

THE SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY
AT THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

A MONTH AFTER THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS:
MEASURING IRAQI PUBLIC OPINION

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[TRANSCRIPT PRODUCED FROM A TAPE RECORDING]

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. INDYK: [In progress]— He's a distinguished political psychologist whose most recent book is co-authored with I.M. Destler. It's called "Misreading the Public: The Myth of a New Isolationism." You'll be glad to know that it's published by the Brookings Institution Press and, hopefully, is going to be available at the bookstore just across the aisle there when you go out. Steven is also a member of the faculty at the University of Maryland, where PIPA is based.

After Steven has made his presentation, his findings in this PowerPoint arrangement, we have invited two experts to discuss the findings. Both of them are from the Saban Center. First is Ken Pollack, our director of research, an expert on Iraq himself about to publish a paper that he has done, together with an Iraq working group of experts, about American strategy in Iraq. He will be followed by Shibley Telhami, who holds the Sadat Chair at the University of Maryland, but is also a partner of ours at the Saban Center at Brookings as a nonresident senior fellow.

What we're going to do is invite Steve up to make his presentation. We'll take a few questions just specifically on the polling data itself, if there are any, then I'm going to call Shibley and Ken up to discuss the findings and then we'll open to the floor.

Steve, please.

MR. KULL: Good morning. Thank you all for coming, and thanks to the Saban Center for having us here.

I think it goes without saying that one of the key factors that will determine whether the situation in Iraq improves will be the attitudes of the Iraqi people. With the election that took place in December, we thought it would be a particularly good time to conduct a poll and find out more about how the Iraqi people are feeling. We also thought it would be particularly important to look more closely at the attitudes among the different ethnic factions, which is something that hasn't been done very much.

The poll was conducted for the new website/webzine WorldPublicOpinion.org, with funding from the Stanley Foundation, where—Jeff Martin is here from the Stanley Foundation.

Let me move on and show you some of the details. It was fielded by KA Research Limited associated with D3 Systems. Matt Warshaw from that firm is here today. He may be able to answer some more detailed questions about the methodology.

The poll was conducted with a nationwide sample. It covered all 18 provinces. There were just a few very small areas that couldn't be polled in, for security reasons. Overall there were 1,150 respondents, which included an over-sample of 150 Sunni Arabs. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 points. It was fielded between January 2nd and 5th.

First, I'd like to look at how the Iraqis are feeling about the current election and then move on to how they feel about the U.S. operation in Iraq.

Basically, what we are finding is a remarkable division between Sunnis on one hand and the Shia and Kurds on the other. Asked, "Do you think that recent parliamentary elections were or were not free and fair?"—overall 66 percent say that they were fair, including large majorities of Kurds and Shia. But as you can see, 94 percent of the Sunnis said they were not free and fair.

"Do you think that the government to be established by the newly elected parliament will or will not be the legitimate representative of the Iraqi people?"—same pattern. Overall 68 percent said it will be a legitimate representative, but among the Sunnis, 92 percent said that it will not be.

"Do you think that Iraq today is generally headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?" Well, this is very interesting. We see an upward movement. This is a question that's been asked by the International Republican Institute regularly for some time now, and we found an upward movement. In November it was 49 percent saying that Iraq was going in the right direction. That's shifted up to 64 percent saying that Iraq is going in the right direction. The last time we saw this upsurge, the 67 percent you can see up there, was also shortly after an election. So an election seems to create a surge of optimism. But here

again there's a big division along ethnic lines. Ninety-three percent of the Sunnis say that Iraq is going in the wrong direction.

Among Iraqis overall it appears that there may be also some increase in positive attitudes about ousting Saddam Hussein. Gallup asked this question: "Thinking about any hardships you might have suffered since the U.S. invasion, do you personally think that ousting Saddam Hussein was worth it or not?" And we found 77 percent saying that it was worth it. This is up from when Gallup asked this question in 2004—61 percent said that it was. But here again you see a sharp division along ethnic lines. Eighty-three percent of the Sunnis say that it was not worth it.

So clearly the challenge is as strong as ever to make the Sunnis feel that they're included in the political process.

Okay, now turning to attitudes about the U.S. presence. Now, you're going to see some numbers that at first glance sometimes seem really contradictory and complex—it's not easy to make sense of it. So I'm going to do my best.

There does appear to be strong support for a timeline for U.S. withdrawal, but not immediate withdrawal. We are not seeing majorities of Iraqis saying, you know, get out of there right away. We asked what they would like the newly elected Iraqi government to ask the U.S. forces to do after they take office, and overall 70 percent favored some kind of timeline. Thirty-five percent favored the most short-term

withdrawal within six months; another 35 percent said gradually over two years. Only 29 percent said only reduce U.S.-led forces as the security situation improves in Iraq. But not surprisingly, there were also rather strong variations. Among Sunnis, 83 percent favored the most immediate withdrawal within six months. Among the Kurds, the majority of 57 percent did not want a timeline; they wanted to only reduce as the security situation improves.

We also asked how they felt about the government endorsing a timeline at the recent Arab League conference. Here we found majorities in all categories, including the Kurds, approving of a timeline for U.S. withdrawal. So there's definitely a readiness to follow the government in establishing a timeline.

"What do you think the newly elected Iraqi government will ask the U.S.-led forces to do," we asked, and here there was a kind of division. The plurality thought that it would ask for a two-year timeline; 17 percent, something shorter; and 37 percent, not a timeline.

What's more important, I think, is what Iraqis think the U.S. will do. We asked, "Do you think the U.S. government plans to have permanent military bases in Iraq, or to remove all its military once Iraq is stabilized?" And here, I think, is one of the more striking findings, that 80 percent assumed that the U.S. plans to have permanent bases in Iraq. This view is found among all ethnic groups, even 67 percent of the Kurds. Equally striking when we asked, "If the new Iraqi government

were to tell the U.S. to withdraw all of its forces within six months, do you think the U.S. would or would not do so?" A clear majority, three-quarters, say that the U.S. would not withdraw if asked to do so.

Now, this leads to, really, what I think is the most disturbing finding of the poll. Asked "Do you approve or disapprove of attacks on U.S.-led forces," overall 47 percent said that they approved. Among Sunnis this was 88 percent; but even among Shia it was 41 percent. And among the Sunnis, by the way, 77 percent said that they approve strongly.

