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GOVERNING IDEAS SERIES

CONTAINING GLOBAL TERROR

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Introduction:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TALBOTT: Good morning, everybody. I'm Strobe Talbott, the President of the Brookings Institution. I want to welcome all of you here to what I think is going to be a particularly timely and stimulating discussion, with a very good friend and colleague of several of us in the room, Ian Shapiro.

Before I say a word or two more about Ian, let me just say a bit about this particular Brookings Program. It's called "Governing Ideas," and it is a brainchild of our Governance Studies Program, institutionally, and of Bill Galston, personally. And Bill will tell you a little bit more about the context of Governing Ideas, and say a bit more about how the proceedings are going to work during our discussion this morning.

I, however, did want to take advantage of Bill's suggestion that I say a word or two to introduce Ian to all of you. I suspect there are quite a few of you in the room who know him personally. There may be some who have been colleagues of his. And I'm sure that a lot of you have read Ian's book -- or at least read his work in the past, and as a result of the next hour, you will want to read Ian's book.

I have read it, and find it to be extraordinary in several respects. First of all, it is succinct. It is persuasively argued. It could not be more timely. And it does something that pretty much everybody in this room and people all around this city -- whatever line of work -- have been trying to do,

and that is to come up with a compelling, practical, ambitious answer to how to address the question of global terror. And this is an admirably provocative, and at the same time a persuasive, attempt to do that on Ian's part.

Ian is a triple Yalie -- which is to say he is a Yale-educated lawyer, he's a Yale-educated political scientist. He's not just a professor of political science at Yale, he is a Sterling Professor of political science at Yale. And there are a couple of Yalies in the room who know that that word "Sterling" sort of says it all.

He is also the Director of the Whitney Center at Yale, which I remember as the Yale Institute for International and Area Studies -- close enough? It's easier to say "The Whitney Center" -- and all things to the Whitneys. And when I had the good fortune to spend an academic year at Yale after leaving the United States government in early 2001 -- which meant that my nearly 10 months up there coincided with 9/11 and its aftermath, Ian was my boss, in effect. He was the Chairman of the Political Science Department, where I had a courtesy appointment. But much more importantly, he was a mentor and a friend. And I owe him a lot, both for what he did for me and my wife during our time at Yale, and also the help that he has given me since in some of my own endeavors.

So it is a personal pleasure for me, as well as a pleasure on behalf of Brookings to be able to welcome him here. But he's not going to get to come to the podium quite yet, because Bill Galston has got a little bit more

to tell you about this series, and also about how we're going to proceed with the discussion.

But before I sit down, I want to thank your Trustee, Chuck Robinson, who's down here in the front row -- one of two people in the room with a bow-tie, the other one being my dad, who's also a Yalie, by the way.

Chuck is not just a trustee of the Institution, but he has also allowed us, just in the last couple of months, to establish the Charles Robinson Chair in Foreign Policy Studies, which is currently held -- and will be held for some time, I think -- by Carlos Pascual, our Vice President for Foreign Policy Studies.

So, Chuck, it's terrific that you could be here this morning, as well.

So -- Bill, over to you.

MR. GALSTON: Well, Strobe, let me start by saying that I'm very grateful to you for kicking this event off, and for the vote of confidence in the series, of which it is a distinguished part.

The idea behind the Governing Ideas Series is very simple: it is that behind specific discussions of individual pieces of public policy there are larger assumptions about the way the world works, and the way the world ought to work. And an essential part of the public policy process in this town -- or, indeed, in any town -- is bringing those two ways of thinking into fruitful conjunction with one another.

That conjunction is necessary in domestic policy, of course, and that is why in a couple of weeks we'll be having another one of these events on the future of the welfare state. It's important when thinking about institutions and governance processes -- which is why the previous even in this series was around a book entitled, "The End of Government as We Know It," and talked about possible replacements for 20th century bureaucracy as a way of getting the public's business done.

And it is certainly true in the area of foreign policy. As you know, since the end of the Second World War, U.S. foreign policy has been dominated by a series of large ideas, which were ideas whose sway was terminated by events -- "Containment One," as I'll call it -- obviously by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Empire; Clinton-era globalization by 9/11; and -- this is a somewhat more controversial statement - - the Bush Doctrine as announced in various national security statements and, most notably, in the President's second inaugural address, by events on the ground in the Middle East.

And so the question is very much on the table: what comes next? And a candidate for what comes next has thrown his hat into the ring: Ian Shapiro's book on what I will call "Containment Two."

Ian has already been introduced, but you should know that in addition to being a very distinguished political theorist, he has also co-

authored a wonderful book on tax policy, and has now turned his multiple talents to the area of foreign policy.

Ian is going to speak for 20 to 25 minutes. After that, we'll hear a commentary by Brookings' Daniel Benjamin, who was named Director of the Center on the United States and Europe, and a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies here at Brookings in December 2006. Many of you probably know his book, *The Age of Sacred Terror*, which was co-authored with Steve Simon; and, more recently, his book *The Next Attack*.

After Ian's talk and Dan's comment, there will be some cross-talk on the stage for 10 or 15 minutes, after which we'll open the floor for questions.

So -- without further ado, let the show begin.

Ian, the floor is yours.

MR. SHAPIRO: Strobe, thanks so much for your kind introduction. And, Bill, thanks for the invitation. And thank you all for coming.

