

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

PRESIDENT BUSH'S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY:  
IS THE U.S. MEETING ITS GLOBAL CHALLENGES?

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

(10:30 a.m.)

MR. PASCUAL: Good morning, my name is Carlos Pascual. I am the Vice President of the Foreign Policy Studies Program here at the Brookings Institution. I would like to welcome you today to Brookings for the discussion that we have scheduled on the National Security Strategy.

Participating in the discussion today will be four of my very close colleagues here on the Foreign Policy Studies staff. Immediately on my left is Martin Indyk. Martin is a Senior Fellow and the Director of the Saban Center on the Middle East.

To his left is Richard Falkenrath. Richard is a Senior Fellow and a specialist on Counterterrorism and Homeland Security Issues.

On my right is Ivo Daalder, a Senior Fellow and a specialist on security issues, non-proliferation issues, and political transition.

And, finally, over on the right hand side of the room is Mike O'Hanlon, a Senior Fellow who is a specialist on everything. If you haven't seen Mike on CNN, you haven't watched CNN. It is one of those things.

We wanted to have this discussion on the National Security Strategy because we think that the country's national security matters, and having a strategy to address it matters. And hence, it is important to have a discussion and a dialogue on whether the National Security Strategy that has been put forward by the Administration is one that is getting at some of the key issues that are facing the country and the nation today and whether it is an effective one.

One of the things that we can all certainly say is that the National Security Strategy provides a vision, and that vision is very clear. It says that: “The goal of our statecraft is to help create a world of democratic, well-governed states that can meet the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system. This is the best way to provide enduring security for the American people.” So, overall, it is a very grandiose vision that is set forth for American policy, American strategy, and what we seek to accomplish throughout the world.

The strategy itself goes extensively into the range of tools that are necessary to achieve that and particularly focuses a great deal of attention on democracy — democracy as an end point, democracy as a tool, democracy as a factor that is a function of a whole range of other tools such as foreign aid; diplomatic capabilities; sanctions and the selected use of sanctions; the application of military force when necessary.

One of the things that the National Security Strategy does not do, at length, is discuss how those tools are used in any given country’s situation. While there are references to a number of different situations or regional issues, it does not go into detail, for the most part, in the application of those tools in any specific environment, and hence, part of what we want to get at today.

The National Security Strategy presents itself as a wartime strategy. What are those wars? Can we be effective, in fact, engaging in those wars?

It says that we need to end tyranny. Which tyrannies? Which ones are the ones that matter the most, and how does one approach that?

As we said, it lays out democracy as our greatest tool. Do we have the resources and the capabilities to advance democracy? Do we have the strategies to advance democracy effectively in any given country's environment?

It talks about retaining preemption as a tool. But is there a change in the way that we think about preemption and have we reflected on some of the lessons on the use of force and its legitimacy that have been learned in recent years?

It talks about terrorism and lays out, as the principal tool in addressing terrorism, the promotion of democracy as well as a number of short term factors. Is this an effective strategy?

Those are some of the key questions that we want to try to get at today.

The way that we want to run this is to begin with a discussion which we will have among the panelists. We will spend about 45 minutes. I will ask individual panelists some questions. We will allow them to debate and discuss with one another. If nothing else, we hope to entertain you a little bit here. And then after 45 minutes, we will open it up broadly to questions from the audience. So, what we want to try to do is have as much of a dynamic discussion as we possibly can.

Let me begin with, in fact, the President's first lines in the introduction to the National Security Strategy. It says that, "America is at war. This is a wartime strategy."

Let me begin by addressing a question to Mike O'Hanlon. Mike, is this a war strategy? Who are we at war with? Who is it focused on? Can we achieve even the military goals that we might have in that war?

MR. O'HANLON: Thanks, Carlos. It is a great pleasure to be involved in this discussion. Thank you all for being here.

I am going to get to that question very quickly, but I first want to make one broad comment on the strategy, which is I think it reads as a very reasonable document overall, very intellectually serious, although of course the 2002 document also read, I think to my mind, quite well and quite seriously, but it had this ironic effect that it actually created an image, to use Ivo and Jim Lindsay's excellent term in their great book, *An America Unbound*, and I think caused more problems for the United States in terms of the Iraq debate and how to handle North Korea and other problem spots than it actually solved.

So there is a bit of a distinction here between what is intellectually compelling and what is politically smart for the Administration to say. I don't think the 2006 document could really walk back that debate. So, I have no qualms about the way it continues to reaffirm the potential need for preemption or, to be more specific and semantically correct, preventive military operations under some extreme circumstances. The 2006 document is a little more guarded, a few more caveats in how it talks about this.

The basic concept, however, is sound either way, but I think we will always debate whether it was appropriate to talk about it publicly and emphasize it so much back in the 2002 document. My one-liner is that it was intellectually coherent and yet politically counterproductive and strategically counterproductive. But again, this document in 2006 only has so much ability, I think, to change that.

And so, I feel overall it handled preemption and prevention fairly well. They are an important tool. They are two different kinds of tools, but they are actually important, but they need to be placed in proper perspective. The way they were talked about in 2002, I think, will always go down as something that hurt this Administration in its dealings on Iraq and North Korea in particular.

Let me get to the question at hand. The military strategy for winning the war, whatever the war is or should be seen as, we all know that the Administration has made great efforts to link the global war on terror with Iraq and call Iraq part of the global war on terror. There are linkages, and the linkages have increased with time as many foreign Jihadists have flocked to Iraq. And by our latest count in the Iraq Index that Nina Kamp and I do here, it looks like there are probably three times as many foreign Jihadists in Iraq today as there were, let us say, just two years ago. This comes from data from Anthony Cordisman and others. So I think in that sense, Iraq has become part of the global war on terror.

Whether it should have been in the first place, again, will always be debated and is one of the great questions this Administration will have to contemplate, and people who write about and think about it will have to contemplate. I am not going to get into that philosophical discussion.

Let me just say a little more concretely: How is it going now? It strikes me that if we look at the whole range of places in which we might want to use military force to deal with the global war on terror or the Al-Qaida Jihadist threat, it strikes me that overall the military tools are in pretty good shape with the one

huge caveat that the all volunteer force is being enormously strained by the Iraq operation.

But I am not too worried that if an Al-Qaida cell pops up in Yemen or pops up in Somalia or somewhere else, I am not too worried that we won't have the capacity to address it. I think we will the capacity. One of the stronger elements in the Administration's defense legacy, I believe, is the support for Special Operations Forces, roughly a doubling of the budget since 2001, now another one-third increase in overall capacity in certain units in the latest quadrennial defense review. I think these sorts of tools are being developed quite well. I think Mr. Rumsfeld's controversial legacy will always be well remembered, at least for what he did for Special Forces. I think, for most of the kinds of operations we may see crop up in the future, those will be the most important tools. So, in that sense, I am not too concerned about the military wherewithal to wage the war on terror. I think it is in fairly good shape.

It still leaves the two big questions of Iraq and Afghanistan, a brief word on each. As you say, Carlos, you want to keep this pithy, so I have already said too much. Let me just say one word about each of these.

Afghanistan is not going great, but it is also, I think, a better off place than it was five years ago and poses less of a threat to American security. Chris Van Hollen had a very good op-ed in *The Post* today, talking about a lot of the problems that are still in Afghanistan. These are serious. We still do see Al-Qaida elements there. But I think that overall, frankly, and not to sound insensitive, but these are more problems for Afghanistan than for the broader war

on terror. Even if we managed to consolidate control of Afghanistan more effectively, the Al-Qaida elements that are there right now would probably move even more into Pakistan than they already have, might disperse into other parts of the world. I think even today we do not see Al-Qaida with a sanctuary in Afghanistan. It doesn't have the opportunity or the ability to use Afghanistan as a staging ground in the global war on terror.

To the extent our operations in Iraq might have detracted from our ability to have enough force in Afghanistan, this has been a cost, and it has had some implications for the broader war on terror, but I think more of the implications have to do with Afghanistan itself and the ability to create a stable society there, which unfortunately is lagging behind where I would like to see it.

In Iraq, again, the huge issue of the day — and I won't say a lot about this — but clearly the trends in foreign Jihadists over time have been a concern and make this part of the global war on terror now in a way it might not have been before. This is posing a huge threat to the all volunteer military. Certainly, if that military were to suffer further strain, the entire U.S. military posture around the world for this war and any other possible wars would be seriously impinged upon, and I do worry about that. I think the short answer right now in early 2006 is, despite all the strain we are seeing on the military, it is actually holding up okay, not great.