This raises a kind of curious question. If only 35 percent want the U.S. troops to withdraw within six months, why do 47 percent approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces? In fact, among those who approve of the attacks, only 41 percent of those said that they favored a near-term withdrawal.

Now, one possible explanation is that support for attacks on U.S.-led forces may not be always prompted by a desire for the U.S. to withdraw immediately, but by a concern that the U.S. is not ever going to withdraw, so that it's necessary to put pressure on the U.S. It does make some sense out of what seems like a contradictory attitude. Among those who approve of such attacks, 90 percent believe that the U.S. plans to have bases in Iraq permanently, and 87 percent assume that the U.S. would refuse to leave if the new Iraqi government asked them to.

It's also important to note that approval of other types of attacks is much lower. While 47 percent approve attacks on U.S.-led

forces, only 7 percent approved attacks on Iraqi government security forces and actually it was even less than 1 percent for attacks on Iraqi civilians. This suggests that the attacks are not necessarily driven by a real desire to undermine the new Iraq government; they really are aimed at U.S.-led forces.

Now, another question we explored is what do Iraqis assume would happen if U.S.-led forces did withdraw over the next six months? What's really striking is that Iraqis seem to believe that many aspects of their lives would improve. Sixty-seven percent assume that day-to-day security for ordinary citizens would increase, that violent attacks would decrease, that inter-ethnic violence would decrease, that the presence of foreign fighters would decrease, that—73 percent assume the willingness of factions in parliament to cooperate would increase, the availability of public services would improve and amount of crime would go down.

So, if all these great things are going to happen, why do only 35 percent want the U.S. to leave so quickly?

Well, the answer may lie in response to another question we asked, whether six months from now Iraqi security forces will still need the help of military forces from other countries or they'll be strong enough to deal with security on its own. Fifty-nine percent said that they would still need help from military forces from other countries.

So apparently the presence of the U.S. troops is perceived as something undesirable, unwelcome, unpleasant, and something that

produces a lot of undesirable side effects, but at the same time, it's also perceived as something necessary, at least for awhile longer. When we asked how much longer, overall 59 percent say a year or more; 21 percent, one year; 26 percent, two years; 12 percent, three years or more.

So, last, I want to look at are there any alternative approaches to the current situation that could impact public opinion, especially Sunni opinion, which of course is the key source of animosity. We know Iraqis feel uncomfortable with the U.S. presence, but how would they feel about a more international approach? This is something that Brent Scowcroft and others have been talking about lately.

Well, first, we did find evidence that Iraqis, especially Sunnis, may feel differently about non-U.S. forces in their country. Coming back to this question, "Do you think that six months from now Iraqi security forces will still need help of military forces from other countries?"—now, notice that. You know that sometimes wording can tell you a lot. "From other countries"—no mention of U.S. forces, right? And here you find that 58 percent of Sunnis say that they will need help from forces from other countries, even though 83 percent of Sunnis say that they want U.S.-led forces out as soon as possible. When asked how long foreign forces are going to be needed, 57 percent said that foreign forces will be needed for a year or more.

So this does suggest that some kind of internationalization of the operation could have a significant impact on Sunni attitudes.

We also asked, "Would you prefer to have the U.S. or the U.N. take the lead in Iraq's economic reconstruction?", and a clear majority preferred the U.N. This was generally the case among the different ethnic groups, though the Sunnis were divided between "the U.N." and "neither."

We asked, "Would you favor having a major conference where leaders from the U.S., Europe, the U.N., and various Arab countries would meet with leaders of the new Iraqi government to coordinate efforts to help Iraq achieve greater stability and economic growth, or do you think it is best for other countries to stay out of Iraq's affairs?" Well, here we found, overall, 64 percent favor the idea of such a conference, but 57 percent of the Sunnis said that it's best for others to stay out. But still, 40 percent of the Sunnis favor the idea of such a conference.

"Do you approve of the recent efforts of the Arab League to help Iraqi leaders achieve national reconciliation?"—as you may have read about—and this gets very strong support even among the Sunnis. Overall about three-quarters supported it. And as you may know, there were three points that the Arab League got the Iraqi leaders to agree to, and these were endorsed by the public overwhelmingly: that all groups should participate in the political process—it's interesting that 100 of the Shia endorsed that view, suggesting that they're welcoming, and 98 percent of the Sunnis have that view, so it's not that they think they have

some divine right to govern there; overwhelming majorities said terrorism should be rejected; and very large majorities—not quite so large among the Kurds—said that there should be a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S.-led forces.

Now, at the same time, we wanted to see, well, how are people feeling about Iran and Syria, their Muslim neighbors. There the views are not too positive. Overall 52 percent say that they have a mostly negative view of the influence of Iran in Iraq, so we're not finding some kind of juggernaut forming between Iraq and Iran. The view of Syria was even more negative, with 61 percent expressing a negative view.

Now, we also wanted to know how do the Iraqis feel about nonmilitary forms of U.S. involvement. Do they just simply want the U.S. to get out of there? And also, how do they feel about the different nonmilitary forms of U.S. assistance? Basically, overall what we find is that clear majorities approve of the U.S. assisting with economic development, assisting with the oil industry, training Iraqi security forces, helping to build Iraqi government institutions, helping to mediate between ethnic groups, working on the infrastructure and helping Iraqis organize their communities to address various needs. However, you can also see that not very many think the U.S. is doing a good job, even though they do. So some of the criticism you may hear on U.S. performance in these areas may not always be derived from not wanting

the U.S. to do these things. However, among Sunnis, you find a very different picture. Three-quarters and more disapprove of the U.S. participating in this way.

Now, at the same time, when we asked, well, what if we ask the Sunnis how they would feel if it was clear that the U.S. was going to withdraw; if the U.S. had committed to a timeline, how would they feel about U.S. nonmilitary assistance? And without such a commitment, support for U.S. nonmilitary forms of assistance was low, in the 19-26 percent range, but with a commitment there was a rather big jump up—37 percent to a range of 56-63 percent—suggesting that there really is the potential here for a significant improvement in attitudes if it was clear that the U.S. was not staying permanently.

So I think this is one of the key takeaways from this study, is that among the Sunnis, they seem to be very attentive to this question, and there is potential for some attitude change if those perceptions changed as well.

Okay, we're going to open it up with just a few questions very specific to the poll. Okay?

MR. INDYK: Yes. I'll moderate, if that's okay.

