A Brookings Iraq Series Briefing

ENDGAME IN IRAQ: ENDING THE WAR, KEEPING THE PEACE, AND CREATING REGIONAL STABILITY

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MR. JAMES M. LINDSAY: Hello and welcome to another in a regular series of Brookings briefings on the war in Iraq. I'm James Lindsay, Senior fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies program.

In today's briefing we want to concentrate on how we got to a point that seemed unimaginable two weeks ago. Two weeks ago we were all focused on how the war plan was going badly. There was a lot of criticism of the Administration planning for the war, talk about perhaps falling into a quagmire. Yesterday we saw U.S. troops go into Baghdad, the tearing down of the statue of Mr. Hussein in central Baghdad. To explore how we got to this point and what are the consequences of winning the Iraq war we have my colleague Ken Pollack, Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies program here at Brookings and Research Director for the Saban Center on the Middle East. We will be joined shortly by my colleague Michael O'Hanlon, Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies program. I believe Mike is unfortunately stuck somewhere in traffic between Capitol Hill and here.

We are also fortunate to have some people from outside Brookings join us. We have to my immediate right James Dobbins, a career Foreign Service officer and currently the Director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at RAND. But much more important, he was the U.S. Special Envoy to Somalia, Haiti, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. Jim is a man -- and Bosnia. I always seem to forget one. Basically, if we wanted to go out and fix something, Jim was the man we sent. We're very fortunate to have him here today.

We are also joined by Shlomo Yanai who is a Major General Retired from the Israeli Defense Forces. He is here in residence at the Saban Center, and he among other things in the Israeli military dealt with issues of strategic planning and we're going to draw on his expertise about looking forward as to the consequences of the war in Iraq.

But we're going to begin with my colleague Ken Pollack. Ken?

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

I thought I'd say just a few words about what we've seen over the last few days and a few days about what we may see over the next few days.

First as to the past, I'm getting asked a lot of questions about how did this place fall apart so quickly? I think there are a whole lot of reasons, and probably there are a bunch of reasons which none of us knows just and won't come to the surface until we're able to sit down and go through our files, go over the plans of the General Staff and actually hopefully talk to some members of the General Staff. But I think there are two important factors out there.

One, as best I can tell the Iraqis did not expect, once again, for U.S. forces to move as quickly as they did and to be as powerful and as overwhelming as they were. This is something

we saw in 1991. The Iraqis plan for a certain kind of war and they always expected to have more time to make decisions and shift forces than was actually the case.

You can't fault them entirely because earlier on in the war they clearly were able to shift forces around and probably shift forces around better than I think most Americans would have expected. They did move almost all of their Republican Guard Divisions. They did it under air attack but they were able to move them. And early on in the war that probably gave them a false sense of security about their ability to shift forces in the midst of combat if they needed to do so. But as best I can tell, their expectation was that that line of Republican Guard divisions that they formed up running from Karbala out to Al Kut. About ten days ago you'll remember that that was when that line first got set and it seems pretty clear that they expected that that line would hold up U.S. forces for much longer than it did, and that the would have time behind that line to build a second line of defenses on the immediate outskirts of Baghdad itself. Why they had not done so in the fall or even in the spring is an interesting question. As I say, at this point in time I don't think anyone can really answer that although as you've heard, those of you who have been here before heard me say, I think Saddam was extraordinarily over-confident about his ability to preclude the war altogether. That probably was the most important reason for that.

But nevertheless, the U.S. forces collapsed that line from Karbala to Al Kut I think much faster than the Iraqis realized, and as a result those forward Guard divisions were forced to be pulled back. They pulled back in disarray. By the time they got back to Baghdad they had been heavily damaged and disorganized by U.S. ground and air attacks on the way. I think what you saw for the first couple of days was the Iraqis trying desperately to reset the defenses of Baghdad, to gather those forces back in, reorganize them, and mount some kind of a new defense of Baghdad, and of course the U.S. military recognized what was going on. They saw that the Iraqis had been badly disorganized in the retreat and rather than racing themselves and digging in for basically a siege of Baghdad, they decided to press. They caught the Iraqis off balance, and by pressing U.S. forces just kept pushing the Iraqis off balance and that led to the rather speedy collapse of Baghdad itself.

The second important feature of the south there, and I think this is important for the future, was the fact that the people of Baghdad were not going to fight for Saddam. I think we've seen actually mixed reactions in Baghdad. Yes, I agree, I think most of the people in Baghdad are delighted, overjoyed, listening to the reporters most of them seem to believe that it is a majority of Iraqis who are welcoming the liberation in any way you want to shape it.

But there are a lot of other Iraqis who simply weren't ever going to fight for the regime. They weren't necessarily happy with U.S. forces marching on Baghdad but they weren't going to take up arms against the U.S., they weren't going to fight for Saddam.

I think it's important for the future because it is important to remember that we haven't

yet conquered all of Iraq. We have not yet liberated all of Iraqi territory. There are still important cities left out there. And in particular, Tikrit is still left out there. That for me is the big remaining unknown out there. What will the battle for Tikrit look like?

I don't think Tikrit is going to be a deal-breaker. I never did. I never thought that Tikrit was going to somehow stop the invasion in its tracks. But Tikrit is a sizeable city, about a quarter of a million people. And as best we understand it, in Tikrit the people actually like Saddam and the people actually feel a sense of loyalty to Saddam. It's important to remember, Tikrit is Saddam's hometown. He is the favorite son. He is the man who put Tikrit on the map in a very meaningful way, even though there's a long tradition of important Tikriti figures in Iraqi politics, Saddam is really the one who raised Tikrit to the pinnacle of Iraqi power. Far too many Tikritis are now important senior regime members. Far too many Tikritis are members of the Special Republican Guard and the Republican Guard and the Muhabarat and the SSO and any of the other internal security organizations. And Saddam through his patronage has enriched any number of Tikritis, tribesmen living in the vicinity of Tikrit, any number of people connected with the populace of Tikrit.

So when we do go and reduce Tikrit we probably are likely to find some of Saddam's armed loyalists up there. We will find some Special Republican Guards. It seems that the remnants of the odds-on Republican Guard division are in Tikrit. Other elements of the Republican Guard may have found their way to Tikrit. In addition you are likely to find other regime security forces up there. And more than that, we may find a populace for the first time in Iraq that is willing to actively support the regime's loyalists and that could make Tikrit a very messy fight if it happens.

It's also possible, and I want to stress this, because of the general demoralization and the psychological wave sweeping across Iraq, it is possible that Tikrit too will collapse quickly. This is a phenomenon that you see in war all the time. The people in Tikrit may under other circumstances have been willing to fight for Saddam but seeing what else is happening in the country they may simply become despondent and not be willing to do so. But I do think that we have to keep in mind that Tikrit is out there, and if we are going to see a city, if we are ever going to see an incident in Iraq that looks truly like Mogadishu, Tikrit's the one place where that might actually be true.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, Ken.

Before I turn to Mike O'Hanlon can I get you to speculate a little bit perhaps on why it is that Saddam's forces did not use chemical or biological weapons? That was the great threat going into this. The great fear. And the argument was that when his back was up against the wall and he had no way out this would be his parting shot. It hasn't happened yet. Any speculation as to why?

MR. POLLACK: First, this is absolute, pure speculation, and I am as interested as everyone else to find out what the truth is when this all sorts out.