My hat is off, as is true I am sure of everyone in this room, to the men and women of our Armed Forces, how hard they are working, the kind of patriotism they are showing, the commitment to keep going back time and again to Iraq and

Afghanistan. Frankly, it has stunned even a long time observer of the U.S. Military like me, and I am sure it has stunned and impressed many people in this room, just how willing people have been to keep reenlisting, keep going back.

We have obviously got recruiting problems. We have obviously got problems of huge strain on the force, high divorce rates, other kinds of real cost to people's lives. But the military overall is, I think, so far holding up okay.

I still think it is an imprudent gamble to assume that it will continue to do so, and therefore, I disagree with Secretary Rumsfeld's and General Schoomaker's decision not to go for a large increase in the size of the all volunteer force, which certainly would have been possible back in 2003-2004 even though it has become harder since then. I think that mistake may or may not cost us, but, so far at least, the all volunteer force is holding together, and that allows us to maintain a plausible deterrent in dealing with Korea, Taiwan, contingencies, and other possible larger conflicts around the world.

In short, Carlos, it is an impossibly big question to answer, but I think the military strategy, leaving aside all the strains on the force in Iraq, is actually not the biggest of our problems, and, so far at least, things are holding up okay.

MR. PASCUAL: Richard, is this a wartime strategy?

MR. FALKENRATH: Actually, I think the 2002 strategy was more of a war strategy. The 2002 strategy came out a week after the President addressed the United Nations, a few weeks before the Congress authorized the use of force against Iraq, and a few months before the actual beginning of the war, and it

really was an integral part of the Administration's effort to make the case for operations against Iraq.

This document, I think, isn't quite as clear. Unlike the 2002 strategy, which was really historically anomalous as National Security Strategies go, this one is more like its predecessors in that it has the feel of a bit of a compilation of Presidential speeches and departmental fact sheets sort of pulled together, lots of bullet points and lots of lists of things that we have been doing. The 2002 strategy was really characterized by very good writing and bold thinking. There is some of that in here, but it is a little bit harder to discern.

The essential problem it has to deal with, I think, is one of time. In what timeframe are we talking about a war? There clearly is, as the document says and as every Senior Administration Official says, including the President 10 minutes ago in a press conference, we are at war. There are multiple military operations going on around world, and we are under a constant state of threat both here at home and our interests abroad from terrorist attack. So we are, in that sense, at war, and it requires us to do a lot of different things. But that sits pretty uncomfortably with the promotion of democracy as a centerpiece of the strategy.

One major difference between this and 2002 was this emphasis on the promotion of democracy. It started with the President's speech really at the National Endowment on Democracy. The 2002 document talked about inalienable human rights, the non-negotiable demands of human freedom. This one is really more about democracy which is a political system for states. It is

different than the rights of human beings. It is the political character of a country, and that is the centerpiece.

That sits uncomfortably with our near term requirements in the war on terror, including Iraq. Those near term requirements require us to deal with a number of governments that are undemocratic. Some might even be tyrannical by some people's definition. Think about Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, even Jordan which is a much more benign undemocratic state. We need them. We need them really bad in the war on terror to deal with the day to day tactical requirements of offensive operations against terrorist cells and the stabilization of Iraq.

There is a real dilemma between promoting democracy in those states which would likely cause, at least in the medium term, destabilization, as it has elsewhere, and achieving our near term wartime tactical objectives. So that is a basic tension in the document. It doesn't deal with it transparently. If we were there, we wouldn't deal with it transparently because it is imprudent to do so. You wouldn't want to be really candid in a document like this on how you deal with one of the most fundamental dilemmas of statecraft.

I happen to support the President's emphasis on the promotion of democracy. I think it is the right thing for American foreign policy to do. I think it casts the United States and the President on the side of ordinary citizens, ordinary people in Muslim societies in a way that they can understand more easily than they could U.S. policy in the '70s or '80s, for example.

But there is no denying, Carlos, that in the near term, and our conduct of the War on Terror right now today, and for the foreseeable future, it is a problematic

position and creates a lot of tension that this document does not in and of itself definitively resolve.

MR. PASCUAL: Ivo, the situation Mike and Richard framed up is one where not necessarily a wartime strategy, but a strategy that looks ahead to the future, one that is difficult to apply in the near term. There are military realities where the military is holding up, but yet at the same time, there are huge demands globally in Iraq and Afghanistan. It poses lots of questions out there about the world that we are facing and how to approach it.

In that context, what should the strategy have done? What is it that would have made sense for it to hit on? Are there things that are particularly missing? Are there key issues here that we should be focusing in on more specifically that are not sufficiently addressed in a strategy like this?

MR. DAALDER: Let me start out by saying something that the Administration is unlikely to welcome, which is I like this strategy. I actually think this is a very good document. Perhaps for the reasons that others don't like it, I do. I think it is very pre-Bush when it comes to the framing of the foreign policy and the strategy that is there. My first reaction was this is Clinton redux. It reads like a shorter version of the 1999 National Security Strategy, and as someone who believed that that strategy was pretty good, I welcome the change.

Let me put that change in perspective. I think the Bush Revolution, which Jim Lindsay and I wrote about, is over. That revolution was based on two fundamental pillars: one, that in a dangerous world, America should shed the constraints imposed by international institutions, by international law, by

alliances; it should use the freedom of action that its power gives it to deal with the threats to America and do so without regard to how others might think about it. And secondly, that one ought to use that power, which was unprecedented in its scope and breadth, to change the world and to make it a better place. And then that revolution was then translated into a policy of unilateralism, preemption, and a focus on changing rogue regimes.

If you read this document, some of the words may be there, but the overall frame is very, very different and, if I say Clintonian, I mean Clintonian. First and foremost, it recognizes something that it refused to recognize in 2002, which is that our world is being shaped by the forces of globalization.

There is indeed an entirely new chapter in this strategy that recognizes the importance of how cross border threats, threats that affect all of us in one way or another because they are global, are now shaping how we ought to respond to them. The most important observation that is right there in the President's letter, that is the introduction to the National Security Strategy, is you can't deal with cross border threats except by cooperating with others. That you have to have — not because you like multilateral institutions, not because you need them for legitimacy purposes, you need them for effectiveness purpose; you need to work with others.

The strategy talks about building institutions. It talks about adapting existing institutions to deal with new realities. It talks about working with allies. It talks about working with friends. That sounds familiar to someone who served in a Democratic Administration. It is language that wasn't there in the first term,

and it is important that that is there. It is recognition that, in fact, the world may be slightly more complicated and require slightly more cooperation than what the bold first National Security Strategy put in.

Secondly, as Richard pointed out, we don't have a rogue regime change strategy anymore; we have a pro-democracy strategy, and that is very different. There is recognition that it isn't enough to get rid of tyrannies; that you, in fact, also have to build democracies.

We can debate whether the strategy that is in here is the right way of building democracies, though I would note if you compare the President's NED speech, the President's Second Inaugural, and this strategy, that you see learning. For example, we no longer talk about democracies; we talk about effective democracies. We now have defined what a real democracy is. It is a functioning state in which there are not just elections but there is a rule of law; there are institutions that support the political system; there is freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, freedom of speech; all the fundamentals of what a working, effective, functioning democracy ought to be about.

We have abandoned the notion, at least I would hope, that elections is what democracies are all about, though I note that Iraq is still described as a democracy, and I would just point out that three elections do not a democracy make. If Iraq is a democracy, then I wonder why it is, as one of the people in a wonderful story in *The Washington Post* today said, why it is that I can't get up because I am worried about being killed, if not by Americans, then by Sunnis,

then by the police, then by death squads, or then by criminals. That is not a functioning, effective democracy if you live in that.

But there is a change. There is no longer this emphasis on regime change as the core; it is about democratization.

Then third, and most importantly, I do think there is a shift on the issue of preemption — preemption, which was a tool, long regarded as a tool in the arsenal of statecraft of American Presidents in years past. Indeed, the Clinton Administration talked about preemption in 1999, and conducted preemptive military attacks. They attacked the al-Shifa chemical factory on the basis that it was trying to prevent those chemicals being transferred to terrorists.

Preemption or preventive attack par excellence, that changed in 2002. We moved from preemption as a tool to preemption as a guiding strategic doctrine. The argument in 2002, in the strategy was there is a new threat out there, that deterrence and containment can't deal with that threat, and that therefore we need to have preemption as a fundamental tool, a fundamental strategy for dealing with these new threats.