I backed into writing this book in a rather curious fashion. In September of 2004 I was going to Japan, and somebody asked me if I would give a talk at the Yale Club, and I said, "Sure." And I sent some topics of things I was then working on, and the message came back that nobody would be interested in any of those topics, and that what they wanted me to do was to speak about what the Kerry Administration's foreign policy was going to be.

So I ended up giving a talk on why there was not going to be a Kerry Administration, out of which this book grew.

And the basic impulse -- which was a similar impulse that had motivated my book on tax policy with Michael Gratz that Bill alluded to -- the basic impulse was that in politics it's extremely difficult to beat something with nothing; and that while Democrats had mounted a series of very powerful critiques of the Bush Doctrine as it's developed since 9/11, they had failed to articulate any kind of alternative. The ideas vacuum that was created by 9/11 was filled very rapidly by the Neo-Conservatives who had been working away developing these ideas in think-tanks for the better part of a decade, and the Democrats really were mesmerized -- sort of donkeys in the headlights, as it were -- while U.S. national security policy was rewritten overnight.

And the Bush Doctrine as was first announced in President Bush's 2002 State of the Union, but then elaborated on in various other speeches and the "National Security Doctrine of the U.S." published later that year, a version of which was reiterated in 2006, have outlined a radical change to U.S. national security policy that we're all pretty familiar with by now.

I'll just tick off what seem to me the six defining features of it.

The first is the notion that nowhere is off-limits; that the U.S. asserts the right to act in our national security interests anywhere around the globe. I think it's no accident that one of the members of the Axis of Evil is 12

time zones away from the East Coast of the United States, so the only way you could get further away is by blasting off into space.

Of course the only thing that comes remotely close to such an assertion is the Monroe Doctrine, in the early 19th Century, where we reserved the right to act anywhere in the hemisphere -- although, in practice, the U.S. only asserted the Monroe Doctrine close to the coasts of North and South America.

The Bush Doctrine really is the Monroe Doctrine on crack.

(Laughter)

Secondly, the Bush Doctrine abandons the idea that traditional alliances should constrain American actions around the world. The doctrine of “Coalitions of the Willing” says “anybody will do” -- no matter whether they’re an ally or not; no matter whether they’re a democracy or not; and no matter whether they’re committed to the other goals and purposes that we share. It’s a frankly opportunistic notion that we will ally with anyone who works for the moment to secure a national security objective.

Third, the Bush Doctrine embraces the idea of preemptive attack -- abandoning the idea of war as a strategy of last resort.

Fourth, the Bush Doctrine contemplates a condition of permanent war. The very notion of a war on terror is a war against an adversary who will never surrender. There’s nobody to sign an armistice, to give up, to admit defeat, and to pay reparations. What politician is going to

take the risk of declaring the war on terror has been won the week before, perhaps, the next plane flies into the next building.

Indeed, we all saw how badly burned President Bush himself became when he had the banners declaring “Mission Accomplished” on the aircraft carrier, at what turned to be the end of the phoney war in Iraq.

Fifth, the Bush Doctrine openly asserts that there’s no possibility of neutrality. “You’re either with us or against us” was the President’s line right in the week after 9/11, and that position, too, has been reasserted time and again in various policy statements that have emanated from the Administration. We therefore have repudiated almost a century of law of international neutrality, of which we have taken considerable advantage in the past, and which provided important back-channels during the Cold War through non-aligned nations. There’s no possibility of neutrality in conflicts between the U.S. and its adversaries in the war on terror as the U.S. defines it.

And then finally -- and, of course, perhaps most dramatically and importantly and surprisingly -- the Bush Doctrine embraces the spread of democracy through forcible regime change around the world, abandoning the longstanding U.S. -- and especially Republican -- antipathy for imperialism, foreign adventures, nation-building and so on. You only have to go back and look at George W. Bush’s campaign speeches in the 2000 campaign to see him heaping scorn on all those forms of internationalism. And it just underscores

the extraordinary character of the about-turn in which he engaged once the Neo-Conservatives took over the foreign policy establishment after 9/11.

Now, as I said, the Democrats have made many powerful critiques of this doctrine, and shown the ways in which it makes unviable assumptions. They've pointed out the enormous incompetence in the lack of post-war planning in Iraq, the lack of exit strategies, the insufficient troops -- and on and on and on.

But almost all of these critiques come down in the end to questions about competence. There has not been a contest of ideas. There hasn't been an alternative put out there, in the wake of 9/11, that Americans could resonate with and think of as something that we could be for, rather than simply being against the Bush Doctrine.

And it's my case in this book on containment that the doctrine of containment, as developed by Kennan in the 1940s, provides important conceptual tools for the challenges that we face into the future to pursue what seems to me the basic goal of national security policy, which should be: the preservation of Americans in their democracy into the future. A secondary goal, I argue in the book, is the preservation of other democracies into the future -- to the extent that it's compatible with the first.

Now, containment has a long history. And when the Bush Doctrine was first announced, it came along with many statements in speeches from senior Administration officials to the effect that this was really obsolete

in the era of weak states, of transnational terrorist organizations, and proliferation of destructive technologies. And I'll have some things to say about all of those things.

It's worth noticing that in recent months and even the last year or so, as the Administration has been forced back in the direction of containment in Iran and North Korea, they've softened their rhetoric to some extent, talking now about the Bush Doctrine as "supplementing" containment. But really that hides what's at stake in this debate. I think that "supplementing" containment with the Bush Doctrine is a bit like talking about "supplementing" the traditional method of putting out fires with water by pouring gasoline on them, because the Bush Doctrine works fundamentally at odds with what an intelligent policy of containment requires, when we're thinking about the challenges that confront America's security as a democracy into the future.