My best guess at the moment is it has something to do with what I was just describing. So rapid collapse of the defenses of Baghdad. Again, my sense is that Saddam in particular always thought that the battle for Baghdad would move much slower. That he was going to have time to build a new defensive line. It's important to remember that the embedded correspondents who are all reporting back from the battles around Baghdad were talking about the fact that when they first arrived at the outskirts of Baghdad, particularly the correspondents with the 3rd Infantry Division. When they first arrived at the outskirts of Baghdad, when they first took Saddam International, there were no defenses whatsoever. There was nothing there. It was only after they had taken Saddam International that they saw the Republican Guards first of all launching counterattacks just to slow them down; but secondarily, trying to dig foxholes, trying to build fighting positions on the outskirts of Baghdad. This suggests that Saddam had not been really thinking much about the defenses of Baghdad and it may well be that what happened was he did have the stuff, it was located somewhere, but he always expected that if he needed it he could bring it forward as part of this defense of the inner ring of Baghdad and we simply collapsed his defenses so quickly that that became obviated. IT was not possible for him to do so, which as best we understand it is also what happened in the Gulf War in 1991. Where again, he had chemical warfare agents positioned, stockpiled outside of the Kuwaiti theater believing that the war would unfold slow enough so that if things ever really got bad he could bring it into theater if he needed to do so. But again, U.S. forces moved so fast that that became impossible.

MR. LINDSAY: Thanks, Ken.

Mike, Ken isn't telling us about the war from the Iraqi military perspective. What can you tell us about American strategy, both getting us to this point and going forward.

MR. MICHAEL E. O'HANLON: Thanks, Jim, and I apologize for being late. I had to look up the word "cakewalk" in the dictionary to make sure my understanding was correct. [Laughter] For those of you who haven't seen the Washington Post OpEd page, I apologize for the inside joke. Ken Adelman's still out there saying it's a cakewalk.

Anyway, what I wanted to do was go through five main elements of U.S. strategy and quickly say where I thought they had been innovative or brilliant, to use the favorite adjective that General Myers and now Vice President Cheney have used to described this war plan, and it sort of raises the interesting question, maybe I'll open with a retrospective on the strategy so far and save for others and the discussion in the future the harder question. But was this sort of an over-matched U.S. military capability against a mid-level developing country, almost sort of a replay of Germany against Poland in World War II, or was this really a brilliant strategy where

we had to come up with innovative tactics? Or maybe a little bit of both. I would propose it's a little bit of both.

But I think there are five main elements to the strategy, and five concepts that drove a lot of what we've been doing. The shock and awe concept, the special operations raised early in the war, the rapid armored assaults moving towards Baghdad, the combined arms offensive against the Republican Guard, and finally the urban combat tactics of the last few days. I would say the urban combat and the special operations have been quite innovative. Whether you want to call them brilliant or not is not so important. But they've been quite impressive, they've been creative, they've been clever. They were not obvious. And they've been very effective.

The other three concepts, shock and awe and the rapid armored movement and the combined arms offensive have been essentially textbook. Historically, with plenty of precedent, things we've been planning to do for 20, 30, 40, 50 years in American military training and in war colleges, and therefore the right things to have done but not necessarily brilliant. So let me just add a couple of words on each of those and then wrap up.

Again, shock and awe which was of course the big talk three weeks ago. We never really tried it since we wound up doing the limited airstrike to try to assassinate Saddam instead of the 48 hours of intensive bombardment that shock and awe advocates had proposed. But I was skeptical of that strategy for a number of reasons. First of all, the Iraqis are pretty used to getting attacked from the air by the United States. They've been subjected to that for 12 years. We've done fairly massive first-day bombing campaigns before, including in Desert Storm. So I think that even though there was some merit to trying to go in and hit hard, we also were attacking an enemy that was used to American air power, and also an enemy that we were going to try to attack very selectively. Hit certain infrastructure but not other infrastructure. Finally, we were going after Saddam's regime, we were not going to be satisfied with anything less than that, so what incentive did Saddam have to be shocked and awed to the point of surrender? It's hard for me to see what would have led him to do that.

So shock and awe, perfectly reasonable idea, very mediocre prospects for working, even if it had been tried, and not that innovative because the idea of massive, big, early bombardments has been around in Air Force debates now for about 80 years. We've actually used that concept to some extent in places like Desert Storm the first time around. Not quite the same way that it was being advocated this time, but nonetheless a very big beginning.

The Special Forces raids. Here I was very impressed. This seems to have been an idea that Rumsfeld really pushed the uniformed military to work into the plan much more than they would have at their first 'druthers.

A year ago the military wanted to go in big and strong and conventional, Rumsfeld

wanted to go in small and creative and innovative, and each side dropped part of its idea and kept the good part. The system really worked because Rumsfeld's ideas for innovation and Special Operations were juxtaposed with the military's preference for a big force. Whether it was just big enough we can debate, but it was certainly big compared to what Rumsfeld and Adelman and Perle and others were advocating a year ago, and we got the best of both worlds.

So the Special Operations raids early on destroyed command and control centers, they seized oil infrastructure, they took airfields, they began to establish a presence inside of Baghdad and get the targeting information we've used in the attacks against Saddam and Chemical Ali in Basra. The Special Operations element here was quite new, quite largescale, and to my mind quite courageous as well. Even if we were going to succeed in this war with little doubt, the individual teams of 10 and 12 people who went into many of these places on their own in the war's opening hours were really doing something was not only technically very proficient, but quite courageous and admirable. So I would rank that strategy and its execution very very high.

The rapid armored thrust. This idea of going quickly to the capital. This is just as old as armored warfare itself. It was obviously a big part of what the Germans wanted to do in blitzkrieg in World War II, not just vis-à-vis the Poles, not just vis-à-vis the French, but even their strategy for going into the Soviet Union wanted to penetrate deeply and quickly, keep the enemy guessing, keep the enemy off-balance. There's nothing particularly new about this approach. It was a good idea. I was supporting that strategy even two weeks ago when it was coming under criticism for leaving the flank somewhat exposed, but it was not a new idea so it's be hard to call that idea brilliant.

Going down to the combined arms offensive, the fourth element of the strategy as I would describe it, this was I think a very very well executed air/ground campaign. All four military services were critical in the execution. The Air Force and the Army probably doing more in the west against the Medina Division; the Navy and Marine Corps doing more in the east against the Baghdad Division. I don't have all the information on exactly what Navy and Air Force roles there were in each of these two places, but that seems to have been the general overall approach.

But here what you saw as the excellence of our forces and the excellence of our technology. The idea of combined arms warfare of this nature, hitting very hard from both the land and the air simultaneously, this goes back obviously to the world wars, and it's a concept we've been trying to use with more and more high technology and newer innovative approaches ever since NATO devised the follow-on forces attack plan in the early 1980s to counter the Soviet threat. Again, there was nothing new about that, nothing innovative for Mr. Rumsfeld and Mr. Myers and General Franks to be taking credit for. It was just simply a good idea, good execution, good technology, and excellent proficiency on the part of our forces.