MR. KULL: Okay, sure.

MR. INDYK: Let me start with one question about the over-sampling of the Sunnis. Can you explain why you did that and what impact that had on your results?

MR. KULL: Once you over-sample, then you weight it back down. It's not that they're over-represented in the ultimate outcome. The purpose in over-sampling is to get more precision in your information about the Sunnis, so that you get a smaller margin of error when you're focusing on a sub-group. But it did not skew the ultimate numbers at all. I'm glad you got that clarified.

MR. INDYK: What is the difference in margin of error between the Sunnis and the others?

MR. KULL: The Sunnis, I think, was about 5 percent margin of error. For the sample overall, it was 3 percent.

MR. INDYK: Okay. Questions about the poll itself?

MR. HERSH: Thank you. My name is Steve Hersh [sp]. I'm a journalist here in town. I have two questions.

On the ouster of Saddam, there was a switch in the data from Gallup to your organization. My first question is whether the switch in methodology had any effect or could have accounted in any way for the rise in recent months. My second question is you have a large margin rejected terrorism, but when you asked the question about attacks on outsiders, the results are somewhat different. Is there anything to make of that?

MR. KULL: First, about Gallup. Gallup's sample the last time was a bit under-representative of the Kurdish population but not enough to dramatically alter their numbers. So there wasn't any

fundamental change in methodology other than that. So it's not enough to account for the increase.

And I'm sorry, the other question was about the—

QUESTION: Rejection of terrorism versus attacks on outsiders.

MR. KULL: Oh, yes. Yes. Clearly—and I know that's very interesting, that apparently the perception is that attacks on U.S.-led forces are not terrorism.

QUESTION: Daniel [Inaudible] from the German Embassy.

You mentioned that both Syria and Iran were not viewed favorably by the people polled. Was there any difference between the various ethnic communities?

MR. KULL: Yes. The Shia were more positive to the Iranians, but it was not strongly positive, while the others were quite negative. The Syrians didn't have any really positive attitude among any ethnic group.

MS. LEVINE: Haninah Levine, Center for Defense Information.

Looking at that VuGraph that's up right now, is there any indication that in some way this is looked at as some sort of a tradeoff, you know, that the respondents understood this as sort of an offer—well, we'll let you have your nonmilitary involvement if you agree to a timeline?

MR. KULL: I doubt it. I don't think they would quite reason it that way. The feelings about the occupation are very—the feeling of being occupied has an intense association with it. We asked those who were eager for the U.S. to withdraw why they felt that way, and the biggest reason was that it was just offensive to be occupied by a foreign force. And so I think it's more a question of the atmospherics, the reassurance that they're on their way out, and that would create an implication that this is a different kind of operation.

It's really striking. We did a—just a few weeks ago we released a poll that we did in Afghanistan, also done with the D3 Systems, and it was quite remarkable the positive attitudes about the operation there, extremely positive about the U.S. and about the whole operation. And clearly that operation is perceived as being international rather than being the occupation of a foreign force.

MR. LAFRANCHI: Howard LaFranchi, Christian Science Monitor.

I'm wondering, what you've been telling us, what you see that that says about the Sunni attachment to the insurgency. Martin was saying that, you know, we're very conscious of winning the hearts and minds and I'm wondering, the different findings that you have there about approval of terrorism, attacks, but also approval for the government that's going to come along, what that tells you about Sunni attachment or disattachment from the insurgency.

MR. KULL: Yeah, well, obviously—you mean how directly associated they are with the insurgency? I think it's clear that they, to some extent, identify with it. They approve of it; they see it as expressing in some way their feelings. I don't think that extends to foreign fighters, even if they do have some sympathy at certain moments. But clearly they feel quite alienated from what is going on. I was struck by the extremely high majorities expressed in these attitudes. But I also think that there are some signs that it's not intractable.

MR. MARGOLIS: Howard Margolis from the Woodrow Wilson Center, University of Chicago.

Did this poll or any other try to discriminate between people who thought the U.S. invasion overall was for the best, who felt it because they were getting rid of Saddam, or because they felt it was getting rid of Sunni domination of Iraq?

MR. KULL: We didn't ask a question that was that specific. That sounds like a good question. We'll try to remember to ask that next time.

MR. INDYK: Okay, Steve, if you will take your seat and mike up there, and Shibley and Ken, if you'll join us. Could we also get the lights turned up here, please?

Okay, Ken, why don't you start off, please?

MR. POLLACK: Thank you, Martin.

First, I want to thank Steve and PIPA for agreeing to do this here at Brookings. I think that it's a very interesting poll, I think that it's a very helpful poll, and I'm very glad that the Saban Center was able to host this event and that we were able to participate in rolling this out because I think it is very important.

I generally agree. My own experiences with Iraq and with Iraqis especially since the fall of Saddam lead me to concur with most of the things that Steve had found. I'm going to highlight some things that I find particularly salient, but there are also a couple of areas where I think I just have a different interpretation of the data from Steve, and I want to bring those out as well.

First, to reinforce a point that Steve made that I think is very important, is that the timing of the poll is very important. Again, Steve made this point. You saw it illustrated in that graph which added the IRI polling results over time to Steve's own poll which showed that Iraqi public opinion and their feelings about the future tend to fluctuate very widely over time. They kind of follow a sine curve, and the upswings in the sine curve are very closely associated with Iraqi elections. It's important, A, to take away about the poll, but I also think it's very important to understand about Iraqi public opinion in general which is that over the last 4 years you've seen these wild swings in Iraqi public opinion mostly timed to their feelings about what they're getting from

their government, and I think this gets to some other questions that Steve asked as well and I'm going to come back to those.

The basic point is that as we've seen from any number of other polls and what you hear from Iraqis and any kind of anecdotal reports you get is that Iraqis are most concerned about things like day to day security, employment, clean water, electricity, gasoline and a few other basic necessities. And every time you get an election in Iraq what you see is a huge increase in public support for the government and public expectations of a better future because every single time we've had a new government in Iraq, Iraqis have believed that now they are going to get the government that is finally going to deliver on security and employment and all those other basic services.