The 2006 preemption doctrine is very different. It says there are new threats out there. Therefore, we need to adapt and strengthen deterrence to deal with those threats. We need to have stronger diplomatic approaches with our allies and international institutions. Oh, and by the way, if that fails, we ought to have the option to use force preemptively — an option that, frankly, every president has not only had but insisted on having since 1945. So we are back to a pre-Bush, pre-first term strategy when it comes to preemption, too.

As I said, I like this strategy. It is more in keeping with where I think we should have been in the first term, and we are now seeing it moving into the second term. The Bush Revolution turned out to be a one-term revolution even though we have a two-term Bush Presidency, and I think the world is better for it.

MR. PASCUAL: Martin, Ivo likes the strategy. It gives us a set of tools that he argues are effective tools to be able to work with. It puts them in a better perspective of having a long term perspective of democracy as an end point, that tyranny isn't enough; the two need to be balanced together. It moves preemption to being a tool as opposed to sort of a fundamental, philosophical premise of how policy is conducted.

But then we still have the question of how do these things play out in any given part of the world, and no part of the world is more difficult or complex than the part of the world of which you deal with and have dealt with for quite a long time on a day to day basis. Here, we have seen political openings result in the rise of Islamist regimes in a number of countries, a particularly complex situation in the Palestinian territories with Hamas, but that is not the only place.

Can you comment on how these tools play themselves out in the Middle East, and does this strategy actually reflect a realistic approach to the complexity of the situation in the Middle East? Does it abandon the Middle East Peace Process?

MR. INDYK: Thank you, Carlos.

I think that, looked at from Ivo's perspective of the change from preemptive regime change, I can see his argument that this is no longer a revolutionary

strategy. But looked at from the viewpoint of what is the main theme in this National Security Strategy, democratization, this is a revolutionary document and a revolutionary strategy which has replaced the one that Ivo was so concerned about. This idea that we should have a strategy of democratization is really what this document is about. It comes before everything else, including preemption.

It is a remarkable phenomenon not just because of what appears as a single-minded focus on democratization but because at a time when the effort is encountering so many problems in the Middle East that you have alluded to, Carlos, one might expect that the National Security Strategy would be an opportunity for reassessment of that strategy. But, instead, in this document, the Bush Administration plunges ahead, allowing for no doubts; absorbing all the setbacks in the Middle East as proof that it is, in fact, on the right course; rationalizing the difficulties by arguing that we should take the long view of history, that 50 years from now history will judge the correctness of the strategy.

The problem I have with this is that, as Maynard Keynes famously pronounced, in the long run, we are all dead, starting with a lot of people in the Middle East. It is not too soon to predict that the historians 50 years from now, when they look back on this period will declare it not as a victory for democratization but as a march of folly.

The problem with making democratization the strategic goal is that it doesn't allow sufficiently for the promotion and protection of other American interests. The document actually recognizes this in a half of a sentence on Page 6, in which it says there is a need to "balance other interests that are also vital to the

security and well-being of the American people.” But there is no indication in this document of what those interests are or how that balance is to be struck.

There is one such interest in the volatile Middle East. It is called stability, and that particular interest has been abandoned both in this document and in practice by the Administration as an illusion that covered all manner of evils.

If there was a reason why successive administrations, including the Reagan and earlier Bush Administrations and Ivo’s Clinton Administration, there was a reason why they all believed that Middle Eastern stability was a strategic interest of the United States. It was that stability helped to preserve all prices at reasonable levels. Stability helped to prevent fragile states from descending into chaos. Stability helped to provide a bulwark against the atavistic, tribalistic, sectarian, fundamentalist tendencies of a deeply troubled region. In short, stability did not provide freedom for the people in that region, but it did provide basic security, something which the strategy of democratization is manifestly failing to do.

It is one thing to recognize the dangers of an overdependence on authoritarian regimes to maintain stability. That was clearly a fault of previous administrations, and the Bush Administration was correct in its assessment that that was an overdependence on the pursuit of stability. But it is another entirely to abandon any interest in stability, rather to declare it as the father of all evil, because if you abandon all interesting stability, what you end up with is chaos. As a consequence of that chaos, democratization then becomes impossible to

pursue. In other words, within the very strategy lies the essence of its destruction as an effective strategy.

Look how the Administration has already backed off on pursuing democratization in Saudi Arabia. Look how reform has been abandoned in Jordan. Look how quietly this Administration has now accepted the postponement of municipal elections in Egypt and the jailing and further prosecution of one of the leading exponents of democracy in Egypt, Iman Noor. Look how this Administration has now stopped pressing the regime in Syria, a rogue regime if ever there was one, a tyrannical regime if ever there was one, because of the fear of the consequences of destabilization in Syria for the spread of sectarian warfare throughout the region.

Because this document is an example of the way in which the Administration gets carried away with the rhetorical ideal of democratization and ignores other interests, we are now accused of hypocrisy when we are forced, because of our other interests, to back off from pursuing our objective of democratization. In the process of backing off, we undermine our credibility and our ability to pursue our objective of democratization.

There is one other problem with this strategy of democratization when it comes to its implementation. Here, I think it is worthwhile again, contrasting this document with the 2002 strategy. As Richard said, in 2002, there was a focus not on democratization but on the promotion of liberty. I want to quote what that document said because I think it had it in the right perspective. It said that, "Liberty should be defined as the non-negotiable demands of human dignity: the

rule of law, limits on the absolute power of the state, free speech, freedom of worship, equal justice, respect for women, religious and ethnic tolerance, and respect for private property.”

I think the Bush Administration would have done far better if it had stuck with trying to advance those goals rather than the much grander goal of democratization because, you see, the people in the Middle East are much more concerned with the issues of dignity, human dignity, and liberty than they are with democratization as it is pursued by this Administration.

The problem here is that, in trying to implement the strategy, democratization has morphed into an almost mindless pursuit of elections as the way of promoting this idea. While the Administration protests that democratization isn't just about elections, in fact, that is the almost single-minded purpose the Administration has pursued.

The problem with that is that, as we push regimes in the region to open their political space and to have these elections, the result was predictable and has, in effect, come to pass that it is those forces, anti-democratic forces, who are best organized that fill the political space and then take power. What I am talking about is Islamists and Fundamentalists. These Islamists have been able to use the Bush Administration's push for democratization through elections to actually enter the political process and gain power, and that presents a profound irony. The very forces that we are seeking to defeat in the war of ideas, that democratization is supposed to be our vanguard idea that we are trying to defeat them with, those forces are using democratization to come to power. So

democracy cannot be the antidote to terror if the terrorists use democracy to gain advantages against us, and yet that is what is happening.

A second problem with that focus on elections as the means to promote democracy is that it is resulting in a consistent ignoring of other principles of democracy. The most important in the Middle East, I believe, is the principle that you cannot enter the political process with your guns, with your militia, with your terrorist cadres intact. That is a fundamental democratic principle because, as we know, there can only be one authority and a monopoly of force must be in the hands of the democratically elected government. But, because we focused on the elections, the Bush Administration purposely ignored the fact that political parties sprung up and entered the political process in Iraq with their militias intact, and we see the consequences of that today. Muktada al-Sadr, the Badir Forces of Syria, the Kurdish Militias, all present a fundamental threat to the democracy that the Administration is trying to promote in Iraq.

But it wasn't just in Iraq. In Lebanon, we had a U.N. Security Council resolution that said the Syrian forces had to withdraw and the militias had to disarm, in particular Hezbollah had to disarm. We chose to ignore that second part of the Security Council resolution. Elections were held. Hezbollah entered the government and is now in the government and holds a veto over what the Lebanese government can do, in particular because its militias and its terrorist cadres are more powerful than the Lebanese army itself.

And then, we did it again in Palestine, where it was clear in the Road Map, it was clear in the Oslo Agreements, and it was clearly a democratic principle that

was espoused by the democratically elected President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, that there can be only one gun, and it must be in the hands of the Authority, and we did not insist that the before Hamas could contest the elections, it would have to disarm. And what did we end up with — a Hamas-led government which is, in effect, a terrorist government that presents an immense problem for our strategy of trying to achieve a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

MR. PASCUAL: So, in effect, one of the ironies you are arguing is that, because authoritarian regimes have essentially alienated the population and at the same time suppressed any kind of political moderates, that in the short term the irony is that as you get a political opening, the only way for people to express their opposition is through Islamist groups who have organized in the mosques. The near term opening of democracy in certain environments is likely to, in effect, entail a rise of Islamist regimes or give them legitimacy and political life.

