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## THE SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY

## "WHAT ARAB PUBLIC OPINION THINKS OF U.S. POLICY"

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## PROCEEDINGS

MS. WITTES: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

Please go ahead and start your salad. It's a Saban Center tradition to eat while we talk. We're very efficient around here.

I'm Tamara Wittes. I'm a research fellow here in the Saban Center working on Arab reform.

I'm delighted to welcome all of you here for a session on what Arab public opinion thinks of U.S. policy with our own Shibley Telhami, a non-resident senior fellow here in the Saban Center and the Anwar Sadat Professor at the University of Maryland and with some commentary from Jackson Diehl, the Deputy Editorial Page Editor of the Washington Post.

From the title of today's sessions, I

think--I'm happy to say that we've finally abandoned

the phrase the "Arab street." And I think few

people have done more to contribute to the demise of

that unwelcome phraseology than Shibley with his

regular polling over the last several years of what

Arab citizens think.

And we welcome him today to give us an update of his latest round of polling which was done at the beginning of October. Shibley has got a PowerPoint presentation, and I think each of you, as you came in, received a copy of the poll results, including some graphs and tables. So feel free to refer to those as we go along. And Shibley, the floor is yours

MR. TELHAMI: Well, thanks very much.

Before I proceed, I just want to introduce my assistant, Shana Marshall, who is going to do the PowerPoint presentation. She has helped me put some of these data together.

Let me, before I give you a report on this poll, give you the context in which it was done.

Many of you know this is not the first one I did- I have an annual measure, so this is the third annual poll. I've done a lot of other smaller polls. And what's driving this isn't really attitudes toward the U.S. as such. In fact, I began doing this before 9/11. And in some ways attitudes toward the U.S. were only a small part of it.

There are bigger issues. It was really more about trying to understand how the Middle East is changing even before 9/11. And many of you will notice that there are data on media, quite a bit of data on media. And I've started doing that a while ago, because I believe that there was something going on in terms of possible changing notions of identity that are a function of this new satellite media that is broadcasting to Arabs and Muslims at large. And therefore, their consumer has changed. And as a consequence, there may be changing notions of identity.

So a lot of what I do, a lot of my questions are really trying to trace a relationship between the media and how people see themselves and their opinions on a host of issues, not just foreign policy, but also domestic.

And there are a lot of questions about the identity of people, how people define themselves- as Arabs, as Muslims, as Jordanians, as Egyptians.

And so what I'm reporting today has to be understood in that context. And it has to be seen

as only a small part of the survey. I'm not releasing the entire survey yet. A lot of it requires analysis.

In fact, I work with our own people here in terms of analyzing some of this data, particularly looking at the relationship between what people watch and how people see themselves and their opinion on foreign and domestic policy.

And much of the information that I'm not releasing yet is one that requires analysis and interpretation and statistical correlations to try to figure out whether there is any strong statistical relationship between what people watch and their opinions and notions of identity.

So I put that as a background for you to understand I'm not out there asking a question, do people like America today?

That's in a way only part of a much bigger theoretical question about how the Middle East is changing.

What I'm reporting on is mostly information that pertains to the hot issues of the day. And as

a consequence, I'll make some reflections on what they mean. But at some point down the road, we will be able to do better interpretation, particularly of changes over time and what the media's impact is, if any, on pubic opinion.

I already have some of that written up for a book that Brookings will be publishing as "Reflections of Hearts and Minds" on this particular issue.

So let me begin with three things that I want to talk about today. One is the media. What's happening with the media? You know, what are people watching - and some interpretation of what's happening in that regard - or particularly satellite television?

And second, what are people's opinions of, not only American foreign policy in Iraq, but what is the consequence of Iraq on their opinion? And particularly, on the issue of democracy, I'm going to report the question related to how they see America's advocacy of democracy in relationship between Iraq and democracy.

And another issue is the question of their perspective on Al Qaeda particularly. I know that the President has been saying in the past couple of weeks that the big threat to the United States now is from Al Qaeda and the establishment of an Islamic caliphate, and perhaps if America withdraws from Iraq, that is likely to be some consequence.

Well, I have some interesting data related to whether that is really a realistic prospect or not or how people see it in the Middle East.

And finally, since most of it, as you will see, is largely negative information about the perception of America, I asked the question, are there some good news and what are they? And I'll talk about some elements that one might see as, you know, small good news in this picture.

But let me begin first with the media. I think that when--when I ask questions about the media, I typically ask, what is your first choice for news? And what is your second choice for new? And then I have a question about how frequently do you watch the following channels?

And I think for me, those two questions are the dominant questions because people always surf.

They watch most of the channels. It's not that they never watch, you know, television of Hezbollah or Egyptian television or al-Hurrah. They will watch it. And the data show they do watch, because they surf.

From my point of view, the ones that have most impact are the ones that they go to largely for, regularly, for news.

And that's why I ask that question. And I found that in the statistical analysis these are the only answers that could correlate in a meaningful way with people's opinion. And so that's why we ask those particular questions. And when you see this question, you find the first choice for news, Al-Jazeera is 45 percent. And then you've got like four of them far behind, roughly the same. And notable are Al Arabiya is not even number two in that mix. You even have NBC, which is a sister and LBC, Lebanese Television, which is not even a

primarily news channel that people still go to for news.

So really, it's Al-Jazeera and then there's everyone else, roughly.

And remember, if you look at the aggregate data here with the 3,900 you're talking about roughly an average of about a 4 percent margin of error. And so this, if you look at it in comparison to last year--later on we'll talk about some of these data in the context of comparing with the year before. Al-Jazeera roughly stayed the same. It was 48 percent within the margin of error. And there was Al Arabiya, which was beginning to gain. this year, Al Arabiya really kind of slid a little bit. And you see it a little bit in the second table, which is what people watch as their second choice. Al Arabiya is up there. In fact, it is clear that it is the favorite second choice in the Arab world. And then Al-Jazeera is for those who don't watch it as a first choice.

And that's why I did the combination. The third table, which I think is probably the best

table to look at for real comparison, because I think first and second choice both matter a lot because people typically watch more than one. And if you look at that, that combined table really tells you about the standings.

Al-Jazeera is the first and second choice for 65 percent. And then Al Arabiya is for 34 percent. And then Abu Dhabi television, even with NBC, but Abu Dhabi does very well and particularly interestingly in Saudi Arabia.

Actually, as a foot note, the United Arab Emirates is a fascinating model for the Saudis because not only does Abu Dhabi Television do well in Saudi Arabia, but when you ask them whom they admire most in terms of political leaders, their views first—I will talk about who they admire most—but you find that Sheikh Zayed of the UAE, the President of the UAE, is high up there in terms of people they admire. And when you ask them to name two countries where they think there is the most freedom and democracy for their people, they actually say the UAE as one of the countries where

there is a lot of freedom and democracy for the people.

So it's fascinating that the UAE is a model for the Saudis. Previous Zogby polls, by the way, showed that the UAE is a model for many Iraqis, which is interesting about what they'd like to emulate in the Middle East.

So just as a footnote, it's an interesting footnote.

The fourth table is just a--people who said they never watch a particular channel. And you see the two that score highest in the never are [inaudible], Hezbollah and Al-Hurrah. You see that Al Hurrah, only 1 percent who say it's a first choice for them.

But again, that means there are a lot of other people who watch it, but it's not their first choice for news. Al Jazeera has the lowest score in the never watched numbers.

Now what's the most important finding in terms of public opinion? The most important finding is that Arabs today see the world through the prism

of Iraq in the same way that they saw the world, you know, only a few years ago largely through the prism of the Arab-Israeli conflict. And they still see it in parts of the prism of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But there is a new prism and that is the prism of Iraq. And you can see that at almost every level of their opinion on a host of issues.

