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OPENING REMARKS:

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PANEL ONE: Post Conflict Reconstruction

CARLOS PASCUAL

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JENNIFER WIDNER

Professor of Politics and International Affairs, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University

PANEL TWO: The Future of Children

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ISABEL SAWHILL
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SARA MCLANAHAN
Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University

PANEL THREE: Electoral Politics and the President

THOMAS MANN
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LARRY BARTELS
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CLOSING REMARKS:

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Dean, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TALBOTT: I am speaking now for Belle Sawhill and Ron Haskins and Carlos Pascual and Tom Mann and other colleagues at Brookings in saying how delighted we are that Anne-Marie is here, along with Professors Widner and McLanahan and Bartels to lead us in what I think is going to be a very good program this morning. Anne-Marie will have a few remarks of her own to make when we close the program at the end of the morning.

By way of opening, I just wanted to underscore how much these two institutions, one of the world's premier teaching and research universities and the original think tank, have in common, and I will start with Woodrow Wilson himself. A lot of us here at Brookings like to think that we are able to move relatively easily between the world of the mind and the growths of academe on the one hand and the policy community on the other. I don't think anybody has taken that kind of mobility quite as far as Woodrow Wilson. Anne-Marie reminds me that he is the only President of the United States who had at least an earned Ph.D., and he did move, after all, from being the President of a great university to being the President of the United States.

In fact, just a note of what you might call or he might have called counterfactual history, I don't think that Brookings would exist if it hadn't been for Woodrow Wilson, and here is the reason for that. Robert S. Brookings was doing very well, thank you very much, out in the Midwest. He had made a fortune in St. Louis, selling woodenware to the pioneers as they made their way West across the Country. When he turned 50, he decided to devote the remainder of his life, which turned out to be a very long one, to philanthropy. He concentrated that philanthropy on Washington University in St. Louis.

But then Woodrow Wilson asked Robert S. Brookings to come here to Washington and

help the United States government prepare for what would be the war effort. Brookings found that there was actually quite a bit of work to be done in reforming the United States government, and he decided to stick around. Once he got settled here in Washington, he established the forerunner institutions that became The Brookings Institution in 1916, which means that we here at Brookings are celebrating our 90th Anniversary at the same time that the Woodrow Wilson School, which we think of as an energetic young whippersnapper, is celebrating merely its 75th Anniversary.

But in any event, both of these institutions are committed to the absolute highest standards of intellectual integrity. We here at Brookings try to make sure that our research is not only geared to public education but also is useful to policymakers. And as for the Woodrow Wilson School, it trains its students to come into the world of public service with a particular emphasis, of course, on international relations but, as I think we are going to be reminded this morning, with a very strong commitment to making a difference here at home as well.

Both of our institutions, the Woodrow Wilson School and Brookings, believe that in this complicated world of ours where the magnitude of the problems greatly exceeds the resources available to tackle those problems, it is very important for outfits like ours to find counterpart institutions where there are comparative advantages to form a partnership with. It is with that principle and ambition in mind that the Woodrow Wilson School and the Brookings Institution are engaged in a partnership of their own that is going to, I think, blossom into a genuine institutional partnership, and it is off to a very, very strong start with the joint production of a journal on the future of children, which I suspect that Belle will be talking about during the course of the morning.

We are going to start our program today with a panel on Post-Conflict Reconstruction, and I can't imagine two better people to lead that discussion than Jennifer Widner and Carlos Pascual. Jennifer has had a great deal of experience on the ground, particularly in Africa, with failed states, and she is also leading a project at the Wilson School on this general phenomenon. So she knows this subject very well, both in theory and in practice. As for Carlos, he is rather recently, although it probably doesn't seem that way to him, come to Brookings from the United States Government, and he spent the last several years of his very distinguished career in government, working full time, very imaginatively — heroically, I would say — precisely on the problem of post-conflict situations in trying to put broken countries back together again.

I would now ask the two of them to come and get us started, Carlos and Jennifer.

(Applause)

AMB. PASCUAL: One of the things Jennifer and I want to try to do is to give you a sense of some of the lessons that we have tried to learn on stabilization and reconstruction issues and some of the difficulties of learning lessons on stabilization and reconstruction as well, but let me just take one second to deal with the broader question of why should we care.

One of the things that we have come to learn is that in today's world, conflict is a reality. Since World War II, there have been 54 U.N. peacekeeping missions; 41 have actually been since 1991. So in the last 15 years, there have been 3 times as many international peacekeeping missions as we saw prior to that. One of the things we have come to learn, tragically in some ways after 911, is that this should actually matter to us. When there are governments in conflict and there are voids in governance, that can create a foundation for international terrorism, organized crime, and weakness in governance that could also lead to

the spread of infectious diseases or the incapacity to deal with things like infectious diseases and poverty. Indeed, those kinds of threats are direct threats that we can feel in the United States, and so we have to think about these issues differently than we might have thought about them 25 years ago.

In that context, what I would like to try to leave with you are 10 lessons on stabilization and reconstruction issues.

The first of these is actually the fact that stabilization and reconstruction is almost a misnomer, that there are multiple stages of transition that we have to think about. Generally, we focus on the process of stabilizing a society, of bringing in peace and security and order, dealing with humanitarian needs, jumpstarting an economy, beginning a political process. But that is really an opening stage, and it is usually characterized by the international community playing a leading role in affecting what happens within a country. If it is based on the international community's lead role, that in and of itself does not become sustainable, and it has to transition at some stage to local ownership.

Some of the other key factors that have to be addressed or other key stages that I think have to be addressed are first dealing with the roots of conflict, those very factors that led to the conflict to begin with, things like political exclusion, discrimination against ethnic groups or religious groups, corruption within a society, unequal distribution of natural resource wealth that can lead to conflict in a society.

The third stage I would offer is one of building the laws and the institutions of a market democracy, those elements of an economy and a political system and a rule of law that are necessary in order to try to bring order to a society, things that we tend to take for granted, things like regulatory systems, tax systems, political parties, Parliaments, the functioning of

court systems, civilian control of the military.

And finally, a fourth stage that I would suggest is the development of civil society or civic institutions that could provide checks and balances on government.

It is not to say that you have to do all of these things and get them perfectly right in order to have a stable transition, but if you don't get a critical mass of each of those, then it is very easy for states to lapse back into conflict, and it is one of the reasons why we have seen in the research that has been done that 43 percent of states that have gone through conflicts actually lapse back into conflict within five years.

If we look at it from a perspective in contrast to, let's say, transition in the former Soviet Union, where there was no war and we think that it took eight to nine years to get some consensus in Russia or Ukraine around economic policy to move from a contracting economy to beginning to achieve economic growth. Then put that into a situation, say, in Africa, where you have just been through a war, where there is virtually no literacy, there are no comparable resources in the society. It gets us to begin to recognize that this process of transition is a multiyear process; it takes time. And if we do not stick with it, we will get a lapse back into conflict.

The second lesson is the importance of peace agreements and how they are written. It may seem like a funny thing, but so often peace agreements are actually understandings and don't get written down. What we have learned over time is that it is absolutely critical to put down in writing what the timetables are for peace; what the requirements are for participation by political groups; what funding expectations should be from outside sources because in many cases there are expectations that are built up in a society, and then you get a population that becomes disillusioned when those expectations aren't met. It is also critical to have a sound

peace agreement to be a foundation for international support because indeed if you try to put in international peacekeepers without the context or a framework for peace to begin to operate with, they themselves are not going to be able to achieve that peace.

The third lesson is that transitional security is a fundamental requirement to facilitate a lasting peace in any society. We can talk about what the ideals should be — that you have military operation or international peacekeepers that create an environment which allow you to work with local police forces and local military; build up their capability; transition to perhaps, say, international policing capabilities; and eventually, when you have built up your indigenous capacity, your international peacekeepers and police can phase out. The reality is that that timing hardly ever works, and that there are major gaps.

We saw some of those gaps in Iraq, for example, when the military, the U.S. Military, had no orders or instructions on the maintenance of stability and order. As a result of that, they lost that critical monopoly on the use of force. Over time, what we have learned is once you lose that monopoly on the use of force, it is extremely difficult to gain it back again. Hence, we have to be sensitive to these gaps in transitional security, of who has the capacity to maintain it, who has instructions for stability and order, and how international capabilities are going to be meshed with the building of an indigenous capacity.

As that capacity for policing locally is developed, it is critical to link it in as well with the development of court systems and penitentiary systems. Since Jennifer is doing a lot of work on this subject, I will let her talk about that further in her remarks.

The fourth lesson is the importance of transition to local governance. You can have outside peacekeepers and the international community begin to maintain an environment of peace, but it is only an environment, and it is not sustainable if you don't start to grow a local

capacity for governance which has credibility with its own people and can maintain ownership over the kinds of political decisions that have to be made in society.

This is difficult to do because you have just been in an environment where parties have been at war. There is not a lot of clarity about which particular group should have dominance on the ground. It is often difficult to have local ownership that broadly extends itself to a wide range of groups within a society. Yet, at the same time, what we have also learned is if you don't have indigenous groups and organizations that become the foundation for governance, international peacekeepers cannot actually sustain the peace in that environment. Hence, the example again that we see in Iraq. The U.S. military and international forces could create an environment to transition to local governance, but without a firm local government to actually have a credible posture within, it would be difficult for international peacekeepers to impose a peace on that society. Eventually in Iraq, we have to get a local government which is credible and can call off the militias and create an environment politically that allows for security and for economic reconstruction to develop.

The fifth lesson is on economic reconstruction, and there is a lot that we can say on this, but let me just make a couple of points. First is that it is absolutely critical in order to sustain an environment for peace, but it cannot substitute for external security or even internal security and it cannot substitute for local governance. Unless you have some element of security, unless you have some element of political transition, it is very, very difficult to try to get economic growth to be able to be sustainable. It is also important when you think about economic development in a society after conflict to think about developing a new economy, not just rehabilitating the old, but what kinds of businesses can be developed, small scale enterprises can be developed that can begin to sustain a population.

In many cases, we have become fixated with the importance of infrastructure investments, and I don't want to say that that isn't an important thing to do, but we also have to think about what are some of the critical requirements for a given society to be able to put people back to work in the near term.

The sixth lesson, I would say, is the importance of trying to create a transparent regime for wealth management. Ironically, so many of the societies where we have seen conflict have been societies where there have been massive natural resources. If there isn't a capacity to equally share those natural resources or have a sense that most ethnic groups or religious groups can benefit from those resources, there can be a tendency to lapse back into conflict. Again, hence, what we see in Iraq. If the Sunnis do not have a sense that they will be able to benefit from the oil wealth of that nation, it will be difficult over time to get them to buy into any kind of lasting governance for that society.

The seventh lesson I would offer is the importance of involving women in all aspects of peace agreements and the implementation of peace agreements. The basic reality is that it is 50 percent of the population that is affected, but they are also going to bring a more practical perspective to some of the critical issues that have to be addressed in sustaining the peace — education, health care, division of water, division of land — creating an environment of trust in the implementation process.

The eighth lesson is the importance of effective decentralization. This is a tricky issue because in some countries, decentralization can come to mean empowering regional warlords that promote separatism. In the end, what you want to try to do is stimulate local initiative and local activity, recognizing that you cannot depend on what usually are extremely weak governments to be able to deal with the needs all around the country. Yet, at the same time, if

you cannot help regional governments or provincial governments be able to develop themselves in context of the national strategy, there is a real danger in developing separatist tendencies.

Let me just say a word about the provincial reconstruction teams that were put in place in Afghanistan and are being developed in Iraq. There were positive initial experiences with these, particularly in Afghanistan. They created an environment in which there was a sense of security, and I think were absolutely critical in facilitating the successful elections of October, 2004, in Afghanistan. But after that, there was the critical challenge of development. Some of the brigade commanders told me, they said that they did development by opportunity. If there was a well that needed to be fixed, they fixed it. If there was a school that needed a classroom, they added it. But this was not something that was sustainable.

What we have not been able to do is build up the civilian capabilities associated with those provincial reconstruction teams to have groups of civilians who can work with provincial officials to develop provincial development strategies that tie into a national strategy. Hence, there is a real danger that these provincial reconstruction teams could stagnate or, in fact, could be unsuccessful because right now they do not have an effective exit strategy of how to move from a military lead to a civilian lead. It is particularly, particularly important in Afghanistan right now because not only is this a major U.S. involvement but NATO is involved there in a significant way. If NATO in the end finds that it cannot engage in this kind of area activity, undertake it successfully, and exit successfully, it is going to be extraordinarily difficult to get NATO to do this in other parts of the world.

The ninth lesson I would offer is the importance of building a U.S. capacity to engage in stabilization and reconstruction. This is one of the things that I was doing in my previous job

that Strobe alluded to, in building an office for reconstruction and stabilization in the State Department, which in fact actually serves as an interagency body and includes representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Joint Forces Command, USAID, the Treasury, CIA, and others.

The capacity that needs to be developed there, I would say, is four-fold. The first is to actually serve as a joint staff type of capability that brings together the civilian parts of the government to allow them to operate within a common U.S. Government strategy in a way that is interoperable among agencies, something we have not had in the civilian world in the past and which the military has struggled with since the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation and took them a good 15 years to build their joint staff capabilities. We need to do that for the civilian world and between the civilian world and the military world.

It is critical to develop a capacity to quickly deploy individuals who can staff U.S. embassies or capabilities on the ground to develop and manage programs. That is a particular skill set that has largely been stripped from the U.S. Government, and certainly USAID has lost as a result of staff reductions over time. It is necessary to have a reserve capability to bring in critical skills like police, police trainers, and rule of law experts. From that, it is critical to have the capacity to tap into a fourth skill base, contracts and grants with the private sector, NGOs, firms, universities, think tanks.

In order to do all of this and have the resources to actually move people quickly, I think the requirement is on the order of $350 million a year. I would say a bargain. If you put this in the context of Iraq, if we had had a greater capability of getting people on the ground early with plans in hand and a greater capability of making a difference before there was instability in that environment and if we could have, as a result of that, brought home one division from

Iraq one month early, that would save $1.2 billion, just one month early for one division.

And finally, the tenth lesson I would offer is the importance of building a multilateral and international capability. A U.S. capability here is not for the purpose of unilateral action. I would offer that it is as part of a contribution of a contribution to a multilateral effort that has to take place in dealing with issues related to conflict.

There was an important development over the past year with the development of a peacekeeping commission at the United Nations, but right now it is just a shell. It is an approval that was given at the level of the U.N. Security Council. The General Assembly still has to nominate its members. So does ECOSOC. There is an opportunity to shape it as a capacity in the U.N. system for the first time that can walk across peacekeeping operations to humanitarian operations to long term development-related activities and integrate them in an effective way. But if we can't fill that shell in some meaningful way, it is not going to take us much further.