Finally to wrap up, again the urban tactics of the last few days have I think been very very well done. Not just at the level of Myers, Franks and Rumsfeld, but at the level perhaps even more of the division and brigade commanders who tested the Iraqis, pushed a little bit and pushed a little bit more, figured out where the defenses were strong, figured out how much resistance they were facing, and then kept the initiative, kept upping the ante day by day to the point where I would never have expected this set of tactics to have worked within five days. And the fact that we've now seen most of Iraq's cities fall is remarkable. And the fact that they've fallen with relatively low loss of life, not only to ourselves but to Iraqis is remarkable as well.

The losses have certainly not been trivial, and again I would really take on the cakewalk concept. Any war in which you have to deploy 300,000 people, spend $70 billion, and kill 15,000 of the enemy is a cakewalk, so I think that kind of language needs to be dispensed with quickly. But nonetheless, compared to any other way of fighting this war that I can envision, I do not see how we could have done any better.

I'll leave it at that. The five big conceptual underpinnings of this strategy, at least two of them I think were very impressive, very creative, and the other three were time tested, textbook, but still basically sound approaches to trying to wage this kind of war.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you very much, Mike.

I want to turn to Jim Dobbins next. The question I want to pose to you Jim is, I think as Mike and Ken both pointed out, war is still going on. We still have fighting particularly in the north. But much of the country clearly is now in U.S. and British hands which raises the question of what comes next? What is the day after going to be like? What needs to be done in the short term to stabilize security in cities? We've already seen some disturbing scenes from Basra. But also in the long term to fill the President's vision of bringing a democratic government to Iraq.

MR. JAMES DOBBINS: Well, I think cheering streets, cheering crowds in the streets of Baghdad does suggest we're moving from the first stage of this operation to the second, from war to peace, from combat operations to reconstruction.

The first stage is obviously more dangerous and more dramatic, but it's not necessarily more expensive, and it's almost certainly not as time consuming.

For the last several weeks we've had to worry about Iraqis killing American forces. Now we have to start worrying about Iraqis killing Iraqis. And Iraqi on Iraqi violence will stem from three basic sources. The first already visible is rioting, looting and criminality that always increases in times of disorder and it now falls to the United States to reimpose order and deal with those problems.

The second source is retributive violence. That is the millions of victims of Saddam's regime looking somehow to get even.

We may not lose a lot of sleep about the fate of Saddam and his closest henchmen, but there are hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of people who are closely associated with the regime by virtue of family ties or ethnicity or religion or the place in the country they come from who are perfectly innocent at a personal level. And their safety is now in our hands.

It's worth remembering that we went into Kosovo to protect the Albanians from the Serbs and then spent the next three years protecting the Serbs from the Albanians. It's quite likely that we will be faced with similar tasks in Iraq.

The third security challenge is holding the country together against those who might try to tear it apart. There we'll be confronting more likely our friends than our assumed adversaries. That is the Kurds, the Turks, as well as potentially the Iranians.

So those are the major security challenges that fall to the United States as the successor to the Saddam regime.

The second challenge of course is meeting humanitarian needs of the people. This really can't begin in a major way until security is established, until some modicum of security is established.

The next is putting in place a basic administrative structure so the lights work and the water works and food deliveries begin and normal civic services are established. Here the U.S. will face the question of how deeply it wants to rely on Saddam's machine and how extensively it wants to purge and reform that. The dilemma is the more it relies on the machine the less the burden on us is, but the less it reforms and purges that regime the less likely a fundamental democratic transformation is.

This brings you to the next major task the U.S. faces which is the task of democratization. And here the tension is between turning over Iraq to unelected Iraqis which allows us to diminish our commitments and get out of it more quickly, or waiting to turn Iraq over to elected Iraqis and enduring that the democratic transformation is a genuinely enduring one. This is a tension that we're going to face as we go forward over the coming months.

The final area is the area of reconstruction. This brings us to the second major issue the United States will face. The first is how quickly and how substantially to turn power back over to the Iraqis. The second issue is how quickly and substantially to share power with the rest of the world.

Reconstruction is going to be a massive challenge. Iraq has suffered 20 years of war and sanctions. Its oil revenues are more than committed to basic humanitarian needs. Emergency repairs of the oilfields and Iraq's massive indebtedness. So they're not going to be a source at least in the next several years of the kinds of funding that's going to be necessary to reform the structures and begin a real process of economic reform.

So the question is, does the United States intend to do that alone or does it want to draw on broader resources of the world in general.

To conclude, I think it's never been a doubt that the United States would win the war, that it would win it quickly, and that if necessary it would win it alone. Winning the peace is less certain. And winning the peace on our own is even less certain.

One of the questions that I'm often asked is how long will it take. My answer is that I've never seen a nationbuilding operation of this dimension succeed in less than five years. That doesn't mean we govern Iraq for five years, but it does mean that we stick around long enough to ensure that the reforms we put in place stay in place. And the historic parallels of course go back to the 1940s to Japan, Germany, Austria, in the post-World War II era, and then the 1990s in the post Cold War era where you had a similar set in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan.

We have concluded these operations in less than five years in Somalia and in Haiti and in neither case did any of the reforms that were applied take. It's only where we stayed longer, made a longer-term commitment that we had a lasting effect.

So there is going to be a real tension which will run through our politics, through our debates with the rest of the world, through our debates with the Iraqis. Between getting it done quickly and getting out quickly and putting in something that looks better than Saddam which is not a hard challenge to meet, or staying long enough so that we've had a lasting, transformative effect on Iraqi society.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you very much, Jim.

Now I'm going to turn to our final panelist, General Yanai.

Shlomo, the war in Iraq not only has consequences for Iraq but it has consequences for the broader Middle East. Indeed one of the arguments against the war by many critics was that it would destabilize the Middle East and have long-term harmful consequences.

A decision to go to war has been made. The war is not over but victory certainly looks to be in the offing.

On your basis of someone that's lived in the neighborhood and has spent a lifetime thinking about strategic planning, how do you see the consequences of the war for the region as a whole?

MR. YANAI: First, we are living in a historic moment. I don't know if we have the perspective to understand it right now, but definitely there is an opportunity here for a different Middle East, hopefully a better one.

I think the most important thing regarding the war in Iraq is that the United States demonstrated their determination and their commitment for what the President said two years ago about fighting terrorism and rogue regimes in global reach. I think these are very important signals for the people in the Middle East and especially to the leaders in the Middle East.

I would like to just mention some of the ramifications of this kind of war that we see right now in Iraq.

First of all the rogue regimes, mainly Syria and Iran. They will have to think and to draw their lessons regarding how they continue to support terrorism or terror-like organizations like Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah in Lebanon, or to continue pursuing weapons of mass destruction regarding Iran.

But I think it is also a moment of thinking for the authoritarian regimes and governments, even some of them that are friendly to the United States like Egypt or Saudi Arabia regarding the other [inaudible] of the Middle East which is radicalism.

We all understand, especially after September 11th that the root for all those organizations started probably I would say persuading of what they see in their country. The only way to fight radicalism is by more opening or widening their society. I think if we will win the war on peace as Jim said here, and I [inaudible] and if we will see more moderate, liberal Iraq coming out of this war the chance to see the kind of reform in those countries is better than we see right now.

I will also point out a different kind of opportunity which may play even a stronger role regarding the interests of the United States in the Middle East. If, and there is a big if here, Iraq will be a more liberal, moderate country then the role of Saudi Arabia in the Middle East is going to be decreased. If you wish, we will have a better situation when you have two oil suppliers in the Middle East, a big one, not only one of them is friendly as it used to be before.