First, their interpretation of what happened in Iraq is a negative one. Remember, these are not Iraqis, so don't misunderstand the reporting.

The reporting is these countries--Egypt,
Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Jordan, the United Arab
Emirates and Lebanon. So this is not Iraqi public
opinion. Iraqis have different public opinions, and
we know that they're split along sectarian lines.
And there are many Iraqis who find Iraq to be better
off, and some will find it not to be--some will find
it to be worse off. But the vast majority of Arabs
when you ask them--I want to go in order if we can
just get the Iraq--if we can go directly to their
opinion of whether Iraq is worse off or better off.

If you ask people if they think Iraq is worse off or better off than before the war, look at the numbers. Their interpretation of Iraq is that 77 percent that the Iraqis are worse off.

Now this is--we can argue about the objective reality of whether Iraq is worse off or better off, but that's the perception. And I'll tell you two things about it. One is that they see essentially Iraq through the prism of anarchy and violence, domestic anarchy and violence through the prism of the U.S. presence which they don't like and also through the prism of the Sunnis, who are obviously worse off. And so if you add that, it's not any way surprising that these are the numbers that you have.

But when you ask them in terms of the consequences of the Iraq war for the Middle East, a series of questions about if the Middle East is better off or worse off since the Iraq war, on the issue of democracy, is there more democracy or less democracy in the Middle East, the vast majority say

there is less democracy in the Middle East, not more democracy in the Middle East since the Iraq war.

When you ask them, is there more peace or less peace, a majority said, there is less peace.

If you ask them if there is more or less terrorism, a majority says there is more terrorism.

So, you know, they think Iraq is worse off. They think the consequences of Iraq for the Middle East has been bad. And then, in addition to that, they have total suspicion of American foreign policy. And when you ask them on the question of democracy, for example, I start with a statement about the United States actively advocating the spread of democracy in the Middle East, especially since the Iraq war. Do you believe that -- remember this is just a statement of fact, it's neutral, it's not trying to editorialize it, just describe it one way or the other in a straight forward way--do you believe that number one that this is an important objective and it's likely to make a positive difference? Number two, it's an important objective, but the U.S. is going about it the wrong

way? Or number three, you don't believe that the U.S. is really seeking a democracy. And you look at the numbers across the board, and majorities in every country do not believe that this is an American objective. Of the minority who believe that it's an American objective, a majority say that the U.S. is going about it the wrong way.

So there's a mistrust of the U.S. on those objectives, complete mistrust of the U.S. on those objectives.

Another indicator, which is fascinating, pertaining to the U.S. is I ask an open question.

And the open question is name two countries that are most threatening to you. And I just--that's an open question. I don't give names of countries. They can name any countries they want. And you look at the numbers--these are actually--well, these should be doubled. These numbers should be doubled because they really should add up to 200. I don't know why we still have the old one because we had fixed that already. But these numbers should be doubled because...

MS. MARSHALL: Are these the new numbers?

MR. TELHAMI: No, these are not the new numbers. These are the old numbers.

These numbers should be doubled because every person mentioned two names. But this is the rough percentages. So in essence Israel appears on 80 percent of the lists, roughly that. The U.S. appears roughly on, you know, 60 percent of the lists.

They add up to--they should add up to 200 because everybody lists two countries, not one country. So in any case, you can see that the U.S. is very close, very close to Israel in the perception of threat.

In my judgment, this is the most troubling thing for the U.S. But if you look at the others, you look at Britain--remember we had, and the others should have been [inaudible] and this is not the corrected. So for whatever reason, this is the old one. But if you look at Britain, we have the third, you know, being third on that list. This is all

Iraq. I mean, you can look at it and see--why would
Britain be there? It's all Iraq.

If you look at Iran, which is a certainly a country that is threatening to the UAE. Many people in the UAE see it as a threat. Certainly the Saudis see it as a threat. It falls back because people are seeing--they see this as part of a bigger threat. And if you see the U.S. as a threat, how could you trust what the U.S. is going to do?

I mean, that's the bottom line, but part of it you can see it that way.

Similarly, when you ask people the following question, if you have to live in a world where there's only one single super power, which super power--which of the following countries would you rather be that super power?

And then I give them a list of several

European countries, China, the U.S. and I add

Pakistan in there because I wanted to put in an

Islamic country. It's the only one that has a

nuclear power. I wanted to see whether this Islamic identity issues comes up there. And that you can

tell, France is number one. And China is number two, and then you see Pakistan and Germany up there. And this is interesting because I want to come back to this issue to see that this is only a policy issue not issue about—not perception of the values of these countries. We will see the different results at the end. But you can see that Iraq again is defined in these questions. Britain and the U.S. are not scoring very well on this list.

When you ask them, whom among world leaders do you admire most, when you look at that particular table, that's again an open question. And therefore, you don't get many names. You get--the first thing that is visible is that there is a vacuum of leadership in the Arab world. I mean, there is no really overwhelming personality. And certainly no overwhelming Arab personality. It is spread all over the place. It varies from country to country. There's a huge vacuum of leadership. There is no one to inspire out there at all.

But Jacques Chirac is number one in every country. And this, by the way, you might say, well

this took place just a couple of weeks before the riots in France. But frankly, this took place also two years after there's been all of this talk about the veil in French schools, about France you know taking a tough position on Syria. It didn't affect Jacques Chirac's popularity. It is all through the prism of Iraq. And partly through the prism of Palestine, because Jacques Chirac did hold a state funeral for Yasser Arafat.

So Jacques Chirac, you know, basically wins accordingly. But you really don't have any one else present.

Now on the dislike question, I asked a question, name the world leader that you dislike most, and you look at the numbers. Again, Sharon is there, not surprising. But then Bush is pretty close second and then Blair is the only who gets numbers.

Again, Blair would never have emerged five years ago on that list. This is all a question of Iraq looking at it through the prism of Iraq and interpreting Iraq in a negative way.

Now let me also say on this interesting kind of prism of Iraq and look at the Iran issue and their opinion toward Iran. Because Iran, I already said, remarkably is not scoring high on the threat list. And that's remarkable because even in the Gulf, it's not perceived to be the single most or the second most important threat.

And I find, in fact, in the question, by the way I have a question that we can look at in terms of - I ask them what is your greatest fear about Iraq. What is it that you fear most about Iraq? Why is it that you're concerned about Iraq? And I give them choices. I say that Iraq might be divided, that Iraq will remain unstable, that the U.S. will continue to have dominance there, that Iraq might divert attentions from other issues like the Arab-Israeli conflict or that Iran is now more powerful. And I would have expected that Iran is more powerful to do much, much better than it did here. It doesn't do that much here because there are threats that they see even bigger than the issue

of Iran. That's interesting. And that might color their opinion of the Iranian nuclear issue.

In fact, I asked them whether they believed Iran is in fact developing nuclear weapons or it is pursuing its--the other question I think it is, the question on Iran, which is, do you believe Iran is merely conducting research for peaceful purposes or is trying to develop nuclear weapons.

And it is clear that, you know, the plurality says that Iran is actually developing nuclear weapons. They believe that it's--more people believe it's developing nuclear weapons. But then you ask them a question about whether the international community should pressure them to stop it or not, and you look at the numbers--60 percent believe that Iran should not be pressured, that Iran has the right to do so.

And by the way, we did a cross tabulation on this issue to see whether people who thought that Iran is developing nuclear weapons have more of a propensity to say the international community should pressure them. We didn't find any such

relationship. It didn't matter whether there were, whether they believed it was developing it or not.