So there are 10 lessons that I will offer that perhaps we can build on in the discussion. Let me turn to Jennifer to add to that a broader perspective on some of the experiences that we have had and intellectual lessons that we have learned from the reconstruction and stabilization experience.

MS. WIDNER: Thank you. I am not sure I am going to offer lots of lessons now, but I thought we might get into that in questions and answers.

Given the occasion and we have a number of Woodrow Wilson alumni in the room, I thought what I would do is talk about the rationale and some of the challenges associated with the new program at the Woodrow Wilson School to try to draw some lessons about what works and what doesn't, not only in post-conflict settings but also in failing states where we are likely

to get a high level of violence, states that have failed because of low, very low levels of economic growth, a negative or shrinking economy, as well as sporadic violence that we might not call civil war yet.

I thought maybe it would be most helpful if I divided my remarks into three parts. One is just to offer some facts again about the significance of this problem, why we ought to pay attention to it. Second is to talk a little bit, Tom Caruthers fashion, about how hard it is to draw lessons in these settings. There are actually some real hurdles to doing this effectively. I think Ambassador Pascual pointed to some excellent priorities with which I would entirely agree. But once you get down to good practices for particular kinds of institution-building, I am not sure we actually know very much, and I want to say why I think that is and maybe what we can do about it. And then I want to conclude with a few remarks about the particular kinds of things that we are trying to get off the ground at the Woodrow Wilson School and invite your comments and revision of some of those ideas.

Then I am happy to talk about lessons drawn from the African experience when we move to questions and answers because I think there are some interesting insights from a continent which is not all failing. We have 11 real success stories emerging on the continent right now since 1990.

Let me first offer a few facts which ought to be familiar to some of you if you have waded around in this subject area for a while. Economist Paul Collier, who is now at Oxford and was at the World Bank as head of the research staff not long ago, has written an interesting paper on policy turnarounds in failing states, and he is only looking at low income states. So he is not commenting upon those higher income states. But through econometric analysis, with which one may not thoroughly agree, he finds that in the low income failed states, the expected

duration of failure is about 59 years. That is not in our lifetime or in the lifetimes of the leaders of those countries or most of the citizens of those countries would we expect to see a failing state turn around into a more successful state. This is a severe problem. Without outside help, most of these failed states will continue to fail during our lifetime.

His second finding is that outside help, while essential for bumping any of these countries over the threshold into recovery, must assume a radically different form from what it has had in the past. Aid contributed in very small amounts can actually hinder the turnaround, and of course that is what hesitant foreign donors — hesitant because they are not sure how their money is being used — are going to do. They are going to parcel out small bits of money here and there. That, he finds, does not work. Aid is only effective when it is big, roughly 30 percent of GDP in these kinds of situations. Now, one can dispute some of these figures, and we can talk about that later, but I think it is an interesting observation.

Technical assistance as opposed to funding big infrastructure projects, institutional development projects, is only useful in the first couple of years. We can imagine one reason why that might be, that it is important for countries to have ownership, and if technical assistance means continued foreign control, it is not going to go very far.

Unfortunately for many of those beloved academic theories and theories in policy circles these days, the level of democracy doesn't seem to make much difference for these particular things and whether there is a turnaround or not. What does make a bit of a difference, and I suspect this relates to a lot of other more important things, is the proportion of people who have a high school education. Those with more are more likely to experience a turnaround.

Well, this analysis certainly isn't ironclad. It has been disputed, but I think it is an interesting point of departure. It is a little bit different from what we are trying at the

Woodrow Wilson School. We are actually trying to focus on what do we know about the solution to particular kinds of problems that people on the ground from these countries face when they try to build an institution. So, for example, in the area in which I work, often with court systems, what do we know about what makes a homegrown effort to produce a better court system, a more independent judiciary actually work or not? We are beginning to accumulate some wisdom about that by looking at the range of experience across countries where you have had higher levels of judicial independence evolve over time versus lower.

We are very interested in filling a gap that I think Ambassador Pascual referred to, and that is once foreign assistance gets out there, it is very important to have people on the ground from those countries who have some ideas about how to build up the strength of these institutions.

Let me say, first, a few words about how hard it is to actually draw lessons about what works in these contexts from an academic perspective, since I am from an academic institution, and then say a few words about how we are trying to address these problems at the Woodrow Wilson School.

As you all know, being in Washington D.C., the language of best practices, lessons learned, lessons identified is all over as a buzzword. If you were to surf the web right now, you would find good practice guidelines, lessons learned on almost all of the web sites of NGOs and others involved at UNDP and others involved in the subject area. I think that is very important. The only way we can begin to build in one setting is to begin to look at what happened in other settings or improvements over time within the country in which we are working.

From an academic's perspective, one always asks, well, how reliable are these lessons?

If you look closely, you also see that they are based on one success or a few successes that that particular organization feels it had with a particular program. As an academic, I would like to look a little bit more broadly. Typically, when we are trying to generate reliable statements about whether a program works or not, we try to control for a whole range of factors, hold a lot of things equal. We try to look across successes and failures and see what was common to the successes but not in evidence in the cases of failure, and then we like to double-check those initial findings with the people who are on the ground at the time.

The problem with these post-conflict settings and with failing states is that they subvert all the kinds of things that we take as essential to generating reliable conclusions in academic research.

First, most people out in the field don't actually like to talk about the project that failed, and we see a lot of that right now. The problem is that if your funding stream, your job is contingent upon the success of that project because legislatures in the United States and other parts of the world are trying to measure the successful projects and continue to fuel the successful projects. We don't look at the failures. We don't advertise the failures. To draw reliable good practice guidelines, we actually have to look at the failures. Somehow, you have to get people to confess, and that is hard.

One of the things we are thinking about at the Woodrow Wilson School is oral histories after the fact, taking people out of that context when they are no longer dependent for their incomes on this particular project. Then, can you give us a candid sense of what worked and what didn't?

The second thing that subverts the ability to draw nice reliable lessons is that these are very volatile environments. Lots of things are changing all the time. In academic research,

you want to hold a whole lot of factors constant in order to draw a clear causal inference about what was doing the work, whether the program actually worked. Volatile conditions subvert that goal. Economists who work on economic shocks, economic crises get a little bit closer to trying to solve some of the problems associated with volatility than a lot of us do, but it is very hard.

The third thing is that the duration of the program may matter. It may matter a lot. In medical research, we say, hey, if you want to know whether a particular medicine worked or had terrible side effects, you would want to see what happens after it is has been used for a fairly long period. Of course, that is the last thing in the world anybody is doing right now. We are drawing conclusions very rapidly about programs that have often been in place only a few months. Partly, that is driven by Congressional priorities. Congress often says you have to report in after six months, and then we will make some judgments, and that may just be too fast. You could cut off good programs too quickly with too short a duration.

Fourth, often it is the conjunction of several circumstances coming together that produces the success or failure of a program, and we can all relate to this in terms of the kinds of things that we do in our daily lives. Sometimes it is bringing three things together that is essential before you begin to see a result for good or for ill. Again, we tend not to look at that when we are drawing best practice guidelines at this point.

Finally, in post-conflict settings and failed states, information is scarce and the sources of information are rarely trusted. The voice of rumor is very, very strong in these settings as they are often in some pockets of the United States or over some issues in the United States. And so you often see a lot of herd behavior and fad behavior, and whether something works may be a function of whether you provided the kind of bell weather or responded to the bell

weather issue that people on the ground thought was terribly important as a sign of success, whether it really was or not. In Iraq, being able to provide electricity very rapidly appeared to many to be an indication of whether other aspects of reconstruction would work. We don't find that kind of behavior quite so often in stable settings, but I do I think very strongly in these highly volatile contexts.

I think these are reasons why it is actually quite hard to draw good lessons about what works in these settings. When I am talking about good lessons, again, I am not talking exactly about what Ambassador Pascual was talking about. I am talking about whether we know how to make a court system work or how to build a police force.

If it is hard to draw clear lessons, what can we do?

I think, first, we want to pay a lot of attention to context. I would like to see a lot of our NGOs and government organizations begin to show us decision trees, to say: Hey, if you have this kind of contextual factor present, what has been tried and what is the range of experience on that issue? Probably there should be several nodes to those decision trees, each focusing on a particular kind of context. We rarely see those.

A second is I think we need to begin to think about detailed histories, descriptions of projects as important forms of knowledge. We rarely see these, too. We really need the gritty detail about what was done in a particular case, not the kinds of four or five variables that academics often look at but rather the kinds of things that we need to include in policy histories.

Third, I think we need some carefully pared qualitative comparisons, and we need to shed some of the big cross-national regressions that I think are likely to yield wrong results in these cases.

And four, I would love to see us create some experimental zones, places where ideas from people on the ground could be tried out and where others could observe the success or failure. If you will permit me just a brief indulgence into my African interest here, there are a number of agricultural research organizations in Africa that have found that the best way to spread good news about how to do a project in Africa is to try it on an experimental farm and bring people in to see the results, and then give them the seeds of the variety that they liked best, so they can then go try elsewhere. I think that model is something that we ought to try more often. It gives people more local ownership. It also plays on that need to see examples that are coming from people on the ground before others will begin to adopt them. I would like to see us do more of that, and I think we can learn some important lessons from that.

What are we doing at the Woodrow Wilson School in this regard? Well, we are beginning each fall to run a number of policy workshops that involve our second year Master's students or mid-career students. We send them out in the field. They have to look at a particular problem, look at the particular experience over a number of countries in dealing with that problem, and report back to a client, a Blue Ribbon Panel, and to the practitioner who is leading the workshop about what they found. And we find that their conclusions are often not wholly reliable, that they tend also, as NGOs and others, to argue for solutions they happen to like rather than solutions the data support, but it is a first step and it provides some training for them, responding to some of the training needs you pointed to.

The second thing that we are doing then is using those workshops as a point of departure. They are wonderful points at which to collect lots of different case experiences. Then we launch a more academic center that involves oral histories and some systematic case studies to try to refine them.

The third dimension, which we haven't launched yet because many people are talking about something similar and we are trying to assess what will truly work and be a contribution that an academic institution could make, is some way to provide access to this information to people on the ground, not just donors but people on the ground in these countries, some multilingual resource. Obviously, it would probably have to be electronically-based, and that presents some problems on its own. But how to provide access? So we have played around with the idea of creating a kind of web portal for these kinds of findings that would allow ideas to bubble up from the ground. I am sure many of you have heard similar ideas elsewhere here.

Let me stop there. I am happy to talk about lessons that I think we are getting from the African experiences as we go forward, but I think I would like to throw the conversation back to Ambassador Pascual who has far more experience on the ground than I do.

AMB. PASCUAL: In fact, why don't we throw the conversation open to you and give you an opportunity to raise your questions?

MR. CRAIG: I am John Craig, retired AID officer.

I have been reading very carefully the accounts of what is going on in Iraq. The *New York Times*, in particular, and Mr. Rosen, who I gather is an Iraqi, has given this picture of 100,000 people who have been hired and given guns to guard the oil pipelines. These hit squads, not hit squads, they are supposed to be squads that can go out and deal with the bad guys. It turns out that they take turns taking out the bad guys and taking out their personal enemies. It looks to me as though you have got such a mess there that there are no good guys to start working with. I am wondering if there is any ray of hope that you see or if this is just a case of complete chaos and there isn't much that one can do about it.

AMB. PASCUAL: There are a number of issues that are embedded there, and I can

comment on a few. Jennifer, I don't know if you want to also comment on this.

First of all, on the situation in Iraq, it is a good illustration and one of the points I was trying to make, that when you lose control of the use of force, when you lose that monopoly on force and then you have to depend on ad-hoc methods of providing for security, such as militia groups that are staffed for a particular purpose, it becomes much more difficult to maintain a stable environment. Hence, a very simple lesson that emerged from these experiences is to ask the questions: Who is responsible for stability and order in the transition process? Who is going to take responsibility for protecting infrastructure, for major buildings, for historical sites, for political leaders?

If you don't have an answer to those questions, if your answer is I don't know, than you have a real problem and you should rethink whether in fact you should go in to begin with or whether you redesign your plan. If you don't do that, you are potentially getting yourself into an irresponsible situation.

The second point is it becomes extremely difficult to control these militia groups if you don't have some kind of political understanding. If, in Iraq, we can, in fact, get a stable government in place, then there has been some progress on that. If there is an effective set of negotiations that makes the Sunnis believe that they will get some benefits from oil wealth, and that is a very critical question because the constitution which was written and which was passed and which was hailed as a success for democracy basically says that each of the provinces has the ability to write law for the development of oil resources which, you might imagine, the Kurds and the Shiites are going to develop this in a way that benefits their own areas and excludes the Sunnis. So the Sunnis are basically hanging in there with the prospect of some revision to that constitution. If they cannot get a sense that that will happen and they

will benefit, it will be extremely difficult in fact to bring some element of security around the oil and pipeline system.

The final thing I would offer is the importance of dealing with transparency on issues like natural resources and wealth. In Iraq, it was only in April that meters were ordered for the oil wells. We actually don't know how much is being stolen in Iraq right now because there is no capacity to actually understand how much oil is being produced. For that matter if you don't know how much oil is being produced, how to reconcile it with shipping documents and letters of credit, a basic tool that you would use in any kind of situation in order to try to control corruption, there is potentially billions of dollars of oil that has been stolen, and we actually have no understanding of how much.

If we can't get our hands around these issues and help the Iraqis get their hands around these issues, then it is going to be difficult to bring peace and stability because there will be a sense that you can launch your own missions and become wealthy independently without actually having to pay any cost for it.

MS. WIDNER: I am not sure that I can add. Certainly in the Iraqi case, you are the expert here. We have seen some development of related situations in Nigeria and other oil-producing African countries, and again transparency is part of what is important. There, we know a little bit more about how much is being lost. One estimate is at least 70,000 barrels per day in parts of Nigeria. That is a lot of money.

MR. DESSLER: Mack Dessler (?), Woodrow Wilson, 1965 and 1971, and University of Maryland.

Ambassador Pascual has told us how excruciatingly hard it is to do reconstruction. Professor Widner has told us how excruciatingly hard it is to understand reconstruction.

I am reminded of a principle I was reminded of by my late colleague at Maryland, one time Princeton Professor, Mansur Olsen (?), when I was seeking career advice — I knew what advice he was going to give me — about whether to go to Maryland. He said, "Mack, you should go to Maryland; don't take that other offer" — even though it was a higher salary and it was a chair — "because in going to Maryland you are going to have about a 35 percent change in your life. That is about as much as you can do. The other place you go, it is going to be about 75 or 80."