This was as true for Jay Garner's ORHA, as it was for Jerry Bremer's CPA, as it was for Ayad Alawi's Transitional Government, as it was for Ibrahim Jaffrey's Interim Government. Sorry, reverse that, Jaffrey had the Transitional Government, and you saw this every time. Again, Steve put the sine curve up there and that's what you saw is that each time a new government came in there were a lot of hopes raised because Iraqis thought now we're finally going to get the government that's going to deliver on these things, and the problem was every single time the government failed to deliver, and as a result you saw public support and expectations about the future declining in the aftermath until you had a new election. It's very important, again, to position this poll,

but I think it's even more important in thinking about the future of Iraq today which is we've just had the December 15 elections, there is not scheduled to be another election in Iraq for 4 years. So there is not another government that the Iraqis can look forward to if this one disappoints them. That's why it's very important that this government start to deliver on those concerns of Iraqis and do it rapidly, probably within about 6 to 12 months which is about the period of that sine curve that Steve put up there.

Another thing that I think is very good about this poll that you get is this general sense of overall Iraqi suspicion and disappointment with reconstruction and with the United States. I think that it is very much the case that Iraqis were very grateful to get rid of Saddam Hussein, but also wary of the United States. They just didn't know what to expect from us. There were some Iraqis who were ecstatic who thought we were going to turn Iraq into a paradise, there were lots of other Iraqis who were dubious for a whole variety of different reasons. That continues to be the case, and over time I think that those suspicions deepen, and I think that it is one of the principal reasons why you're increasingly seeing Iraqis saying we would like some kind of time line from you at the popular level, again, not the leadership. The leadership is very different.

It's worth pointing out that while the Arab League Summit in Cairo said that there ought to be a time line, but you've not heard any

Iraqi leaders calling for it and that's because the Iraqi leaders understand the problems that would be associated with such a time line. In particular, the problem is not as we tend to portray it what would the bad guys do, in other words, would they lie in wait and wait for us to leave. The problem is what would the good guys do. The good guys all understand another point that Steve's poll brought out that their security and in fact their political institutions are not capable of keeping this country together and won't be for at least several years. And the real issue out there is if we announce a date certain when we are leaving, it is highly likely that the good guys are going to realize that that's the day civil war starts and, therefore, we have to start cutting deals with people ahead of time to make sure that when some war comes we're protected, and that of course can create a self-fulfilling prophecy. I think that's one of the principal reasons I hear from Iraqi leaders as to why they're not really interested in an actual date certain being announced for when U.S. forces would actually leave.

Another point that Steve didn't get to but it's in the poll and it's an important one to bring out, there were a number of Iraqis in the poll who did say that they are fearful when American forces are present. This is something that you hear from Americans from time to time, that American forces are actually making the problems worse. General Abizaid himself has said this from time to time.

I will tell you that, first, Steve's poll demonstrates it's only a very small number, it was 11 percent, and that was overwhelmingly Sunni. Four times as many Sunnis said it as Shiia, six times as many Sunnis said it as Kurds and, again, it gets to a point that U.S. CENTCOM has found, and they do polling every month in an enormous sample all across the country, it tends to be correlated with how often you see American forces: the less you see American forces, the more fearful you are of them. So I think that's another point that's worth bringing out there.

Another point that Steve made that I think is worth highlighting is this point about expectations for when the U.S. should leave Iraq. The way that the PIPA poll put it was effectively, I'm kind of broadening the characterization, it's kind of a do you want American forces to leave now, to never leave, effectively, or to leave at some intermediate point in the future? The actual term was 6 months, when the security situation stabilizes, and 2 years. Again, I think in most Iraqi minds that's now, never or at some point in the future. As Steve pointed out, the plurality all went with that intermediate period of time. They understand that their institutions of security and politics aren't ready to hold this country together, but there is a deep resentment about the U.S. presence in the country and a lot of it is just pure pride, pure nationalism. They don't like having foreigners in their country, and I think that that is also important to keep in mind.

On the one hand, we can't stay there forever. On the other hand, there really isn't a great deal of agitation for us to leave now because so many Iraqis understand the alternatives, and this is something that I and other journalists who have spent lots of time in Iraq, experts who have been there, all report which is that while Iraqis do want ultimately to see the foreign forces leave, they are terrified of civil war and the prioritization typically is we are more fearful of civil war right now than we are desirous of having the foreign forces leave, and I think that's exactly why you have that 2-year window out there.

One issue where I did have a bit of a problem with the poller with the interpretation of it is this question of approving of attacks on U.S. forces. With the exception of tribal Sunnis, I've never met an Iraqi who actually approved of in the sense of encouraging, wanting to see attacks on Americans, let alone the Iraqi security forces. What you hear a lot of, and this is what I actually think what the poll captured, this is how I would interpret the response to that question, you get a lot of Iraqis who say they understand the attacks on the American, they sympathize or empathize with the attackers. The U.S. should expect these attacks. These attacks are only natural. But they don't necessarily encourage these attacks or associate themselves with the attackers. Again, it gets to Iraqis, A, not liking this big foreign presence in their country. And second, the point I want to finish up with, the general frustration and disappointment of so many Iraqis with the course of

reconstruction. I think this is very important. Again, I don't see any evidence that Iraqis genuinely support attacks on Americans.

It is more a matter of understanding them, understanding why they happen and believing that they are somehow natural and to be expected. But if you ask most Iraqis, the vast majority of Iraqis, including Sunnis, middle-class working Sunnis, and I've had the opportunity to do both, none of them think it's a good idea. It gets to this other point that Steve raised that the poll captured which is they don't approve of terrorism but they understand where the motion comes from, they understand why their fellow countrymen do it. In some cases they understand it because it's Sunnis who are trying to regain control of the country which they don't care for but, again, they understand where it comes from.

But I think that one of the things that the poll does really nicely and it's something that we all need to keep in mind very much is, again, this broad Iraqi disappointment with the United States and with the course of reconstruction. Here I'd start by saying Howard La Franchi made the point about hearts and minds, and Howard you made that point with regard to the Sunni community. I would say one of my greatest concerns is I think that the United States is fixated on the hearts and minds of the Sunni community and as a result we are losing the hearts and minds of the Shiia community, and I am much more concerned,

frankly, about the hearts and minds of the Shiia community than I am about the Sunni community.