MR. INDYK: If the focus of democratization is elections because elections give them the opportunity to get in power.

If the focus of democracy is on those things that were described in the 2002 document, which is focusing on trying to build democratic institutions — the rule of law, an independent judiciary, freedom of the press, freedom of association — you can then build up potential alternatives to the Islamists and give them a chance to succeed in elections when you eventually have them.

MR. PASCUAL: Let me turn to each of the panelists and give each one of them an opportunity to comment quickly, and then we are going to turn to the audience. Ivo, you are jumping in, so go ahead.

MR. DAALDER: I mean I think Martin is absolutely right. The problem is not with the democracy strategy; the problem is with an election strategy and a strategy that confuses democracy with elections. The confusion is really remarkable on Page 2. It says, "The peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq have replaced tyrannies with democracies."

If Afghanistan and Iraq are democracies, what are we? These are societies riveted politically, militarily, and in every other way in which the fact that people go to the polls has absolutely no meaning on how the country is governed. So, the fact that you have three elections in Iraq; which is a tyrant has been toppled; over 8 million Iraqis voted in the first free and fair election; and then a freely negotiated constitution was passed by referendum, yes, in which almost 10 million people voted except that two parties voted for it and one voted against it, which doesn't enhance unity; and then nearly 12 million people went to the polls for the last election. Okay, people went to the polls, and they expressed an opinion, but it had no impact on how the place was governed.

Just to reemphasize Martin's larger point, if you confuse democracy with elections, you are in trouble. What you need is a strategy that sequences, that lays the foundation for what Fareed Zakaria called liberal democracies, rather than illiberal or electoral democracies, and that is missing. It is missing in the strategy. It is missing, more importantly, in our policies.

We don't spend a lot of time figuring out how to build civil societies. We don't spend a lot of time figuring out how to build institutions and the rule of law. We don't spend a lot of time figuring out how to disarm militias and have the central and monopoly control over the use of force. We spend a lot of time figuring out how we can have people come to the polls.

It is a disaster when you do it when have elections in deeply divided societies, and it is one that the Clinton Administration was apt to do as well. I was partly responsible for organizing the election in Bosnia nine months after the fighting stopped. It wasn't a pretty picture, and we are still living with the consequences. A deeply divided society votes in the deeply divided parties who are not willing to compromise, and that is what we are having in Iraq right now.

That is why the chances of things going well in Iraq, put it that way, are less than one would have hoped for, and it is because we are emphasizing the wrong tools. We are not paying attention to how societies can emerge as free and liberal in that sense. We are focusing on how people can go to the ballot boxes as if that is somehow what we are about. That is not what we are about.

MR. PASCUAL: Now, to be fair, the strategy on Page 6 does have a whole litany of tools: speaking out on human rights, sanctions, work with civil society, work with military, et cetera. So the tools are put out there. In some ways, one would argue that it is a question of the application of those tools and how they are brought together.

MR. DAALDER: Right, well, again, the moment you say that Iraq is a democracy is the moment you have lost. If that is a democracy, then what is Britain?

MR. PASCUAL: Richard, is Iraq a democracy?

MR. FALKENRATH: It is a country with an absolutely extraordinary political process underway that is incredibly violent but certainly is not a democracy yet, and hopefully — I think everyone in this room hopes — someday it will be, but it is not yet.

I think that point gets to how important it is to understand what these documents are and what they are not. These documents or these National Strategies, first and foremost, are something that are required by law. I think it is the Goldwater-Nichols Act. So the Administration has to crank them out by law. Nothing happens if you don't or if you delay a long time, but they have to be done. They do not determine policy. They reflect it, and they are a very filtered and selective reflection of policy. And they do not offer detailed analysis of particular strategic or operational tactical problems involved in executing any particular aspiration.

Martin's very biting critique of the Administration's Middle East policy, it is not really a critique of what is in here so much as what has been happening, what has been done, and what has been the outcomes of a series of National Security Council meetings, and PCs, and DCs, and what is in the Summary of Conclusion, and what individual decisions are being made.

I think Ivo goes a little too far in his analysis of the first Bush National Security Strategy in calling it a “revolution.” I think it was a sort of projected reality. It was never the case - even though there was some very muscular language in the 2002 strategy - it was never the case that the senior officials in the Administration felt themselves utterly unbound and free do to whatever they wanted, and purely unilateralist, and purely preemptive.

The reality, although not expressed in that very muscular document, was always more nuanced and more constrained. It was, I think, a way for the Administration, that document in 2002, to signal to the world: We mean business; and we are serious about dealing with this; get in line; get behind us as we deal with these problems. That, to me, was a certain message.

Now, on this question of democracy, as I said in my comment, I have some concerns about how it is being used, too. But the fact is the document is right when it says, in the war on terror, our challenge is, in part, a challenge of ideas. It is a war of ideas, and that within the Muslim world, there is a strand of thought which is routinely giving rise now to violent militant groups that are willing to stage catastrophic terrorist attacks against innocent civilians in support of their twisted political and religious agendas. This is a really serious problem, and it is, as the document says, in part, a war of ideas. And the President has an idea about what to do about that which is promote democracy in part.

It is the easiest thing in the world to sit back and criticize; we have all these problems with it, which I myself just did in my opening. The harder part is: What is the alternative? What issue are you talking about here? You don't like

this, so what do you have in mind? What is your idea for dealing with the war on terror and its ideological dimension out there?

You must say something. If you are in government or if you aspire to be in government or if you are advising people in government, you must have an alternative concept if this one is no good. So that is what is really the responsibility of the critic to articulate. I will say it is a profoundly hard challenge to do that. It is very hard to figure out how you get traction on the ideological element of the war on terror.

As I said, I think it is very important that this President has gone so far to cast himself on the side of liberty and freedom and self-determination of peoples. It creates innumerable problems, no question, and cannot be uniformly applied around the world, but at least it is sending a message that we are not just going to stick with these tyrannical, repressive regimes which are highly convenient for keeping the price of oil low and conducting paramilitary or intelligence operations or whatever may be.

We stand for something larger, that larger thing which is very consistent with who we are as a nation and which we all agree would be a very good place to end up if we could just deal with the transitional challenges.

MR. PASCUAL: Mike?

MR. O'HANLON: There are at least eight big countries we haven't talked much about. I am only going to mention, in about sixty seconds, five of them. Carlos, I hope you will talk about Ukraine and Russia at some point, and we are all going to, I am sure, focus on Iran a bit in the Q and A.

I want to quickly talk, though, about East Asia and just how democracy and the strategy relate to five countries. I am going to say a sentence on each one. I think here the Bush Administration record and policy overall is doing better, perhaps because the regionalists have had a bit more influence than the broad ideologues. I don't know, but that is one hypothesis.

In any event, on China policy, I think we are pushing democratization clearly with a more patient, gradual approach. We are not in favor of regime change, per se. We are not pushing the abolition of the Chinese Communist Party. We probably wouldn't oppose it if it happened, but it is not an active goal of American foreign policy. I think the U.S.-China relationship overall is fairly good in this Administration, as it often winds up in the latter years of most administrations, when people get more pragmatic about dealing with China.

I think the U.S.-Japan alliance is in very good shape. Now there are some caveats here. Japan's relations with its big power neighbors are not in good shape, and the Bush Administration in some sense may have hitched itself a little too much to rising Japanese confidence and self-assurance. But generally speaking, I am glad to see that we have confidence in Japanese democracy to the extent that we are prepared to see Japan play a bigger role on the world stage, including even in military terms, which I think is appropriate if done correctly with that big caveat that there are some problems in how it is happening at the moment. The broad thrust, I think, historically is correct.

U.S.-Indonesia relations, I think, are good, and we are doing a fairly good job of supporting that country's trajectory towards a more democratic system in a pragmatic way.

I have some qualms, as do a number of Brookings colleagues, about the U.S.-India nuclear deal. But the overall improvement in relations, which was begun largely in the Clinton Administration, and of course our boss, Strobe Talbott, had a lot to do with that, and we are very proud of that track record here. I think the general improvement in U.S.-India relations is, again, appropriate and a good manifestation of the concept of espousing democracy.

And, finally, the half-arm distance with which we hold President Musharraf and Pakistan, again, I think is generally appropriate. There is a lot of room for debate on the specifics of Pakistan policy. But I think the broad symbolism of sending a message to Pakistan: You are a valued partner, but there is something special about the U.S.-India relationship that is becoming in some ways more special than the U.S.-Pakistan relationship because India is a true democracy, and Pakistan has a long way to go. That message is appropriate to send, and I think the President's visit at least sent that message correctly even if, again, the U.S.-India deal may have been a little too without constraint or demands on India in the nuclear realm.