And last but not least, of course, is the Israeli-
Palestinian conflict. I think that we have opportunity here to come out of the stallment that we

are there in the last two and a half years, but I would like also to point out besides those opportunities, that we have some risks coming together with those opportunities.

The major one is high expectations. The Middle East is a very rough neighborhood so to speak, and it takes time. There is no silver bullet there. No black magic. And for many years that deters all those thinkers who try to make any change there.

I think that the United States by going to Iraq started a chance for change in the Middle East and I think that if we will have the patience and the time then we will win not only the war, but what is much more important, the peace, the ultimate.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, Shlomo. We're now going to go to the question and answer portion of our session. Let me begin first off by reminding everybody that there will be a pretty transcript of this briefing on the Brooking web site, www.brookings.edu; along with transcripts of previous Brookings briefings. Also when I call on you please wait for the microphone to arrive and please identify yourself.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION: Miles Benson with Newhouse Newspapers.

I'd like to ask Mr. Pollack and the other panel members to comment on this. Now that the war in Iraq is almost over, are we here in this country safer from terrorism? And I recall some people at Brookings suggesting a couple of months ago that the short term effect might be to increase the risk of terrorism, the short term effect of a war in Iraq. Is that still your view? And what is your view about the long-term effects as well?

MR. LINDSAY: Ken, should we go to Red or down to Green? [Laughter]

MR. POLLACK: The honest answer is I think in terms of your question, Jim, in terms of counterterrorism preparation, I think we're in pretty good shape. I still do worry about possibilities for terrorism in the short term. We have seen an influx of other Arabs into Iraq. I think for many Americans, certainly for me, one of the most interesting developments was the flow of volunteers, small numbers but nonetheless volunteers, from other Arab countries into Iraq. And just as you have had small numbers of volunteers to go into Iraq to fight the Americans, you may also be having small numbers of volunteers from Arab countries signing up with the local al Qaeda representative to attack the United States in another venue.

I think the recent tapes released by bin Laden also suggest that there is still a terrorist threat out there. I don't think that we should relax our guard. But Miles, as you've heard me say

any number of times, I do think the bigger issue is the long term one, and there I think that the question is very much along the lines of what Ambassador Dobbins and General Yanai have been talking about in terms of what does the United States do in the Middle East and in Iraq after this? Because I truly believe that we all have an opportunity to either start turning Arab public opinion around and diminishing the extent of anti-Americanism, which is the reservoir from which the pool of terrorists are recruited, or we may exacerbate it. For me, that's the bigger consideration over the longer term, what happens.

MR. LINDSAY: Mike, you're the co-author of "Protecting the American Homeland", which by the way is on sale in the Brookings book store. How would you respond?

MR. O'HANLON: It's a great question. I think first of all the immediate fears have not played out as badly as some of us thought they might. That Iraqi-sponsored terrorism or sympathetic terrorism might become more prevalent. Just as was attempted after and during the first Persian Gulf War, the 1991 war. So that particular threat has not been as serious, at least so far as feared.

A second point, however, Ken I think is underscoring very appropriately, the risk to our troops inside of Iraq which continues, and of course we're not through this yet. Because Saddam may have had sort of a sense of fighting fair being his best way to survive this. Not using chemicals, trying to fight us in a way that would encourage the French to stay on the fence about who they were rooting for a little longer, and gradually set up the international pressure against our continuing a war in which many innocent Iraqis were dying and having those deaths telecast throughout the world. That seems to have been a strategy he followed. That would have argued against terrorism during the war but it may now lead to an unleashing of terrorism. But I'm not too worried about that because, again, Saddam seems to be out of the picture for all intents and purposes, so I don't see how he's going to be able to coordinate any massive new global terrorist effort. He was never very good at that anyway.

The third issue is al Qaeda was never likely to be waiting for us to choose the moment of acute crisis and then they themselves responding at that moment, a moment of our choosing. I think al Qaeda is much more resourceful and much more innovative than that. They will wait until the alert levels go down. They will wait until they've developed their tactics and then they will try another attack. It's not going to be based on our timetable, it's going to be based on theirs, so in this regard the arrest of Kalid Sheik Mohammed to my mind is much bigger news than the entire downfall of the entire Iraqi regime. Because I think we have disrupted the top levels of al Qaeda and let's hope we can put the time that we now have to good use before new people step into those roles and reorganize that organization and get it back to where it can mount a September 11th type attack. So I hope we use the intervening time to improve our homeland security and I'm somewhat encouraged. The last few months we've pushed this debate a little further. It's gotten bogged down in a lot of 2002, and now I think homeland security

efforts are being promoted a little more quickly and vigorously than was the case for much of last year. I hope we use that time period well.

QUESTION: Randy Mikelson with Reuters.

To what extent has this war set a precedent in terms of a strategic focus on decapitation of the leadership and what kind of risks could that pose, or what impact could that have on future wars?

And secondly, are you concerned about the early entry of the Iraqi National Congress with its implied U.S. favor arming them, running around? Is that the right time to introduce that group?

MR. LINDSAY: Mike, why don't we have you take the first part of the second, and Jim if you want to take the second part of the question.

MR. O'HANLON: I wish you'd clarify, you're worried about or wondering about the precedent a decapitation strike may have for sort of a broader doctrine of preemption?

QUESTION: Right. And this war seemed to be, the entire focus seemed to be on taking out the leadership. Is that a factor, and does it have [inaudible]? -- less willing to surrender [inaudible]?

MR. O'HANLON: It's a big question and an interesting one. I won't do it full justice. But I think we have done some of these kinds of attacks recently. For example, Panama, and certainly some of our involvement in the Balkans was ultimately aimed at Milosevic. Granted, we did not try to target him in quite the same way, but we certainly welcomed his lack of influence and then his political downfall. So I think there have been precedents in which we've gone after regimes more and more in recent times, trying to avoid fighting countries and whole populations and trying to go after the political apparatus that's responsible for whatever disagreement we have.

In some places it could be harder to do that. Iran and North Korea might be the two obvious examples that would come to mind, and the two obvious places where it would be harder. Maybe Syria is a place where you could consider extending the model. I don't think that's very likely, but in theory you have the same sort of situation there to some extent with a party at the top that's your main concern as opposed to the population being fundamentally against you.

In North Korea, however, if you went after Kim Jung Il, I don't know how you would get at him in quite the same way you got at Saddam. I think the North Koreans are more

brainwashed than the Iraqis. I think they've been more cut off from the outside world, outside debate. They're less likely to see Americans as liberators. So I think the strategy of going after the top there would not work very well. There's obviously going to be a lot more debate about this in coming months because let's hope we don't have to consider these sorts of options against North Korea, but in the short term we can't rule them out entirely, so people will continue to ask your question. But that's my first impression in responding to it.

With Iran, of course, we have a complex political struggle going on in which many factors and many peoples are involved in top-level government of that country, and so to go after the government would be to go after many different elements of Iranian politics and many different elements of Iranian society. So you couldn't easily target a rotten elite and say that was the extent of the problem inside that country's politics. It seems to me much more systemic throughout, that the concerns we have with Iran are much more systemic throughout the security apparatus, and if you go in and you try to take that piece out you're going to also wind up going after a lot of reformers and moderates that you don't want to hurt, and potentially convince the population to oppose you.

