believe, to support a way out.

The United States would have to come in and take a much more proactive role in trying to shape a process to get out. Unfortunately what the President said was we're working on the road map. Well, maybe he wasn't informed, but the road map as far as the other members of the quartet that have been working on it are concerned inside the State Department, that road map was completed five months ago. It was shelved by the White House until the Israeli elections were over.

Working on the road map means negotiating with the Palestinians and the Israelis about every one of these difficult steps of which there are about 500, and if that's what we're going to use, the opportunity created by Iraq for, we won't. We will have scorned the opportunity. I think it needs to be a much more active and direct engagement by the President to use the influence that he will have and the more favorable conditions to really pull these parties out of the rut. As to how to do that, that's a whole other lecture.

QUESTION: My name is [inaudible] from [inaudible] Magazine.

Just a follow-up on the Middle East, just the whole Arab world. The impression that they made, most of the Arab countries like Egypt and others that they are irrelevant to what's happening or will happen to Iraq. Specifically a lot of [inaudible] stressed that there will be no role for Arab countries in a post-Saddam era. So why also making irrelevant, even your friends or your enemies, irrelevant in post-Saddam era? The countries. Most of them may be now they are lining up against you, most of them. But a couple of months ago you said you are irrelevant. You cannot have an input in it. So why is this relevancy in the Middle East?

MR. POLLACK: There are problems and there are pluses in doing so. The problems are we don't know how the Iraqis are going to respond to us and in fact a lot of what we're hearing from Iraqis is they don't particularly want Arab countries coming in and helping them, quote/unquote. They've got their own suspicions about the United States but in particular they don't really want the other Arabs.

We just don't know if that's true, though. Until we get in I think it's really unclear. And I think we have to be kind of humble about this because what we've found in other parts of the world is that the assumptions we had going in were wrong. Afghanistan is a perfect example where our assumption was the last thing the Afghans wanted was Americans, and it's one of the reasons, one of the justifications for having such a small American presence and trying to rely on Turkey and other countries.

In fact what we found in Afghanistan in talking to the people who did it was they only wanted Americans. Because the Afghans looked down on everyone else. The last thing they wanted was being occupied by countries they didn't respect.

So we don't know what's going to happen in Iraq and I think we have to be very careful about necessarily going in and saying yeah, we're going to have Egyptian peacekeepers and Jordanian peacekeepers and Turkish peacekeepers.

You also have a problem because some of those countries have their own interests in Iraq. Bringing Turkish peacekeepers into Iraq might not be such a great idea, especially if they're stationed in Northern Iraq. That's part of the problem with the Kurds.

But on the other hand it's also the case that trying to build, to reconstruct a stable, prosperous, pluralist Iraqi society in the midst of neighbors who are deeply suspicious if not antipathetic to the effort is also a terrible idea. So I think the United States has to be working with them.

Again, I think there are ways to handle this. In particular what we're going to need to do is we're going to need to listen carefully to all of them about what they would like to see in Iraq and where their redlines are. We're not necessarily going to be able to go to each of them and say tell us what you think a new Iraqi government ought to look like, and do it. First of all, we shouldn't be doing that to begin with because it should be up to the Iraqi people to decide what their government should look like.

Second, because each of these countries is going to have a very different idea about what a new Iraqi regime should look like. But by the same token we do have to create mechanisms by which their fears are going to be assuaged. On the one hand they all have aspirations, they'd all like to see, and the Iranians would probably like to see an Iraqi government that is an Islamic republic and is very closely tied to them. They're not going to get that. By the same token the Iranians also have fears about Iraq that can be assuaged. And if we aren't willing to work with them in assuaging their fears then you're going to get them taking unilateral action which is going to make the entire enterprise that much more difficult.

MR. STEINBERG: Going back to Evan's question and this is another example where the uncertainty about the Administration's policy is because they're deeply divided. There are some in the Administration, particularly the State Department, who would say gee, you have to involve these countries, they have a big stake, we're not trying to, we want stability in the region. If you ignore the Saudis, you ignore the Iranian interests, ignore the Turks and others, that you're going to have a situation which is even more volatile and creates greater instability.