So those are just five quick mentions, five countries. I look forward to the discussion.

MR. PASCUAL: Let me open it up now to the audience for questioning. You have a platform of ideas here, a range of different views. What I would like

to do is ask you to introduce yourself, say the organization that you are with, and if there is a particular person you want to ask the question of, to do so. In the third row?

MR. LEVENTHAL: I am Paul Leventhal with the Nuclear Control Institute. Mike O'Hanlon did mention that Iran was not mentioned. I was going to make that point. The other term that wasn't mentioned was "nuclear," and I will throw in a third based on my own personal interest which is fission material. These are there very potent terms, surely in terms of the strategy. I am wondering how you feel the dynamic tension between democratization on the one hand, and preemption on the other is going to play out with regard to Iran or should play out with regard to Iran.

And I would ask you also, perhaps Mr. Falkenrath on this, the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, as it is called, carried out to its ultimate manifestation could well arm the world with millions of kilograms of plutonium for peaceful purposes. I am wondering whether the panel feels if this perhaps introduces a centrifugal force which could come back very badly in terms of affecting U.S. interests, not to mention domestic tranquility at home.

MR. PASCUAL: Ivo, you first raised the issue of preemption and democracy. Do you want to take the first attempt at that?

MR. DAALDER: Sure. I mean a lot of people have noticed that the preemption language comes after you talk about Iran and the strategy. As Steve Hadley, who was asked about this, well, does that mean it doesn't apply to North Korea, said, no, it applies to any country that is acquiring Weapons of Mass

Destruction. If I read the strategy right, where we don't have a diplomatic solution to the problem at hand, and we have tried, then at some point a military option remains on the table.

I think that is the message here very clearly to Iran. The sentence that says, we will try, we need to engage peacefully and diplomatically in order to avoid confrontation, is a warning that there may well be down the road a military option. I wouldn't expect any administration saying anything different about this particular issue.

The question that arises is the question that comes to the issue that Martin raised: How do you, on the one hand, try to resolve this diplomatically which presumably involves some kind of negotiation, either direct or through intermediaries or through the United Nations Security Council? As Steve Hadley said, we do talk to each other; we both issue statements, which is a rather interesting way of conducting diplomacy, but it is, in some sense, diplomacy. I prefer that we do these statements in a room with the doors closed, and we might want to explain what it is behind those statements.

But be that as it may, if you try to do that, while at the same time having the explicit strategy that basically says we want to block, counter, or change at least the regime's policies if not the regime itself, there is a conflict here. There is a conflict between, as Jessica Mathews, I think in today's *New York Times*, rightly pointed out, between a strategy that tries to change the regime and a strategy that tries to deal with the nuclear issue. Now there are some people in the Administration who argue that the only way you can deal with the nuclear issue is

by changing the regime, which is to say if they are democratic, it doesn't matter that they have nuclear weapons, which is clearly a view held within many parts of the Administration, as we have seen with regard to India, et cetera.

Leave that aside for a moment. You have to decide what it is that you want to do. Do we want to change the regime, even at the cost of having a nuclear Iran and all the consequences of that and say we can live with that outcome, or do you want to deal with the nuclear proliferation threat? Then you need, it seems to me, a diplomatic strategy while holding preemption as part of that diplomatic strategy in the background. Clearly, I think we ought to do the latter. I am not sure we are sending the right signal to make sure of that. On the one hand, that is what we are saying; on the other hand, we are also spending a lot of time and, frankly, some money doing the opposite which trying to change the regime.

MR. PASCUAL: Martin, Ivo put this in a broader strategic context. Do you want to bring it back to the region?

MR. INDYK: Well, just to perhaps amplify on it because I think his point is right when he says Jessica Mathews has also made this point. But where it now becomes highlighted is that the Administration has announced that it will talk to Iran about Iraq.

MR. DAALDER: But not about this.

MR. INDYK: That makes sense. It always made sense since it is fair to at least assume going into these talks that the Iranians have a common interest with the United States in preventing Iraq descending into civil war since they are a neighbor. They have a good deal of interest in seeing a Shiite majority exercise

effective control there, and if it descends into civil war, they would be inevitably dragged into it. So it makes sense on the face of it.

But if you only confine talking to Iran about Iraq, and you say that very specifically “we are only going to be talking about Iraq,” — and the reason for that is because you don’t want to undermine your regime change strategy, which is designed to try to appeal to the people of Iran over the head of the Iranian regime. Then you find yourself very quickly both in a contradiction and a vulnerability, a diplomatic vulnerability because if we actually find ourselves dependent on Iran to prevent chaos in Iraq and we haven’t been engaging with Iran on the nuclear issue, we are then vulnerable to pressure from the Iranians when we try to press them on the nuclear issue.

In other words, if we are dependent on them in Iraq, how can we press them on the nuclear issue without them saying, okay, we are not going to cooperate with you in Iraq? So we have a kind of fundamental diplomatic vulnerability if we don’t resolve this issue of regime change.

I think we would be much better off saying that we are going to engage the Iranians in Iraq and on the nuclear issue just like we engaged the North Koreans. It makes no sense to me to be subcontracting the nuclear diplomacy.

(Interruption)

MR. INDYK: [Russia] who has an intense interest in keeping this issue out of the Security Council and will therefore always be offering the Iranians less than we can accept, and we will always be put in a position of having to reject what the Russians bring to us.

It would be a much better thing at the table. Now I don't think we can be at the table unless the Iranians stop their enrichment and stop their conversion, the very things that they have now gone ahead and done. That should be the condition for our coming to the table. But I really think that we would be much better off in terms of the National Security Strategy if we both talk to them about Iraq and talk to them about their nuclear program.

MR. PASCUAL: Let me get some other questions on the floor.

SPEAKER: Thank you. My question is for Martin and Ivo.

Since the end of the Cold War, various expressions or phrases have been used to describe U.S. enemies, from Rogue States, to State Sponsors of Terrorism, to Axis of Evil, to Outposts of Tyranny, and now Despotism Systems. Throughout, two countries, only two countries have been the constant, Iran and North Korea. This might mean something to them. Also, at the same time the strategy describes ending tyranny is the policy of the United States. The policy of ending tyranny, I think, is also known as the policy of regime change.

So my question is, the promulgation of this policy or strategy at this point, will it help promote and facilitate the talks with Iranians and North Koreans with regard to their nuclear programs?

MR. INDYK: Well, I will just quickly speak on Iran. Maybe Ivo or Michael can talk about North Korea.

I think in the case of Iran, there is a basic problem of communicating our intentions. It is, in a sense, their problem, but it becomes our problem. The regime, probably for the reason you suggested, considers that the United States

wants to topple them, and there is plenty of rhetoric from our side that they can point to in that regard. They are a paranoid regime by nature, and they now have good reason to believe that we actually want to overthrow them.

In reality, what we are doing, what the Administration is doing is committing \$75 million to television broadcasting, which is not going to overthrow the Iranian regime, at least not in the next 50 years, but that is not how they perceive it. And because they, I believe they perceive our intentions as regime change, it affects the way that they respond when we try to actually use diplomacy to resolve some of their problematic behavior.

MR. PASCUAL: One thing I will just comment on, it is interesting we have seen press accounts indicating that the Administration has invited Iran to engage in some form of dialogue related to Iraq, and some indications with Administration officials they characterize this is as Iran responding to old invitations that may not necessarily be current and on the table. And so, I don't know if there are Administration officials in the audience who would feel comfortable commenting on something like that, but there is ambiguity out there even on the question of a dialogue right now, whether they are welcoming of that dialogue with North Korea.

MR. DAALDER: Let me take this a step higher. This Administration is approaching the question of nuclear proliferation in a very different way than previous administrations have done. The question is, is the problem the regimes, the countries, or is it the weapons and the technology? For 40 years, our policy has been that the problem is the weapons and the technology. You try to control

the access to the technology and what you do with the technology through inspections, etcetera, that is a non-proliferation regime, and the IAEA, and all of that that we have come to love and some of us not to love.

With this Administration, it is clearly not the weapons per se; it is who has them. The nature of the regime is what is important. When you are a democracy, and you have demonstrated control over your capabilities, and you have demonstrated over time to have good non-proliferation behavior, having these weapons is not a problem.