The media, the press, the administration itself is all focused on how we bring the Sunnis back into the fold. That's not unimportant. I would never suggest that. It is just that in our mania to try to bring the Sunnis back in, we have really neglected the Shiia and I think that that's what you see reflected in Steve's poll and in particular in those critically important questions that he put up on the screen toward the end of his presentation where he showed the numbers of Iraqis who approved of the U.S. efforts to help in all these nonmilitary categories, but believed that the U.S. was doing a rotten job. In my mind, I think it's comparing that or meshing that together with some of the other results from the polls that talked about how Iraqis believe that once the Americans left, all of these other things would suddenly improve, that there would be an improvement in day to day security, violent attacks would diminish, interethnic violence would diminish, the presence of foreign fighters would abate, the factions in Parliament would be more cooperative, public services like electricity and sanitation would increase, crime would diminish, those findings I think are absolutely ludicrous.

I've never met an Iraqi who believes that and I think just on the face of it they are ludicrous. This is not a problem with the poll, it's about Iraqi public opinion, and there are two things worth saying. First, one of the things that I and a lot of other people who have spent quite a

bit of time in Iraq have suggested to me is that Iraqis tend to use these polls as their opportunity to speak truth to power. One of the greatest complaints of the Iraqis is that no one listens to them. The Americans don't listen to them and, frankly, their own government doesn't listen to them.

It's interesting; you can actually match that up. Phebe Marr, who many of you know, did some wonderful work where she interviewed several hundred Iraqi leaders over the last 2 years, and Phebe got the other side of that same story which is she found these leaders overwhelmingly understood that the greatest concerns of their constituents were economic factors and the security which underlay those economic factors. She also found that these leaders were spending almost no time actually trying to meet those needs of their constituents. They were all spending their time squabbling over power within Baghdad, so you get both sides of it. You get Iraqis feeling completely disconnected from their government, from the U.S., no one listens to them, and you get government leaders who are basically admitting that they're not bothering to listen to their constituents and actually do anything about it.

I think when you mesh these two things together that's what you see, you see Iraqis who are very unhappy about their government and the United States not paying attention to their basic needs and wanting to register their disapproval and their anger and their hope that when

something dramatic changes, when they get a new government, when the U.S. forces leave, that things will be better.

For me that's the last point that's worth ending on which, again, I thought that the PIPA poll did a very nice job of illustrating which is that Iraqis have not yet lost heart in the process of reconstruction, and for me that's the biggest thing out there about Iraqi public opinion, that you've got this very strange, very difficult duality. On the one hand, Iraqis are very frustrated with reconstruction, growing increasingly more so, but they desperately want reconstruction to work. On the one hand, I think the great danger for the United States is that Iraqis are continuing to grow more frustrated and that over time more and more of them will just lose heart with reconstruction and sign up with a militia or an insurgent group, but I think that the great thing that we have going for us is the fact that most Iraqis don't want to move in that direction and I think that if we can start to turn things around and show them some progress on these different measures that they're so concerned about, we'll be fine.

MR. INDYK: Thank you, Ken, for that uplifting conclusion. Shibley, I should have mentioned to those of you who don't know, Shibley also does a lot of extensive polling in the Arab world, so brings a double expertise to this discussion both as a Middle East expert and as a polling expert.

MR. TELHAMI: Thanks. First, I really appreciate what Steve and PIPA are doing. This is a great service for all of us. We need to have this more regularly, and it does give us a window into public opinion. There are always questions you raise and there also are always issues you would like raised that are not raised, so you say I wish he asked this and I wish he asked that, but I really do know how difficult it is when you're doing the polling. Even when I do my own polling, I come back and I say I wish I asked this question. In part it's the resource issue. You can only ask a limited number of questions. In part you're committed to asking some questions to see change over time because of questions you asked in the past or others have asked in the past, and it's something that changes over time.

Having said this, I learned a lot from this poll. I think it was very interesting, and in some ways I reflected, and that's where I'll concentrate my comments, on comparing this poll with the poll I recently did in six Arab countries: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon. This was conducted last October. We released parts of the results recently and some of that reflected on the Iraq issue. It is interesting to compare the two and get some explanatory leverage out of that comparison.

I begin with the issue of the Iraqi fear that the U.S. is there to stay. That is a really important fear, I think, that even if the Iraqi government asks the U.S. to leave, the U.S. is not likely to leave. Vast

majorities of Iraqis believe that, even Shiia and Kurds. That's very, very fascinating, and they obviously don't want the U.S. to stay. Majorities across the board want the U.S. to withdraw. They disagree on the time table, but there is no question that they want the U.S. to withdraw and they don't think the U.S. is going to withdraw.

That is a huge issue. We sort of glossed over it a little bit, but that's really the focal point of their interpretation of what's happening in Iraq. It is in a way interesting particularly how you juxtapose that with the differences on the time table of U.S. withdrawal. When you ask Arabs outside of Iraq about what they fear most about the consequences of the Iraq war, the number one answer they give is division of Iraq. The number two answer they give is continued U.S. domination. That's interesting because I think, yes, they fear the same thing about U.S. domination, but they think even that Iraq might be divided is even a bigger fear, and most of them have not made up fully their minds on whether the U.S. helps accelerate the division or not in the short term. We see that in the division in Iraq even in the Arab world where majorities think that the U.S. is hurting more than it's helping, they want the withdrawal more rapid, there is a division.

We see it here in our own country across the liberal-conservative divide as to whether our presence is going to accelerate the division or not. That's not really surprising, but it's fascinating to see

that they all are concerned about the U.S. presence and they don't trust that we're there just for temporary reasons.

The second thing is the Arab perception of Iraqis. When you ask Arabs outside of Iraq do you believe that Iraqis are better off or worse off than before the Iraq war, the vast majority of Arabs in every single country say that the Iraqis are worse off today than they were before the war. That wasn't the exact question that was asked by PIPA, but it was a question about looking forward, whether you think Iraq is headed in the right direction or wrong direction, you find a majority saying it's headed in the right direction with the exception being the Sunnis, where the vast majority of the Sunnis think it's not only headed in the wrong direction, but they think removing Saddam Hussein wasn't worth it.

I think when you look at the Arab public opinion, Arab public opinion looks at Iraq through primarily two prisms, a Sunni prism and the U.S. presence prism. Those two prisms color their overall judgment that Iraqis are worse off today than before, and I think there is some interesting comparison here.

A third point I want to make is about the Shiia. If you look at the Shiia in Iraq, obviously if anything this poll reinforces the notion that there are huge sectarian differences. Huge, because the gap of perception on very important issues is so large, including the legitimacy of the government, that those of us who have been concerned about

sectarianism growing have even more reason to be concerned about sectarianism growing. It is there, it is serious, it's huge, and no evidence that it's shrinking, and so that's a real problem.