And that again tells you that there's some sense of threat about something bigger, that they see first and foremost America and secondarily, the immediate consequences of Iraq internally. And that's really troubling.

Let me very rapidly move to another set of issues which is the way people--to differentiate or to--let's put it this way, to interpret this kind of opposition to American foreign policy and negative interpretation of Iraq and relate it to the question of values.

And I think the immediate thing that is visible is that this is not at all a question of values. It's a question of policies.

First of all, when you ask them directly about the United States, are your attitudes toward the United States based on values or are they based on policies, you can see the numbers. Eighty percent say policies. Only 11 percent say values.

But more importantly, when you break it down to specific questions, I asked people, name two countries where you think there is most freedom and democracy for their own people- to see where their values are. Do they have a different interpretation of freedom and democracy?

And that's an open question. I asked them to name any country they want in the world. And look at this. Every single one of these countries is a Western country. Every single one of them. I mean, sure France is still number one. It's the choice of the heart and because of the politics largely.

But you look at every single one of these countries, including the U.S., they're all Western countries. Their notion of freedom and democracy is not significantly different from our notion of freedom and democracy.

And when you ask them specifically about the countries that I asked them about for super power, when I asked the seven countries that I put forth, I said, which of the following countries do

you believe that you would like to see as a superpower, you notice that China and Pakistan were up there together with France. But then if you ask them about the same countries, and say, which one of the following countries would you want to live in if you had to live outside of your own, look at that number. You know, the countries up there--France, Germany, Britain and the U.S. Look at how little Pakistan and China get and Russia.

Okay, so they have no illusion. They don't see China as a place they want to emulate. They see it as mostly, okay, standing up the America and maybe it's good. Or maybe they see it sympathetic to American foreign policy. But that's not a choice they make.

Similarly, when you ask them if you have to send a member of your family to study in one of the following countries, which one would you sent it to, look at it, France, Britain, Germany, the U.S.

Again, the same countries.

And everybody else doesn't--it's not-that's not what they choose for their people, not

China, not Pakistan even if they happen to be Muslim.

The final point on this value issue has to do directly with Al Qaeda. I have in the past been a little shy about asking directly about Al Qaeda. Let me tell you why because we know that this business of doing surveys in the Arab world is relatively new, and David who is modestly talking about the Arab street, actually to his credit, David Pollack, was one of the people who did do some real work in the State Department on surveys in the Arab world. And it was difficult to do, and it's been difficult to do. And it's been a learning thing. And we've been expanding it. And governments have been giving more and more space. But what you don't want to do is put people in a position where they're going to fear the consequences and ask the question in a way that people are going to have a little bit of censorship or a little bit of -- or even the people who ask the questions.

For example, when I asked them, whom among world leaders do you admire most, I say outside of

your own country. That's why you don't see anybody named in--because I don't want them--they might, you know if I'm asking an Egyptian they might say

Mubarak or whatever. I don't want that. So I say outside of your own country. And that tells me far more than if I added their own names. I don't put them in a position to worry about it.

An Al Qaeda question, this is the first time I asked a question directly about Al Qaeda. And I chose to ask it in the following way which I think from my point of view gets at the issue. I said, when you think about Al Qaeda, what aspect of the organization, if any, do you sympathize with most? And then I give them the following choices. And they're not in that order. This is just only the order of getting a majority. I asked them the fact that it confronts the United States, the fact that it stands up for causes like the Palestinian issue, the fact that it seeks to create a Taliban-like Islamic state, or do you like their methods of operation.

And look at the numbers. I mean, only six percent say they sympathize with the fact that it seeks an Islamic state. Only 7 percent say they sympathize mostly with its method of operation. The bulk says the fact that it confronts the U.S. or that it stands for Islamic causes. And I think that should be a key. I don't think personally, if you look at the value issue, if you look at the issue of how Al Qaeda is scoring, okay, this is an anti-American in your face, just like Jacques Chirac, but it is not that I love this organization, it is very clear.

And by the way on values questions, when you asked people about women's rights in the Arab world, do you believe that women should have the right to work outside of the house, either always or when economically needed or never, the vast majority in every country, including Saudi Arabia say, that they think women should have the right to work outside of the house.

This is not a Taliban world image. And that is why I think Al Qaeda's agenda of

establishing an Islamic state, which I think is—the administration is right about that—I think that is an aim of that organization. I think it is a zero sum game with the United States in terms of the organization. But there is not a chance in the world, not a chance in the world that it will succeed because no one, if you look at this, the overwhelming majority of the people is completely opposed to it, and Al Qaeda wins strictly by default. It's mostly an anti-American backlash than it is an embracing of this organization.

Now let me end with the question of are there any good news in this picture? And I think there are some, there are some. And the first one has to do with how they see President Bush himself.

I generally ask questions about American foreign policy, and you can see from the questions when I asked if in fact they think America is motivated by spreading democracy, human rights and peace, the vast majority say no. But the vast majority think that America is there to either control oil, help Israel, dominate the region or

weaken the Muslim world. This is not a question specific to the Bush administration. This is specific about what is--you can see this number here--when you consider American objectives in the Middle East, what the numbers are. And very few people think it's spreading peace or democracy in the Middle East.

Now that's negative for sure, but there is a silver lining to this when you ask the specific question about Bush himself. And I asked them specifically about President Bush in terms of what they think motivates his foreign policy. Do they think it's the pursuit of American national interest, the pursuit of democracy, his own belief, his own personal belief in democracy, or is it his Christian faith? Because there's this kind of issue that has been out there in terms of the crusade business and the way people see it. And sure, when you look at the democracy issue, practically no one believes that really his foreign policy is motivated by the spread of democracy. And that's obvious.

But look at the Christian faith question.

Only 11 percent believe it's really his Christian faith. It's not--I mean, I think that's relatively good news because whatever they think of American foreign policy objective and they think it may be hostile, they're interpreting them as a religious crusade. And to my mind that is a silver lining in the question. And that is helpful because the more you get that, the worse it gets. You may not have gotten 11 percent two years ago, and therefore, this is an increase I'm sure. We didn't ask this question before, so this is an increase I'm sure.

We didn't ask this question before, so this is new.

But the fact that it's not too large is good news. It's not bad news.

The second thing is we know that in all of the polling that we've done, and I think everybody that does polling in this country knows, that there are spikes that are related to events. The closer you are to a crisis, the more the opinion is driven by that crisis. If you took an opinion of the U.S. when you had the Fallujah operation, it was very

negative. When you move away from it, it recedes a little bit.

And I think there is a slight improvement for the U.S. as we move away from the crisis, from the actual war and from the actual direct involvement of American troops in a visible way every day in the operations. And we see that in a slight improvement in all of these answers from last year.

I can give you examples. Perhaps we can do a few pertaining to American—the consequences of the Iraq war on issues like democracy and terrorism, the comparison of 2004 with 2005. You can see that there are actually slight improvements over 2004, over a year—and—a—half, a slight improvement. And slight improvement is, I think, driven mostly by the distance. But it's beyond the margin of error. And one can say that there's a few percentage point improvement in almost all of these areas from 2004.

So time really is important. The distance from crisis is important.

The final point, which is related to this one is one of the questions I asked to get at this-the actual attitudes of people toward the U.S., toward issues in general, is a market kind of question, which you can see here for example. Okay, this is less peace or more peace. In 2004, it's 92 percent saying less peace. In 2005, it's 81. So you can see those are the kind of differences.

Here's one on more terrorism or less terrorism.

Again, there's a slight improvement. It's beyond the margin of error from 2004.

The final point again on this market question, which I ask people when they buy a product, when they buy a product in the marketplace, do they make their decision based on the best product at the best price or do they look at the politics of the country of origin when they purchase?