As the President memorably said, we don't, we, the United States, don't have Weapons of Mass Destruction. Well, yes, from his perspective, we don't; we have a nuclear deterrent. Others, bad people, rogue regimes have Weapons of Mass Destruction, nuclear weapons, and others. It is that tension, as Martin rightly described with regard to Iran, which would undermine our diplomacy with regard to Iran because the rest of the world, in fact, doesn't buy this new non-proliferation approach which is that the regime is stupid, it is not the weapons. The rest of the world, in fact, thinks it is the weapons and believes that if you talk about regimes, you are not serious about non-proliferation.

In fact, in some sense, that is true. You are only serious about regime change. That was the problem with Iraq. It, frankly, is the problem with Iran and in some sense the less so with regard to North Korea.

Mike might want to particularly comment on North Korea. I will just point out that we have now done what we have already done to North Korea, which is outsource our diplomacy. We have relied on the Chinese to do our diplomacy

with regard to North Korea, and we have relied on the Europeans and increasingly on the Russians with regard to Iran.

I mean I think we are pretty big boys. We should have some confidence in our ability to do diplomacy ourselves, but because of the way we approach the issue of non-proliferation in a regime basis as opposed to a weapons and technology basis, we can't talk to the people we are in fact trying to change. So you are caught in a catch-22.

MR. PASCUAL: Mike, do you want to comment on that?

MR. O'HANLON: I will comment briefly. That was a very good broad answer. Let me specifically talk about North Korea.

Having just said something nice about the Bush Administration's East Asia policy, I will be very critical. The North Korea policy has been almost a perfect failure. What I mean by that, and I won't go through the whole history in detail, obviously, the U.S.-South Korea relationship declined in the first years of the Bush Administration. The preemption doctrine, I think, really cost us here.

I remember very vividly in October, 2002, in a conference in Beijing, everyone was asking: Who is next? You are going after Saddam now; who is next? Because this image of *An America Unbound*, which I think Ivo got mostly right in his book. I think it really was the image that the world had. George Bush is going to decide who to knock off next. That, in some sense, incredibly, actually created some sympathy for North Korea and Northeast Asia which his a fairly stunning statement to make, but it is true.

And then, on top of that, of course, you had Colin Powell, in this period of time when we were building up pressure on Iraq, say what I think is the least accurate thing he said in his entire career in public service, that the North Korean problem is not a crisis. This was the designed strategy because we needed to keep the pressure on Iraq. Where we are now is in a place where North Korea is a de facto nuclear weapons power. We have lost the opportunity to stop that.

I agree with Ivo's overall point, but I will also observe that in 1994, the Clinton Administration, somewhat by happenstance, created a combination of the threat of regime change, or at least of military strikes, and offers of diplomacy to address the weapons. That combination worked very well.

Now it wasn't a permanent solution. We know the agreed framework was later cheated upon by the North Koreans, but that was the right approach. The moment for that with North Korea in the latest crisis was 2002-2003, and we squandered that moment, and now it is very tough to walk the problem back.

So that may or may not be a real answer to your question but it does involve some of the themes of preemption strategy, National Security Strategy, and of opportunity talks. I think, despite an overall fairly good East Asia track record with the big powers, the Bush Administration record on North Korea will go down as a major failure.

MR. PASCUAL: All the way in the back of the room?

MR. PFEIFFER: I would like to go back to a more general question, which I think Richard touched on, which is: To what extent is this document declaratory policy versus action policy? Because I think to some extent when you are writing

a document like this, you want to convince you on the panel and us in this room that, in fact, there is a coherent vision, a coherent strategy to how the Administration looks at the world.

But, on the other hand, I think that there are probably very few or no principal committee meetings wherein the participants are going to say wait a minute, go back to Page 17 on this document, and this is what we ought to do.

So the question is: How much is this a guide to how the Administration is really going to act when it has a key issue? Given that, I think there has been some evolution in this document today from what you saw in 2002. How much does the panel think that the Administration now would act differently to those key problems as to, say, two or three years ago?

MR. PASCUAL: Richard, do you want to start?

MR. FALKENRATH: I think it is mostly declaratory policy. It is sort of what the Administration says. Certainly, I can't imagine a principals committee meeting which would feel itself bound by anything said in here — I think that has probably always been the case — nor the President. I mean it is not clear how carefully he even read it. That is probably true in the Clinton Administration, too. I mean these documents, that is just not how they are done.

The 2002 one, I think was different, and I think 2002 was a very powerful signaling device. This one, to figure out how it is new, what is different, how it is significant, you have to read it pretty closely, and you have to do some historical comparisons of the sort that we have been doing on this panel. The differences don't leap out on you the way they did before.

I must say, personally, I feel a little bit disappointed. I wish it had been a little more balanced between some of the other great challenges that we face and the sort of first order threats. The part that people will remember it for is its focus on the long term threat of Islamic militancy and the idea of democratization as the answer, the ending of tyranny, the answer.

I think it underplays Weapons of Mass Destruction issues in general, the way we have been talking about it here. More should have been said about that. It certainly doesn't deal with the other great first order strategic challenges such as China and the rise of China.

And then the globalization issues which were added at the end. It was a like a page, a chapter to deal with the enormous challenges like energy demand, including nuclear energy; pandemic influenza, which was mentioned but not really dealt with; the possibility of catastrophic climatic change or environmental change; the trade liberalization.

So I think a document of this sort is best when it accurately reflects the real first order challenges facing the country. Democratization and the war on terror, frankly, have almost nothing to do with our overall approach to the rise of China and East Asia. It is equally important, I think, in the long term, but not really democratization; this is a useless concept when you are dealing with China.

MR. DAALDER: Can I just add? I think it is declaratory policy, but that is why it is important in two central ways. One, it does set milestones for other people in the Administration about certain things, go and no-go areas. It tells you what is acceptable and what is not. It is true that in the principals committee, no

one will refer back to this document, but then again you will find people saying, listen, the President has said A, and therefore, we need to stick with A. That happens in interagency meetings, particularly when it comes to the U.S. military which reads this document very, very carefully because after all, this is the guiding strategy from which everything else follows.

The second audience, the most important one, is non-American. A lot of foreigners read this document very closely. One of the problems with the 2002 document is it scared the be-Jesus out of everybody for exactly the same reason as Mike rightly said on North Korea. It wasn't just the Axis of Evil; it was the Axis of Evil speech and then a document that justified preemption under any circumstances, that basically said to the rest of the world: We are going to tell you how to do things. It is my road. It is the highway or my way. You ride with us or you are dead.

If that is the way you want to communicate to the world, don't be surprised that we now have the popularity in the world that George Bush seems to have in the United States.

MR. PASCUAL: I think it is worth observing in terms of declaratory policy that there are some aspects of declaratory policy that, as Martin was observing, are indeed actually being pursued in establishing democracy as a front order issue particularly in strategy in dealing with the Middle East.

The question, again, comes back to how do you apply it. That becomes the issue which is it might have principles as Steve Pfeiffer is indicating that could be

declaratory out there, but in the end what really matters is how you put them together in a strategy that works. Is it effective? Is it not effective?

I think there are a number of issues that are put out here as declaratory policy that people are going to continue to look at and parse. There is the democracy issue. Later on in the document, it says something like it is hard to imagine anything in the world that can't be accomplished if it is done together with our partners and allies.

MR. DAALDER: He said the same thing in 2002.

MR. PASCUAL: In the end, how is something like that going to be applied? Those are some of the real challenges that we face.

MR. MITCHELL: Gary Mitchell from the Mitchell Report.

I think it is interesting that we are here, spending this kind of time talking about strategy in the Bush Administration because it seems to me if there is any lesson in the last five years it is that the strategy is irrelevant to the execution, and that the real story of this Administration is that it has, I would argue, an almost unbroken record of executing incorrectly in most of the places that we have been talking about.

That leads me to shift from the places that we have been talking about, and say that one of the places we have not talked about this morning, and I am interested in the panel's response to this, is we are not talking about Africa, and we are not talking about Nigeria, for example. So what is the panel's thinking about where that fits in the American national security and foreign policy strategy thinking?

MR. O'HANLON: Let me comment on that briefly because it is an extraordinarily important point. Later in the National Security Strategy, it says that Africa is a priority and that we must work with Africa; that we have special ties with Africa; we have to open our markets to Africa; that we should promote development in Africa. It does not go into it in any kind of specific detail.

It is reflective of one of the kinds of issues that we have been raising. You mentioned Nigeria in particular. Part of the strategy that is laid out or a piece of the National Security Strategy is the importance of conflict prevention, looking at regional conflict, and addressing those regional conflicts in advance.