Now this may sound silly but perhaps the connection is evident. What Ambassador Pascual has given us for Iraq and which we have all been sort of mindboggled by watching this is everything seems to be up. There is sort of no base, no continuity. Now this leads me to what I guess will be a question which is, first of all, can you name some successes, not necessarily in Iraq, not necessarily whole countries, though it would be nice, and is it possible that these successes are places where a lot of these variables were either stable or something that could be left alone for a while, so you had a limited number of things you could work on without having everything?

We seem, in Afghanistan where we probably pretty much had to do and Iraq which some of us think we didn't have to do, but in both cases we seem to be in situations where so much is up. Political, economic, violence, everything is sort of up. Anyway, that is the question if it is a question.

AMB. PASCUAL: Let's maybe get a couple of other questions or comments on the floor.

MS. DANIELS: Hi, my name is Sherry Daniels. I am in the State Department Foreign Service, and I am just in between assignments, now back from Israel.

My question is really for both of you in terms of whether it can be drawn as a "lessons learned" under your lesson about transitional security. Is there something in the Bosnia experience or in the Kosovo experience or in previous, earlier in the century, the 21st Century that you can say about force levels when you compare to World War II? How much international security is enough security? In Bosnia, I think the length of the security, of the S4 and I4 protection, is it a success yet at 10 years? But, basically, is there anything you can say about force levels that you care to offer?

MR. TALBOTT: Thanks, Carlos. Let me add, if I could, one question, and this is particularly for Jennifer because of her area of expertise. It has to do with what she and indeed you too, Carlos, see as the role, not of global multilateral institutions but of regional and sub-regional institutions.

Here, Jennifer, taking the list of issues, considerations, and recommendations you made, what would you say about the role of the African Union, ECOWAS, SADC, that kind of thing? First of all, as a species, are they evolving in the right direction where they can be more helpful on this kind of thing? I think it is particularly important, especially in the case of Africa because that is the continent maybe where this problem is most acute, although it is found elsewhere as well. Carlos, maybe you will have some observations in this regard, too.

MS. WIDNER: I will go ahead and try to respond to a couple of sets of questions.

Certainly, in the African setting, responding to your question about whether there are any success stories, there are some. It depends a bit on your definition of a failing state. If you are prepared to accept that some states are failing but haven't had the very, very high level of violence that you see in Iraq, then there are a number of success stories I think both in Africa and in Latin America. The classic one that people point to in Africa is certainly Mozambique.

Uganda has some problems now and has some continuing conflict in the north, but in many respects it has turned around. Benin looked as though it was really going to fracture. That was one of the early, early turnarounds, but it is a tiny place. So it hard to know how far you want to generalize from that.

Somaliland, again, part of Somalia splits off, does well on its own, the international community won't recognize it, but it has done rather better. Then there are a number of other cases where we have seen no particular violence but the breakdown of infrastructure and rule of law and a turnaround from that. One could even put in that a country like Tanzania, dirt poor, had a rule of law problem back in 1979 but pulled back from it. Looking at that transition is possibly helpful.

I think the violence does complicate it enormously. There may fewer cases in the African setting that are that illustrative, but perhaps some in Central America that would be interesting to look at.

On the regional side, we have the kinds of problems with the African Union, SADC, ECOWAS that I think you would expect to find. They are new, relatively. Some of them are newer regional organizations. They are coming out of states that are often themselves failing. The capacity is low. It is building. They often don't have the kind of mandate you would need to intervene effectively in a Darfur. SO I guess I would say that I have limited expectations of how helpful they could be.

But I think the really interesting work is below that level. In East Africa, you have, for example, the emergence of the East African Bar Association, a collaboration between judges. You see some of this in other regions as well, where the fact that you have three countries circulating lawyers among themselves, watching one another's activities means that somebody

who blows the whistle and says, hey, there is something going on in X country, has people in two other countries to back him up, and it becomes that much harder for a government to close that down, that statement of hey, not all is well. I think we are seeing some very useful examples of cooperation along those lines.

We need to see it more, but we are beginning to see some of it in Customs. A lot of the flow of arms could be regulated more effectively if Customs operations were cleaned up. That needs to happen, and that has to happen on a regional basis. I think that is where the action really is. It is not with some of the larger organizations, although they have certainly made enormous strides from where they used to be. I wouldn't want to close that down, but I would say that without bigger mandates and much bigger capacity, they are not the solution to a lot of the very pressing problems in Africa.

AMB. PASCUAL: Let me try to build on a few of those points.

First of all, in the difficulty of this process, yes, it is extremely difficult. I think it is important to think about it in the context of moving out of an environment of war, where that state's history of order has been authoritarian rule that has been imposed from the top, and we are now hoping that the society will now transform into something which is based on openness and freedom and competition with a rule of law that will mediate how individuals operate vis-à-vis one another, a court system to mediate the disputes, and an electoral system to serve as checks and balances on the leadership of a country.

When you put it that way, this is a radical transformation, and it is not going to happen in a short period of time. You can't impose it because you are fundamentally changing people's lives. If there isn't a belief in what is being done there, it is going to obviously fail. And it is going to require a period of sticking with that process of transition and supporting that

transition as you get indigenous groups beginning to believe in that process of transformation and where they are seeking to take their society.

Unfortunately, the Western concept of transition usually doesn't operate within those timeframes. It is usually a year or two years. Certainly, Congressional funding cycles don't operate within that context. It is why we get into so many clashes over funding and frustrations over funding issues.

Just an example from my experience in Ukraine, not a post-conflict situation, certainly one of tremendous transition, but in the early years, the U.S. Congress used to earmark year after year $225 million for Ukraine. Those of us who were working in the Administration would say it is too much money because they actually aren't ready to use it yet. They haven't developed a concept of where they are trying to take the society. By the time the Ukrainians started to get their act together on economic issues, at that stage when we began to argue there is a need for additional resources because now there is a concept of how the economy should function, the U.S. Congress' perspective was hey, we gave you your $225 million a year; you misutilized it and therefore we are not going to increase the funding level. So there is usually this disconnect between the capacity of the Congress to fund and, in fact, on basic absorptive capacity issues.

The irony of an immediate post-conflict situation is an international community comes in and it is providing a great deal of services. It is a lot easier to spend money in that kind of environment. As you transition to local ownership, you start to run into problems because suddenly you have local groups that have to figure out for themselves: Where is it that we want to go? What do we do? The absorptive capacity suddenly radically drops. That is where, ironically, you get your frustration because you have got a certain amount of

expectation built up with the international community's role. Funding gets provided, but then when you have to depend on locals to actually do the job, it takes a period to build up the capability to do it. So it is hard to do.

In terms of the "success stories," Mozambique is one that is indeed regularly cited. I was in Mozambique from 1989 to 1991. One of the ironically positive things in Mozambique was that it absolutely hit rock bottom. There was nothing else that you could take out of that society. In fact, when you got some element of peace and stability combined, ironically, with market reforms that the government started to put in place in about 1989-1990, the agricultural sector just shot up. So you got very positive development there.

On Bosnia and Kosovo, let me use that as a transition to your question on the force levels. The rule of thumb that some have pointed to is one officer or one military presence for every 20,000 population. If you would extend that to Iraq and you discounted the need to provide for some kind of security provision in the Kurdish-held areas, assuming the Peshmerga could do this on their own, the kind of force level that would have been required in Iraq is 450,000. In Afghanistan, the shortage of troops, relative to that rule of thumb, is even greater. So what has happened is that in the lessons we have learned on the kind of international military peacekeeping presence that has been successful in sustaining peace over time has not been replicated in some of these recent major conflicts like Afghanistan and Iraq.

It raises the question of whether or not any individual country can actually sustain that kind of effort. The obvious answer is no. We have a very difficult time actually maintaining 150,000 troops there, much less any larger, reinforcing the importance of being able to approach these kinds of initiatives on a multilateral basis.

Just a word on regional institutions, Strobe, I think the regional institutions do need, over

time, to play a more effective role. There are many cases where it is going to be very difficult to get the U.N. to be able to move quickly on peacekeeping functions. Sudan is a good example. If, in fact, from the outset we had tried to get a U.N. mission deployed in Darfur in 2002 and 2003, when we were putting in what eventually became 7,000 African Union peacekeepers which was still too low, we still would be waiting. The U.N. mission in Sudan, which is the force in the south, was authorized at 13,000 troops. It was supposed to be completed last November. When I last checked, the deployment was about 80 percent complete. That is for 13,000. You can see the difficulty that is going to arise in Darfur when it transfers to a U.N. mission. If there is not a capacity to build on the African troops that are already there, it is going to be extraordinarily difficult to build up to a 20,000 troop level. It is going to be difficult to build up to 20,000 troops anyway.

In Africa, you have basically got three forces that are relatively reliable on a consistent basis. The Nigerians, bad as they may be or inadequate as they may be, Nigeria is one of the principal contributors to peace in Africa and certainly has been in ECOWAS. Second is the Rwandans, and the third are the South Africans. By the time you get done with those three, you take a huge drop down which is the other point that essentially rises. If you want an African peacekeeping mission, not only do you have to provide the troops, you have to put uniforms on them, you have to give them equipment, you have to give them transport, the whole set of works.

The other issue where there is a huge, huge capacity is on airlift capacity or transport capacity. Every time we want to move a peacekeeping mission anywhere, there is a huge set of issues that come up on simply how to get them there. The U.S. has a certain amount of capacity, but it is not adequate for everything that needs to get done. Ironically, the countries

that do have significant capacity are Russia and Ukraine which has not, in fact, been very effectively tapped. In many cases, for example, in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States was contracting with Ukrainians and Russians to provide airlifts of troops from Central Europe for, say, Polish peacekeepers that were being brought into Iraq because we didn't have the capacity to actually lift them.

We have time for one last question.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Gary Mitchell, from *The Mitchell Report*.

The question really comes from thinking about Jennifer's experience specifically in Africa and also her mentioning the oral history concept. It, first of all, reminded me, there is a wonderful African proverb with which you may be familiar, which is "The tales of the hunt will always glorify the hunter until the lions have their own historian." It makes me wonder.

In this case, it raises two questions for me. One is are we asking the right people, and are we asking the right questions? Let me just flesh that out to say, and this is also to your 10 points of learning, Carlos, when we are studying success, are we studying it from the standpoint of the U.S. Administration's perspective and the allied NGOs, or are we talking to Iraqi's upon whom this was thrust? Ditto in any other African country, for example. To what extent are we asking the indigenous people the questions? Are we talking to them?

Then second, as you pointed out, Jennifer, it is difficult to get people to talk about their failures, but it is not necessarily difficult to get them to complain. So are we structuring this conversation in a way that allows people to talk about it in that sense of what didn't work?

It also made me think about something you were saying. In the medical world at NIH, I don't think they look at the work that they are doing on Alzheimer's, for example, as failures. They look at what is working and what is not working. So I am hoping that turned into a

question.

MS. WIDNER: Let me just say a few words. I think one of the really unfortunate things is that, by and large, very few organizations working in these areas have asked people on the ground what works, and I am hoping that we can begin to overcome that. The obvious reason for it is there isn't a lot of money to go out and canvas people very systematically, and most of these are emergencies where people feel, hey, we just gotta get the job done. But I do think this is an important dimension that has been overlooked, particularly because I would like to see our Woodrow Wilson School project attend more to the perspectives, the ideas of people on the ground in some of these critical areas.

There have been some efforts to monitor public opinion about government at large, including whether you can trust local government officials. There are barometers out there and a new Arab barometer that is going to do the same. But I don't think it gets to the particulars of a program. I would like to see us do more, and I don't think we do a lot in that way right now.

Then how do you get people to talk about their failures? We have tried to cook up a whole lot of schemes for this. One kind of innocent way is to say: Well, look, what would you do different if you could do it over again? Or if you were providing advice to somebody in another setting, and you give them some parameters, what do you think would port to that other setting? Sometimes you can get them to start going down the road about what didn't work. You almost always have to detach. You have to present the information anonymously, so as not to jeopardize the funding stream.

I think this is something that we will continue to find problematic, unless the donor agencies change the way in which they allocate the funding and reward collecting data on what

didn't work and reward turnarounds. That you could do with a slightly longer time horizon, I think.

AMB. PASCUAL: One of the things I would add is in addition to collecting the data, we have to digest it. For example, there are thousands and thousands of hours of oral history that have been done on diplomats who have served in Iraq which have been put together in History of Iraq project, virtually, totally untapped and unmined, not systematically organized in any particular way thus far.

In terms of learning from indigenous people, it is absolutely the right question and not enough of it happens because it means that you have to get on the ground; you have to do surveys of local groups. There is some work that has been done, particularly by non-governmental organizations, but generally most of the learning that gets done is done from an American perspective rather than a perspective of indigenous peoples.

I want to thank you very, very much for giving us time to share some of these ideas with you for the questions and answers. We have lots of very interesting and exciting panels still to come.

(Applause)

MR. HASKINS: Hello, my name is Ron Haskins. I am a Senior Fellow here at Brookings and also a consultant at the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore where I spend a day a week, hidden in a corner somewhere, furiously trying to finish my Brookings work, for which they pay me. That works out pretty well.

I am joined on this panel by Belle Sawhill, my colleague here at Brookings, who is the Vice President for Economic Studies and also a Senior Fellow, Belle is an economist; and by Sara McLanahan, a sociologist from Princeton, Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs, she

is also the Senior Editor of a journal, *The Future of Children*. This is what the journal looks like. Sara selected the color. There is no other color known in Western civilization that can match this color, but it is not Brookings' and it is not Princeton colors. I think that what it is not is the most important.

MS. MCLANAHAN: It is our joint color.

MR. HASKINS: It is our joint color, yes.

We have a true partnership. I don't know what other activities are ongoing between Brookings and Princeton, but this is a true partnership. Let me tell you how it came about.

In 1991, the Packard Foundation started a journal called *The Future of Children*. I am a Republican. So my view of the journal was a lot of good information, but it was slightly biased in my opinion, in fact, outrageously biased in some cases. It had very little balance. But then Packard, as many of you probably know, ran into financial difficulties, and they decided to divest themselves of their children's portfolio, but their board and their staff loved *The Future of Children*. So they decided they would like to rescue *The Future of Children*.

They hit upon the idea of having a national competition and use the market to get the best possible editors and writers. At this point, Sara found out about it, and Sara wisely called us at Brookings and said, let's go together and let's bid for this journal, which we did after an elaborate process. They went through a fairly elaborate process themselves. I think, in the end, they had it down to two or three possibilities, and we were one of them. We met with them at Princeton, and in the end their board decided to give the journal to the Princeton/Brookings team with Sara as the Senior Editor and with two other editors at Princeton, Cecilia Rouse, who is an economist who specializes in education, and Chris Paxson, who is also an economist and she specializes in health.