So I would tend to say it might be tempting to think of this decapitation concept as a new strategy, but in most of the cases I can think of it's not going to work nearly as well as it seems to have in Iraq.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you very much, Mike.

Jim, how would you respond to this issue of the Iraqi National Congress, the general issue of bringing exiles into this sort of situation?

MR. DOBBINS: I think Shilabi and the Iraqi National Congress have "a" legitimate place in post-Saddam Iraq but not "the" legitimate place. It would be wrong for the United States to maneuver so that they appeared to be "the" chosen instrumentality for building a post-Iraqi regime. But there's nothing wrong with allowing them to secure and demonstrate their own legitimacy and support in the society by giving them access to it. They've certainly earned that much. So it's going to be a question of balance I think.

QUESTION: Stanley Lewis, Copley News Service.

On the issue of weapons of mass destruction and supplies of the materials for which those kinds of weapons might be fashioned, I know this is very conjectural but how much time do you think coalition forces have in order to secure those supplies and is there a policy response that we should start thinking about a la something like Nunn/Lugar to try to sop up those supplies when we find them?

MR. LINDSAY: Ken, do you want to answer the question and also perhaps talk about some of the rumors that these weapons have made their way to Syria?

MR. POLLACK: Sure. I'll be honest with you, I don't think that's necessarily the way to think about it, that there is somehow some kind of a clock out there that needs to be [adjusted in the mean time]. These weapons are out there. We've always know that they were out there. We knew that that was going to be a big part of conducting this operation was getting control of them, preventing them from flowing beyond the borders.

As best any of us can tell, there's not been significant leakage with this one exception of Syria.

My sense is that the weapons are still deeply hidden and deeply under other people's control and we've not seen any evidence certainly that it is moving.

As Secretary Rumsfeld likes to point out, the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. So who knows exactly what the right answer is? But we always knew this was a problem. Again, I don't think you can necessarily put a clock on it. It's an important issue that needs to be dealt with and obviously the sooner the better.

This issue of Syria is an interesting one. When the rumors first surfaced back in the fall people who had seen the evidence were saying to me that the evidence was good enough that it couldn't be dismissed but not so good that it necessarily swept away all counter-explanations. I think there is a question out there as to what if anything has been moved to Syria at this point in time. It's one that I'm hoping we will get additional information on before we make any precipitous decisions.

QUESTION: Peter Ganz, Refugees International.

My question here is your second bullet on the news release, what is the future role of the UN? But I want to preface that by saying that I think there's a sense that in terms of a humanitarian role that's fairly largely agreed upon, but regarding a security role and a political role, I think that's more interesting and there definitely is a security situation in Iraq as we touched upon briefly here, but it's pretty telling that ICRC and NSF who stayed in Iraq and in Baghdad for three weeks of bombing pulled out once the U.S. troops got there because the security situation deteriorated that much. So I'm interested in that,

MR. LINDSAY: Do you want to respond to that, Jim?

MR. DOBBINS: I think the potential roles for the UN are numerous. One is coordinating the flow of humanitarian assistance. The second is helping put together a non-

elected interim regime as they did very successfully in Bonn and very rapidly. A third would be overseeing elections when elections are held which they've done dozens of times all over the world. Another area would be actually overseeing the civil administration for some interim period before that's fully returned to the Iraqis. And finally, conducting peacekeeping operations.

The first of those, as you've indicated, is non-controversial I think and I think the United States and the U.K. will encourage the UN to assume a direct role in coordinating NGOs and international organizations in supporting humanitarian operations.

The second of those appears to have been what Tony Blair was trying to persuade George Bush in Belfast and it got at least halfway there. That is President Bush has said the UN should help in proposing Iraqis for an interim regime. So some role for a UN Special Representative is foreseen in the political area although at this point it looks undefined and perhaps limited. But in any case they've definitely got a foot in the door in that area.

Elections are still, in my judgment, one to two years away, so the issue of who actually oversees the election and declares them to be free and fair that's not something a decision is necessary on right away. Although the whole process of creating political parties and civil society and the infrastructures for elections an electoral council, etc., etc., those are long lead time items. You will have needed to decide this at least eight months before you have an election.

The issue of the UN actually taking over the civil administration, they've done it in Kosovo, they've done it fairly successfully in Kosovo. It took them awhile to get established and it's undoubtedly wise for the U.S. to assume that we'd have to do it ourselves at least for some interim period.

It appears that there's no interest in having the UN do it at any stage on the part of the U.S. Administration. The British may feel differently, other countries may feel differently. This could become part of a grander bargain to get other countries to share other aspects of the burden there. We'll see. But at the moment the Administration is taking quite a strong negative line on that.

Finally on the area of peacekeeping, I don't think the UN has any interest in that. It's too big a job. It's not suited to the kind of blue-helmeted UN peacekeeping force which operates successfully unless demanding circumstances, but not in something like this.

There is an international organization which can do it which the Administration has expressed some interest in and which if it could occur would be a major advance in multilateralizing and broadening participation in that, and that's NATO.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, Jim.

QUESTION: I'm Susan Page with USA Today.

Ambassador Dobbins, can you talk a little more about lessons from previous U.S. efforts to foster democracy and nationbuild in other places? You mentioned one is to be prepared to stay at least five years. Are there other lessons? Especially lessons this Administration doesn't seem to fully understand at the moment?

And General, Israel tried to help foster a more democratic government in Lebanon in the early 1980s and I wonder if you also see lessons that might apply here from Israel's experience then.

MR. DOBBINS: There's a lot of lessons more than I could go into here. By coincidence we're working on a book which we will soon publish, a hundred pages of lessons drawn from America's principal nationbuilding experiments -- Germany, Japan, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan.

The main difference between the '40s and the '90s was that in the 1940s the United States produced 50 percent of the world's GDP. It was feasible for the United States to do this by ourselves and indeed there was no real alternative than to do it by ourselves, and we did it and we did it very successfully. Albeit with an extended commitment over a long period of time, but extremely successfully.

In the '90s the effort was, by the '90s the United States was producing 20 percent of the world's GDP, and while we might theoretically have been able to do one or two of these on our own there was absolutely no appetite on the part of the American people, the American public or the Congress and burden-sharing was clearly a major consideration. So we spent a lot of the '90s experimenting with different ways of multilaterlizing the process while retaining adequate command and control so that there was a unity of purpose in the international effort. And we gradually got better at it. I mean Haiti was better than Somalia, Bosnia was better than Haiti, and Kosovo was better than Bosnia.

I think this Administration is going back to the '40s for its models is passing over a body of experience and of experienced people, countries, institutions, modalities that were built up in the '90s to create civil societies, to build political parties, to police ravaged societies where domestic institutions for law enforcement were corrupted or collapsed. And I think on the one hand this Administration's willingness to reverse the U.S. military's aversion to nationbuilding and actually put it fairly high on their list of priorities is to be welcomed, but on the other hand the pendulum seems to have swung a little bit too far on that side and some of the other

instrumentalities that were built up in the '90s are being overlooked. So I hope a mean can be established between reliance on the military, and the military can do more than it did in the '90s in this regard, and the use of the civil modalities that were built up in that decade.