What is notably absent from that is that those conflicts which would be probably the most destabilizing to the United States are ones that are not addressed. It is an ironic situation that we have gotten ourselves into. If one looks at the 2002 strategy, it says that today that we are threatened more by failed states than we are by conquering ones.

But if the next logical question you ask is: Well, which might be those failed states, and which might be those weak states, and which might be those weak regions because that would be the critical element to identifying what the threats are? In fact, we don't have a mechanism in the U.S. government right now to actually achieve a consensus on what the threats are and what the aspects of instability might be, how to deal effectively with some of those weak states in Africa in particular, and what can be done in advance to actually prevent them.

Ironically, probably the more complex the situation, the more difficult it becomes to actually address it politically because within the civilian world — and

this is interesting because it is a sharp contrast to the military world — in the civilian world, there is an absolute fear that any kind of gaming or analysis into the future of some of the most critical problems will in and of itself become a political problem if that leaks to the general world that that kind of analysis is being done.

I would argue it is probably an issue that affects our ability to achieve the best kind of policy that we can achieve in places like Nigeria or places like Pakistan, or Saudi Arabia, or Egypt that are some of the most sensitive places in the world that are extraordinarily complex that truly demand a very thorough and extensive analysis.

MR. PASCUAL: In the back?

MR. LEVINE: My name is Matt Levine. You talked earlier about a lot of things that are equally important to democratization were omitted or were downplayed in the strategy. I was wondering if you thought that, had they gone through the causal process of how democratization was going to help the United States ensure the physical safety of Americans, if going through that process might have been a way in which those other elements could have been dealt with and could have been explained in context.

I felt the whole strategy goes through and emphasizes democratization and free markets but never shows explicitly how that helps keep me safe. It never really, there is a little bit on Page 3, but it is very vague, and it is non-specific. I was wondering if you thought more of that could have been added, and if so, in relation to what countries, etcetera.

MR. PASCUAL: Richard or Mike, do you want to start on that?

MR. FALKENRATH: Well, it is a kind of analysis that doesn't go on that very often and to my knowledge doesn't usually inform these sorts of strategies. The focus on democratization was arrived at over a period of time in the Administration, not through great contemplation of causal links — how A could lead to B to C to D — but rather kind of interactive discussion with the President and the principals and leaders around the world about what were the purposes of American power and how could policy decisions reached for particular reasons, be explained effectively and, for lack of a better word, sold, so that people would support them. That is a part of governance. If you are leading a state and you make decisions, you need to convince people that your decisions are right. You search around for arguments that work, and terms that work, and phrases that work.

I am not surprised that you find that sort of analysis lacking in here, and you won't find it very often, I think, in government products of pronouncements like this.

MR. INDYK: Can I just add a point about this?

I think Richard is absolutely right. But where the idea came from, beyond anything that he said, is an analysis of what was wrong with our policy towards the Middle East in particular. That, I think, was essentially right, which is to say that it all starts with 9/11. This Administration's strategy starts with 9/11. It didn't have a strategy, a National Security Strategy before that.

The analysis after 9/11 was that these terrorists were a product, in part, of American policy, which backed authoritarian regimes and maintained a Middle Eastern order that had a sickness at its heart, a swamp that was generating terrorists. Therefore, we had to dry up the swamp. The way to dry up the swamp was through democratization. On top of what Richard has said, there was that kind of analysis that ties back directly to the idea of keeping Americans safe, and fighting the war on terror, and winning the war of ideas against the Islamists and Fundamentalists.

I will say I think the analysis was right, but it overlooked a whole lot of other things about the nature of the Middle East, the ability of the United States to effect change in that part of the world, the unintended consequences of trying to break the existing order and what it could leave in its place. On all of those things, the analysis wasn't done, and the prescription fell short. So, instead of ending up with you and me feeling more secure, we end up — I can at least speak for myself — feeling a lot less secure.

MR. PASCUAL: Let me take three questions together and then we are going to turn back to the panelists to answer those questions. I am going to give the panelists an opportunity, in the course of doing that, to make any closing remarks they want to make.

MR. SCHOETTLE: I am Pete Schoettle from Brookings. My question is whether there is not another major big disconnect in this document in the following way. The focus is on democracy promotion which means that the U.S.

Government needs civilian agencies to implement that. You can't promote democracy with a bayonet.

The institutional chapter, way in the back, Chapter 10 I think it is, basically says we have a Department of Homeland Security; we have reorganized the intelligence community; the Office you ran at the State Department has been created; but no indication whatsoever that the civilian agencies in the U.S. Government are going to get a bigger share of the budget and more resources.

Given the Pentagon, at 450 billion and the civilians at 20 or less, how is a democracy promotion going to be implemented with such an imbalance in resources?

MR. PASCUAL: And on this side?

MR. HARRELL: Scott Harrell, Brookings.

I just want to ask Ivo and Carlos if you would comment in particular on democracy promotion with respect to Eastern Europe and the Central Asian republics since that is where we have seen most of the democratization during the Bush Administration apart from the democratization that we have caused in Iraq and Afghanistan.

MR. PASCUAL: And one final question in the back?

MR. ROSENTHAL: Avery Rosenthal, American University.

The Bush Administration has given itself a lot of credit for increasing development aid over the last five or six years. The 2002 National Security Statement introduced the three Ds: diplomacy, development, etcetera. Democratization, as I see it, is really part of the larger development issue. What

does the new 2006 National Security Statement say about the larger issue of development? It is really a continuation of the comment from the first person who talked about the civilian agencies. Thank you.

MR. PASCUAL: What I am going to ask the panelists to do is each to address any one of those comments or questions that were asked as well as any parting comments you would like to make, and I am going to ask each of them to also comment very specifically on one point that I will raise individually with each.

Richard, I am going to start with you. In the course of your closing remarks, if you can also come back to the issue of counterterrorism and say what is it that is fundamental that needs to be part of the counterterrorism strategy today, and is it part of the strategy or is something that we still need to develop?

If you want to take two, it is okay; it is a big question.

MR. FALKENRATH: There is a lot. It is interesting, as I said, I endorse this notion that thinking about the war on terrorism as a part of the war on ideas. I said I think it is right. I think it is good that the President is proposing an idea which promotes that democracy is the answer to that. I think it is up to us and the people outside to have better ideas, and I haven't heard a lot of them, frankly.

This promotion of democracy is what I would call soft power, and it is important. I thought it was interesting that the Strategy sort of underplays hard power and the real tricky, hard-to-do, tactical things against known terrorist operatives around the world, and what we plan to do on that or do about that. I would look for a little bit more of that in the document. You can't be very

transparent about it because of the nature of those activities. Such accountings exist in the Government, but I thought there should have been a bit more of that in this document.

In closing, I think I would say these things - these documents are important, in part, because they precipitate discussions like this and reflections on really a first order question, which is: What are the purposes of American power? We have such extraordinary resources as a country by historical standards. What are we using it for? Why do we have it, and what do we intend to do with that over time?

It is up to the President to explain that again and again and again to the American people and to the world because so much of that power is vested in him personally, and these documents, at their best, help clarify that really fundamental question.

MR. PASCUAL: Martin, let me come back to you. You made a very eloquent, passionate statement about the complexity of the dynamics and, at least, the importance of having human dignity as unifying theme, the complexity of the democracy strategy, contrasting that with a liberty strategy.

So, in the course of your final comments, what is the way ahead with the Middle East peace process? What could happen right now and how to handle this extraordinarily extraordinary dilemma of a democratic election of Hamas to power while at the same time it is an organization that has opposed the existence of the State of Israel?

MR. INDYK: Let me just start by responding to one of the questions. I think the Administration has put its money where its mouth is in terms of democracy promotion in the Middle East by allocating funds for that purpose, setting up institutions for that purpose. I think that I would not criticize them on that at all. And there is a broader shift that the Secretary of State has undertaken in terms of this transformational diplomacy. What Carlos was responsible for in the State Department is an example of an institutional change that has taken place there that I think is a reflection of this commitment to try to seek a transformation of the Middle East, in particular, through the promotion of democracy.

But, and this comes back to Richard's point about the need to put up an alternative strategy, I have tried to suggest that there is an alternative strategy which is less ambitious, which is more focused on building democratic institutions rather than promoting elections; that is more focused on individual freedoms and individual dignity than regime change; and that balances in what I think is a more effective way in terms of protecting our interests, the interest we have in promoting democracy and change in that part of the world, and the interest in promoting stability and, to come to Carlos' question, peace.