Now, containment was, of course, developed in the context of a bipolar world, with a single major adversary in the Soviet Union. We're now dealing with either some combination of a unipolar and multipolar world -- I'll say a bit more about that -- and we're dealing with very different types of adversaries. And obviously if you're going to think about containment in that changed context, you're going to have to think about ways in which it needs to be modified. And a good part of the book is concerned with those modifications.

But let me just, before getting to them, say a couple of words about the ways in which Kennan's ideas, as formulated, travel very well, and travel further than people might think at first blush.

Firstly, part of what motivated his development of containment was recognizing the national security had to be pursued in the context of scarce resources. It was after the war, the army was being mobilized, and budgets were being cut. We had to think about national security from the perspective of constrained resources.

Of course, in 2001, nobody was worrying about that. We had budget surpluses as far as the eye could see. We were still giddy with the economic successes of the Clinton years. Alan Greenspan, then up for reappointment -- and perhaps this may have had some bearing on his statement -- but up for reappointment by the Bush Administration, came out and said that -- and this was before 9/11 -- unless the President's tax cuts were enacted, we might face the problem that the government would actually run out of debt.

Well, we solved that problem.

And now we are again into a situation of thinking about national security from the perspective of scarce resources. I saw on the front page of yesterday's paper: we're extending tours to 15 months; the military's overstretched. The burn-rate in Iraq is now \$7 billion a month for a war that's going to cost \$1.6 trillion -- conservatively estimated now. So the Administration's "One Percent Doctrine," that every possible threat must be

treated as a certainty is clearly not viable, and we have to have some basis for thinking about national security that takes account of constrained resources.

A second point that Kennan made, and that motivated Kennan -- and I think is clearly of relevance when we think about our situation, particularly in the Middle East, but not only in the Middle East -- was: Kennan's view was that the best way to spread democratic capitalism in the world was by demonstration of its success on the ground. That's the way to win the battle for hearts and minds. Arguing with the Soviets he thought was a complete waste of time, because they saw us as basically just sort of putting forward ideological drivel in defense of a system that was fundamentally illegitimate. And his view was: never mind the leadership. If we demonstrate success on the ground, the populations will want to move in the directions of these sorts of polities and economies.

And if you look at the situation in the contemporary Middle East, I think this argument applies equally well. A country, particularly a country like Iran, no matter what the rhetoric and stance of the current leadership, all the opinion-poll data, all the studies that have been done, converge on the proposition that the population -- particularly the population under the age of 30 -- is strongly pro-Western in orientation. They want Levi jeans and MTV, just as the Russian population's turned out to want it, and the East Europeans turned out to want it in the early 1990s.

So, the battle for hearts and minds should be just -- in Kennan's day, that meant the Marshall plan in getting the West European economies going as much as possible. But we should be pursuing the battle for hearts and minds by spreading democracy through demonstration of its desirability, rather than anything else.

Third, Kennan made an important distinction between vital and peripheral interests. And the notion was -- and this harkens back to the point about scarcity: never go to war over a peripheral interest, and go to war as a last resort over a vital interest. Other interests should be pursued by mechanisms short of war.

He had a number of reasons for this, but perhaps the most important one is that if you go to war over a peripheral interest -- this was the basis for his opposition to the Vietnam War -- if you go to war over a peripheral interest, the problem is that for your adversary, it's a vital interest. And so they have every incentive to out-wait you, to out-fight you, to keep upping the ante, until domestic support for your war effort dissipates. This is what he predicted would happen in Vietnam and happened, and what we now see unfolding in Iraq.

So the asymmetry between your perception of what's at stake and the adversary's perception of what's at stake when you go to war over a peripheral interest leads to catastrophically poor decision-making for America.

A fourth observation of Kennan's that travels very well, I think, in debates about what to do now is: he was strongly of the view that we should not give our potential adversaries common cause. So his view was that America couldn't possibly dominate the world international security environment, so we should be working towards creating an international security environment that nobody could dominate.

And his view with respect to the Soviet Union was we should not operate on the perception that international communism is the adversary; rather, the Soviet Union. He recognized that there was great potential for competition within the international communist movement, and that that would be a good thing for us. So he welcomes the rise of Tito-ism, and he thought that kind of internal challenge to Soviet hegemony is exactly what we need in terms of limiting their influence worldwide, and their attempts to expand the Soviet sphere.

Well, again, if you look at our situation in the Middle East today, there are huge numbers of potential conflicts of interest between Sunnis and Shiites, between Persians and Arabs, between Kurds and others; nationalist versus religious. There are so many possible fissures among people who are, in some respects, adversaries of ours. But what the Bush Doctrine does is sort of herd them all together into Huntington's Dystopia of the clash of civilizations -- sort of making a self-fulfilling prophecy out of it. So the Bush Doctrine is fundamentally at odds with what Kennan would have

recommended, which was: never give your adversaries common cause, and look for points at which their own competition and conflicts of interest can actually work to our advantage.

The final point: I think that Kennan's basic view of the Soviet system was that it was dysfunctional and would eventually implode. It was therefore unnecessary for us to try to bump it off -- even if we could; rather, the better policy was to hem it in until the difficulties internal to the system made it start to fall apart. And he also thought their own grandiose global ambitions would lead them to become overstretched and eventually collapse.