MR. YANAI: I would not take the Lebanese example as a good example. [Inaudible] is very simple. And to a certain degree it's important today.

I think the idea is not to replace Saddam with another Saddam or Saddam-like. That is basically what the idea back in the '80s in the Lebanon era and some other examples. The idea is to bring about a new kind of government, a broad-based government. I won't say a democratic government because democracy is something that takes more than just decisions. It's a question of the process. It can take many years as the Ambassador explained before. But at least more liberal, more moderate, and again broad-based government to create at least the opportunity. To get one day to a more democratic way of life in those countries.

So Lebanon is not a good example.

QUESTION: Rick Newman with US News and World Report. For Ken and Mike I imagine.

The Air Force talked a lot about effects-based operations before this as part of their shock and awe campaign and the air campaign seems to be one of the more opaque parts of this campaign so far. Ken, you talked last week about command and control. Did it seem evident to you that, obviously there was a decapitation strategy, but also a strategy of putting intense pressure on the leadership and all their levers of power. Does it seem evident that the air campaign accomplished that? Or is it too early to tell, to sort of parcel out where the ground troops were responsible for the collapse. For example, did it appear that command and control just disintegrated so much that they couldn't control their troops, for instance?

MR. POLLACK: I certainly think your last point there is an absolutely valid one. We just don't at this point in time have a lot of information to I think make a good assessment of exactly what happened. For my part, I don't know exactly where the airstrikes were going, I don't know exactly where the ground pressure was coming from. On the Iraqi side I don't know which Iraqi units were feeling that kind of heat and what kind of an impact it was having on them. About the best I can do is point to I think the one example we do have which is the collapse of the Republican Guard divisions during that retreat from this Karbala-Kut line. I think it is very cleat that those divisions lost all cohesion in the retreat.

Again, let me caveat this. Retreats are not something the Iraqi military does well, and we've seen this time and again from them. When they're force to improvise an operation, any operation, but particularly a massive retreat like this which has not been prepared for, which is

totally ad hoc, it immediately starts to have command and control problems. But that said, I also do think it's pretty clear that U.S. pressure greatly exacerbated those command and control problems such that when we finally got to Baghdad, when U.S. forces finally reached Baghdad, the Republican Guard divisions had almost no cohesion whatsoever. What you saw the Central Command Authority doing was throwing penny packets of Republican Guard armor at 3rd Infantry Division, a far as I can tell basically to slow them down and keep them at Baghdad International Airport to prevent them from moving on the city in the hope that they'd be able to put together some kind of a defensive line. But again, they couldn't even do that. They couldn't reestablish the cohesiveness of those Guard divisions enough even to get that kind of a defensive line established.

MR. O'HANLON: I think that the Air Force and also Navy and Marine air power have had a fantastic war, but it's been largely in the supporting role. The old fashioned way to think about air power is supporting ground forces. Obviously a lot of Air Force people would dispute that, and clearly if we assassinated Saddam Monday night with air power that needs to be a big caveat in my overall conclusion. But nonetheless I think the most remarkable thing the air power campaign accomplished so far was to help the ground forces decimate the Republican Guard in a kind of attack that only became effective, as far as I can tell, once the ground forces began to engage and localize the Republican Guard and force the Republican Guard forces to essentially identify themselves by moving or by firing back. So I think air power had a fantastic war, but largely in a supporting role.

QUESTION: Dan Myers from the Kuwait Information Office. This is for General Yanai and anyone else who may want to comment.

You made a comment about how this war may impact the role of Saudi Arabia in the region. I'm just wondering if you may have any comments on the consequences for Kuwait. If their assistance in helping the United States in the war effort and humanitarian aid and things will give them a more prominent and important role or relationship with the U.S., or if U.S. presence in Iraq might kind of put Kuwait on the sidelines.

MR. YANAI: I think that any player, if you wish to call them this way, that helps United States should gain some dividend from the help they provided. But it's a question of the size and the capability.

I think if you look at the Middle East regarding the key players we are talking about Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and to a certain degree because [inaudible], Iran. And again, if you wish also Syria. But the others, with all due respect, less important in the kind of gains that we are going to see in the next years in the aftermath of the Iraqi war.

MR. LINDSAY: Can you just sort of draw on that question and put it in a little broader

context? What does the war mean for not just Kuwait, but Saudi Arabia? Are we going to have U.S. troops coming out of those two countries because they're going to be in Iraq?

MR. POLLACK: It's certainly my hope that the end of Saddam Hussein's regime will make it possible to reduce the U.S. military footprint in the GCC states, in particular in Saudi Arabia. I think the presence we have in Kuwait, in Bahrain, in Qatar is somewhat less problematic because there does not seem to be the same kind of popular unhappiness with us.

Right now the Saudi people don't particularly like our troops in Saudi Arabia and our troops don't particular like being in Saudi Arabia. So eliminating Saddam's threat, and we have to remember that the overwhelming reasons those forces were in Saudi Arabia was because of the Iraqi threat, because of the need to enforce Operation Southern Watch and to keep an eye on the Iraqis. There's no reason those forces can't come out now. I think the U.S. ought to be thinking and working with our GCC allies to be thinking about how we restructure the security of the entire Gulf region.

We've eliminated a very important threat. We've done it after 30 years of trying and failing with any number of different security systems in the Gulf region, and this is an excellent opportunity now to sit down with our Gulf allies, talk about what the real security needs of the region are, and about how we can best restructure the security architecture to meet the security needs without creating additional internal problems for any of them.

QUESTION: I'm Bob Hillman with the Dallas Morning News. To Ambassador Dobbins and Mr. Pollack perhaps.

MR. DOBBINS: Looking back to Afghanistan and our unfinished business there, has the mission there suffered because of the operations in Iraq and might it continue to suffer? And are there any immediate lessons to be learned now as we begin the rebuilding process in Iraq? It's hard to know whether Afghanistan suffered. It's hard to know whether we would have made different decisions if we hadn't had in the back of our mind from the beginning that there might be another operation after this, and we might have to retool our forces for another even more difficult operation more quickly.

I suspect that the U.S., that the limited commitment the U.S. made to sort of post-conflict Afghanistan was influenced by the knowledge on the part of the Administration that it had other uses for those forces and money and time and attention. And that we could afford to make a more limited commitment in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan on a cost-effectiveness ratio may be our most successful nationbuilding effort yet because we've invested so little in it. We set low expectations. We've met those low expectations, and we've done so at extremely low cost.

But Iraq is a bigger, more important, richer, more complex country in a much more sensitive and important area, so we can't afford a low budget approach.

I think there are relatively few lessons from Afghanistan that will apply in Iraq. I think in many ways Iraq is likely to be more like the Balkans in terms of the scale of the demands, in terms of the kinds of problems. In Afghanistan, all the Afghanis, whatever language they speak and whatever ethnicity they are, all want to be Afghanis. They all think they should be running the country, but they all want to run that country. They don't want to be Uzbeks or Pakistanis or Tajiqs. They want to be Afghans with whatever ethnicity they have. That's not necessarily the case in Iraq. Iraq in that case may be like some of the places in the Balkans where the Kurds and the Arabs just don't want to live in the same state, so a degree of compulsion is involved in keeping them in the same state.