I mean, this is a behavioral question differentiated from opinion. Does their opinion matter for things like buying a product? If you're a business in the Middle East, an American business,

and you can see that it does. Twenty percent who say that the politics of the origin of the country is one they look at, but they majority of the people, they look at the best product for the best price.

And we saw that, by the way, not only in opinion, we saw it also in Egypt particularly. I've done a little bit of research with companies that do business in Egypt. McDonalds, for example, when you had the Israeli operations in Jenin, that crisis, McDonalds was boycotted. And it's income dropped by 50 percent. And that kind of drop was sustained for about six months roughly. And then after the six months began coming back to where it was before. And the same thing happened after the Iraq war, with the Iraq war, just before the Iraq war, right after the Iraq war, another crisis and it lost again for about six months. And it had a roughly 50 percent impact, and then business rebounded.

So we see that those are related to time, and that behavior and opinion are somewhat separated on matters related to the marketplace.

So let me end with that, and turn it to Jackson.

MS. WITTES: Shibley, thank you.

And I think most of you know Jackson, if not personally, by his voice on the op-ed page. Someone with decades of experience as a foreign correspondent, foreign editor for the *Post* and as somebody with a lot of experience looking at societies undergoing democratic transitions, most recently turning that focus to the Middle East.

So Jackson.

MR. DEAL: Well, I'm just going to throw out a few thoughts because there are a lot of people here who are much more expert in this material than I am. So I'll just throw out a few ideas.

I think we're all very indebted to Shibley for doing this work and for doing it over the years because we just do not know enough in the Middle East about what people really think. And it is so difficult over the years to find out what people really think as opposed to what their governments tell us they think, what the English speaking part

of the population says that they think, or what the press tells us that they think.

And so I think that Shibley is really doing groundbreaking work here, and really in this poll, as have his previous polls, I think really contributed a lot to our understanding.

At the same time, I think it raised some questions for me. And so I'm going to focus a little bit on some of the questions that came up for me and some of the things that leapt out.

One obvious question follows from his very good survey of what people watch on television and where they go for news. And you wonder to what extent one explains the other. Does the finding that al-Jazeera is everyone's favorite channel explain all of the answers that he gets in the rest of the survey. Because I suspect if you went to al-Jazeera generically and asked them these same whole questions, you would get pretty much the answers that Shibley got, and that's pretty much their editorial point of view of what we find in the rest of the survey.

And I think there's a more subtle version of this question as well, which is when you approach people on a survey like this in the Middle East, do they tell you what they really think or they tell you what al-Jazeera thinks because they think that's what they should say. And I think those of us who have worked in the Middle East as journalists are very familiar with this phenomenon as a very powerful force of political correctness in the Arab world in which people say one thing in public, they say one thing when you first approach them for an interview and quoting them for the record and then after you've had lunch with them and met their family, spent some time with them, they tell you something else entirely, often just diametrically opposed to what their official position is.

And so you wonder, and perhaps Shibley can help us with this, how you get around that problem when you do a survey like this and how much you think it might influence a survey like this.

I don't know, but certainly I wondered as I looked through the rest of the poll, to what extent

we were hearing what people really thought and to what extent we were hearing something else. And for example, the Iranian nuclear bomb questions. Is it really true that a majority of people in Saudi Arabia think it would be a good idea if Iran had a nuclear bomb, or Jordan or Egypt? Certainly their elites don't feel that way. I'd be very surprised if average people felt that way. And it struck me that the question, which refers to foreign pressure, may have gotten us a different result. Maybe what we learn is that people don't like the idea of foreign pressure on a Muslim country as opposed to-and we didn't' get the answer to the question of whether or not they think Iran should have a nuclear bomb.

Judging from the survey, you would think that France is far and away the most popular country in the Middle East. And you would expect if you went to Cairo, there would be long, long lines outside the French embassy waiting for visas, that the Sorbonne would be crawling with the students from Saudi Arabia and Jordan. And yet it's not.

And yet if you go to these countries, the lines are outside the American embassy, not outside the French embassy.

And if there are fewer students here in the United States from these countries, it's because of our own visa restrictions in the last few years, not because of lack of demand so far as I know.

So what were people really telling us there? Were they telling us that France is really a far more appealing country to them than the United States, or where they telling us according to what they've seen on al-Jazeera, France has a more politically correct position on Iraq and the Palestinian conflict than does the United States.

The Middle East is not more democratic since the Iraq war began says this survey. And I think that, in the case of especially the countries where the survey was done, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, is objectively not true. I mean all of those countries in fact, however haltingly and impartially, have moved towards rather than away from democracy since the beginning of the Iraq war.

So why would people be saying the opposite when you ask them this in a survey? I would submit it's because the question said--explicitly connected this to the Iraq war. And said since the Iraq war, is there more democracy or less?

So I'm afraid that what the poll tells us is something I think we already knew, which is that the Iraq war is very unpopular in the Middle East, but we didn't learn an answer to a crucial question, which is, do people in the Middle East think the region is moving closer to or away from democracy. And I really wish the question had been asked, in your country in the last seven years, do you think the trend has been towards more democracy or towards less democracy? I wonder if we would have gotten the same answer.

And similarly, the broader question about the U.S. policy on democracy, I was a little bit disappointed. The findings were interesting and it's probably correct that many people think it's a good goal, but the U.S. is going about it in the wrong way.

But the third question there invited people again to say, this is not the real goal of the United States. The United States really is just lying when they say that this is what they want.

And of course, that got by far the biggest response.

And I'm afraid again what we learned from this is something we already knew, which is that people in the Middle East are very ready to believe conspiracy theories about the United States and very willing to distrust U.S. motives.

What we didn't learn is whether or not people think democracy in the Middle East is a good idea. And I wish that we had a third question on there. Rather than asking about the motives of the United States had said--if the questions had been, it's a good goal; number two, it's a good goal, but the U.S. is going about it the wrong way; number three, it's a bad goal.

And I would be interested to hear what response you would get to that third question and whether, overall, what you would get from people is democracy is a good goal or not a good goal.

And I think that's important, and it ties into what Shibley has found about Al Qaeda, which I think has also been found by other surveys, including the Council on Foreign Relations study that came out earlier this year, which shows that, in fact, people don't support Al Qaeda's goals or its tactics. And when they say they support it, it's mainly because they're trying to protest the United States and support somebody who's against the United States. Although I would disagree quickly with Shibley on the idea that means they have no chance at all to succeed, because if that were true, the Bolsheviks never would have succeeded in Russia. They were similarly a group that most people didn't support, but people tolerated because they were also against the Czar.

But I think the question on democracy is important, because clearly we all know we have a terrible image problem in the United States. And, as President Bush said today in his speech, he knows there's that we have a difficult problem with public opinion in the Arab world.

But an important question in thinking about how you get at that is asking yourself the question, do people in the Middle East actually share our real policy goals? To the extent that there is a genuine U.S. policy to promote democracy in the Middle East, do people in the Middle East support that goal or do they not? Are we pushing on an open door or are we up against people who really don't want that?

And I'm not sure we got the answer from this poll.

MS. WITTES: Thank you, Jackson and Shibley. I do want to give you a chance to respond. I just want to remind you that I'm going to keep a list up here for those of you who want to ask questions or make comments, so just keep your hands up for minute while I get your names down.

Go ahead.

MR. TELHAMI: Well, first of all, these are excellent points that Jackson made, and really excellent questions.

In fact, some of them I've already answered somewhere else. As I told you, this is actually a

limited cut of what I have. I have a lot more on this that I have not yet released. And I will be releasing some additional statistical analyses that we've done.