Now if you are doing your math, we have three economists, I am a psychologist, and one sociologist, and that is about the order of things here in Washington. Economists dominate. Their lawyers compete with them sometimes but not on our team. No lawyers on our team.

MS. SAWHILL: We have an Associate Editor. Elisabeth is a lawyer.

MR. HASKINS: Good, okay, I didn't know that.

So we won the competition, and now we have to figure out how to publish this journal. We got together, and we discussed various topics. All of us had some pretty firm ideas about how we should this. I think at that first meeting, we talked about our first four or five issues. The first issue was on early education; second issue on marriage; third on obesity; the fourth on social mobility, about which we will say some more in a moment; then the fifth one, which is not done yet. Social mobility is not done yet. The other three are done. Social mobility is just about done. It will be out in September. Then the next one after that, about six months later will be primarily on teachers. It is called Excellence in the Classroom. Then our sixth issue will be on poverty and new ideas about how to reduce poverty of which there are lots of interesting ideas, and we will not only present those ideas but describe how they should be funded, which will lead us to recommending all kinds of glorious cuts in the U.S. budget, I am quite sure.

I think that is an example of how we try to be somewhat sophisticated. Most academicians just make recommendations about how you ought to change policy, but you also have to pay for it, and it often raises miserable choices to figure out how you are going to pay for things, and we try to do that.

Really, I think our comparative advantage showed up in the competition, and I think it has shown up in the way we actually do this journal, and that is we try to take the dry, dusty

academic conclusions and actually insert them into the policy process. We make a great effort to do this. Many other people at Brookings do the same thing. In my view, that is why we are really a very, very good team. Not only do we have five people who get along pretty well and all of them have their own ideas, but we have been able to meld them. We have great scholarship. Belle and I have pretty good scholarship as well, but we have great scholarship from the Princeton team and the credibility of Princeton University, plus the political knowledge and policy knowledge of the team here at Brookings.

I think we have done very well in actually getting people to pay attention to our ideas. One way that we do that is we publish a 3,000-word policy brief. Now many people think policymakers would never read a journal or a book, which is completely true, but they would never read a 3,000-word policy brief either, but their staff will and their staff will summarize it in a one-page memo. So we have really specialized in writing these 3,000-word policy briefs. We pick out the most interesting and policy-relevant issue from each of our issues and write one policy brief, and then we organize a public event around the policy brief. We have done all our events here in this room. Plus, we have done a couple on the Hill, where we go up and especially try to attract Congressional staff. In all of those briefings, we try to emphasize specific recommendations about how policy should change and in many cases, what it would cost and how to go about it.

We also, by the way, in several cases have emphasized state and local policy. In fact, I think one of our best events and one of our best policy briefs was on obesity which was focused almost exclusively on state and local efforts. It is really amazing how much state and local government has done, primarily because Washington has basically punted on this issue because the food lobby is very powerful and for other philosophical reasons. The states and

localities have really had to focus. That is where we put our attention, on what the states and the localities could do.

Let me just present you with a few little tokens of what we think is success. First, one of the most frequently used education web sites is called Education World, and they recently evaluated a bunch of books and journals, and they gave our journal, for content and its presentation, its design, as well as our web site, an A Plus. That seems pretty good. I never got one of those myself. That is pretty good, right?

Then also our web site, we have about 50,000 hits a month with lots and lots of downloads, and we have 28,000 subscribers to our newsletter, our electronic newsletter. I think this shows we are having some modest impact, both on the field and on policymakers, both because I think we have selected the right topics and because we are able to bring both a distinguished scholarly background and a knowledge of the policy process and how to influence policy process and brought those things together.

Now we want to hear more detail about two of the topics. Sara and Belle, respectively, are going to talk about two of the issues that we address. Sara is going to talk about marriage and what we did with our journal on marriage, and then Belle is going to talk about social mobility and what we plan to do with our volume on social mobility. Sara McLanahan?

MS. SAWHILL: Actually, I think I am not going to talk about social mobility. I am going to talk about poverty and inequality, and I think it is going to lead into what Sara is going to talk about.

MR. HASKINS: So you want to go first?

MS. SAWHILL: What do you think, Sara? I think it is going to lead right into it.

MR. HASKINS: This is a brilliant example of organization that we are able to follow

here.

MS. MCLANAHAN: That is fine — I am just going to talk about the marriage issue — if you think it is going to lead into that.

MS. SAWHILL: It doesn't make any difference to me.

MR. HASKINS: Sara, why don't you go first?

MS. MCLANAHAN: Let me just say one other thing, an add-on to what Ron said, which is that the journal is free. It is on the web. You can download it. If you Google "children," I think we are the second thing that comes up. If you type in "future of children," we will obviously be the first thing that comes up.

We make a big effort in this journal to sort of translate the best scientific research into information that is accessible. If any of you have tried to read academic writings, you know that academics don't often do this kind of thing. So that is a big part of our effort, to find the best research but then to get it written in a way that the general public, policymakers, people can read it and understand it.

Let me talk a little bit about the issue that we did on marriage. "Marriage and Child Wellbeing" was the title.

Why do an issue on marriage? First, many of you are probably familiar with the very dramatic trends in family formation that have occurred in the U.S. in the last 50 years. There has been a delay and possibly a decline in marriage, large increases in divorce, increases in cohabitation and nonmarital childbearing, and basically increases in single parenthood. It is important to note that these changes are much more pronounced among low income families. This is not about Murphy Brown, despite the popularity of that idea. This is primarily a phenomenon that is occurring among low income people. In fact, the divorce rates have

leveled off since 1980 and actually gone down among educated people.

The trends are driven by multiple causes: changes in the economy, changes in social norms and values, and changes in birth control technology. Similar trends are occurring in all Western industrialized countries. I think this is important to know that these trends may be very hard to reverse. They are driven by a lot of things. They are occurring in nearly all the countries.

The U.S. stands out in a couple of respects. First of all, we have more marriage in the U.S. We have both more marriage and more divorce. More of the children born to lone mothers or born to unmarried mothers in the U.S. are born to mothers who are not living with a partner. So you hear a lot about Sweden and the cohabiting couples over there and the high rates of non-marital childbearing, but Sweden is very difficult. Ninety percent of the kids in Sweden who are born outside marriage are born to cohabiting parents. In the U.S., it is less than 50 percent. We have high marriage, high splits, and high rates of single motherhood.

What are the consequences of these trends? First, we know they are related to increases in poverty. They are also related to increases in mental health problems for adults, mothers. They have long term negative effects on children. Children who grow up in single parent families have less education, lower wages in adulthood, more mental health problems, and they have more disrupted families of their own.

The effects on all of these outcomes are modest. These are not huge effects, but the fact is they affect lots and lots of people. So at a population level, they really do matter. Over half of all children born in the last 10 years, in the last 20 years really, are going to spend some time in a single parent family. This is a very widespread problem.

Why don't low income mothers marry? I am going to focus on the low income mothers

primarily because that is where a lot of the policy interest is, and also because, as I said before, this is the group where the rates are the highest and the trends are the largest.

First of all, most low income unwed mothers want to marry. They say they want to marry, but they fear divorce. They actually think that it is better not to marry than to marry and divorce. So they have a fear of failure here.

Children are different. Children for these low income mothers are a necessity, whereas marriage is sort of a luxury good. These mothers have children while they continue to search for a suitable partner. They are, in a way, like middle class or more educated women in the sense that they are searching for the right man and that takes a while to find. What is different is that they have children during the search process. Therefore, they end up having children with multiple, different partners.

People have talked about a marriage bar. There is a very interesting idea that the low income women have set a very high marriage bar for themselves. They don't want to get married unless they can find a man who agrees to be faithful and who has a steady job. So they are looking to get these two goals accomplished before they marry.

In the journal that we did on this, we talked about two kinds of solutions. We really commissioned two different authors to come up with solutions. The first set of solutions have to do with changes in the income transfer and tax policy, so marriage penalties that exist in those policies. The second set of solutions have to do with marriage programs.

First, let me say a word about the transfer programs. As most of you know, I am sure, most of the programs for poor single mothers that we have in the U.S. are highly income-tested. Therefore, benefits fall sharply as incomes increase. Thus, poor single mothers stand to lose the benefits if they marry, and with the loss of this benefit, they have to weigh the loss of

this secure source of income against the somewhat insecure source of income that might come with marrying or cohabiting with a partner.

The solutions for this problem that were suggested by our authors are two. First, we might set a maximum marginal tax rate for low income families, just as we do for high income families. Right now, single mothers, poor single mothers are paying 100 percent tax rate if they marry someone and we count that extra income.

A second solution would be to provide individual-based wage subsidies to low income earners and allow these individuals to keep their benefits if they marry. This would be an individual-based benefit. It would not be looking at the couple income. As long as the individual remained a low wage worker, he or she would retain the subsidy. Therefore, if they marry, they would be able to benefit from the economies of scale.

The second set of solutions have to do with the marriage programs, and there is a lot of interest in these. As many of you probably know, the Bush Administration is planning to spend half a billion dollars on programs to increase marriage and father involvement among low income families. The model programs focus on improving communication and relationship skills among unwed parents, and these are couple-focused interventions. That is what is really different about these interventions. In the past, most of the programs that we have had have focused either on the single mothers, and more recently we have had some programs focusing on the fathers, but the marriage programs are designed to involve the couple. The couple is treated as a unit.

There is pretty good evidence that these programs help middle-class couples. Middle-class couples pay to receive these services. There is some experimental evidence by psychologists that shows that parents who participate in these programs are more likely to be

together and to have a good relationship after five years. So they may work for low income families.

I think there is a big "if" here. First, the programs need to be adapted to meet the needs of low income couples. They need to also provide additional services in many cases: mental health services, employment services, the kinds of things that perhaps the middle class couples didn't need but the low income couples will need to go along with the relationship training.

Finally, offering these services around the time of birth may actually increase the benefit of the programs themselves as well as the service. We have this idea that there is a magic moment that occurs at the time a child is born, and this is the case for unmarried couples as well as for married couples. So we are recommending that whatever programs are provided for these young couples that they start around the time of birth to take advantage of the very high levels of motivation that appear to exist among these couples.

ACF is currently funding evaluations of several model programs, using random assignment. We also recommend that the future funding of these programs should be closely tied to the findings of these evaluations. Pretty soon, we are going to know which combinations of services work, and we suggest that we should be following through on that knowledge.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you.

Let me just make a point about this, and that is the person who wrote the chapter, Gene Steuerle from the Urban Institute with his colleague, I have forgotten his name. Senator Brownback from Kansas who is the Head of the D.C. Appropriations Subcommittee of Appropriations in the Senate and soon to be a Presidential candidate, we think, is very interested in marriage, and he actually has consulted with Gene and others here at Brookings.

He is now writing legislation which will be in an Appropriations bill this year, and he will fund one of the ideas presented in the article, which is that if low income couples get married — all the details are not worked out — for two years or three years, whatever amount they lose from the benefit programs, they will be paid that amount. So there will be a zero percent penalty from the benefit programs.

Since he is the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, it seems quite likely that this thing next year we may actually be implementing in the District, and it will have an evaluation just like we are recommending in the article. He found out about this because his staff had read the policy brief that we wrote. It worked out pretty well.

Now, Belle Sawhill to talk about poverty and inequality.

MS. SAWHILL: Well, I am glad you brought that up because I think that is one of the wonderful things about this partnership, that we are able to translate research into action through our efforts. This is a great example, and we could probably mention some others if we had time.

Ron said I was going to talk about social mobility. I am not, but if you are interested in social mobility, come back in September. We will be having a launch event then to talk about the extent of opportunity in America, the extent to which we are a more fluid society than some other advantaged democracies. Sara and I are working on that together. The journal is in press, and we will have a lot to say about that later, but we don't want to step on our September event by talking about that today.

I am going to go back and talk about anti-poverty policy. I think this is of great interest to many people now in the wake of Katrina, and that interest hasn't been translated into any action in this case, but we have done some interesting research already, and we will be doing a

lot more. In fact, we will have a whole issue of the journal devoted to that about a year and a half from now, I think it is.

Just to remind those of you who don't deal in this subject on a daily basis as some of us do about the trends here, income inequality in the United States has increased pretty steady for the past four decades with a pause during the late 1990s, and it is now as high as it has ever been, at least since we first began collecting data about half a century ago. Poverty rates, especially among children, are also high and have been rising for the past four years, although they did decline in the late 1990s. Again, that period in the late 1990s was a little bit of an exception for what otherwise has been some pretty gloomy trends.

For those of you who don't know what we mean by poverty, the conventional definition and the one used by the Government in measuring poverty is based on what various sized families need to have for a barely adequate diet and a few other necessities of life. For a four-person family, the poverty line is currently around $20,000 a year, and about one out of every six children lives in a family with an income that is less than that amount. That being the case, many advocates for the poor believe the most effective way to reduce poverty is simply to provide these families with more money. Such assistance is usually called welfare, although it may include in addition to cash assistance, various important non-cash benefits such as food stamps and subsidized housing.

In 1996, thanks to Ron's efforts, he was then on the Hill as a Chief Staffer for the key committee that passed a welfare reform bill. That bill was reauthorized finally this year. As you may know, the new welfare system as opposed the old one emphasizes work and also emphasizes marriage rather than cash assistance. Put a little differently, a low income mother can now only get cash assistance for a limited period of time, and the results of the reform bill

in 1996 — it has just been researched to death — have been a sharp drop in welfare caseloads, an increase in employment and earnings among single mothers, and most families are better off, at least economically better off, as a result because their increased earnings have more than offset their loss of welfare benefits.

That said, the extent to which anti-poverty policy should be based on providing people with more assistance, money assistance versus providing them with help in finding and keeping jobs and supplementing their low wages, remains somewhat controversial in part because many of these single women, of course, also have childrearing responsibilities. Our research suggests that this new emphasis on work, however, is a good strategy. It also suggests that bringing back the two-parent family that Sara talked about would also reduce poverty, although just how we bring back two-parent families and how we encourage marriage remains to be seen, as she emphasized.

Some of our research on these questions about the role of work and the role of marriage in reducing poverty is written up in a policy brief that Ron and I co-authored. If you are interested, we can get you a copy of that with all of the gory details. This is just a small sample of all the work we have done in this area, and certainly a small sample of all the work that has been done at Princeton and Brookings combined. But I don't have time to talk about the entire iceberg, so I will just give you a little bit about the tip.