Well, I think, again this thinking travels, in the sense that one of the things that Islamic fundamentalism shares with the old Soviet systems is: it doesn't have any kind of viable political economy. So when Islamic movements do come to power in Afghanistan, or in Iran, the macroeconomic results are disastrous. So it's not the case that there's some medium-term competitive threat to democratic capitalism that's posed by these regimes, and therefore we don't have to think of them as posing any kind of competitive threat in the medium run. And the notion that, rather, we should hem them in and sort of cauterize them until the dangers that they do present subside, I think makes eminent sense.

Okay -- a few anticipatory points about difficulties.

I will just say that one difference between Kennan and my arguments is: I think Kennan was strategic all the way down. He didn't really think about normative questions very much.

But I make the case in the book that there's actually a principled argument in support of containment that flows out of the democratic ideal of non-domination. The sort of core idea of containment is to stop the bully without yourself becoming a bully. It's not appeasement, and it's not roll-back. It is this middle ground where you draw lines in the sand and you say that certain actions will breed responses. And you upwardly calibrate the responses as much as you have to in the face of the threat. In President Kennedy's case, in the Cuban missile crisis, it rose all the way to the level of quarantine. And we saw the no-fly zones in containing Iraq after 1991.

So you have to tailor what's necessary to contain. But at the end of the day, it is this principled notion that you stop the bully without yourself becoming a bully. I think that's consistent and compatible with traditional doctrines of just war, and with international law that recognizes that war should be a strategy of last resort.

I spend a good part of the book arguing that this is a realistic doctrine. And I'll just say a couple of words about that.

The obvious place to start about its realism is its success in dealing with the Soviet Union. But then also I argue that we have certainly not stuck to containment throughout the Cold War, but when we've departed from

containment is when our policies have been least effective. I already mentioned the Vietnam case. Of course the other one that turns out to be rather distressing over the long run was the decision by the Eisenhower Administration in Iran to topple the democratically elected government and install the Shah -- for which we have paying for decades.

But let me just say a couple of words about its realism in the post-Cold War era. It worked in Iraq after 1991. We now know that Iraq posed no national security threat to any country in the region, let alone the United States after we had pushed him out of Kuwait.

But the poster child for the success of containment in the post-war era against a rogue regime, terrorist-supporting state, is Libya. Application of the traditional tools of containment led them to stop sponsoring terrorism, to turn over the Lockerbie bombers for trial; to pay compensation to British and French victims of Libyan terrorism; to help with intelligence in the invasion of Afghanistan; and, finally, to give up their nuclear program in return for the removal of sanctions.

So this is a case where a regime which perpetrated terrorism, which financed terrorism, which sponsored terrorism, which provided safe havens for terrorists was brought under control and rendered benign through the instruments of containment.

And I think that that -- when we think about containing terrorist groups, we have first and foremost to go after the enabling states because, as I

argue in the book: it's not plausible to think that any terrorist group can present a serious ongoing threat to our survival as a democracy into the future without the support of enabling states. They need safe harbor, they need places to train people, and they need staging grounds. And so we go after the enabling states.

Of course there are other things one must do in dealing with transnational terror networks -- none of which are provided for in the Bush Administration. We have to reinvest in human intelligence. We have to reinvest in homeland security.

And we have to modify Kennan's doctrine in two respects. One is working with regional alliances. Just because terrorist groups can move around, and often can move into weak states that don't have the capacity to render them harmless, even if they have the intent, we have to think about working with the states that border on weak states that harbor terrorists.

This is why I think the Baker Commission was exactly right to say, over Christmastime, that we're going to have to work with Iran and Syria with respect to thinking about a containment strategy for post-occupation Iraq - which is what we should be thinking about. And I can say more about that if people would like me to. But it's unimaginable that we can stable the borders of Iraq, which are porous to terrorists in both the east and westerly directions, without cooperation from Syria and Iran.

Syria has been largely a status quo power in the region for three decades. They were, after all, brought into Lebanon by Henry Kissinger. For a long time the one-liner in Washington was that “only the Syrians can hold Lebanon together.” We pushed Syria out of Lebanon; we helped the Lebanese push the Syrians out -- but we didn’t have any plan for the weak-state problem. We didn’t have any plan to stop Hezbollah expanding to fill the vacuum. And so in that instance, we haven’t really solved any problem there.

Iran is a status quo power in the Middle East. They haven’t attacked anyone since the 18th Century. They have no territorial demands anywhere. They have a common interest with the U.S. in not seeing a return of the Taliban in Afghanistan. They have a common interest with the U.S. in the territorial integrity of Iraq. Despite all the saber-rattling, if that country were to break up, they would have problems with their own Kurdish populations.

So we can work with Iran, I think we can work with Syria, in thinking about containment for post-occupation Iraq -- which is not to say we won’t have to contain Iran. That one can both contain and work with a state to contain another state I think is also -- it’s tricky and complex but, after all, that was what we pursued with respect to the Russians and the Chinese during the Cold War.

So we have to work with regional players. I think Colonel Nunez and others are right that we have to create regional security organizations and work with them to deal with the problem of weak states.

The other main way -- and I'll end with this point, because my 25 minutes are up -- the other main way I think in which Kennan's doctrine has to be modified is that we really do have to work centrally with international institutions and the U.N. in a globalized era, for two obvious reasons. One is: often when we're dealing with weak states, it's often the agents of the international institutions on the ground that have the relevant information, the relevant intelligence, about which warlords have which agendas, and how they may or may not be compatible with our own objectives -- but, more importantly, in creating legitimacy for containment on a global basis.