Others, particularly in the Pentagon, are arguing hey, Iraq is just the first one. We're going after the Saudis next. We want change in Saudi Arabia. [Laughter] We want change in Iran. So why should we empower and take into account these illegitimate regimes in any event? And these deep tensions pervade everything that's being done in terms of how we engage with others. It's because people don't want to decide this. You get a very uncertain answer about is there a legitimate role, how should they be involved, and each side trying to keep the options open going forward.

QUESTION: Just a follow-up on what you were saying. What if the U.S. goes into war with a coalition of the willing [inaudible] and then the role of the UN is marginalized, then more and more the U.S. adopts the role of a military occupier not only in Iraq, but as the resistance builds up maybe in Kuwait or Qatar and so on. And then you know, if you take [inaudible] that Syria is [miffed], Arafat is [miffed] and so on, and people begin to see that there is an Israeli tank and a bulldozer bulldozing in Gaza and an American tank in Baghdad and other places. How will that really impact the process for peace in the long run? What will happen? That's for Martin.

And to Jim, what will the President say do you think tonight? [Laughter]

MR. INDYK: I think it would help the whole post-Saddam strategy that we've been discussing here to have an initiative try to help the Israelis and Palestinians get out of this rut and onto the path towards a negotiated peace. And it would help calm the region as well in the aftermath. So there's a kind of symbiotic relationship.

What happens in Iraq can help us move the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. If we move the Israeli-Palestinian conflict it can help us in Iraq and the broader region. I think that's the way we need to see it.

Unfortunately I think that what I understood from the President's speech is this is like the UN resolution. Check the box. Tony Blair says we need a speech on peacemaking in the Middle East so I'll give a speech on that. But again, other than the expression of the President's personal commitment to see the road map implemented there is really no explanation of how this Administration is going to work the issue, and I think there's a very tried and true way of doing it which is to appoint a presidential envoy. Not a Tony Zinni who has a restricted mandate to get a cease-fire, but a George Marshall type. Somebody with stature who can do the hard work using the influence of the President himself to develop a meaningful process that can work. And there's no indication that the President is actually going to do that. In fact if you speak to people who have discussed this with the President, and you saw it actually in a public moment after the speech when he said I work every day on this issue. Is that by making the speech, by putting out his vision, I think the President actually believes that's the way you make peace. You basically tell the parties what they have to do and in this case the Palestinians need to get rid of Arafat and reform themselves, and then peace becomes possible. But that's, in a sense he's on the bully pulpit saying what needs to be done, but there's no concept of the United States actually getting involved to try and make that happen.

You can have regime change in Iraq. We can set up a trusteeship for Iraq. We can go through a process of trying to establish a democratic Iraq with all of that involved in terms of 200,000 troops and \$100 billion and so on. But when it comes to Palestine where the President has gone to the United Nations and spoken to the nation and said what we need is a democratic Palestine living alongside a secure Israel, there's not a willingness to spend one percent of the energy or capital to try to make that happen.

[Applause]

MR. STEINBERG: That's good. All the energy and capital is being spent on trying to deal with the North Koreans, obviously. [Laughter]

I think the President tonight is going to try to reinforce the sense of inevitability that the game is over, that we're moving forward. He's going to try to highlight the degree of support that we have. We're going to hear a lot about the coalition that we have and as I think Rumsfeld said

the other day, we have more supporters here than we had in the first Gulf War and they're going to try to give some sense that the United States is not isolated because if you read all the headlines today the theme is the United States is increasingly isolated, but the President is going to have to lean very heavily back against that, and I think he's going to repeat this focus that he had from the AEI speech about the benefits of what's going to happen once this is done.

Given that they're losing the diplomacy they need to change the topic and that's where I think they're going to try to go.

Thank you all. Thanks to all the panelists.

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