What we did in this research was we took an actual sample of poor families with children, and using Census Bureau data, we simulated what would happen if they worked as much as non-poor families, which means that most of them would be working full time. What would happen if they married as much as people married back in the 1970s? Then we got carried away, and we also asked the question: What would happen if every family had

completed high school and no family had more than two children? Under those various assumptions, we found that the poverty rate could be reduced dramatically. If all four of those things were done, somehow or another, the poverty rate would decline from 13 percent to well under 4 percent. We would reduce the poverty rate by 70 percent in this Country and get it down to such a minimal level that it would be hard to be horribly concerned about it.

One more point, although all of those factors contribute to a reduction in poverty, we also compared them to what would happen if you doubled welfare benefits. In other words, you made a welfare check twice as big as it is now. We compared that one policy to each of the other four policies: making sure everybody graduates from high school or making sure everybody works full time or getting them to limit their family size. All of those other policies did more to reduce the poverty rate than even a doubling of welfare benefits. A doubling of welfare benefits is not in the cards. It would never be politically feasible in this Country.

You can say, well, is it ever going to be feasible to ask people to work more hours? Is it ever going to be feasible to get people to marry as much as they did in the 1970s? Is it ever going to be feasible to get people to graduate from high school in larger numbers? Those are daunting challenges as well, but the good thing about them, I think, is that they are consistent with American values and with the self-respect and desire of low income families themselves to be part of the mainstream and to earn their own way.

This doesn't mean that we don't need to shore up wages at the bottom of the wage scale, using vehicles like the earned income tax credit or a higher minimum wage. It doesn't mean we don't need to provide low wage workers with child care and health care. In fact, we could take advantage of the greater employment among single mothers to put their children into very high quality early childhood education programs which, as one of our earlier issues of the

Future of Children argued, is probably the very best thing you can do to get those children ready for school because there are very large gaps by socio-economic status and by race between the test scores of children even as young as age three or four. The best way to close those gaps is to reach them far earlier.

The bottom line here is that we think the strategy of encouraging work and encouraging marriage are good strategies, hard to do but better than the old approach of simply providing people with higher welfare benefits. I will leave it at that.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you, Belle.

Now we have a half-hour to argue with each other. Who wants to start an argument? Yes, in the back there?

MS. GILL: It is not an argument, but I am curious. I am Wanda Gill, U.S. Department of Education, on loan to Bowie State University.

I am curious to know if your population included illegal immigrant children because they fit all those categories and if you looked at diverse language populations as well.

MS. SAWHILL: To the extent that they get into the Census Bureau's data, they are there. Now are they under-represented? I am sure they are because if you are an illegal immigrant, you don't want to talk to anybody in authority, including a census taker. So there would be some deficits in the sample with respect to that.

MS. GILL: (off mike)

MR. HASKINS: Did you hear that?

MS. SAWHILL: She said some of them are getting social security.

MR. HASKINS: Yes, also in the back?

MR. STATES: David States (?), Policy, American, Virginia Commonwealth University.

A question about bringing young poor men back into the equation, for decades we have subsidized low income women with regard to a variety of subsidies and benefits to encourage them to participate in the labor force, and what are the prospects of doing the same for men of color?

MS. MCLANAHAN: As I said, I think that is part of what the marriage programs are all about. Actually, before, there was a version of the marriage programs that had started under the Bush Administration, I mean under the Clinton Administration, and that was fatherhood programs that would focus on the couple. It was called Teen Parenting. So the old version of fatherhood programs were sort of do something for the men over here. We have been doing something for the women over here. Then they got this idea that if we really want to get the men involved with the children, maybe we should bring the women in, too, because they are living with the mothers. Then, the Bush Administration came in, and the program of Teen Parenting turned into the program of let's get the couples married.

But I think, at the basis, what this is all really about is trying to improve the relationships and the cooperation between these couples. Hopefully, if you start early enough, when many of them are romantically involved, which they are — 80 percent are romantically involved at the time the child is born — you could end up encouraging marriage in that way. If you wait five or six years until after the couple is broken up, that is not going to happen. I think bringing the fathers in but bringing them in around the time of birth and bringing them in with the mother in the room is a very important new policy change.

MR. HASKINS: Sara mentioned the legislation that just passed that provided a half a billion dollars for marriage over five years. That also includes a quarter of a billion dollars for fatherhood programs. The first response to your question is that fatherhood is very much on

the Congressional agenda and has been for probably a decade now. The House passed legislation three years ago with even more money than that. They passed it two different times, but the Senate killed it because there was one particular Senator who didn't like it, so they never got to pass it. But now they have just passed $50 million a year for five years.

I think the two things that the Congress is most concerned about and I think policymakers, too, number one is employment, that a lot of males are unemployed or out of the workforce. Amazingly, during the 1990s when the work rates among low income women just skyrocketed, never married mothers actually increased their employment rate by 50 percent between 1995 and 1999. During that period, low income minority males actually declined, and as Belle implied in her first set of comments, despite the fact that wages in the bottom were increasing for the first time in something like two or three decades.

Employment is a big part of this issue, and really nothing we are doing now is effective. We have had lots of programs in the past. So there is a lot to do here on employment.

The second thing that we can do something about is child support enforcement. A lot of these guys are completely pushed into the underground because as soon as they start having earnings, we have all kinds of new spectacular ways that Congress passed in 1996 and before — thanks in part to Sara's husband who is one of the leading scholars of child support enforcement — that we find out about their money and we seize it right out of their paycheck. Sometimes they have arrearages of $10,000 or $15,000 or $20,000. Can you imagine that for a guy who makes $11,000 or $12,000 a year? I mean it is just hopeless.

We have got to do something about child support, and a number of ideas have been put forth. Some of them are being tried in experiments now. There is a lot more flexibility at the state level to bend some of the rules in child support enforcement. So I think we will make

some modest progress over the near future, but employment is still the most difficult problem.

Other questions? Yes, and tell us your name and where you are from, please.

MS. CAYATANI: Debra Kayatani (?), GKnot Foundation.

My question is on the scope of your study. How much of your studies or your research has been done to include or use statistics from military families? There are quite a few military families on food coupons, social assistance, and that was a big issue in 2000.

MS. SAWHILL: Well, again, they would tend to be in the data sets that we used. We haven't broken them out and looked at them separately, but they are not excluded.

MS. MCLANAHAN: Probably the ones overseas are not in the data sets.

MS. SAWHILL: Right.

MR. HASKINS: Over here and then there is another one in the back. Okay, go ahead.

MR. KONDRACKE: I am Mort Kondracke from *Roll Call*.

Somehow I missed the reauthorization of TANF. Tell us how much of an improvement that bill is over the previous status quo and what was provided in the end for child care because that was a big issue when it came up a year ago, and it didn't pass. Would you give us an evaluation of the reauthorization bill?

MS. SAWHILL: I am going to let Ron say more about that because I think he has followed this more closely than I have, but you are absolutely right that the amount of money for child care was a huge sticking point between the House and the Senate. I think we ended up with, what, an extra million dollars?

MR. HASKINS: Billion.

MS. SAWHILL: I mean billion; excuse me, billion, yes. I should know that, having worked in OMB. I used to say billion when I meant million in those days.

The other issue was how strict the work requirements should be and particularly the issue of whether people who are on welfare should be required to work while they are on welfare and what proportion of the caseload should have to be involved in work and what would be defined as work. Would, for example, getting some kind of vocational education count? Basically, the Administration and particularly the House held out for quite a strict definition of work and quite high work rates.

Ron, what else should we say about this?

MR. HASKINS: First of all, the bill contained the marriage money and the fatherhood money which, at least in my opinion, is crucial. From that perspective, it is a good thing they finally passed it. They did cut the money way back because they had to finance as part of a reconciliation bill. They cut funds elsewhere. It used to be $300 million a year rather than $100 million, so they cut it by two-thirds, but they still passed the marriage and fatherhood part of it.

Secondly, on child care, child care was really, as Belle points out, the major issue that held things up. The Democrats started way back in 2002 in the first year of reauthorization. They wanted as much as $16 or $13 billion dollars. It depended on different members of the Senate. They were primarily in the Senate that wanted different amounts. At that point, the Bush Administration was willing to compromise at $3 billion but could not work out a deal. So it was not reauthorized in 2002 or 2003 or 2004, and finally it was reauthorized in 2005, although technically it passed in February of this year, as Belle said, and child care held it up.

There is a billion dollars in child care which I think most people would consider to be not enough, although I would point out to you that the amount of money for child care has more than doubled since the mid-1990s because of Federal policy and state policy. Those two

things are important.

On the work requirements, it is quite fascinating. What actually finally passed is essentially the 1996 deal. I don't want to go into all of it. It is kind of complicated. Roughly speaking, what it means is that every state has to have half its welfare caseload in some work program for 30 hours a week and they can use some education, but it is limited, the amount of education. They have to be in a work program. I think most people think it is going to be very, very difficult for the states to meet that 50 percent requirement. Probably only a few states will be able to meet it, and there are heavy financial penalties.

Stay tuned. There is going to be a lot of fighting over this. The governors, including Republican governors, I think, are definitely going to give some kickback on this, and you will hear a lot more about this issue over the next two years as it is implemented. I think 50 percent is a good standard, but the problem is the states probably can't meet it. That was, as Belle pointed out, one of the points.

MS. SAWHILL: A lot of Democrats argued, correctly in my personal view, that the emphasis should be on getting people into jobs in the private sector and to the extent that you divert resources into having to keep people in jobs while they are on welfare, that is actually not a constructive way to achieve what should be the ultimate goal. There should have been more credit given to getting people off of welfare as opposed to keeping them working while they are welfare.

Now, you may want to dispute that.

MR. HASKINS: Yes, but I am not going to.

MR. KONDRACKE: In the child care funding, to what extent was there emphasis on early childhood development?

MR. HASKINS: Go ahead.

MS. SAWHILL: I don't think there was any.

MR. HASKINS: Right. The compromise that was reached in 1990 in the Congress was that you would run the Head Start, that which is Head Start. You would keep running Head Start during the Clinton years, funded at ever higher levels. Republicans have never cut the funding. In fact, they have given it roughly an inflationary increase very year, so we have roughly the same number of kids in Head Start. That is the high quality early childhood education answer from the Federal Government.

In 1990, the deal on day care was that it would be left up to the states and parents, and there would not be strong Federal regulation. There are dinky little Federal requirements for quality child care, and there is money in there. Four percent of the block of the money for day care has to be used to be devoted to quality improvement. There is some little piece in the Federal legislation. It is mostly up to the states. We have lots of very good data that shows that most child care is not of a high enough quality that you would expect it to boost child development, but it does serve the purpose of taking care of kids while mothers work, and that increases family income which does have impacts on children's development.

I think in a perfect world, it would be better to spend $8,000 per child per year on high quality care that is even better than Head Start, but we are a long ways from that and given the Federal budget crunch, I don't think it is in the cards.

MS. SAWHILL: Although it is happening at the state level now.

MR. HASKINS: States are spending a lot more money. States are now spending at least $4 billion of their own money, not just on child care but exclusively on these high quality preschool programs. Evaluations seem to imply that their programs are producing better

results than Head Start. I am sure that is not true of every state, but for the ones that have had good evaluations like Oklahoma and Georgia, they are producing, it looks like they are producing better results than Head Start. The states are really stepping in here.

All the way in the back row, he had his hand up several times.

MR. BORDEN: Thank you. I am David Borden, Director of StoptheDrugWar.org and Editor of the *Drug War Chronicle Newsletter* and Princeton Class of 1988.

We have an incarceration rate in our Country that leads the world and, in terms of our own history, is unprecedentedly huge. I don't think that is an exaggeration to say. Has work been done, is there work being done at your center or elsewhere on the impact on families and children of incarceration in our minority communities and lower income where it is most targeted? Has work been done on the impacts on families and children of removing so many people from the communities into jail or prison for shorter or longer periods of times, on the effects economically for families when people come out, having criminal records that may affect their employment?

MS. SAWHILL: I can say a couple of things about that. First of all, in the study that I described a few moments ago, we discovered that for African-American younger mothers, there was a scarcity of African-American males that we could match them up with. When I first saw that, I thought, well, that is because the Census Bureau doesn't do a very good job of reaching and interviewing those men. But I talked to people at the Census Bureau, and they convinced me that these days they are doing a reasonably good job of sampling those men. And so, I think there really a scarcity of young African-American males. Where are they? They are either dead or they are incarcerated, as you are suggesting.

The second brief point is we are beginning to do a little bit of research here at Brookings

that is looking at the criminal justice system from the standpoint of what happens when people try to reenter society after serving a term in prison and what can be done to facilitate that transition. Our colleague, Hugh Price, has written an op-ed and plans to do more work on this. He recommends that we provide a transitional jobs program for young men before they come out of prison in order to give them a track record and a job record that will then have some meaning in the private sector when they come out of prison. And he points out that that need not cost anymore than what we are spending now on the incarceration itself and that you would select people based on their good record in prison. I think that is an interesting idea.

MR. HASKINS: Sara?

MS. MCLANAHAN: At Princeton, we have a study called The Fragile Families, a child wellbeing study. If you Google "fragile families," you will find it. It is a study of unwed parents. We start with birth, when the child is born, and we follow the parents and the children until the children are five years old now. One of the big shocks of the study has been that 50 percent of the unmarried fathers have been incarcerated, not in jail at the time but at some point. The average father is about 24 years old.

If you think about it, not only do we know from research that incarceration lowers earnings after getting out, there is certain discrimination against people who were incarcerated. We have another study at Princeton that shows that. But if you think about it, the kinds of skills that a man has to learn to survive in jail are exactly the opposite of the skills that they need to be a good partner or father. And so, I think the two policies of this incarceration which is very much a result of changes in legislation about how to deal with drug laws and three strikes and you are out policy. If you think about it, that policy which locked up so many men is in complete contradiction to a policy that says we should be trying to strengthen families and

build good relationships.

Actually, there is a new RFP that just came from the Administration for Children and Families that is going to focus on the relationships of these men coming out of prison and what can we do to strengthen the family relationships there.

MR. HASKINS: Let me just add, as Sara is suggesting here, that in the last, I would say, three years or so, there has been just a dramatic increase in interest in this field and especially in the process of men coming out of prison and reintegrating with society. Last week, there was a big meeting of researchers and practitioners at the University of Michigan. HHS had a meeting about three weeks ago. The Joyce Foundation is going to spend a lot of its money on incarceration in the Midwest, and they are doing large, random sample studies to see techniques for getting males back in the workforce. Nothing that we have researched so far is very hopeful, but perhaps in the next decade or so, we will learn a lot more and be able to do a better job.

Other questions? Up here?

MS. JOHNSON: Hi, I am Jennifer Johnson, and I am from Virginia Commonwealth University. I am a sociologist there.