The promotion of settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is also something that has been a hallmark of over three decades of American diplomacy in the Middle East. That has essentially been dropped by this Administration in favor of transformation through democratization. That is the other part that I think has been missing over the last six years. Unfortunately, now it is too late.

The short answer to your question is the peace process is dead. As we have known it, it is dead. It is dead because Hamas is in government on the Palestinian side, and Hamas is devoted in its ideology to the replacement of Israel with an Islamic government, not to making peace with Israel. And it is dead because four years of Intifadah violence and terrorism, while the Bush Administration lectured from the sidelines, has led the Israelis to decide that they don't believe in making peace anymore, especially not with a Hamas-led government, and they are going to turn their backs on the Palestinian people, separate them, put up a big wall and a fence and a moat, and go their own way.

So the combination of these two factors means that there is no prospect on the horizon for promoting a peace process. That, I think, is a failure of the Administration's diplomacy over the last six years.

But in terms of what can be done now about it, I think the first answer to your question is I wouldn't start from here, but we have to. Therefore, I think the best that we can do in these circumstances is, on the one hand, lay out a different kind of Road Map for Hamas which makes very clear that they will be judged by their actions, not their words. I think it is a mistake to focus on the words. We went down that road with Yasser Arafat. It was a silly game. What matter is are they going to be a responsible government that tends to the needs of the people who elected them, or are they going to be a terrorist government that allows, or maybe they won't pursue terrorism themselves for the time, but allows a Islamic Jihad, and Aleksa, and the popular resistance committees to continue with the terrorist activities?

That is how they should be judged. If they stop their terrorist activities, if they arrest those people, not only will they be doing something that Fatah did not do when it was in government, but they will also have to explain why they are doing that, because they are, Hamas means the Islamic Resistance Movement. If they are stopping resistance, then they will have to explain to their people why they have decided, as the democratically elected government, that they are going to tend to the needs of the people rather than confronting Israeli terrorist means.

If we could somehow, and I don't have any great faith that this is going to happen, but if somehow Hamas were actually prepared to stop the terrorism that could then provide the basis upon which you could try to rebuild some kind of peace process.

MR. PASCUAL: Very helpful, thank you.

Ivo, in your closing, I wonder if you could make a few comments on more broadly the nuclear non-proliferation and the non-proliferation regime in the context of recent developments.

MR. DAALDER: Sure. Let me start off on Peter's and the question in the back. I actually think that, from a strategy point of view, the merging of development of democratization, the notion that freedom is indivisible, that you need to have development and democratization at the same time for this to work is there from an analytical perspective and a welcome analytical perspective.

The question is: How do you get from A to B? The strategy basically says B is a really good place to be, so we ought to go. But how you get from A to B is left unsaid. I think if you really are pursuing a democratization development,

actually building functioning free societies and states across the world, spending 450-some billion excluding the war, on defense, and 30 billion on everything else is an imbalance that is never going to get that right. So, fundamentally, you need to really shift in a very new direction.

I think one of the challenges, a challenge for an institution like this, is to say: How do you do that within budgetary constraints, within the needs that the military has, but how do you rebalance that?

Richard is right; it is easy to criticize, but unless you come up with a strategy, it is not going to work.

On the non-proliferation, let me take the preemption part of the non-proliferation strategy because the one point I was going to make and never had a chance to make is this: I look at the preemption challenge in a very different way than the Administration looks at it, which is why I come out being more pro-preemption in the end than the Administration. What I am trying to deal with are threats that are not just to the United States, but they are to everyone. The frame I take to this issue is that proliferation is not just a threat to the United States; it is a threat to countries around the world.

The same is true for terrorism, and the same is true for pandemic diseases, and the same is true for a whole host of other global problems; they are global. They can merge anywhere in the world and affect anybody else anywhere else in the world. In order to deal, that is the challenge we have. That is why we need multilateral cooperation. That is one reason.

But it also may mean that we may have to, in certain instances, move militarily to prevent some things from occurring that otherwise would not only affect us but others.

I will take disease. Let us say you have a county that has an outbreak of a highly contagious pathogen and is unwilling or unable to quarantine the population that is infected. If you were able to quarantine it militarily before that disease sort of blows up around the world, that is a kind of preventive use of force that is an interesting thing to start thinking about. Once you put it in that larger framework, the issue of legitimacy, the issue of who decides, the issue of when do you use force becomes very important. The Administration doesn't deal with that because it only talks about self-defense. The issue is only when does the President decide or what is the Constitutional order within the United States.

That is not an interesting, that is, from an international security perspective, that is not the problem. The problem isn't when the President decides. The problem is when do we together decide that it is, in fact, in our interest to move forward to preempt an Iranian nuclear weapons program, to preempt a terrorist cell that may not only attack us but someone else, and what are the mechanisms for making those kinds of decision. Is it the U.N. Security Council, in which countries that are neither democratic nor frankly particularly interested in many of these issues, have veto power? Or are there other ways in which to legitimize it?

That is, it seems to me, where we are increasingly coming to, particularly on the issue of nuclear weapons. If you are starting to think preventively about the use of force, you have to do this not within a national context, but within an

international one. But that means you have to have a different frame for what is the threat to you. It is not just a threat to the United States. In fact, in many cases, it isn't a threat to the United States. We do have two oceans still. When it comes to issues like proliferation and terrorism, it is a threat to other countries, and it is our obligation to work with them to deal with those threats in a cooperative way.

How to do that is the challenge, it seems to me, of this century. This strategy, however much I like it — I like it in comparison to what it was in 2002 — doesn't deal with that fundamental problem.

MR. PASCUAL: Mike, you started us off. You can wrap up for us, in particular, if there are any closing remarks you want to make on Iraq.

MR. O'HANLON: Just about everybody wants to get into a 12:12, right, another big topic.

I will simply say that I am glad for the President's tone of the last few weeks. I think it is a little more sober even though we know so far it isn't going as well as we would have liked to believe. It is a relative success but not an absolute one. I think the Vice President has got to be a little bit more careful about arguing from facts and not from what he would like to see in Iraq. Things aren't going well. I think we will do well to get passable outcome in which the place doesn't blow up and we can pass the war off to the Iraqis. That has essentially become our strategy.

I am still hopeful that we are not going to see all out civil war, and that we will get at least something that holds together over time and can gradually

improve on a 10 to 20 year time horizon, but that is obviously a lowering of expectations compared at least to what I used to hold and certainly compared to what the Administration promised, but this is not making a lot of news to most people.

I think, unfortunately, the headlines and the media coverage of the war are more accurate than the Administration would like to have us believe and, in fact, the problem is on the ground in Iraq, not with the American public's wavering support or the incorrect or biased news coverage. That is my short answer.

There are a couple of specific things that I would love to see us do more in Iraq. I will just tick one off, which is attack the economy more directly and the unemployment rate. I would like to see a major work program, a la Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930s; anybody who wants a job can have one. Not at high wages and not forever, but I think that sort of thing would target the unemployment rate in a manner we haven't yet.

There are a number of other things that could be addressed. This is, I know, late in the day to get into that.

I will simply conclude with one final comment, which is in the broader discussion we have had today about how important these strategies are and who really bothers to work on them and weigh in on them and so forth. I would simply say without divulging sources that I have it on good authority the President did read this a couple of times in his preparation. So I think we should take it seriously, and I am delighted you all did by coming to this discussion today.

MR. PASCUAL: I want to thank you all very much for your participation today.

I think one of the things that is very useful that has come out of this is that there are declaratory elements of the strategy as opposed to activist elements of the strategy. In that sense, in some ways, the strategy almost comes back to the middle. It puts out tools that are important to utilize. The question then becomes: How do you utilize them?

If there is a path-breaking element to this, it is a build on the President's Second Inaugural Address, the focus on democracy. One of the interesting things to reflect on from that is democracy is something that actually has to come, by definition, from within. And so, in effect, we are talking about how do we build the tools and the capabilities of influencing dynamics and change that are internal to other countries rather than things over in which we have direct control.

This makes very relevant the questions that were asked about resources, because in the end, as Ivo was saying, if you have a \$450 billion defense budget, a \$30 billion budget to deal with all of those kinds of things that can, in fact, influence the internal dynamics of change, an entire strategy that is almost premised on the internal dynamics of change. One then has to start to ask the question: Do we have the resources, the capability, the institutional structure to, in fact, actually change what has become a fundamental shift in what we are defining today as a National Security Strategy challenge.

Thanks very much for participating with us.

(Whereupon, at 12:15 p.m., the PROCEEDINGS were concluded.)