Let me begin with the issue of Al-Jazeera.

And I think it's really important to come to grips with this, because it is at the core of my forthcoming book.

I have done statistical analysis in 2004. In fact, that's the whole objective: to see whether there is any relationship-- you call it causal; we call it correlational between what people watch and their attitudes toward the U.S.

And I think it's really a mistake to think that the problem is the media, as such. I mean obviously the media matter, and, yes, the media, of course, are important. At some level, you know, everything is transmitted through the media, and people get their opinions through the media.

But the media have their own dynamic, and on attitudes toward the U.S. in the 2004 survey, when we controlled to see whether people who didn't

watch Al-Jazeera or people who didn't even have satellite television had different views from people who watched Al-Jazeera, there was no statistically significant relationship. People who didn't even have satellite had the same propensity toward American foreign policy that people who watch Al-Jazeera.

And this is not--it shouldn't be shocking to us. It should be really natural. If you look at anti-Americanism in places where there's no Arab press, whether it's in Latin America or part of Africa or part of Asia or part of Europe where you see this hostility to the U.S., it's not driven by the media. And when you look at Arab Americans--I did control for Arab Americans and I controlled for Israeli-Arabs, citizens of Israel, who have access to the Hebrew media, who are fluent in Hebrew, who watch the Hebrew media as much as they watch the Arab media. And Arab-Americans watch when you ask them what do they watch first for news, they watch CNN, Fox, and NBC, and then a few others.

And when you ask them about their opinions of American foreign policy, they're roughly identical to the opinions of people in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, and even though they're watching the American media.

There are some issues of identity that transmitted on which people have strong opinions that are not affected by the media. And look at our own politics. I mean why should we be so shocked when we see the difference between our 2000 election results and 2004 results after four years of intense media coverage of some of the most difficult and painful issues in American foreign policy, and it was roughly red is red and blue is blue. Identity matters more, and there are issues of identity and core identity in Iraq, and the Arab-Israeli issue are main issues of core identity. And people pass that judgment.

The media matter less on core identity issues and more on non-core identity issues, and we see that across the board. So I don't think Al Jazeera is the problem. And I think that people go-

-this is a--now, you have a market. It's not that it--you know, Al Jazeera doesn't have an agenda--Well, Al Arabiya doesn't have any--everybody has an agenda. But I think in the end, the new market means that if you're going to succeed, you have to understand your consumer. There's a consumer-driven market. Consumer -- not money making. I'm talking about viewership. And so if you're going--if you can get the largest number of Arabs, you have to have an Arab product and Islamic products that resonates with the most. And if you don't, you're not going to get market share. Somebody else is going to get it. And what happened with Al Arabiya's number dropping from last year to this year I think--I haven't done, you know, a full study of this--but I think my hunch is that Al Arabiya tried deliberately to be a little more sympathetic with the U.S., and little bit less, you know, kind of sympathetic with what it thought the Arab core wants, and they dropped. And I think we saw that in the past with Al Manar gaining market share of

Hezbollah by virtue of it. So it's a market-driven phenomenon. People watch what they want.

I think it's used frankly, Jackson, to divert away from responsibility on policy. It's sort of like--all right, the media matter. Okay. Put pressure on--sure, since they're responsible media, and sometimes they overdo it, and we ought to be there to make sure they do it right. But that's not why people think what they think. I mean policies in the end are far more critical than the media, and I think we ought to keep that in mind.

The Iranian nuclear issue: you're absolutely right. I didn't say, and the numbers don't say that Arabs support Iran's nuclear power. No, that's not the point.

And, in fact, if you ask them, as some other polls have asked in the past, if they want a nuclear free-zone in the Middle East, most want a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East. I think it is more of a defiance of the U.S. I don't want the U.S. to tell us this. Why are you focusing on a Muslim country? It's not that they really want

nuclear power, and that's clear. I mean I think that's absolutely right.

The political correctness of opinion polls. You know I don't know how to answer this actually because I think that you can make the same argument even here in America, maybe less there. I think that what you look for is relative consistency over time, and you look for opportunities where people are telling you what you don't expect or people are telling you things that governments don't want you to hear. And we find many such instances of these in the polls.

And so I don't know, you know, otherwise we can be guessing or rationalizing or, you know, attributing something just based on our own thinking. I just don't know a better answer. It's not a perfect one. But there is no better way to guess than taking these public opinion polls, and, yes, you know, I pay a lot of attention to how to ask the questions.

On the question of democracy, I don't agree with you actually on how people see whether there is

a--why people answer there is less democracy, whether they just really not acknowledging or they're acknowledging deep, but they're not saying it. I don't agree with you at all actually.

You look at the Egyptian situation. I think it's definitely objectively right. There's definite improvement. I mean, you know, limited as it is, the parliamentary elections were more democratic than before, and I think the presidential elections, sure, there were answers. But if you look at how many people participated in the presidential election, it tells you what the rest of the people think. You got 80 percent of the people not participating in the election, which tells you 80 percent of the people are suspicious that these are not--whatever; right? So the fact that they don't see it is, you know, is real. It's not They're not going to vote. unreal. If they believed it was going to be, they would have gone to vote. They don't vote.

So that's real. It's not unreal. And frankly, and you ask them what did they see. What

we don't want to acknowledge, and I think we must come to grips with, is that when we want, you know, in people's mind, 90 percent of them oppose the Iraq War. Their leaders told us the Iraq War is a bad idea. None of the leaders wanted to support the Iraq War initially. And then we went to their leaders and said we want your support for the Iraq War, anyway. And most of them who depended on us strategically, they went along.

But when they went along, what did they have to do? I mean you got 90 percent of the people opposing, passionately opposing what you're doing. So what is the King going to do in Jordan? What's President Mubarak going to do? Is he going to open up freely? So what they see is clearly there was far more repression, at least initially on the lead up to the Iraq War, during the Iraq War, after the Iraq War, we know there were a lot of steps that were taken that result in more repression, even as those steps were taking place.

So their evaluation of democracy is not unreasonable I'm afraid. I think it's reasonable.

I think we're--we've been far too willing to be optimistic in our interpretation, because we all want democracy.

Now, a final point on democracy. I think most of them want democracy. I think they do. I think that, you know, the fact--and they know what it looks like. I mean it's not--you know, this--people who say it's a relative thing that people want their own. Yeah, maybe to some point, sure, the culture matters.

But they know what freedom is, I mean, and they don't want repression; and they all want change. And I think you see it, and I--you know, I ask it in a variety of ways, because I don't want to put them on the spot of whether they want revolution against their own governments. But the fact that they don't believe American foreign policy on this, I don't know why it surprises you. I mean I don't know why people should believe that this is really our priority. It hasn't been our priority, in fact, in effect. I mean it's a stated priority, but it's not, in effect, a priority in a way that they see,

and historically hasn't been a priority. And our textbooks never taught it as a priority, even here in America as what drives American foreign policy. I am wiling to guess that if we go to our own people in America and said, do you believe the Bush Administration is motivated by the spread of democracy in the Middle East, we're not going to get a majority to say that -- or human rights, we're not going to get a majority to say that. And I did a survey a little bit with people actually asking one question about whether people believe that the violation of human rights in our prisons were an isolated case or whether they thought far more spread than our government says, and a plurality of Americans, nearly half believe it's far more spread. Only a minority say it's isolated cases. They don't believe what we say, and I don't know why we're shocked to hear that the -- we just don't want to hear We think it's maybe, you know, again, you know, reinforcing something or biases or bad polling, when, in fact, it's reality, and we got to wake up to it, and confront it.