At the same time, it's fascinating that the Shiia are far more diverse than we thought certainly on the U.S. issue, on the presence of the U.S. They are strongly more positive about the removal of Saddam Hussein, strongly more positive that it was worth it for them. The majority want the U.S. to withdraw; the majority doesn't trust that the U.S. is going to withdraw. Forty-one percent said that they support attacks on the U.S., notwithstanding what Ken said about interpreting that. That's really important to think about Shiia in this diverse fashion, and even on the answer on Iran, whether they think Iran is playing a positive or negative role, people are lumping them together on the Iran issue, you get a majority of Iraqis which means a very large percentage of Shiia thinking Iran is playing a negative role. They're not equally of one mind on the issue of Iran and what Iran is playing, and that's very important I think to think about.

Before I get to the last point which is about the Arab League, I want to say something about this juxtaposition of having this negative view of the U.S. presence, being happy about Saddam being gone, and also juxtapose that to what's happening in Arab public opinion, I think there is a profound mistrust of Americans' intentions. We find, for example, in the Arab world when you ask them why do you believe the

U.S. went to war in Iraq, or what do you think drives American foreign policy in the Middle East, the single most important reason they give is controlling oil in the Arab world outside of Iraq. The second, helping Israel; the third, weakening the Muslim world. Democracy, spreading peace and human rights is at the bottom only by a very, very few people. So they might see some positive consequence of the U.S. intervention such as removing Saddam Hussein, but they don't think that's what we wanted to do, so they don't trust our intentions even though they see some benefits of our presence and for our action, and that's I think some of the explanation for this gap in their attitudes.

The final point is on the Arab League. I think it's really fascinating, actually, because, frankly, most of us here in the West have been very suspicious about the role of the Arab League. We see it as not being constructive, maybe a little bit helpful, but people are skeptical about the role of the Arab League. Frankly, when you talk to many Shiia and Kurds, not only are they skeptical, but they're resentful because they say where was the Arab League when Saddam was treating us the way he did, that kind of resentment that you hear among the leadership.

The reality of it is, vast majorities of Iraqis across the board, Shiia, Sunni, Kurds, see that the Arab League's role is constructive, positive, and they support it. I think this is an interesting issue because in my judgment, this is part of the question of Iraqis, particularly the Shiia Iraqis because you see a slight difference between the Shiia and

Kurds on that one, as also Iraqi and Arab and the need for this external legitimacy issue, even as they're resentful of Sunni domination or the Saddam Hussein regime, that this is still an issue for them and it reflects itself both in terms of their attitudes toward Iran and how they see Iran, and it reflects itself in their need to see more support from the Arab world. That I think is a dilemma that's far broader in Iraq than we have accepted. It's not just a Sunni issue; I think it is especially a Shiia issue as well.

MR. INDYK: Thank you very much, Shibley and Ken. I think we should open it up now for questions and call I call on Congressman Solarz.

MR. SOLARZ: Thank you, Martin. It was a very interesting poll and I commend you for having conducted it. I'd like to follow-up on one of the points Shibley made in which he focused on the attitudes particularly on the part of the Sunnis toward the American military presence in Iraq.

It's obvious that what we face in Iraq is a Sunni-based insurgency. There are some foreign jihadis, but essentially it's a Sunni-based insurgency. I think your survey helps to make it clear that the presence of American forces is a major if not the sole contributing factor to the support the Sunni has given to the resistance. You asked about how people would feel about a time line for the withdrawal of American forces, but as a practical matter, it appears exceedingly unlikely that the

administration would agree to a time line for the withdrawal of American forces as a way of addressing these Sunni and to some extent Shiia concerns for reasons that we're well aware because of the potential consequences of a withdrawal before the Iraqis are in a position to handle security by themselves.

But there is an alternative approach which I want to mention and ask for the reaction of each of you in terms of what you think the impact of this would be particularly on Sunni attitudes toward the American military presence and the resistance itself which is generated to some extent by that presence. Supposing President Bush after the establishment of the new government in Iraq, assuming one is established, went to Baghdad and addressed the Iraqi Parliament and in his speech said in effect the United States harbors no territorial designs on Iraq, we have no intention of establishing permanent military bases, we believe the oil resources of Iraq belong to the Iraqi people, and we will withdraw from Iraq as soon as your democratically elected government comes to the conclusion that we no longer have a useful role to play in providing security and stability in the country. To the extent they feel we have a contribution to make, we will continue to make it because we feel we have an obligation. But as and when they conclude that Iraq would be better off if we departed, you have my assurances that we would depart.

My question is, would this be dismissed as simply a ruse, an effort to goad the Iraqis into believing that we intend to leave even though we really don't, or do you think it conceivably in that setting might have a significant impact on Iraqi opinion in general and Sunni opinion in particular?

Let me just say finally that such a statement would be entirely consistent with what has been implicit and to some degree explicit in our policy, but I wonder to what extent saying it in that setting in that place might accentuate the fact that this is our policy and therefore the impact it could conceivably have on Sunni opinion in Iraq.

MR. INDYK: Thank you for that hypothetical question. Steve, do you want to have a go?

MR. KULL: I think that probably would make some difference. I think it would be setting the President behind a very specific framework and that it would make it harder to deviate from it in the future. There would probably be a big desire for some other indications and changes in the way that we're building bases, these enduring bases, some objective shift in the way that the troops are deployed, some change in the way that international agencies are brought into the picture, for it to be more than just a speech, but I think that a speech would make some difference.

MR. TELHAMI: May I say something about that? There are two issues. One is to think about also what public opinion suggests here.

Remember, the foreigners are not polled here, so some of the insurgency people that are carrying out the attacks and probably many of those who are carrying out attacks against the Shiia targets, the civilian Shiia targets, possibly are foreigners and at least a very small minority. You have a very large rejection of attacks against civilians by the Sunnis as well. I think there's only 1 percent of the people who said they support attacks on civilians. I think the question of course of the strategy that has to be figured out is whether you can somehow create a dynamic where you're separating the Sunni majority who are resistant of the U.S. presence and those who are doing that kind of attack.