The first war in Iraq had huge legitimacy because President Bush Senior went to the U.N. and got authorization for that worldwide coalition that was put together to push Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. We had huge international legitimacy with the U.N. support when we went into Afghanistan after the Taliban refused to turn over Al Qaeda after 9/11.

So it's clear that we do have to work with international institutions.

I'll just end by just noting there's a rather strange irony: the two areas where Kennan was wrong in thinking -- Kennan had very little time for international institutions and the U.N. He thought they would be swept aside in any real conflict between the U.S. and the Soviets. And he was opposed to regional security alliances. He was against the formation of NATO; he thought

it would unnecessarily militarize the conflict with the Soviet Union and prompt something on the other side.

So in the two areas where Kennan stood most in need of modification are the only two areas in which the Bush Doctrine has followed his advice.

I'll end there.

(Laughter)

(Applause)

MR. GALSTON: Well, Ian, thank you very much for a succinct, elegant and witty statement of your case.

I'll now give the podium to Daniel Benjamin, who knows as much about terrorism and the relationship between contemporary terrorism and radical Islamism as anyone in this country. And I suspect that he will ponder the question of whether an updated doctrine of containment will be adequate to deal with this phenomenon.

Dan?

MR. BENJAMIN: Well, Bill, thank you very much for that gross overstatement.

I should also point out that I don't have a Yale connection -- but I do have a Luce connection. And I note that you are the Luce Director of the Whitney Center. And so we bring both the Director, as well as one of the most distinguished graduates of the Luce empire, and one of the least distinguished.

So I'm really honored to be on this podium with you. I, too, was a *Time* correspondent.

Let me echo the two previous non-tenured speakers in thanking you for a succinct, concise, elegant and -- I think what I admired in it most -- passionate book; passionate in a restrained way which is, I think, the best way to do it. At the end of *Containment* you critique triangulation as a political strategy. And we can discuss that. I'm not sure I'm on the same page with you there. But I do value and applaud you for having an un-triangulated book, because good ideas should be presented without any modification, without compromise.

Containment as a strategy for dealing with the major national security threat we face -- it has a great deal to recommend itself. And I think you make the case for those virtues very, very well. And I would, in this case, emphasize a word I just used a moment ago, which is "restraint." I think that restraint is one of the core virtues of a policy of containment, and one has to recognize that this restraint would serve our interests in a number of ways.

I'm sure if you went back to Thucydides you would find some discussion of how a great power, or the dominant power, aroused the desire by its rivals, its less powerful competitors, to join together to balance against it. I don't know if it's in Thucydides. I found it in Ronko when I was a freshman in college, in his discussion of the France of Louis XIV.

But it would certainly be something that all policy-makers should keep in mind: that's an inevitability, and for that reason restraint recommends itself. You don't want to have the other powers balancing against you. You want to incorporate them into your own order, as it were; or into a global order that serves the interests of all those powers that have an interest in peace, prosperity and orderly transactions between nations.

I think that we have, in the era of the Bush Doctrine, certainly lost that, and we've been balanced against, and we've seen how our power has been eroded by that fact.

So in that regard I agree. I also found absolutely perfect your description of the values of a virtuous policy in this regard. And I think that you, and Kennan before you, got this exactly right: that in order to maximize our own attractiveness as a nation, as a nation that we would want to have others ally with, cooperate with, and follow our leadership, then I think restraint and a well-functioning democracy, and so on and so forth, really do serve our interests. And they serve our interests, in particular, because -- as you mentioned -- the battle of hearts and minds is so critical.

This is something that I fear we have lost. One doesn't need to recite all of the dismal polling that has been gathered around the world, not only from the Middle East, but also from Western Europe and other parts of the world. I guess we are now viewed as the most dangerous -- or second most

dangerous country on earth after Israel, which is not exactly a distinction that we need to boast about.

Having said all that, I think that containment is a part of the answer but not the whole answer. And the reason that you and I will diverge on this -- or at least that I don't think it is a sufficient answer -- is that I think we have a different assessment of the nature of the threat.

Your remark about state support tracks very closely with the Bush Administration's assessment of the threat. And, in fact, when you made your remark I went back through my own book and came up with Doug Fythe's remark on this issue. He said, "Terrorist organizations cannot be effective in sustaining themselves over long periods of time to do large-scale operations if they don't have support from states. This, Fythe reported, was the principal thought underlying our strategy in the war on terror."

Well, I believe that was fundamentally wrong, and that is a major reason why we're in the mess we're in right now.

You mentioned Afghanistan in the book and, of course, Al Qaeda did benefit from its sojourn in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is something of a red-herring, primarily because it was the first terrorist-supported state, not the first state to ever support terrorism. Al Qaeda also benefited from its period in Sudan. So there's no question that there has been a state connection.

But I think that a sober assessment of Al Qaeda's strengths and weaknesses -- and, more precisely, a sober assessment of the strengths and

weaknesses of the radical Islamist movement, not just Al Qaeda -- is that it is a transnational, non-state movement, a social movement, in fact, that can draw upon all kinds of different resources, from different parts of the world and, in fact, today really has no state sponsor whatsoever, and yet continues to gain strength.

It does have sanctuary, it appears, in the federally administered territories in Pakistan. It does have some sanctuary again, it appears, in Afghanistan. And it certainly has some sanctuary in Iraq. These, I think, should be characterized more appropriately as weak states and non-states, in some cases.