MS. WITTES: Thank you, Shibley. I want to just lead off with one point and, Shibley, I'll let you reserve comment until we take a couple of questions. Your slide about what people believe Bush's motivations are I found very interesting. You see it as good news. It strikes me that the fact that people believe that Bush is actually pursuing American national interests is troubling, because it suggests that they view American national interests as inimical to their own. And I would welcome your thoughts on that alternative interpretation.

Why don't we take two questions at a time so that we can get through more of them?

QUESTION: Thanks a lot. Thank you, Shibley; very interesting and informative.

I wanted to--let me just pick up on

Tamara's point about that question, what are

American motives? I see this as good news in a

somewhat different way, and then I want to ask you

about two other possible good news items.

The good news I see in that—in those answers is that a majority of Arabs in these countries believe that American policy is motivated by U.S. national interests, rather than domestic politics in the United States, which I take it is probably understood by many of these people as a kind of a euphemism for Jewish influence or the Zionist lobby or something like that.

So, to me, this suggests a degree of realism and maturity or something like that among Arab publics that is quite surprising and I think encouraging.

Two other good news items that strike me in these numbers that you didn't mention.

And I just want to ask whether, you know, you have a similar take on it is first Al Manar, which is almost hysterically anti-American and anti-Semitic and pro-Hezbollah and all the rest of it, rates surprisingly low. I mean we've heard lots of alarms about, you know, beacon of hatred and everybody's watching Al Manar, and they can't wait to get more of this juicy, horrible stuff. In fact,

even in Lebanon, only a quarter of the public takes it as a first or second choice for news--only a quarter.

And in the rest of the Arab countries that you surveyed, it's, you know, barely into double digits, if that, even as a second choice for news; and it is widely available in the Arab world I think. So that's good news; isn't it? I mean compared to Al Jazeera, it's all relative I understand.

QUESTION: I'm just going to ask two questions that Jackson asked, but in a different way about democracy in Iran. First of all, on your panel on democracy, your slide, there are minorities that say it's an important objective. And I'm just wondering how can we get the polluting effects of U.S. policy out of there, because--could you--I mean if you look at the Englehart data, when he asked the Churchill question and the U.S. is not there, you get giant majorities; right? So how's--what's the difference here, and is that just again the

polluting effect of U.S. policy, and that says nothing about values.

And the second is about Iran. Your data suggest that I lost a very heated debated in Dubai last week, and I don't want to lose. So again, to get out, the United States out of it, did you ask or maybe you know of other surveys, which just says point blank, do you think Iran should have a nuclear weapon, not nuclear power. That's not interesting. Do you think Iran should have a nuclear weapon.

I was arguing that the majority in the region would say no. Your data suggest yes. But you don't really ask the question, as Jackson said, so maybe you could help me on that, and on that, are there any breakdowns in terms of Shi'a, Sunni?

MR. TELHAMI: Okay. The first question about Bush troubling or not troubling, which is both your view and David's, and I think David is right about the domestic. I think that is another little piece of good news in a way, because in general they have viewed American foreign policy as mostly

domestically motivated, and so there is that kind of thing.

When you break it down, though, I think the reason why you don't see it as much is that they now see Israel as an American interest. And when you see that, when you ask them specifically about America's interest in the Middle East, they say oil and Israel are the two top.

So they lump them as kind of their notion of interests, so Israel has been elevated in a way from a domestic issue into an American strategic issue. That's what you see there. And at some level, yeah, I mean you're right at some level that it's troubling that they see that they think this is an American foreign policy objective.

But let me tell you why I'm less troubled by it. I think the worst thing is when you believe there's a clash of civilization, when you believe that it's a principal policy to weaken Arabs and Muslims because they're Muslims or Arabs, and it's much more reasonable to think that, yes, there's a conflict of interest, but you can negotiate it, as

was always in the past. So the principled opposition is far more threatening from my point of view, because every power is going to--America does have real conflict of interest with the Arab world. I mean it's a reality. Every power does.

And I think people know that their interests are not identical. And they've never been identical. America has always had some conflict of interest with Arab and Muslim countries. It's the question of whether people think they are bridgeable, whether you can negotiate them, whether you can talk about commonalities. It's very different when you think it's--America is out there to get them for religious faith reasons. Yeah, you know, and that's why I think it's a bit of a positive.

On Al Manar, very quickly. Al Manar never really had a big share. It had a slightly larger share when you asked the question specifically, as I did in the 2004, in addition to this question. I had another question. I didn't get all that much out it. I stopped asking it. But the one thing I

did get out of it is that when you ask--when you go-when you watch news on the Arab-Israeli issue,
which station do you go to first, Al Manar did much
better on that. So for news on the Arab-Israeli
issue, Al Manar often was a source for more people,
and at one point, on the eve of the Iraq War, it
actually was competing with Al Jazeera in Jordan.
That was one thing that I noticed in 2004.

So it does have, you know, it does have its niche viewing, and we have to keep that in mind.

It's not all just overall. They don't have the broad reach. I mean they don't have reporters everywhere. There aren't the resources, so it's specific information that people go for. So it does have influence. It does have its niche market.

On the democracy issue, Mike, my question isn't whether they want democracy or not. They want democracy. We know they want democracy. They want freedom. I mean the question is what kind of democracy. Sure, we can ask that, but most of them want more freedom and frankly no one likes these repressive regimes. In any one of them, and that's

why they don't show up outside their countries. There's no model, you know, nobody mentions a sitting ruler in the Arab world as their favorite ruler elsewhere, you know, and so that's not a troubling point; that, you know, clearly they want change. But we have to keep in mind that while people want democracy, they want security even more. And while they want democracy, their sense of nationalism is often stronger. And that's what you see there; okay? And for the Iraq issue, the model issue, when they look at Iraq, yes, of course, they're looking and far to the prism of the Sunnis. I mean that's obvious. But when they look at, they're, in part, looking at through the prism of insecurity and anarchy that frightens the hell of And in that sense, the regime can say to them do you want this or do you want a little more stability that I can afford you, even with limited freedom. And people are going to be divided on this. You know, people are going to click on that.

Do you want American presence or not? Iraq is not representative case because of the continued

American presence, so I think there is a sense of nationalism, a strong sense of nationalism. We could look at it.

On Iran's nuclear weapon, again, the data don't say that Arabs want Iran to have nuclear weapons. No, they don't say that. What they say is that their frustration with the international system and the foreign powers is so high that they say, you know, get off Iran's back, just like Jackson said. The interpretation that Jackson gave it is really just get off, you know, no pressure on Muslim countries—fed up with it rather than—and I didn't ask questions about the nuclear issue as such. They were other questions that were asked in the past by others, and I think people would like to see the Middle East be a nuclear—free zone.

You get the double standards issue on Israel every time you ask that question, and you have to try to figure out, if you take it out, what happens, from the equation, but it's not fair to take it out, because that's what's on their mind.

MS. WITTES: Okay. We're going to take three...

QUESTION: Shibley, let me try out an impression I had about conversations with various people on U.N., and then tell me if there is anything that they start to supported this.

My impression is that in the last six months, maybe a year, there is a new diatribe that has been added to all the anti-American staff who are here all the time, and that is the U.S. is not doing enough to promote a democracy in the Middle East. It's all your fault if these regimes are still as authoritarian as they are and so on, which, to me, and I have never gone--I have tried to get back on [inaudible] saying, well, what do you think the U.S. should be doing instead of what it's doing now. I never got an answer on that. But what of this--my impression is that there are more people who see a legitimate role for the United States in promoting democracy. And I'm wondering whether there is anything in your data that, you know, that can confirm this one, you know, disprove it?