I suspect that what a President would say in that environment probably would not outweigh the existing dynamic which is that those people who are doing a lot of those sectarian attacks will accelerate them, that a lot of the security forces allied with Shiia factions would retaliate more and you'd have the sectarian issue outweigh just simple statements in the short term.

I'm glad you say you think it's an implicit policy that is being said and just be articulated. I'm much less certain than you are that we don't have plans to have long-term bases in Iraq. I'm less certain than you are. I'm here in Washington, I'm not out there in the Middle East, and I'm less certain that that's a decision we have made.

MR. BARAM: Amatzia Baram, Woodrow Wilson Center.
It's a pleasure to be here again. Thank you very much for a very, very

interesting performance and presentation. I think the poll is really important and the analysis is excellent.

I would like to suggest one thing. First of all, not just this poll, any poll you take in Iraq today has to be taken always with a pinch of salt, not that people are trying to lie to you, and nobody is trying to you, I don't think so, in their response, and maybe, but not really. It's that you have in Iraq for a long time conventions, let's call it ideological, intellectual, emotional conventions, and it's very difficult when you're asked about something which goes into the heart of one of these conventions to say something which goes contrary to the convention. An example: attacking Iraqis, killing Iraqis, not a good thing according to Iraqi convention. Of course, Iraqis have been killing Iraqis all the time, but there is a very strong convention that you don't do that and at least you don't say it's a good thing. So here I think many people who are supporting killing Iraqis wouldn't say that. They can't say it. They won't feel good about themselves.

Having said that, even though their names won't come out, you don't make their names public, so that's very important to bear in mind. The same way, you don't say anything bad about religion. Even if you really an atheist and you don't like Islam and if you are a born Muslim, you are born into a Muslim family, but you just can't do that. So you have to take it into account.

More specifically I'll say this. How can you explain the fact Shibley correctly pointed out that there is a huge variety within the Shiia community, and I agree—

[End Side A. Begin Side B.]

MR. BARAM: [In progress] —more difficult for ourselves. There is a huge personality split within many, many Shiites. It's personal. It's of the individual. The same person will give you two different answers to the questions. One question would be, is it legitimate to kill American soldiers? Yes. And the other question is would you like the American soldiers to leave immediately or within 6 months? No. The same person will give you this answer, and why? Because it's different from Afghanistan, and that's really a very important point which one should bear in mind. In Afghanistan the Taliban were not all that popular. Some liked them, many didn't, many just succumbed to their regime. In Iraq in the last 15 years, you had a huge Islamization process and people became very, very Islamic, Sunnis and Shiias. I don't want to go into the reasons, but good reasons. As a result, people listened more to religious radicals whose propaganda is really very vicious, anti-American, anti-Zionist and Jewish, too, but anti-American, America is regarded as of course a crusader, of course, nonbelievers, enemies of God, Satan and so on, in those segments of the population from which you expect support, the Shiites.

What Muqtada Sadr, I have some of his magazines, a few scores of his magazines, I can tell you what he is writing in his magazines is unbelievable. It's not in any way better than what al Qaeda are saying. It's worse than what the Iranians are saying about you, and he is now going to be a member of the government, not he, but his people, and people are listening, the Shiites, forget about the Sunnis now. So you have here a component which you don't have in Afghanistan, for example. Thank you.

MR. INDYK: Thank you. Steve, do you want to respond?

MR. KULL: The only thing I would say is that the support for the attacks and the support for the U.S. troops staying for a while longer is not inherently contradictory if you assume that they plan on staying there indefinitely because they want oil. If things get stabilized in Iraq, they still want oil, so therefore it's necessary to put pressure on them to leave at some point. Maybe I'll just leave it there.

MR. INDYK: Ken?

MR. POLLACK: Just to say this is one of the few areas where I actually do disagree with Steven on that, which is that I've never encountered Iraqis who thought that strategically about the attacks are good because it pressures the Americans to leave. What I have seen lots of Iraqis saying is that they are very unclear the about U.S. Again, I think the PIPA poll does a really nice job of portraying that, and Shibley brought it out as well, they don't know why we're there. They thought we

were there to help them rebuild their country. As the PIPA poll demonstrates, they're all very unhappy that we haven't helped them rebuild their country, at least not to the extent that they expected. So they're wondering if you're not here to help us, what is it that you're here to do.

Again, typically what I've heard from Iraqis is not we encourage the attacks on Americans because we think it's helpful in getting you out, it's just we understand why people are attacking you. It is natural. It is to be expected. To a certain point it's the point that Amatzia is making about what is acceptable, what is not acceptable, what the conventions are, and so that's how I reconcile those two things in what I've seen from Iraqis.

MR. INDYK: Gary?

MR. MITCHELL: Gary Mitchell from The Mitchell Report.

I want to ask the pre-Socratic question about the tree falling in the forest, and it's triggered by I think an observation that Ken made which is that the principal complaint that you hear from Iraqis is that it's sort of the Henny Youngman thing, nobody listens, we don't get no respect.

The question I have goes to the conduct of research itself, the stuff that PIPA is doing and the stuff that Shibley is doing. You said at the outset we do this because it has some influence on policy or that it can have some influence on policy. What I'm interested in hearing from any on the panel is what evidence do you see that this research, this kind

of research, is having an influence on policy anywhere in our governmental structure.

MR. POLLACK: I think it's a great question, Gary, and my answer to is it is and it isn't. It is in the sense that you do have some people within the U.S. government both on the civilian and military sides who get it, for lack of a better way to put it. You've got some generals who understand what this struggle is about, and you've got some civilians who certainly understand that. On the military side, Generals Petraeus and Chiarelli, they get it. They've been focused on this stuff. On the civilian side, Zalmay Khalilzad, our Ambassador in Baghdad, I think has just been terrific. He also gets it. When you talk to them or when you read the stuff that they've written, they will point to this stuff and say very explicitly we understand this is hearts and minds. The best way to gauge hearts and minds is through public opinion polling, this stuff matters, we've got to pay attention to it.

You've got other people who either don't get it or they're not quite getting it right. For me this is something I've encountered over the last 3 or 4 months. As I mentioned before, U.S. CENTCOM is doing a tremendous amount of polling and the polls that they're doing are mind-boggling. They've got enormous sample sets and they ask people hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of questions. The results, first of all, are almost never released. Occasionally they get leaked. Second, the polls to the extent that I've seen them and I've heard this from other U.S.

military personnel are being very badly interpreted. They will pick out one question along the lines of something like, it's a point that we were talking about before, do you think that the presence of U.S. forces increases or decreases the danger, and you'll get a bunch of Iraqis saying it increases it, and they put that up there. I think that's what General Abizaid is responding to.