But the point is that the military core, or the terrorist core -- the most active parts -- are doing very well without having any states ship them arms or give them large amounts of money. In fact, most of the money, of which there is no shortage, still comes from private donors.

Moreover, I believe -- and I think that this is the view of our intelligence service, as well as intelligence services around the world -- that one of the greatest areas of threats for radical Islamist violence in the coming 10 to 20 years will be Europe, where no one's getting money from state supporters; where groups are largely self-constituted, self-radicalized, and acting on the basis of ideological conviction that has nothing to do with states.

Now, you are absolutely correct in saying that radical Islam has no political economy, or no formula for political economy. But there's a

reason why that isn't, alone, enough to really give us a lot of confidence in a purely containment strategy. And that is that you can drive a state into the ground for a long period of time. Iran's done that, for example. And states have the ability to do that in a way, while developing dangerous weapons programs that, you know, can threaten us. And so while I think over the long term we can be confident that radical Islamists, if they gained control of a state would run it into the ground, the possibility is that they would, a la North Korea, run it into the ground but develop some very dangerous weapons along the way. And that's not a cheerful prospect.

Additionally -- and, by the way, I want to add an elaboration to your own argument that I think helps you in one regard, and that is that I don't think we have to worry so much about states' supplying terrorists with weapons of mass destruction. I think that that threat has been grossly overstated, precisely because one word that you don't describe a lot but which is, I think, an integral part of containment—"deterrence" -- really does work with states and WMD terror. You know, Saddam was effectively deterred by the Geneva warning of 1991 that was delivered to him by Secretary of State James Baker: never use WMD against U.S. forces, because he was threatened with obliteration. I think hostile state in the world knows that they would face that if they were to give these weapons to terrorists. And I don't think they have any confidence that they could do so undetected.

So that part of the equation is okay, but the other part, that we can just be satisfied that the lack of a political economy is going to work to our benefit in the appropriate time is, it seems to me, not satisfactory.

And the other part is that what we are facing is a social movement that is not only focused on gaining control of the state but also on damaging us. I mean, the central thrust of Al Qaeda -- at least on 9/11 -- was to show who was going to stand up for Muslim dignity, and to have a kind of snowball effect on the basis of that. You know, if Al Qaeda was going to do what no other Muslim leader had ever done in terms of standing up to the West, then it could count on the certain reverberation within the Muslim community, and that others would be attracted to its cause. And I think it's safe to say that with U.S. approval ratings in the world where they are, if they could pull it off again today they probably would get a lot of support.

So it seems to me that we do have things to worry about that containment itself doesn't have an answer for. That's why I think that containment-plus is a very important approach.

And the "plus" part would be a different approach to the Muslim world; a recognition, first of all, that we shouldn't confirm the narrative of the terrorists by invading Muslim countries. I mean, the fundamental Al Qaeda argument is that the United States seeks to occupy Muslim countries, destroy Islam and steal their wealth. However right-minded and moralistic we were

about going into Iraq, it doesn't look that way to the Muslim world. And so this has really cost us a great deal.

So, in that regard, the restraint of containment makes sense. But we need to do more. We need to show the world, it seems to me -- and the Muslim world -- that, in fact, we don't bear this animosity, or what Bin Laden would call this "Crusader's grudge" against Islam.

And it seems to me that one of the stains in the Administration's policy over the few years has been this effort to find a positive agenda for the Muslim world. The problem is that I don't think it, first of all, is possible to do that while you're occupying a Muslim country; and, second of all, I think that it was more rhetorical than actual, in that the emphasis on democracy, while important, was not backed up with the kinds of investments and the kinds of deep engagement that I think would be necessary to push that and to derive real progress, and to show ordinary Muslims that we were serious about their having a better lot in life.

When I say "containment-plus," I think the other part -- the "plus" -- is really a modernization/democracy agenda, but one that recognizes how you have to sequence these things; not go to elections first, but actually help deliver greater prosperity and stronger institutions before you move for a greater change. And also, of course, the change can't come from the end of a gun.

How are we doing on time? My three-year-old took off with my watch, so --

(Laughter)

MR. GALSTON: You're at the winding.

MR. BENJAMIN: I'm at the winding-up stage.

Well, there are a number of other things that we could discuss, but let me put a few things on the table to suggest that while containment is, I think, absolutely essential, it may not give us all the answers.

What, for example, will we do if there is an Islamist takeover in Jordan? Something that's not going to happen today or tomorrow, but which could happen five years down the line. Or an Islamist takeover in Saudi Arabia? Again, I don't think these things are going to happen, but they're possible. And because of our interests, for example, in avoiding a major conflagration in the Middle East, or seeing Saudi oil go off-line, you know, we have to consider these things. These are national interests that are also imperatives for us. That is one thing I would ask.

And then I would say, what form do you imagine -- well, let me put it differently: containment is in some sense, as you describe it -- I wouldn't say it's a negative strategy. It's a positive strategy. But you don't elaborate on the posturing of the United States, the positioning of the United States beyond that. And that seems to me to be an essential part of where we have to go from here. And I would ask you to discuss that a bit as we go forward,

because particularly today we're in such a deep hole that behaving virtuously and in a restrained fashion will make a big difference. But we've lost so many hearts and minds, how are we going to recapture them?