So I think that in Afghanistan we didn't set democracy as a goal. We said a broadly based representative government. That was enough. And we got it very quickly and with relatively minor investment we've been able to keep it in power and probably can continue to do so at that same low level of investment. But we're setting higher objectives for ourselves in Iraq which will require a much more substantial commitment.

QUESTION: How long [inaudible]?

MR. DOBBINS: I think we would probably have to stay in Afghanistan more or less indefinitely to keep it at its current level of stability. But that level of commitment is pretty low. Five thousand troops or something. You can do that for a long time, a few hundred million dollars a year.

So I can't set a time at which we could leave Afghanistan. On the other hand, what's our objective in Afghanistan? Our objective in Afghanistan is to prevent it from becoming a base for terrorism. There are a lot of different outcomes in Afghanistan which wouldn't look very democratic but which would probably meet that criteria. We're not trying to make Afghanistan a model for the region, but we are trying to make Iraq a model for the region. Much higher standard.

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

Again we go back to Saddam Hussein. During the war they said that he is irrelevant. Now he disappeared and from Iraq it was quoted in the Washington Post that they are afraid. This guy has nine lives. They are still afraid. Even the [inaudible] that maybe you are a spy for him, you know? They're afraid? Just to see somebody laughing about them or what.

So is he still irrelevant? Will he, in three weeks I ask this question, you think he will

disappear like bin Laden and nobody know where he is?

And secondly, winning the heart and minds of the Arab world, hitting Al-Jazeera. Al-Jazeera offices is well marked and so on and it was seen by millions of Arabs how it was the target of the tanks, you know. Look at it, shoot at it, and then shot the 15th floor which was filming the shoot.

So can you give any interpretation to the Arab audience how this happened, the shooting of Al-Jazeera office? The same as happened in Afghanistan.

MR. POLLACK: I'll start with your first question, is Saddam irrelevant, yes or no. I think that the Administration is right to say that Saddam is irrelevant in the sense that there is a fundamental difference between Saddam and Osama bin Laden, which is that Saddam represents a threat to the people of Iraq, to the region, to the United States, because of his control of Iraq. His former control of Iraq. The U.S. military can take his control of Iraq away from him and they are doing so.

He is not irrelevant for the reasons you mentioned which is that his death will greatly speed, is my guess, the collapse of the remaining resistance and his death or capture would also help the process of reconstruction. But even there, my guess is that this is a matter of time. Even if the U.S. is unable to catch Saddam Hussein, even if he is able to escape and he is running around Syria or Libya or somewhere else. First of all, if he's in Syria or Lybia I think he will be very much under lock and key. Perhaps even literally. If he's in some of these other countries, again, yes, he may linger in Iraqi minds as the bogeyman who will come to take away Iraqi children if they don't go to sleep at night and obey their parents, but I think that over the course of time the fear of Saddam returning will diminish as a stable Iraqi government is put in place. Of course that's the key. But that's the key to everything.

Reconstruction of Iraq if it works has any number of great benefits, this being one. If it doesn't, I think the least of the problem will be the possibility that Saddam Hussein will return to haunt Iraqis.

MR. DOBBINS: Osama bin Laden imposes his will on his followers by virtue of his ideas and his personality. Saddam imposes his will on his followers by virtue of his power. Once his power is gone, his personality and his ideas are not going to make him continue to be relevant as a threat.

MR. POLLACK: Just to come back to your second point because I don't want to let this go. I find it exceedingly, exceptionally unlikely that Al-Jazeera was purposely targeted. It is inconceivable to me that the U.S. military would have done so. It's not even just a matter of whether they like Al-Jazeera or not. The fact of the matter is in the United States these things

always come out and there is no U.S. military official, and I would say no Pentagon official, who would ever want to run the risk that this would come out? This is not how the U.S. military does business. They do not purposely target civilians.

This is a tank commander. A tank commander in the middle of battle has other things to think about other than what building is where. If he is taking fire and he does not see civilians, that tank commander is going to defend himself and defend his tank.

I heard someone saying well everyone knows where all these offices are because the U.S. had all the geo-cords. Does anyone honestly believe that that tank commander had the geo-cords for every single press office in Iraq? This is ludicrous. Or the idea that he would stop and check, even if he did have that list, what are the geo-cords of the building he's about to fire on? If he is taking fire his responsibility is to defend himself and his men. Again, assuming that there are no obvious civilians present, he's going to do exactly that.

I think this was a tragic mistake, but I think it is unimaginable that this was somehow purposeful which is of course the conspiracy theory which is now being spun.

MR. LINDSAY: Mike, do you want to jump in here?

MR. O'HANLON: Very quickly.

Ken's certainly right in this argument but I will add a little bit of criticism of the U.S. military, although I have to admit I haven't seen enough information to want to stand too firmly on this point. But targeting Al-Jazeera or hitting Al-Jazeera inadvertently, we should have known in advance would be seen as a deliberate attack. Especially because we did the same thing in Afghanistan, also by mistake, but nonetheless, two out of two is a pretty bad track record.

Ken's certainly right. It would be unfair to assume -- Journalists who stayed in Baghdad were taking gambles, whoever they were. Not just because of our potential to hurt them but because of Saddam's potential. I'm still surprised he didn't take more hostages, frankly. But having said that, we did have some sense of where some of key press locations were, and I have an impression that we should have taken a little more effort to make sure we didn't attack them, just because of this danger.

Returning tank fire in one situation might be the right thing to do tactically, but in strategic terms this is going to cause us enormous fallout for a long time to come. So I don't want to sound too critical of the U.S. military. The problem as much as anything is with the Al-Jazeera correspondent who stayed in Baghdad even though he had been admonished not to. But, and this is just the fog of war and mistakes happen. But nonetheless I do have the impression we

should have been a little more careful. That might be unfair, but --

QUESTION: I'm Jim Burnam, Community Development Publications.

General Yanai, does this have any impact, our apparent victory in Iraq, any impact on our role in the case of trying to produce some kind of agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis? We keep waiting for the roadmap. We'd like to walk over to the map store in Farragut Square and pick it up but it's not there.

Does this have any impact on that? And even beyond this, what advice would you give the U.S. government for what it should be doing to produce an outcome, a positive outcome in the Palestinian-Israeli situation?

MR. YANAI: Let me first say that I'm not in a position of giving the U.S. advice. I can only share with you some of my thoughts regarding how it could impact the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

I think the notion right now in the Middle East which has been also amplified by Mr. Blair, that we owe the Arab world something for being helpful while U.S. and allies went to fight Iraq. And part of this kind of we owe you is for taking up the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

Well from my subjective point of view this is the wrong conception, actually it's a misconception but it doesn't matter what I am saying. I know that when the war is over we will see Arab leaders coming to Washington and trying to deposit the checks that probably they got on us before this war.

But what is much more important is to understand the climate right now. After this war, could create, and I mentioned it before, a kind of an opportunity for a change in the stallment that you have in the last two and a half years, actually a change to get out of war posture back to a peace posture. And here is very important that all of us will understand that nobody can replace the actors in the Middle East. United States could facilitate. United States in my humble view could also enable both sides to work together, but United States should not, and that's part of the lessons learned from the last from the last Oslo Round, that we all know collapsed, should not replace the Middle East, the Israeli and the Palestinian actors. They should act. They should carry out what they should do in order to resume the peace process [inaudible] to disengage from the war that we are facing right now.