It is interesting that his question actually does tap into the question I have about, from the perspective of the women, they are making rational choices about marriage and a lack of marriage partners. One of the things that consistently runs through, even if we think about the model that you used to test the effectiveness of doubling the welfare payments versus marriage, is the assumption of stability, that there would be some sense of stability throughout the child's life under that model assumption. If we look at some work by even Wilson or some of McLanahan's work, stability becomes a key factor. I am not sure how you can policy-make

stability, but it seems to come into terms with early childhood education. Even schools, longer term school issues, neighborhood issues, geographical issues, but even coming down to, as Wilson argues, the quality of jobs that are available, that the 1996 Welfare Reform Act pushes women to get jobs, but that it can be an unstable family, unfriendly job that doesn't necessarily lead to a stable kind of middle class stability lifestyle there.

Is there anything that is done that is focused on the issue of stability? This is kind of just a general comment of the issue of stability, but it seems to run through all of that. I don't know if you can policy-make that, but it is certainly an issue with the stability of male breadwinners, the stability of neighborhoods, and things like that.

MS. MCLANAHAN: Well, I think you are absolutely right, that it is not just getting people married or in relationships; it is keeping them there. I think that the marriage programs or at least the model programs that are being evaluated now are working on exactly the same thing that would lead to stability. In fact, there is a set of programs for unmarried parents called Building Strong Families, and they are aimed at improving relationships. There is another set of programs for married couples, and that is called Strengthening Healthy Marriage. Those are, again, aimed at keeping the couple together.

The main point is that all of these programs are about improving the relationship quality between the parents. In all of the research that shows benefits for children growing up with two biological parents, there is a big caveat there. If the relationship between the parents is very conflictual, it doesn't benefit the children. Just to march everyone down to the courthouse and get them all married is not going to really help the children in the long run.

MS. JOHNSON: Or even the neighborhood context where a lot of instability, a lot of change, a lot of even violence, or weak school systems, weak neighborhoods, all of those seem

to factor into maintaining a stable, healthy marriage that you can give counseling to the relationship. But if the context within which it operates or lasts is unstable in and of itself, then no amount of counseling, it seems to me, would help in that way.

MR. DRISCOL: Rick Driscol (?) from Senator Kennedy's office. I had a question about — we see a spike in housing prices and the cost of housing. Do you think that has a strong or a weak impact on marriage rates?

FEMALE VOICE: I do think that the availability of housing is associated with couples' ability to live together. I don't know about the pricing right now of the housing because I'm not sure how many of these couples are actually owning their own homes. But I have seen some research that suggests that cities with high rental, that there is less doubling up.

There's also policies in public housing that forbid a man to be in that apartment if he has a criminal record. So if you think about 50 percent of the fathers have been incarcerated and these women are trying to get into public housing. But if he were to be on the rent or on the list, she wouldn't be eligible for that house. So I think this is an interesting area for more research.

FEMALE VOICE: There's a program you might or might not be familiar with called Jobs Plus. It's been a demonstration program that's been carried out in a number of cities.

You know, Ron?

MR. HASKINS: I think four or five.

FEMALE VOICE: What they do in this demonstration is they target typically public housing projects or very poor neighbors, and they try to get everyone in that neighborhood to get a job. But what they do as part of that is in addition to giving them all of

the usual help with job search and so forth, they also have a special waiver from HUD so that the rent assistance that those families are getting is not reduced when people go to work. That has made a big difference.

The program has been evaluated using random assignment. It's a very rigorous evaluation and found to be really very, very successful at increasing employment in those neighborhoods. So if you don't know about it, you might want to look at it. We could give you some sites.

MR. HASKINS: I think we have time for one more question.

MS. CRAVITZ: Katherine Kravetz , American University.

A few years back, I heard some folks from Oklahoma talking about their marriage initiative program, which was an independent-state-sponsored marriage initiative program. And I wonder if you have any information on how well it was working. The folks there said the main reason they had started it was because they had very high divorce rates, and people were getting married at very, very young ages, people who were not prepared for marriage, and they were trying to initiate counseling. So I wonder whether that program has been evaluated and what the results have been. This is about five years ago.

MR. HASKINS: When Keating (?) was governor, he did a study, because they had such high poverty rate, to explain their high poverty rate. I forgot who did the study, but they came back and said the reason is that so many babies are born outside marriage and your divorce rate is so high.

So Keating decided — and, remember, welfare reform gave states a big block grant of money, and they had tremendous flexibility in what they could do with it. So Oklahoma took a lot of its money from the block grant because their welfare rolls were going

down, and they utilized that money to initiate what clearly is the biggest marriage initiative in the country.

They have worked in churches. They just have so much going on, it really is amazing. They have weekends for couples. I think Oklahoma might be one of the few states where you can sponsor a marriage weekend and all kinds of couples will go to it. They get very good attendance at these meetings, even when they're overnight meetings. But nothing has been evaluated yet, so if anybody makes claims about what they're producing, I don't think the claims are justified.

As Sara mentioned, and I think Bill might have mentioned this too, there are large random-assignment studies going on there of marriage education, and there will be a random assignment study in the district of both subsidies for marriage in the form of this check to replace welfare but also of matched savings accounts.

So there is some random-assignment work going on, and over the next five or eight years we'll learn a lot about whether these interventions work, but right now I don't think we know if they work.

FEMALE VOICE: Can I say one more thing?

MS. HASKINS: Sure.

FEMALE VOICE: It's triggered by your point that in Oklahoma, they discovered that people were getting married at very young ages. I think they had the lowest average age of marriage of any state in the country. And we know that that's very predictive of instability, of a later separation or divorce.

I think one of the things we need to think about in that context is where the right place to intervene is. Do you intervene, as Sara has discussed, after the baby is born, and you

have the magic moment, and you hope you can get those two people who are romantically involved to marry, or do you try to prevent that birth in the first place?

I think that when you think about very young people, you don't necessarily want them to marry. Most of the increase in single-parent families these days is driven not by divorce. Divorce rate is actually trending down slightly. It's driven by non-marital childbearing. And half of those out-of-wedlock births begin in the teenage years. We don't really want teenagers to get married. They're too young. They should be finishing their education.

I'm all for evaluating these programs; I hope they will do some good. But if I were a policymaker, I would put a lot more emphasis in preventing those early out-of-wedlock births, encouraging women to delay until they're in their mid twenties. Hopefully they find a lifelong partner at that point that they can raise children together with.

Many times when they're still very young, their relationship isn't very strong, and it's going to break up one way or the other. I think we have to think hard about both of these strategies.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you, Sara and Belle, and thank you for being such a fine audience.

(Applause)

(Recess)

MR. MANN: Ladies and gentlemen, if you would take your seats. Thank you all for being here for the final panel of our morning and early afternoon events here, co-sponsored by Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School and Brookings. I'm delighted to join my colleague, Larry Bartels, who is a professor in the Wilson School, with the Department of

Politics at Princeton, and one of the country's most deservedly-respected analyst of elections in American democracy.

Larry and I a couple of years ago collaborated in putting on a series of seminars leading up to the 2004 presidential elections, doing our best to synthesize what we thought election scholars had learned and hadn't learned, and how it helped us to look differently perhaps at the presidential election.

We have a plan for this morning. Larry is going to start us off by talking about some patterns of American electoral behavior that have taken shape in recent years, including partisan balance the ideological polarization of the parties. I'm then going to take that and say a word about how that helps us understand the nature of presidential congressional behavior, but mostly I'm going to talk about the upcoming mid-term elections, at which point we will stop. If you want to ask us to tell you who will be the next president of the United States, you could ask us that. You could ask us anything that you want to at that point. But let us begin with Larry.

MR. BARTELS: Thanks.

The way I describe this division of labor is that I talk about the past 50 years, which is pretty easy, and then Tom talks about the next few years, which is much more difficult.

I want to talk about major trends in American politics of three sorts. First of all, partisan parity; secondly, partisan polarization; and third, partisan policymaking. You'll note that there's an underlying theme here.

The most important development I think in American politics in the last half century is that what people had thought of as the New Deal Coalition has now disappeared.

What I want to say is that the New Deal Coalition, as people have usually thought about it, hasn't existed for a long time. It probably ended in 1938, when there was a significant recession and Roosevelt lost his majority outside the south.

Indeed, if you look at trends in partisanship and voting behavior, over the long haul of that half century, you see a pretty constant, relatively even partisan balance outside the south. So for example, if you look at trends in partisan identification in the electorate, in the rest of the country outside the south, for the past 50 years, the Democratic plurality in party identification has been bouncing around between zero and 10 percentage points. It's currently closer to zero, but there's really no long-term trend in partisanship outside the south.

So what's happened is that the south has moved massively out of the Democratic column. Roosevelt was elected over and over again largely because there was very little partisan competition. The south was a Democratic monopoly enforced by the oppression of large numbers of African American, would-be voters throughout the south.

If you look at the trend of partisan identification in the south, it starts out with about a 40 percentage point Democratic plurality in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and trend steadily downward through that whole half century, until right now in 2004, the partisan balance in the south looks exactly like the partisan balance in the rest of the country, which is to say it's virtually even. The Democrats and Republicans are razor's edge apart in the south as they are in the rest of the country. So those of you who are bemoaning the end of the New Deal Coalition are bemoaning the end of Jim Crow racial oppression in the south and not much more than that.

If you look at the partisan balance of Congress, you see the same thing; very little change over this 50-year period in the rest of the country, but a huge decline in the south,

so that now both in the south and in the rest of the country, the partisan balance between Democrats and Republicans in the House is virtually even.

If you look at state legislatures, you see the same pattern. There was a huge Democratic majority which existed entirely of a Democratic majority in the south, and the Democrats had a minority of state legislative seats outside the south for most of this period. But those two trend, again, have converged at a point where now state legislatures in the south are virtually evenly divided between the Democrats and Republicans, and state legislatures in the rest of the country are virtually evenly divided between the Democrats and the Republicans.

And so what we have is a system for the first time in many, many years in which there's not only a very close partisan balance but a very close partisan balance simultaneously in the south and in the rest of the country. And that means the stakes are higher than they have been. Both parties are competing ferociously in order to win majority. And at the same time you see the polarization of politics, both at the elite level and at the mass level, along partisan lines.

What is that about? Well, my sense is that pundits discovered this trend in about 2000, and suddenly realized that American politics was polarized. But in fact, it's become increasingly polarized over most of this period, at least over the last 30 years.

If you look, for example, at the voting patterns of members of Congress, you find huge disparities between Republicans and Democrats. In the 1950s and '60s and '70s, there was a good deal of overlap between the moderate wings of the two parties. Now that overlap has virtually disappeared. So you have all the Democrats clumped on one end of the

ideological distribution and all the Republicans clumped on the other end of the ideological distribution.

Meanwhile, in the Electorate, there's a similar kind of shaking out. Congressional voting is more aligned with ideology than it has been in the past. Presidential voting is more aligned with ideology than it has been in the past. That's currently a function of the growth in importance of social issues.

So, for example, if you look at abortion in the 1970s, there was no difference in the presidential voting behavior of people who described themselves as pro-life and pro-choice. But that gap opened up in the '80s and widened in the'90s, so that now there's a gap of about 30 percentage points in voting behavior between people who are pro-choice and pro-life.

At the same time, though, there's been an increase in the import of traditional economic issues. Those issues were always the dominant focus of competition between the two parties. They still are. So where as the gap on abortion is something like 30 percentage points in presidential voting, the gap on traditional, economic issues, like government taxation and services or how involved the government should be in providing income support to people, are on the order of 50 percentage points. And if anything, they've been growing in recent years as well. So the partisan division is still mostly about traditional economic issues of the kind that the New Deal was about, but also increasingly in recent years, social issues, like abortion.

What's happened is that people are dividing on these issues in a way that is partly the response to the divisions at the elite level and partly also a cause of divisions at the elite level. Part of the polarization among members of Congress has to do with the nature of the party organizations, the nature of primary competition and so on. But it also has to do with

the fact that voters are increasingly sorting themselves out on the same kinds of ideological grounds that members of Congress and presidents are.

There's also an important reinforcing factor here which has to do with the impact of partisanship on people's assessment of ongoing conditions. So if you look, for example, at President Bush's approval rating, you see that they're polarized along partisan lines in a way that surpasses the polarization that we've seen for any other president in the past half century.

If you ask people about how the war in Iraq is going, you see huge partisan polarization on that as well. If you ask people even about very straightforward, factual matters, you see big differences in their perceptions of the world, depending upon whether they think of themselves as Democrats or Republicans.

My favorite example of this was in 1988, when the National Election Study was doing a kind of retrospective on the Reagan presidency. After Reagan had just finished eight years in office, they asked a bunch of people a bunch of questions about how things had gone under President Reagan. One of the questions was whether inflation had increased or decreased during Reagan's time in office.

Now, the actual numbers were that when Reagan came in, the inflation rate was 14 percent, and when he left, the inflation rate was 4 percent. Nevertheless, a majority of strong Democrats when they were asked that question said inflation had gotten worse under President Reagan rather than stayed the same or gotten better.

So there's a huge partisan lens through which people are viewing all kinds of things that they see in the world around them, and that's also reinforcing these partisan cleavages that we've been talking about.

Finally, I want to say a little bit about partisan policymaking. Here too, I think there's been a kind of sudden but belated shift in the thinking of pundits about the way the American political system worked.

The conventional wisdom used to be that the American party system was a weak party system. There really wasn't a whole lot of difference between the Democrats and Republicans. They were both pretty moderate when you came to think about it, and maybe in recent years, the division between the two has become increasingly stark.

But in fact throughout this half-century period, there's been a lot of important differences in the policymaking patterns under Republican and Democratic presidents and under and Republican and Democratic congresses, if you look at things like the minimum wage, social polices, the various kinds.

There's especially one that I've gotten interested in over the last few years. I've been studying the increase in economic inequality in the U.S. over the last 30 years. An economist will talk for days on end about exogenous economic shocks, and technological change, and globalization, and immigration, and the increasing return to education, all of which have exacerbated the disparities in income between people at the top of the income distribution and people at the bottom of the income distribution. But what they don't talk about very much is to the extent to which Republican and Democratic presidents and Republican and Democratic congresses have contributed to increasing economic inequality.

If you just look at the numbers with respect to patterns of income growth for people in different parts of the income distribution over the last half century, you see that under Democrats, the distribution of benefits has been fairly egalitarian. The average real increase in incomes has been relatively constant for people at the 20th percentile of the income

distribution, working poor people, or in the middle class, or people near the top of the income distribution. They've all done about equally well in percentage terms under Democratic presidents.

But under Republican presidents over that same time period, the income growth for people at the 95th percentile, the people near the very top of the income distribution, has been more or less equal under Republicans and Democratic president.

The middle class has gained about half as much real income growth per annum under Republicans presidents as under Democratic presidents, and working poor people have gained about one-fourth to one-fifth as much income growth under Republicans presidents as they have under Democratic presidents.