QUESTION: Shibley, thanks. Very interesting data. I think one of your main points about how much is seen through the lens of Iraq comes through very clearly, but that raises the further question of exactly which aspect of Iraq--how much, you know, the initial invasion? How much the continuing occupation? How much the course of events there in terms of the insurgency, the political story and so on?

And I wonder if you could disaggregate the independent variable a little bit, and two specific questions. One, to what degree are the data that you have, you know, tied to people looking through the lens of Iraq susceptible to change, significant change over the next year or two, depending on how the story in Iraq plays out, in terms of security, in terms of economics, in terms of politics, and secondly, could you relate it to the issue of the U.S. troop presence? We've had a debate heated up in this country, thanks to Congress and Murtha and others, and over the last month, we've had an explosion of prognostication about people saying,

you know, what would or would not happen if we do what Mr. Murtha says or perhaps a somewhat elongated withdrawal schedule, and the question is how much of your responses here or the data would be apt to change, and how much and how fast, if a withdrawal began?

QUESTION: Shibley, two quick questions, at least I think they're quick. Is it possible from the data and or any judgment you might want to make on the subject of whether Bush and the U.S. are synonymous terms as it relates to numbers?

Second, is kind of a market segmentation question— As I was listening to this, I was thinking about Katrina and that if you were to do a survey of the U.S. population on views of Katrina, you'd have one picture. But if you were to do a survey of U.S. population and then do a market segmentation just simply on African American versus other, you get a very different picture of Katrina.

So I'm wondering to what extent A, do you-- are you doing some segmentation, and B, in your

judgment, what difference might that make in some results?

MR. TELHAMI: More people are maybe hoping that the U.S. would do more.

I happen to think that despite the kind of resentment of foreign powers, if people truly believe that America is trying to bring about democracy as a priority issue and they can take out some of the other strategic issues out of the picture, I think there would be a lot more support for it.

And I think that when you go talk to elites, you have to differentiate between those people who aspire to have power themselves, which is more elites, and resent the fact that they have no shot at it, and are willing to, you know, what Chalabi did and others, anywhere—and to their credit, I don't think that it's wrong. I think that's a good thing. I think Chalabi was doing it as an Iraqi, for Iraq, for how he saw it, how he believed, whether—you know, from his point of view, he's getting a superpower involved. You find people

in Syria and Egypt and elsewhere who will welcome anybody to shake up the system for them to have an opportunity. It's not necessarily the same opinion you're going to hear at the public level, because their shot at real power isn't going to be there. They're looking for different priorities. And I think in the end, it's really the issue of trust, whether they trust what we do or not, and I think when you--what you see is not much trust of America's intentions.

Had Iraq succeeded, I think, had--you know, if we had quick success in Iraq, and despite all their opposition to it, if we--let's say an ideal situation where you have a--you go in there; the U.S. really is welcomed by the majority of the people. You have an Iraq with, you know, a multiethnic Iraq coming together, and suddenly is able to police itself and emerge as a democratic country. And the U.S. declares that it's going to pull out soon. I think people would have looked at that positively, despite their opposition to the war. I think it would have--you know, I think if you--you

can make an argument about American foreign policy over the past half a century that even though people think democracy is an internal thing, in the end, one of the troubling things for American foreign policy is that it has not been a good model for people to point out to: this is a country that America supported and look how good it is, you know, over the past half a century. That's been part of the strikes against America. That has been part of the reason why people are so skeptical about our ability or willingness to bring about a change.

And so, hypothetically, yes, it's possible, but in practice, people, most people are either suspicious or their priorities are different from that, even though you're going to hear it. There are people—and a significant number—I mean when you say 10 percent or five percent or four percent or 15 percent, that's a lot of people. And it's a stronger portion of the elites that—people who say that, and those are people you're going to encounter more often than we know actually. Zogby polls have shown in the past, not my own, but ones that Zogby

has done independently that when you look at the people who have favorable views of America and America's intention are mostly those who either studied here, who have relatives who studied here, or had encounters with Americans in the Middle East; that the interactions themselves—and those are the people you interact with, they tend to have a more positive view of America in general.

The question on the--are the data susceptible to change, in part, I just answered that. I think yes. I mean I think yeah. I think, of course. And I think the argument that politically nothing succeeds like success and nothing fails like failure I think, in part, is true. And I think sure, you know, had Iraq turned out to be differently, you know, I think America would have had far more leverage than it did, you know. Sure.

But I didn't believe it could turn out differently myself and you know that because we've talked about it before the war, and I'm not surprised by where we are.

The troop presence: I just want to address that a little bit, because I think the data do tell us something. And it tells us something because we have to understand what it means when I say Al Qaeda doesn't, you know, has little chance of dominating in terms of achieving a caliphate you know, in the Arab world.

I think if you look at the American presence, what you have here is a--it's blurring the difference among the insurgency. We know there's not one insurgency. There are multi insurgencies, and Al Qaeda is a visible part of it, but it's a small percent of it in terms of at least the numbers of people who are participating.

And now, there's a coalition, by default, against the United States, and I think that if we pull out tomorrow, Al Qaeda will be in more trouble.

Now, I don't say that it will be good for Iraq necessarily, because the debate about whether we should pull out or not is a legitimate one. It's dependent more on is there going to be more instability or less instability. Is Iraq going to

be divided or unified. Those are questions that are legitimate, but they're not about Al Qaeda's power.

I think if we pull out tomorrow, Al Qaeda's chance of dominating Iraq diminish—Al Qaeda's chance of dominating Iraq diminish. And it's not necessarily that we will have a good and stable Iraq; and, therefore, I say that's a legitimate debate, but we have to differentiate in our minds what the data say, and that's what they say I think. That's how we interpret the data.

On the Bush-U.S. identification, I think in general people--that's why I asked a specific question about Bush, because I never really--I ask it about American foreign policy in general, and I ask these kind of questions about Bush and I see that there is some differentiation because when you look at the numbers, they're not significant numbers from U.S. or [inaudible]. Most of them think Bush is driven by American foreign policy. But anecdotally, most elites differentiate and historically people have, just as in Europe. People wanted Bush to lose in the elections. I think, you

know, they were rooting for his opponent. It didn't matter who it was. And I think in the Middle East, there is this anti-Bush sentiment, despite the fact that they see him representing U.S. foreign policy, they see him as not identical with American foreign policy. But I can't tell you that that's what the data show. That's just my interpretation of what I see.

Segmentation. Of course, we do. We have, in fact, I think we were really among the first to start even income measure and correlate it. We have an income and education. We have regional, you know, from cities. Even in cities, we have quadrants in particular cities. Certainly, we have gender, and we have religion, and so we have Christian, particularly, or Muslim.

And we see in Lebanon, certainly Christians have a more positive view of the U.S. than Muslims. We see that.

We see in the gender in 2004--I haven't done the analysis of 2005 on the demographics--but in the 2004, income was a factor. The poorer you

were, the more likely you were to be resentful of the United States foreign policy. But education was a reverse factor. The more educated you were, the slightly more resentful you were of American foreign policy.

And the gender--the gender variable mattered on some issues, but not on all issues. I haven't broken it down for 2005 yet, but in 2004, we found--I looked at it for 2005. I scanned it, particularly on issues of women's rights. Not surprisingly more women want more rights than men, and in Saudi Arabia it's the biggest gap between men and women on women's rights. You see that, even though, still, I believe a majority of Saudi men want women to be able to work outside the house. Last year, it was a plurality. I think this year, it's a slight majority of men. But the vast majority of women, not surprisingly want it.

So we do segmentation, and there are differences. Remember what I'm reporting to you is largely aggregate for all the countries for ease of reporting, because otherwise it's complex. But we

have it broken down by country, as well, of course.