The United States could also help by pushing the Arab leaders, the Arab world leaders, to play a better and important role in delegitimizing the [inaudible], legitimate in their eyes, to gain political good. By doing so that could create the precondition for a change in the current situation in the Middle East. That [will be again] the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

So what I am trying to say, that if we, and we should learn from lessons from the previous Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, we should understand first of all the role of the leadership here, and foremost, especially after what we have seen all in 9/11, is that we cannot accept terror as a legitimate means through which to gain any political achievement. If this will be sounded loud and clear and the Arab world leaders, especially now after the demonstration that we saw in Iraq will understand it and will come aboard with this idea, then there is a chance to move forward.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, General.

QUESTION: Gary Mitchell.

This is a sort of two-animal question I guess. I'll begin by saying that I think the question arguably is sort of beating a dead horse but I want to build on the question that Jim asked at the outset. I suspect this is for Ken and Michael O'Hanlon.

It seems to me that one could sort of characterize this story as the dog that didn't bark. All of the things that we might have expected didn't happen. The use of the weapons of mass destruction, the setting of the oilfields on fire, the destruction of bridges which would certainly have changed the tempo of the war, the more profound or I should say the more prolific use of terrorism, etc., etc. None happened.

One or two seems reasonable, but when the whole slate didn't happen A, is that a fair characterization? And B, recognizing that we need to wait, what's anybody's best guess about that.

MR. LINDSAY: Ken, do you want to go first?

MR. POLLACK: Sure.

Gary, it's a great question and it's going to be a very interesting source of research after the war is over.

There are some elements of it that I never expected to really manifest themselves. I was always concerned about Iraqi terrorism, but the Iraqi intelligence capability was terrible. My experience watching Iraqi intelligence over 15 years is these guys are awful, and I always felt we would be able to deal with that.

Other aspects of it have surprised me. One that really surprised me, setting the explosives on the oilwells and then not blowing them. I can understand not rigging them, I can

understand blowing them. Rigging them and not blowing them is what I have a tough time with. And I'm going to be very interested to figure out why it was that they rigged them and didn't blow them.

Was it that everyone who was supposed to actually push the primers didn't bother to do so and it never happened? Or was it that Saddam had one thing in mind and at the last minute changed his mind? Which is also a possibility. But it's certainly not things I think we can see right now.

Again, some of the things we didn't see I think do fit with this combination of Saddam's strategy as best we understand it now, and it may be, this is something else we found. It may be that his actual strategy was completely different from what we all think it is. That is something that we've seen in the past. He is capable of coming up with strategic concepts that make no sense to anyone but himself. We are imposing a fairly rational set of ideas about what this strategy looked like.

Nevertheless, assuming for a moment, given just the little information we have, assuming this rational strategy was in fact what they were trying to implement, I think some of the things they've not done are understandable. In other cases I think it probably is because it was suggested, I think we did collapse what they expected to be this very hard core around Baghdad much faster than they expected also explains some of it. But I think there are some other things out there that are definitely dogs that haven't barked. I am surprised.

The other one that you mentioned was blowing the bridges. There as well, as best we understand it, they did rig all of these bridges for demolition and they never actually pulled the trigger on it. That's a tough one to make sense of from pretty much any strategic perspective.

MR. LINDSAY: Mike, as you answer this question, can you help us think through whether the fact that dogs didn't bark, and there were plenty of dogs as we were pointing to in the weeks leading up to the war, the fact that these dogs didn't bark, should it force us to rethink how we think about the potential for using force elsewhere? Particularly one of the issues that's on the horizon or peeking over the horizon is North Korea, and the standard line there is you can't threaten coercion against the North Koreans because everything bad will go wrong and you'll lose South Korea.

MR. O'HANLON: This is also in fairness to my good buddy Ken Adelman, the part of his argument where he does deserve to gloat. Now it took 300,000 coalition forces to produce the overall effect and a lot of hard fighting in the city, but nonetheless the points you make are indeed on the optimist side of the prediction.

I don't have a great -- Ken did a great job of brilliantly speculating about things we don't

yet understand, but he's laid out plausible theories much better than I could have, so let me turn to Jim Lindsay's question.

You have to be very careful not to learn too many lessons of the last war. It took us 20 years to get beyond Vietnam. I hope we don't live on some sort of an easy victory complex for the next 20 years in our strategizing either. I think basically until we know why, the best single explanation is that Saddam made this war plan on his own, with his sycophantic generals giving him advice. It was not very well developed. Actually the big mistake Saddam made was not to give up his chemical and biological weapons on December 7th. If he had done that he would still be in power. And that would not have been that hard for him to do, and perhaps even replenished those stocks, or at least partially replenished them, once inspections occurred. So the reason that some of my colleagues really didn't want to see the inspection concept pursued at all, and it was an easy thing for Saddam to have done. He didn't do it.

So he's not maybe quite as smart as we thought, or as I thought, and that would be the first thing I would say as a broad lesson.

But to make the assumption that because Saddam committed all these big mistakes and didn't have a serious strategy that Kim Jung Il will also not have a strategy or that his generals will decide not to shell Seoul because they know they're going to lose anyway, so why bother bringing down their enemy with them, that would be going too far, I think.

So to assume that warfare has somehow become easy because people are now more fatalistic when they see they're going to lose or they become nicer guys when they're on the battlefield and somehow it pains them to destroy their own country's infrastructure even though they're about to get annihilated by A-10 Warthogs in the next five minutes, I don't think we can assume that people are going to always behave in that sort of a meek, compliant, defeatist way.

Maybe the last point I'll make is that to be blunt, this is one more example where modern Arab armies have not fought that well. The Iraqis did not fight that well, and the top leadership did not come up with a very good strategy, and that's as much part of what happened here as our excellence.

MR. LINDSAY: General Yanai, you have experience on military matters. I'll give you the last word.

MR. YANAI: First of all the war is not over, and I would like to remind you we still can see some unexpected thing that we wait to see from the very beginning. But I think even though that we don't have yet all the data or the information about what has happened there, the best explanation for what we are seeing right now is in the textbooks. If you read the [inaudible] book which is the U.S. military basic book on how to run such a kind of operation, then you will

with the, first try to take out the command and control and the [inaudible] capability of your adversary or enemy. And I think that's what happened here from the very beginning, and even before they won.

The Iraqis were looked out from all the intel capabilities to create their own picture of what's going on and besides that the whole command and control system collapsed. So I don't know if only the equipment or even the key decisionmakers that's gone, but by looking at what's going on on the ground level, it's very obvious that there is no practiced, coordinated kind of war from the Iraqi side. Everything that we saw is in the level of a tactical element. The brigade, battalion, Iraqi decisions for understanding what is going on. And of course their determination to fight back the Americans.

Whenever you saw that, you can see some kind of resistance, but we did not see even one example of a coordinated battle from the Iraqi, battle fighting in the Iraqi, even not in the division level. The only explanation that we can get is we think we understand that the whole system was taken out at the beginning. This is essentially the most brilliant planning and executing from the American armed forces. [Inaudible], and especially the Special Ops displayed a very significant role, more than ever in this war.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you. I'd like to ask you all to join me in thanking my panelists for appearing today.

[Applause]

A transcript of today's event is available on our web site, www.brookings.edu, and we will have another event next Thursday. We'll focus particularly on the question of reconstruction in Iraq.

Good day.

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