Working poor people have gained about one-fourth to one-fifth as much income growth under Republicans presidents as they have under Democratic presidents. Now, that's probably a matter of differences in macroeconomic policies.

Republicans have been more concerned about fighting inflation; Democrats have been more concerned about fighting unemployment. But those kinds of macroeconomic differences I think have been muted in recent years. Nevertheless, there's still these big differences in people's actual income experiences which now I think have mostly to do with differences in taxes and transfer policy between the two parties, which, again, are quite predictable if you think about what's happened under President Bush with respect to tax cuts, for example. They're of a piece with the kinds of partisan differences that we've seen in economic policy making pretty consistently over the past half century.

So we have the parties polarizing. We have policy that both causes and reflects that partisan polarization, and we see a world in which the partisan division is exquisitely

balanced between the two parties. Anything can happen, and Tom will tell you what will happen.

MR. MANN: Wow.

Now, just a point of clarification. When Larry was saying those things about the Johnny-come-lately pundits, he was not talking about me because I, like Larry, believe that the roots of these conditions were planted decades ago, and really began to take shape in the 1960s and '70s. But I do believe that over time they have had different consequences.

One of those consequences has been the nature of the Congress itself and how it operates. We can go back to the last years of the 40-year Democratic reign in the majority in the House, and see patterns that are now so evident in the Republican Congress with respect to setting aside regular order and in denying the minority opportunities to really participate in the process; to basically see a party increasingly unified delegate to their leaders the authority to clamp down on the House and run it in a very tight fashion.

But I think the conjunction of, initially, the sweeping Republican victory in 1994 to claim the majority in the House and to regain the majority in the Senate, followed then by George Bush's accession to the White House in 2000, producing the first unified Republican government since the Eisenhower years, has set in motion extraordinary patterns of behavior in the Congress.

To one extent, if you look internally, you will see a shocking decline in deliberation, committee on the floor and conferences. It is really quite amazing the extent to which the legislative body I has always revered is the most independent and powerful in the world. And a legislative body that genuinely scrubs legislation has organized itself in a way in which members will not have an opportunity to participate in that.

Surprise is to be avoided at all costs. We want predictability. That means arranging everything before it moves into a collegial, deliberative assembly. It means keeping members out of Washington.

We used to kid about the Tuesday to Thursday club. Those were the good old days, when members actually spent Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in Washington. Now they arrive late Tuesday, insisting on no recorded votes certainly before the evening, and are getting anxious to certain depart by noon on Thursday; Mark Russell's latest joke: "What does one Congressman say to another on Wednesday afternoon? Have a good weekend." It isn't laziness, it isn't just a desire to get home; it's part of a pattern of behavior.

The other flip side of this is Congress as the supposed first branch of government, the branch that independently oversees the executive, defends its institutional prerogatives.

In this period, especially during Bush's first term, we have seen party ideology, following on Larry's analysis, trump institution. It has been the most supine Congress that I have encountered in my 36 years of watching Washington. And on profoundly important matters having to do with policies, domestic and economic; having to do with the behavior of executive agencies and the like.

George Bush and Dick Cheney genuinely believe the executive is the primary branch of government. It's a principal view, long held. And it's perfectly appropriate for them to assert it, but in our system that requires Congress contesting it, but it's had no interest in contesting it; that is until Bush's political standing collapsed.

And now you are seeing signs of institutional life on Capitol Hill. Speaker Hastert for the first time in his Speakership felt obliged to talk about the sort of constitutional

authority, responsibility and prerogatives of the Congress, ironically doing it on a warranted search of Congressman Dollar Bill Jefferson's office involving a breathtakingly egregious bribery case; a last, no-such-thing on overseeing NSA; or anything having to do with the treatment of prisoners; or on Congress' authority in the foreign policy arena whatsoever.

But that is the nature of the beast. Right now, Republicans are scrambling — is it fair to say — like rats from a sinking ship. That's unfair. But they are nervous because there is this widespread perception that the President's low approval ratings and the unhappiness with the war in Iraq might be sufficient to end what has been a very impressive Republican run in controlling both branches of government.

Which brings us to the mid-term elections. Is all of that just talk? Is there in fact a realistic chance of majority control changing in the upcoming, mid-term elections?

I would suggest that if you analyze congressional elections with a green-eye shaved from the bottom up, this microanalysis of individual districts, you will be impressed by the robustness of the levy structure in Congress; that is to say, the pattern of uncompetitiveness that tends to protect members of Congress and parties that are strongly ensconced in individual districts, from adverse political conditions and tides.

We went through the 2002 and 2004 elections with historically the smallest number of incumbents defeated by challengers in the general election. We had four in 2002 and seven in 2004. We've also seen the reports coming from Charlie Cook's team, and Stu Rothenberg's team, and CQ's team. And you sort of count from the bottom up. And for months, they were saying they just don't see enough competitive elections to make possible a change in party control. Democrats need 15 seats in the House and six in the Senate to gain the narrowness of majorities.

Those analysts sort of looking at the races from the bottom up point to the relatively small number of open seats, where there's more opportunities for change, and the fact that most of those open seats are safe red or blue districts. They note there are fewer members that are misfits in their district. That is to say, as moderate and conservative Democrats in the south were in 1994 in Republican districts, that there's a greater match between the partisanship of the incumbent and the partisanship of the district.

They note difficulties recruiting candidates for sort of second and third-tier races; the fact that the parties are doing narrow targeting; the fact that the Republicans have a financial advantage, all of which has led for many months to such analysts to be very circumspect at best. We usually get a 50/50. I figure, what's a 50/50 forecast with? I mean, you pay bucks for a 50/50 forecast? I don't think so. So when you get it free, you get a real forecast, as you're about to get from me.

The other way to look at congressional elections is from the top down, the macro conditions. Now, this is a useful perspective, not ordinarily, not in 2002, in 2004; not in a very close presidential race like 2000. But it is significant every decade or so when sort of the national wind is blowing, when we seem to have a hurricane developing, not just a little rainfall or a scrawl, and when it has the smell or the scent of a category 4 or 5 hurricane, because that level of hurricane might be sufficient to wash over the levees of uncompetitiveness and displace a number of members of Congress.

Now, there's a lot of evidence that the national conditions today are more adverse to the party of government than they were in 1994 when the Republicans picked up 52 seats, although the structure of competition has changed a good deal.

But the national conditions measured by the President's approval ratings, Congress' ratings; the extent to which the public believes the country's off on the wrong track to the so-called generic vote for the Congress, would you like to see a Democrat or Republican majority, do you intend to vote Democratic or Republican in the vote for the House; evaluations of party; economic pessimism; and even the intensity dimension on either side of the parties and aisle. There seems to be something brewing rather substantially.

Now, how does a national tide play out? How does it affect the outcome of individual races? There is no national election. The President isn't on the ballot. Well, there are direct effects. Those direct effects are changing voter preferences. In this era of strong partisan voting, there still are some weak partisans and independents who don't really lean strongly to one party or the other, and even partisans who get mad about something, a war, something happening economically or socially, perception of a president and change their mind.

Secondly, the direct effects of a national tide work through turnout, a differential turnout; that is, the party advantaged by the national conditions gets enthused and says, by God, I'm going to the polls. They might be angry.

There is a negativity bias in political participation. They're mad as hell at the government in power, and they turn out while the party disadvantaged — in this case the Republicans — get discouraged by what's happening, seeing divisions within their own party and might at the margin stay home. So it's a combination of changes and preferences and differential turnout.

There's also indirect effects through the, if you will, strategic behavior of politicians, donors, who runs, who decides to run, who gives, how easy it is to raise money.

Now, the microanalysts were saying there's no signs of this strategic response to perceive national tide. They didn't see it six months ago. That's what they're seeing? The field of competition has expanded. They're no longer talking about two dozen, three dozen max competitive races. Suddenly there are potentially 55 Republican districts potentially up for grabs, and the number of Democratic districts has declined, looking simply at public opinion polling, at campaign finance data, at candidate quality in the individual districts.

So the national effect is beginning to play out indirectly in the strategic behavior. It's beginning to show up in altered preferences and in the intensity.

My view is if the election were held under current conditions, it is not unreasonable to think that Democrats would gain 20 to 30 seats; not 50 but not 10; 20 to 30, producing a narrow Democratic majority.

Now, you noticed my qualification if today's conditions were to obtain. Now, how could today's conditions change? Well, it seems to me you look at the macro side and ask the question, in six months, can the public's assessment of the President, of the Republican party, their judgments on Iraq, and the economy, or their ordering of the importance of issues or conditions change in a way that would alter that national climate, and, therefore, alter the forecast that I've just made.

Your guess on that is as good as mine. One hopes that the new government in Iraq fills the ministries of interior, injustice and defense with regular appointees; that the Sunnis come genuinely into the government, that sectarian violence declines; that the Iraqis military and police forces prove more reliable, and stand up, and we stand down, and troops begin to come home, and Americans see the light at the end of the tunnel before November,

and change their views. I'd ask Anne-Marie the probability of that. I bet she'd say it's no more than 1 in 10, but I'm just guessing.

On the economy, Karl Rove wants to trump the successes, and there have been successes; sustained GDP growth, low inflation. On the other hand, sort of Americans have an annoying way of not knowing what the GDP is, and they're kind of looking at sort of money in the pocket. That means sort of real disposable income gains and the cost of critical commodities like gasoline and energy more generally, and health insurance and the rest, and whether today's appointment of a first-rate finance CEO — Paulsen of Goldman Sachs to Treasury — signals, a) better salesmanship because that's what Treasury been about, or a willingness to change policies. And whether any change of policy at this point, six months out, could make any difference on public perceptions, I don't know.

The third thing would be if somehow another issue, security and terrorism came to the four-and-over-road concerns of the sort I've been talking about. One can imagine such scenarios. But you look at how the public attitudes have changed on that. Again, it seems unlikely.

My own personal view is the odds are that those national conditions will not change greatly; that the President will remain in the 30's, and the country will remain pretty pessimistic going in to the election. As this plays out — let me add one other sort of factor to all of this.

Larry and I were talking about it this morning. One of Anne's predecessors is dean of the Wilson School, Donald Stokes, who was a professor of mine. He discovered in his study of British politics that when you had a strong national tide, it's not uniform across

constituencies. It varies a great deal, and it turns out to be strongest in districts where the party disadvantaged by the tide is seemingly safe.

That is, this year, with the Republicans suffering from the tide, it would be larger in safe Republicans districts and smallest in safe Democratic districts; meaning that a 6 percent national tide might be 12 or 15 percent in safe or Republican districts, providing opportunities for more change than structure of competition would suggest, all of which leads me to believe that you should put a little money — of not your life savings, or retirement, or house, on a Democratic House majority.

In the Senate, it's a little trickier. Democrats need six seats. There are probably six seriously vulnerable Republican seats and two others that could potentially become vulnerable. In Arizona and Virginia, there are possibly three or four vulnerable Democratic seats.

If there's a strong national tide, the pattern we have seen in past years, like 1980, suggests it would tip elections all in the same direction, producing possibly a sixth-seat Democratic gain. It could be as high as seven or eight if Arizona and Virginia were in play, with Democrats on to Minnesota, and Washington State, New Jersey, Maryland and the like.

Is that going to happen? You wouldn't bet on it, but you'd say it's not beyond imagination for it to happen. I'd put it at slightly lower than 50/50. So not on 50/50, lower than 50/50, a House outcome probability of maybe two and three of a pick up sufficient to put the Democrats in the majority, suggesting we'll still be in this position of parity of ideological polarization, of difficult times for governing, but the name and gender of the speaker would change.

Thank you. We're going to stop there and see if we've provoke you into any comments or questions.

MR. BAKER: Hi. My name is Don Baker. I'm a Woodrow Wilson graduate of 1957. I am a lawyer in Washington.

I wanted to ask you two related questions. Are we in a situation where we can't really, in the context of these elections, come to grips with really big issues? I mean, I look at the demographics, which we and the Europeans face in terms of aging population and entitlement programs.

The second big issue, which there are lots of them, I'd focus on is whether elections can do anything about these liberty issues. Here we have a government that's defending itself with arguments that are almost worthy of George the III. And Congress can get very excited about a search with a detailed warrant and a congressional office that can't get excited about the rest of us getting searched without warrants.

MR. MANN: You don't think they have their priorities straight, huh?

MR. BAKER: Will elections take care of their priorities?

MR. BARTELS: I guess I have two reactions. One is that big sacrifices usually happen in spite of elections rather than because of elections. So I wouldn't think of the electoral process as the way to stimulate dealing with the kinds of hard choices that you're talking about with respect to the budget and demographics.

On civil liberties, my general impression is that ordinary people are kind of fond of civil liberties in the abstract but don't really pay a lot of attention to the details. And so the more egregious the violations are, the more likely it is to irritate them. But it's not something that they really feel in their heart with the same depth that they do lots of other issues.

MR. MANN: In fact, we have some research going back decades that demonstrate that the public, in sort of really operational, practical terms, is quite willing to compromise what we might see as essential civil liberties in the face of some external or internal threat. Therefore, once again, this is a matter where you can't count on the elections producing it.

There tends to be this view that our problem in American politics is all elite driven. It's all these outrageous elected officials and activists who ride roughshod over the natural good sense of the American people who are willing to do this.

Well, as Larry pointed out, when the public views public affairs and politics through partisan lenses and sees the world so differently, even seemingly objective conditions and factors, you realize it isn't quite the same. The public is reinforcing this partisan polarization.

Yeah, the public says, why don't those politicians just stop fighting and do the right thing. Of course, they define the right thing in terms of their preferences, and they're divided in their preferences, so they have to fight it out.

So like Larry, I'm not real encouraged by the elections providing the basis for dealing and grappling with some of these problems. However, hope springs eternal with me, and I continue to believe that leaders, candidates can help shape public opinion and create a market where a market doesn't now exist.

That doesn't happen in mid-term elections, which are, in tidal-wave elections, referendums on the performance of the party in power, period, and not about solving problems in the future. But as we move into the presidential cycle, it will be interesting to see if prospective Democratic and Republican candidates, and even prospective Independent

candidates, like Mike Bloomberg, try to begin to create a market for dealing with some of the more serious problems that confront the country.

MR. KONDRACKE: I'm Mort Kondracke from Roll Call. I confess to being a pundit, and one perhaps out of touch and dismayed at the consequences of polarization that I've seen here in Washington over a 40-year career here.

The question is, granted that the public is becoming increasingly polarized, the question is does the public like that situation, or is there some sort of yearning out there for comity, problem-solving?