And there are differences, not significant

differences on most issues, on the trends, but there

are some important differences on some issues that

you see when you break it down by country.

MS. WITTES: Shibley, we have four more questioners, and I know that you have people waiting.

MR. TELHAMI: It's all right. We can take them.

MS. WITTES: But you can--

MR. TELHAMI: Sure. We can take them together.

MS. WITTES: Okay. Great. Fantastic. All right. I'm going to ask each of you to indulge me in being very brief then.

QUESTION: Dr. Telhami, I am with USAID, the U.S. Agency for International Development.

And out of the six countries that you surveyed, four have a full-fledged USAID programs. In Egypt, with budget, in Egypt we have \$700

million; in Jordan, \$300 million; Lebanon, \$40 million; and Morocco I don't recall.

And I am wondering why in your survey, even though you are on my mailing list, why in your survey you don't really see what is the reaction of the Arab communities vis-à-vis this development that we are sending on cultural, educational, building roads and so on. And also the survey, it doesn't include anything about USAID. And this is one of our most important public diplomacy efforts that you are putting out.

And, Mr. Diehl, can you help me also why our mainstream media are ignoring USAID, especially in this very crucial time.

QUESTION: Yes, two very, very short questions. One, how were the data collected--in person or by questionnaire? And the second is, Shibley, I think you mentioned that you had done some polling before this--the Iraq War, and I wondered if you've have any general observations about differences in attitudes that you collected before the war, and what we've just seen today?

QUESTION: My question is I--pretty much a follow-up. I was interested in methodology, and about public opinion methodology. In the United States, we know, for example, that if you have a push-poll involving 400 or 500 people, what we're told is, hey, don't pay too much attention to that.

And I'm looking through this, and I can only imagine that in the Middle East the public opinion is not--public opinion polling is not at the same level of specification as it is in the U.S.

So do you, Shibley, outsource this to public opinion organizations? And when you get to the UAE, for example, a number--217 interviews is kind of shockingly small.

Do you do it yourself? Are you personally involved?

QUESTION: My question is also about methodology. In fact, I had several of the same questions that others had.

Let me just add one minor thing: When you're presenting data in the aggregate, how are you weighting them across the six countries? Are you

weighting the responses by population or is one country, one vote?

MR. TELHAMI: Right. Okay. Let me--I'll leave the methodology to last. But the USAID issue, first of all, I think, as you know, I served on the Public Diplomacy Commission for the Administration, a year and a half ago, and I know that when we went out there, one of the questions was, you know, why don't people know about the aid that the U.S. is doing and, of course, the example that is often given in Egypt is everybody knows they call it the Japanese Opera House, but they don't know it's the American sewers; and, you know, sort of the information issue.

I think there's room for public diplomacy there to do more of it, and it probably will make a little bit of a difference, but I'm of the opinion that it will make a difference on the margins; that it will make a difference, because those are people, those are decisions about intentions and foreign policy. Public diplomacy will have an impact in the 10 percent range. My colleague says it's maybe 20

percent range, and that is the optimistic view of the role of public diplomacy. I'm all for public diplomacy.

The surveys--the reason I asked the questions I do is because I'm not, in the end, driven by trying to find out do they like America or not. That's really not--as I reported earlier, put it in context. I'm driven by the--actually, the big question that Jackson raised--you know, where is this opinion coming from? Is it changing in a way over time? What's the role of the media in it, and how do people see themselves--notions of identity change. And in that, you cannot do unless you capture important issues of foreign policy and important issues of domestic policy.

And I ask those questions. Obviously the answers are important for policy, but there is a--my design is really driven by those bigger issues. And as always, you have a--it's very expensive stuff to do. And when you do it, it's--you can ask a particular number--as it is, I expand, you know, more than I can afford. Anyway, I push the budget

to the limit. But in the end, the questions that I'm seeking are the ones that are driven by the research issue.

And others should be asking. You should be asking them, too. You should go out there and have, you know, people doing it for you like we have them do for us.

Data collection. The difference is before the Iraq War, by the way. No, there was not much difference about American intentions. A slight reduction in sharpness, just like we saw from 2004 to 2005, but not much difference in attitudes.

In--on the issue of data, let me tell you how this is done. First of all, we do it country by country. And the aggregation is for simple reporting because when you see--we've reported some country by country, they're so very similar. And it's just easier to give you these numbers by aggregating them all without weighting, but if there were significantly different, I would do it differently. But this is for reporting, but as we

publish them, we're publishing them by country; and you can see the numbers by country.

QUESTION: But just to clarify. So these aggregate numbers are literally weighting each country [inaudible]?

MR. TELHAMI: Yes, but--we're weighting the sample--you know, we're dealing with them as 3,900 Arabs.

MS. WITTES: Prior to getting the sample?

MR. TELHAMI: But the results--but you can have the results by country. They're not significantly different. The point is this is not--this is a reporting mechanism, not a--when you look at it by country, and we have it by country--it's there. You can look at some of the data here, and break down by country, which is weighted according to the demographics of that country. But they're not significantly different from country. So this gives you a very good impression about what the issue is. But we break it down for you, you know, to get the actual results.

In every country, we have--in the large country, we have 800; 800 in Egypt; 800 in Saudi Arabia; 800 in Morocco, which is a very good within three and a half percent margin of error for those countries.

In the smaller countries, we have 500. the UAE, the reason you see the 217 is that in the UAE we tried some new experiment, which is we had 500, and we have a sample of 500. But on a separate issue, which I didn't report on here--I'm going to deal with it at some point -- is we know in Qatar and the UAE we have a large foreign non-Arab population--okay, these 217 are all Arabs--but we have, you know, a large foreign, more than half of the population, that are non-Arab. Some American expatriates, Europeans, Indians, Filipinos that have different opinions. And I'm interested in seeing the differences for those. So we're reporting only on the Arab, because this is Arab public opinion. And that's why that particular one is small, but that doesn't affect the general trends, because it's just in the UAE. The general--you know, the margin

of error within the big countries is three and half percent. The margin of error in the smaller countries is four and half percent, which is not bad.

Now, in terms of how we do it. Zogby--I do this. I design the demographics. I design the questions. I work with Zogby to implement on the ground through local pollsters that have been doing particularly market research kind of polling that we've had, you know, relative confidence in each one of the countries. They're all face to face interviews. There are no phone, because you cannot do it otherwise.

There's a city bias in those polling, because, by default, it's much easier to do in the cities, and we do some weighting to accommodate noncity. There's regional division. We divide it by region, from big cities from every region in the country. We divide each country into quadrants. And then we have, you know, we try to be representative of the population on income, education, and gender.

And the only, you know, compromise probably is on women interview women and men interview men in most places, because that's the way you can get it done in most of these places.

So, you know, the methodology is really--I mean the attempt here is to capture every country, the demographics of the country, to do the weighting according to the distribution of the population in that particular country.

MS. WITTES: But if you want to give

Jackson a minute or two to follow-up on some of the-

MR. DIEHL: Well, I'll cede my time, but I-your point about USAID is a good one, and it's
certainly the case that unfortunately in Egypt and
other places, people are actually not aware that the
United States is doing something to help them. And
if you ask them who built the sewer pipes, they will
say it was President Mubarak who did it. I know
there have been studies that have shown that. So we
have trouble with that.

QUESTION: One thing for Mr.--Dr. Telhami. You cannot divide the public diplomacy effort, the money that you are putting from the political playground. So to be fair, I hope next time you include USAID.

MS. WITTES: Thank you, all. I think we've covered a lot of ground today, and thank you to Jackson and Shibley.

[Applause.]

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