What's not taken into account is, again, it's a point that I made before, most of the people who are saying yes are people who've never seen American forces or they are Sunnis who only see Americans driving in in tank columns, buttoned up and ready to shoot anything that moves. My point again, we're not in the Shiia areas, that's a problem in and of itself, and there are some areas of the country where we're actually doing the right thing, we're out there, we're patrolling, we're trying to make things better. That also doesn't get captured in some of these polls and when it does it's not understood by the people so you don't get this kind of much more subtle, much more holistic approach.

That's a long-winded way of saying there definitely are people who are paying attention to these polls, but in some cases they don't know what they're looking for, in other cases they're misinterpreting it, or in other cases they do get it and they're trying to use it to do the right thing.

MR. KULL: I'd add to that, too, that it's quite significant that though the government does a lot of these polls, they don't release

them. They did for a while. The IRI was putting out a lot, and then they really stopped except for just a few questions releasing them they said for security reasons. There is a perception that the image of Iraqi public opinion is a significant political force in Iraqi society. Presumably there were some things that they were hearing that they thought could be problematic if an image formed that this is what was happening.

I just think that particularly when you're talking about trying to build a legitimate government, public opinion does play a role and the fact that the U.S. government does as much polling as it does is an indication that it does matter to the U.S. government as well.

MR. TELHAMI: In general though, I don't think what you're trying to do with the poll directly affects policy. I certainly don't. I think what you're trying to do is put out information into a public debate, and in the public debate you can argue whether it makes a difference or not. That's what you do, and you make it a better and more informed debate and people weigh in and sometimes it makes a difference, sometimes it doesn't, sometimes in one direction, sometimes it doesn't.

I think it is fair to say that this administration early on when it came to power thought that public opinion doesn't matter in the Arab world in part because it's an authoritarian government and public opinion was ignored. I think the democracy move and the highlighting of the democracy issue made it impossible for them to ignore it, and so there has been a lot of attention paid to it because if you're trying to reach the

public, not the government, trying to create that kind of link with the public and empower the public, it's hard to say that you are ignoring public opinion.

There is evidence in cases where public opinion was certainly taken into account. An example is look at this lead-up to the Palestinian elections where the U.S. made a strategic decision a few years ago to start taking credit for USAID and other projects in the Arab world to say we're doing the sewer system in Egypt, USAID doing this, as opposed to in the past giving it to governments and not taking credit for it. We saw it as part of a public diplomacy issue. In fact, this was seen to be appealing to public opinion.

It was discovered that America doesn't have much credibility now, so when the U.S. was doing projects to help Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the Palestinian Authority, those \$2 million projects late in the campaign, you didn't see the U.S. name on it at all, it was the Palestinian Authority and that's because they were reading the polls and they were trying to figure out which way would help him a little bit more, sign on with the U.S. or without the U.S. name, and that's clear evidence of that.

MR. INDYK: I'm afraid we're going to have to make this the last question. Yes, please.

MR. LAHAB: My name is Bila Lahab [ph]. I'm a Fulbright Fellow from Iraqi Kurdistan. Actually I had a comment and a question.

Regarding why the Kurds are more favorable to the Americans, unlike the Arabs, I think that's pretty much natural. I'm Kurdish, so for us the Kurds are just changing Jaffrey for Mickey Blue Eyes which is just a simple change, while for the Iraqi it's changing Jaffrey the cousin for Mickey Blue Eyes, the totally different looking guy, which I think naturally results in more antagonism.

The other point I would like to make is that there has been a nap and slap in the American policy toward Iraq. Remember, before the war, the super Iraqi stars were Pachichi, Chalabi, and now these people are gone, so it seems that there have been miscalculations about how Iraqi politics works. The American troops got into Iraq and said, look, Chalabi doesn't matter. Actually, this Sistani guy matters more. Then later they say Pachichi doesn't matter, let's go and speak to this Iraqi Islamic Party.

The point is that the Americans did not seem to understand how big a role religion and religious groups play in Iraq. My question is, how is that understand now after two elections and three administrations changing? Thank you.

MR. TELHAMI: I think that's really a huge issue and it's important for you to point it out. I say that because I think when we look at Iraq we're talking about Shiia, Sunni and Kurds, and of course there are religious-ethnic divisions, but we haven't highlighted the fact that the winning coalitions except in the Kurdish areas have been mostly religious

or religious backed or religious empowered. In part, the big question, even if you look at the Constitution and how it be interpreted about the role of religion in the law, it's very unclear.

I think for now one of the big questions we have to ask is what might happen if there's more stability, what might happen by the religious clergy who are empowering the current Shiia coalition, what their long-term intent is, is this a tactical or a strategic position they're taking about keeping religion a little bit less visible? What might happen is Sistani is no longer on the scene and somebody else is there with a different instinct? Is this dependent on that? I think there are a lot of big issues related to it and obviously now with all the questions about democracy in the Middle East and the role of the Islamic groups, I would go to the extent of saying that if there are free and open elections in Arab states tomorrow and all the Arab states, in almost all of them, certainly in most of them, the winning parties will be Islamic parties. I have no doubt in my mind that that would be the case, and it's the reality and I don't think American foreign policy has adjusted to it and the Iraq issue because it's so complex and we're focused on other things, we haven't addressed this issue enough.

MR. INDYK: Thank you. I'm afraid we're going to have to end it there. Before I ask you to thank our presenters today, I just want to remind you that 10 o'clock on Friday back here in Falk we will have a briefing on the Palestinian election results and their implications for U.S.

policy with three people who were observers there, Ziad Asali and Amjad Atallah, Palestinians who were observers of the elections, and Robin Wright from The Washington Post who was also on the ground over the last couple of weeks, and our own Tamara Wittes who heads our Arab Democracy Project. That's 10 o'clock here in Falk on Friday.

I want to thank particularly Steve Kull and all the people associated with you, Steve, for this polling and for bringing the results to us today. I think you can tell from their reaction that everybody found them fascinating, and we're very grateful to you, and to Ken and Shibley for such an enriching discussion. Thank you all for coming.

[Applause.]

[END OF TAPED RECORDING.]

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