There's a limited amount of polling data that I've seen — recent in fact — where the Terrence Group and Salinda Lake asked people whether they would put the first priority on their members of Congress being principal advocates of a party position, or get problems solved; 58/35, something like that, in favor of getting the problems solved.

Are these current politicians most dedicated toward partisan politics or getting the public's problem solved? 92 to 4, they said that they were most dedicated to partisan politics. So that indicates some dissatisfaction. I open the floor to you to comment on these observations.

MR. BARTELS: I think there is a good deal of dissatisfaction, but I think it's worth bearing in mind that people are likely to be dissatisfied on this dimension, regardless of what the reality is at any given moment. That's especially a striking fact among political scientists.

There was a famous report issued by a committee of the American Political Science Association in 1950 that diagnosed the problem with American politics as being weak parties, and said we need a more responsible party system. They were obviously frustrated by

the fact that FDR wasn't able to get through everything that he wanted to get through. Well, now we have a responsible party system, and the political scientists are near the front of the line complaining about all the bads that are caused by that kind of system.

People want problems to be solved, but they really don't have any clear notion of what kind of structure would solve the problems. And so when the parties are disciplined, they think maybe less disciplined parties would do better. When the parties are undisciplined, they think maybe more disciplined parties would do better.

MR. MANN: Just to follow up on that, partisans in the electorate, when asked what they think of parties, say they don't think well of them at all. That is, in general, questions asked about political parties provide negative responses, and not about a party solving a particular problem or your preference for this party versus that party, but just parties in the policymaking and political process. I think we are genetically disposed to be anti-party in general, even though we view the world of politics and public affairs through our partisan lenses.

My view is beware of any polling report that produces a 92 to 4 response. It's not measuring anything other than the wording of the question. I can really produce questions also that suggest the public yearns for comity and problem solving.

John Hibbings (?) sort of helped us understand all of this. In studying the public, he discovered the public really is angry when politicians fight with one another.

MR. MANN: As I said initially, they want them just to get along and do the right thing, but they disagree on what the right thing is. That is, Americans do not embody the Madisonian system, the notion of pluralism, of conflicting interest. Rather, Americans, many of them have this notion that there is a consensus and there is an easy way.

We know, for example, that by spending 20 percent of the budget on foreign assistance, we're spending too much, and, therefore, there's an easy way to solve that budgetary problem. And we know, for example, that the increase in gas prices is due almost entirely to gouging by oil companies, and, therefore, we know how to solve that problem.

It turns out that what the public knows often times just ain't so, and what they think and say are not consistent. So I am sort of skeptical of the idea of good voters, bad elites; we've got to mobilize the good voters to throw out or shape up the bad elites.

On the other hand, I do believe it's sort of important to think about public education, but the public gains much of its information from politicians and leaders. And the trick is to figure out how to convince some leaders that this route is not going to allow us to deal with important problems, and to begin to share information and make appeals in ways that might create a market for a different kind of politics that really doesn't exist in the public now.

MACK: Mack (off mike), Maryland School of Public Policy. Tom, since you've told us the Democrats are going to win the House, I want you to move a little forward in 2007. I can't cite the number like Mort Kondracke did, but I was astonished by the percentage of Democrats who feel that the President should be impeached.

Is that going to happen? Is that going to move toward that, and what would be the consequences?

MR. MANN: The risk for the Democratic Party, of course, is gaining a narrow majority, and then completely squandering any opportunity to be viewed as somehow responsible, as sort of the energies and predilections of the more active segment of the party sort of press their demands.

I thought it was very telling that Nancy Pelosi, who was seen as on the left of the parties said, there will be no impeachment, at which point John Conyers reconsidered his earlier speculation about impeachment hearings and said there would be a group evenly balanced between Republicans and Democrats that would review — and only if they recommended would we move to another stage. Equal balance of Republicans and Democrats, that was Pelosi's charge for him being able to say anything on it.

You will see subpoenas, you will see investigations, but I think Democrats will probably take a lesson from Republicans in 1998 that the country spoke in that time sort of loud and clear and sensibly because conditions were going well in the country, and they didn't want to risk that, and they thought Clinton's behavior was sorted but private, and keep it away from us and let's get on with the business of governing.

I think the public will be sending similar signals of what's the point of trying to punish a president like this; better to figure out, yes, what was done wrongly and how to correct it. And I suspect Democrats will be smart enough to avoid the pitfalls. Although one of the great challenges will be whether they revert to their behavior in the majority and clamp down on the House as tightly and more tightly than they have in the past. So we will see.

MR. NARRON: Hi. Joe Narron (?) from Virginia Tech. In reviewing the impact of electoral politics and the Republican majority over a period of years, don't you have to add and scrutinize the judicial decisions that are likely to impact the U.S. all over the country, from the top court on down?

MR. BARTELS: Absolutely. I mean, how do we disagree with that?

I want to say, though, that I think the impact — this will be one of the most consequential administrations in American history in terms of its impact on public finance, on

our position in the world, and in the course of judicial decisionmaking in the years to come. No one doubts, I think that this has been a inconsequential administration.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks. Gary Mitchell from The Mitchell Report. The question originally on my mind shifted a little bit listening to the response that you both had to Mort Kondracke's question. But I think I'm going to ask it anyway and just push a little bit on it.

I wanted to go back to David Broder's book of 1971, *The Party's Over*. And I think without reviewing the thesis of it, the title says it pretty well. I think you're probably both familiar with the thesis. And, of course, he cites at great length the report of 1950.

In re-reading that in the last couple of weeks, I've been struck by how relevant and salient, it seemed to me, his observations were about what was happening to party politics, and he was taking it up through Nixon. The question that it raised for me — and that I want to come back to the two of you with — is, a) what do you think about Broder's thesis? Was he right about the party's over, and if we don't fix it, it will change politics?

Second, I'm curious to hear you both, it seems to me, saying that you think the parties are being effective today, and that that's actually turning people off. I'm thinking about the kind of party leadership and the kind of organizational success that I think parties had when people like John Bailey and Robert Strauss and others were running the parties. So let me stop there and just get you to talk a little bit about that.

MR. BARTELS: Well, I think they're successful in terms of implementing the kinds of policies that their core supporters and their activists favor. That's a change from the period that Broder was writing about in the early '70s, where things seemed to have kind of broken down and it wasn't clear what the parties stood for, for a while there.

The problem is that everybody only gets their way half the time under that system, especially when the parties are as evenly balanced as they are now. The people who happen to be in the slim majority of the moment are pretty happy with the way things are going, and the people who are in the slim majority of the moment tend to be very unhappy.

MR. MANN: Larry's research has documented that at the very moment David Broder published his book, the parties had hit a low point and were then moving on a trajectory up, in terms of certainly party voting.

David wrote in the midst of the divisions occasioned by new politics of the '60s — the Voting Rights Act — and the beginning of change in the south. And over time, we've seen a growth in the importance of party to the electorate. We've also seen a tremendous growth in the importance of national party organizations as in campaigns, elections, fundraising, both the national committees and the congressional campaign committees. And we've seen an extraordinary growth in the importance of party in government, in legislatures. The unity has been breathtaking.

We've also learned that when strong parties descend into tribalism, and when you have a separation-of-powers system trying to operate within sort of very rigid and intensely felt, and held, and expressed partisan views, then you have a difficult time grappling with problems. Historically, most of our big policy changes have attracted rather substantial bipartisan support, even if initiated by one strong party, and that's less likely to happen in this environment.

We'll see. Immigration is a good test of that because after a very partisan style of governing, George Bush understands that the only way you can get a bill to his liking is to depend mainly on Democrats. The Democrats aren't of a mood to be very helpful to him given

their memories of the last mid-term election in 2002 and the style of governance more generally.

So David was right in describing the past but not in anticipating the future. Our parties are stronger. They're different. You can argue their organizational strength at the local level is not strong; it's true in some respects. But I'll tell you, the Republican Party "get out the vote" effort, working with other groups in civil society, was pretty damn impressive, and the Democratic Party union linkage is pretty impressive as well. So it's changed. They're more important and they're more problematic.

MR. BARTELS: Maybe the other thing to say here in the historical sweep of things is that, depending upon when they were born mostly, I suppose people tend to focus a lot either on the kind of quiet, moderate period of the 1950s or on the wrenching and confusing kind of political changes of the 1960s and early 1970s.

In the larger scope of things, the period that we're in now is really more of a typical kind of period. If you think back, for example, to the turn of the last century, the level of partisanship in the political system, both at the elite level and at the mass level, at that point was striking, even by comparison with what we have today. So what we have is probably better thought of as a rebound to a more typical pattern than it is a historical departure.

MR. MANN: In fact — and this will be the final word before Larry introduces Anne — we may want to look back to the early 20th century, the last sort of distinctive partisan era, and try to understand how it came about and how we got out of that. I would suggest sort of studying the rise of the progressives, of Bob Lafollette, and Teddy Roosevelt had something to do with it. So there's a call to read history. Remember all those great courses you had at Princeton. It's time to go back to them.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you. And thank you, Tom. It's always a pleasure to come and chat with you about what's going on in the world.

With that, it's my pleasure to introduce my boss, the professor of politics in International Affairs at Princeton; the past president of the International Law Society; one of the world's leading authorities on international relations; and the dean of the Woodrow Wilson School, Anne-Marie Slaughter.

MS. SLAUGHTER: Thank you, Larry.

These are my favorite kinds of Woodrow Wilson School events, where I get to sit and listen to wonderful substance all morning and learn something myself. This is a particular pleasure to be here at the Brookings Institution and to do something that I think both our organizations are jointly engaged in. I think of that, broadly, as translation, aggregation, and dissemination.

We are part of a spectrum that extends from pure academic research on the one hand to actual policymaking, policy practice on the other. It's a spectrum that starts, really, in the social science equivalent of the laboratory at universities and, of course, extends to government. And not just government, but, more broadly, non-governmental organizations and even the private sector.

The biggest change in that spectrum has been — over I don't know how many years, but I think it's sort of a steady trend — increasing specialization on the academic side and really on the policy practitioner side.

So in the academy now, where once we just studied political science, now we have subfields of political science. And within those subfields of political science, we have ever smaller areas of study. Inevitably, the world's more complex, and to do serious academic

work, that's what is needed, is increasing specialization, and similarly, of course, if you move to the other end of the spectrum and you think about the proliferation of committees in Congress, or the proliferation of agencies and subagencies. So again, intense specialization.

In the middle of that spectrum, you have policy schools and think tanks, and we play a critical role in translating — as Belle Sawhill said — the results of pure research, evermore specialized research, into a form that can be digested and used by policy practitioners.

That translation function is one that, even in my lifetime, we didn't need intermediaries to do. In my lifetime, even when I was studying international relations, you had scholars — who were people like Strobe Talbott himself — who could move back and forth between the academy and government, and who could produce their research in a form that was readily understandable.

That's less true, and, thus, we need places like the Woodrow Wilson School, where we see our mission as taking really top-quality, academic research, of the kind that Larry, and Sara McClanahan, and Jennifer Widner produce, and translating it, and then projecting it into the public's sphere. That's precisely what the Brookings Institution does. The difference is we're one step closer to the peer researchers and Brookings is one step closer to the actual policy practitioners. But there is a huge overlap there, and one where we think a wonderful partnership can be formed, and we have begun.

The second area where we both participate that is critical is aggregating knowledge. In an era of much great specialization, you still need generalists. You still need people who can take from all these different areas, as we've heard this morning, and think about the bigger picture. Whether it is thinking about reconstructing failed states, or thinking

about children, or thinking about the entire picture of American politics, there have to be people who are trying to aggregate that information.

Again, I think you find more of those people in public policy schools. So we find more of those people in the Woodrow Wilson School than we would find in their affiliate departments of economics, sociology and political science. And there are more people similarly in places like the Brookings Institution, where you have many wonderful scholars who are thinking more broadly about the future of foreign policy, or the future of families and domestic policy, or American politics.

And finally dissemination. Here, we in the academy spend an enormous amount of time producing our research. Increasingly, we understand that we need to be putting as much effort into disseminating that research as we do producing it.

So to give one example, we have been working on the Princeton project on national security. We've involved a number of very important scholars at Brookings; Jim Steinberg, before he decamped for Texas, and currently now, Ivo Daalder, and a number of other scholars at Brookings.

We're going to spend as much time disseminating the results of that research as we did producing it because, increasingly, the sort of one-time report, where you do the work and you issue the report, if you do that once, it tends to create a buzz for a few days, to be perhaps picked up, if you're lucky, in various press articles, and then to disappear.

This is something that I think all academic institutions and indeed think tanks have discovered. And we and Brookings together — exactly some of what you heard this morning, like the Journal of the Future of Children — are working very hard, again, to

aggregate what we do, to translate it, but then to really work on disseminating that information over time and as broadly as possible.

Here I think one of the things we heard this morning was we are focusing on government, but we're also focusing on the entire policy practitioner community. In the area of children, that is everybody from school principals, to social workers, to the various non-governmental organizations that are often partnering with local and state government on the ground, working on the future of children.

In the area of foreign policy, as we heard with the reconstruction project, we're actually looking to make information available to soldiers and diplomats on the ground, but also, again, to local NGOs in ways that can be directly used, and, of course, to our own government officials on the ground.

It's wonderful to me — not only on a personal level — knowing Strobe Talbott and valuing this partnership at that level, but also intellectually. I think the policy school think tank partnership draws on the comparative advantage of both institutions, and really then serves the larger purpose that our institutions seek to serve.

Strobe started by mentioning Woodrow Wilson as the only president with a PhD. It is Woodrow Wilson's year not only because it's the 75th anniversary of the Woodrow Wilson School, but it is the 150th anniversary of Woodrow Wilson's birth.

I was delighted to discover the connection between Woodrow Wilson and Robert Brookings. It then seems particularly fitting to end this morning with a quote from Woodrow Wilson. If you are dean of the Woodrow Wilson School, you discover that Woodrow Wilson had a quote for absolutely every conceivable thing. When I became dean, I

was given a little booklet of his quotations and instructed that I was to read it before bed every night.

But the one that I would leave you with today is he said, "We are not put into the world to sit and know. We are put into the world to act." That's right. And his own career, he moved from the world of thought to the world of action. But I think he would have equally recognized that action that is not informed by thought and knowledge is sometimes worse than no action at all.

I'd like to thank both the Woodrow Wilson School and the Brookings Institution as places that seek to harness knowledge but to use it to spur action. And it's wonderful to be here this morning and to see some of the fruits of that partnership, and to lay the ground for a future partnership.

In closing, I would like to thank Steven Barnes, our Assistant Dean for Public Affairs, and Melissa Skolfield here at the Brookings Institution, for making this morning possible. I'd like to thank all of you for coming, and I look forward to many more such events. Thank you.

(Applause)

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