(Applause)

MR. GALSTON: Okay. Thank you both for clear statements of somewhat contrasting cases. We've now reached the second phase of these proceedings -- live and unrehearsed -- where there will be 10 or 15 minutes of what's known in the news biz as "cross-talk." And I would ask Ian to lead off, engaging as many of Dan's points as you want, but certainly, at least, the following two.

First of all, what is the nature of the threat? And how central or peripheral is state location, state support, state sponsorship for the kind of radical terrorism that the principal national security focus -- rightly or wrongly -- at the present day?

Analytical point number two that I hope you'll engage is the question of the applicability of what I'll call the "Soviet political economy model" to the contemporary situation. You argued, and Dan agreed, that radical Islamism does not have a viable political economy. I would point out, by the way, on my own hook, that in the short term they do have a viable social service strategy that, politically speaking, may be just as effective as a viable political economy -- especially in the context of governments that

conspicuously fail in a very basic responsibility to provide basic social services to the population.

But the question is: is time on our side vis-à-vis this new threat, in the same way as it turned out to be on our side vis-à-vis the Soviet threat?

Plus anything else you want to engage -- then Dan and Strobe, jump in.

MR. SHAPIRO: Okay, well I'll be brief, because I've already consumed a disproportionate amount of oxygen in the room.

MR. GALSTON: You're the guest of honor.

MR. SHAPIRO: What is the nature of the threat?

Well, of course, you can only assess the threat in relation to the goal of the policy overall. And, as I said, I think the overall goal is preservation of America as a democracy into the future; and then, secondarily, preservation of other democracies into the future to the degree that that's compatible with the first.

So what are the threats to that goal? In other words, there might be threats in the world that don't rise to the level of that sort of threat. And I don't think we should be able to end every conceivable threat in the world.

There are different threats, and they require different types of response. We're mainly concerned here with the Middle East, and I would just point out a couple of things.

One is that no Islamic movement -- no Islamic movement I'm aware of -- has declared an offensive jihad. They think of themselves as engaged in a defensive jihad. Others are much more knowledgeable than I about this -- including some folks at Brookings.

We should never forget that Al Qaeda's first goal is to knock off the Saudi regime, and its second goal is to get us out of the Middle East. There's not a goal to take over the world in the sense that the Soviet Union really had a goal of worldwide communism.

I agree very much with what you said about the need to change our policies in the Middle East to get back to a position where we might be able to start digging ourselves out of the hole with respect to hearts and minds. I think to some degree there's just a semantic disagreement, and I don't really have anything at stake in whether we say "contain plus other things," or put it: what are the necessary conditions for an effective post-occupation containment strategy for Iraq?

Your list is the same as my list in the book. I mean it's essentially three points: one is we have to set a date for leaving Iraq, and leave. Because until we do that, it's inconceivable we'll scotch the impression that we have imperial ambitions in the region.

Secondly, there's going to have to be a strategic opening to Iran, who've we now turned into the most powerful player, after Israel in the region, by wiping out its two principal adversaries and engaging in a huge display of

American weakness on the world stage. So there's going to have to be a working with Iran and opening to Iran.

And, thirdly, we're going to have to go back to trying to become honest brokers in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Because if there's any one issue that gives all our potential adversaries in the region common cause, it's that one. Again, you know, if you think about the Israel-Palestine problem and a country like Iran, they have very little interest in it. Most people in Iran -- I'm not talking about the current leadership which, of course, gets all the ideological mileage they can out of it -- it's a far-away conflict that has very little to do with them. They are not, themselves, even Arabs. So this is yet another reason why I think taking away that flashpoint would be essential to our future policies in the region.

Now, if you want to say: well, that's going beyond containment, that's pursuing other goals -- I don't have any stake in that.

What I do have a stake in -- and I take it you agree with me about -- is that whatever containment should be supplemented by, it should not be supplemented by the policies of the Bush Administration, which have undermined containment rather than added to it.

The other things that obviously should be added -- I discuss some in the book, and you alluded to them in your comments: we obviously need to invest more in human intelligence, and we've started to do that. I think the Administration has got religion on that point. And there's plenty of blame

to go around on that. I think in the '90s there was a lot of -- everyone was besotted with high-tech. The Republicans tended to go in the direction of Star Wars. But, nonetheless, we all sort of had this idea, you know, there would be satellites telling us everything we ever needed to know for national security. Clearly that's not true, and we need huge investments in human intelligence to understand, particularly, the kinds of things you talk about emerging in Europe, domestic, and so on.

Obviously we need to do everything we have with financial counter-terrorism and financial intelligence that we can do. Again I think -- I'm not an expert on that, but from what I've read, it is one area where there's been progress. I believe that the attempts last August to blow up airliners were foiled -- again by detecting patterns of unusual ATM transactions. That was the trigger there.

Of course it's hard with HWALA system and all that, but the HWALA system turns out to be less impregnable than people think. But it's an ongoing process. It's just like any detection process. I guess we should think of financial counter-terrorism sort of like the way people trying to protect computer software: they're trying constantly to stay one step ahead of the hackers, because every device you come up with leads to a new way to get around it, and it's a constant battle.

The third one is obviously homeland security, which I guess the Administration gets an "F" for by everybody who has looked at this; that

appalling amounts of money we are blowing away in the Middle East, some tiny percentage of that would go a huge distance to meeting the basic homeland security needs that have been identified by the various commissions that have looked at this since 9/11. And we're not doing it.

So those are things that certainly need to supplement.

Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, any of these countries could -- it's always possible, that fundamentalist regimes could come to power anywhere in the world. We deal with that uncertainty every day. It's, of course, happened elsewhere -- Iran being the obvious case. But, you know, again my view is that Libya should have been the model for dealing with Iran. And we're now sort of verging back to that with financial sanctions which are going to really have a big bite, and there will be lots of pushing and pulling around that.

But beyond that, I think the policy with respect to Islamist regimes should largely be benign neglect; the sort of, you know, the way we treated Algeria. I think the notion that we can go in there and build democracies in these places is simply not thinkable.

Well, can we be as sanguine that this threat will go away as Kennan was that the Soviet threat would eventually go away?

I think it's impossible to know. And, after all, most people were blind-sided by the speed with which the Soviet systems collapsed, and many people thought they had much more staying power than they actually did.

But, again, it seems to me that when we're operating in the face of all of that uncertainty, the best policy is surely to try and demonstrate the success of our system on the ground and its desirability and attractiveness on the ground, and allow the countries that don't have that to see the difference.

Now, Islamist movements certainly build legitimacy by supplying social services. Hamas, for a long time before it got elected, was sort of the welfare state in Gaza and the West Bank. I realize that. But, you know, it seems to me, rather than trying to -- I deal better with specific cases than abstractions.

If you think about the case of Hamas, here is a movement that -- just to take two minutes on Hamas -- it basically became a serious political force after the assassination of Rabin, when the PLO had moved to the center, recognized Israel, Arafat really thought he had a deal. And there was lots of support at that time among both Palestinian and Israeli populations for something like the Oslo deal. Everybody thought it was going to happen.

So Arafat sort of burned his bridges with the radical flank, and Hamas emerged to take that space. And then what happened? It all fell apart because Rabin was assassinated, and Peres, rather than consummating the deal, went the other way. And Arafat never regained his legitimacy in Palestinian politics after that. And Hamas largely took the place that the PLO had occupied prior to that.

But as time went on, Hamas became more and more interested in a settlement. And, you know, what is interesting is -- look, they boycotted the '96 elections, but they demanded the 2006 elections. So they saw themselves increasingly as a kind of government-in-waiting.

But American policy, and Israel policy, was to pull the rug out from under them to try and make them fail, even when they had their 16-month truce; even when they said, well, they won't recognize Israel, but they'll recognize it as an occupying state; even when they said they will have a 10-year truce. They were clearly, clearly, clearly looking for a way to make a deal.

And what I argue in the book is: the more a group like Hamas moves in the direction of becoming a government, the more difficult it is for them to operate as a terrorist group, because they then start to face the constraints that governments face. And, you know, when they won the elections and Al Qaeda congratulated them, they immediately came out and publicly repudiated the congratulations, and rejected Al Qaeda's advice about what they should do.

So -- I take your point. This is a long-winded answer and I'll stop here. But I take your point that these groups can become social service providers -- but only in a fairly limited way. If they're going to really try and do it, and become governments and quasi-governments, and have the

aspirations to become government, by the same token their dangerous terrorist movement, I think, is going to start to erode.

MR. GALSTON: Dan? Strobe?

MR. TALBOTT: Maybe I could just make one quick observation, then put a question to Ian.

The observation is sparked, Bill, by your question about whether we can be hopeful that the terror -- radical Islam -- threat will dissipate over time, and that time is on our side. And, of course, Kennan was extraordinarily prescient in exactly 60 years ago -- 1947 -- not only coining the term "containment," but also predicting the mellowing of the Soviet system.

And one reason he did have that optimism is that he sensed that the ideology that we were concerned about was essentially cynical and corrupt, and being imposed from the top down.

And my concern that the difference here may be that the ideology -- if that's the right word -- the phenomenon that we're concerned about, namely radical Islam, has strong roots down below. And in the case of the Soviet Union, bad governance from the top drove reformers and people towards the West; whereas in the greater Middle East, bad governance from the top tends to drive people in exactly the wrong direction.

So if you have a thought on that, Ian, I'd be interested, and I think the group would be interested to hear it.

My question has to do with the epilogue that you're going to write for your paperback.

(Laughter)

If I'm guessing correctly on when you closed up this version of the book -- the first of many printings -- it was before there was some evidence of some change in the approach of the Bush Administration to the world, particularly with regard to North Korea and Iran. And what will you say in the epilogue to the paperback about the extent to which the Bush Administration, over the last year, year-and-a-half or so -- and particularly in recent weeks -- has begun to take some combination of your advice, Dan Benjamin's advice, and Kennan's advice; which is to say containment, engagement and deterrence?

MR. GALSTON: Do you want to start?

MR. BENJAMIN: Yes -- I think the first point that needs to be made is to understand what the terrorists mean when they say "defensive jihad." "Defensive jihad" doesn't mean it stops, you know, at their water's edge, or it stops at their national boundaries.

"Defensive jihad" is a term that the terrorists use to acquire Islamic legitimacy in calling for a war in which all able-bodied Muslim men participate, because of the argument that defensive jihad is the moment when everyone drops their tools and they go and they fight on behalf of Islam.

The end of a defensive jihad is not a hudna; it's not a truce. The end of the defensive jihad -- certainly as the terrorists see it -- is a fundamental reordering of the global structure.

Now, I don't believe they can achieve this. But they are prepared to use all kinds of tools to reach that end, including nuclear weapons. And they have had fairly distinguished clerics issue fatwas legitimating the use of a nuclear weapon against the West.

There was actually a very interesting debate where the solution that was found: okay, you can't kill innocents, but it's defensive jihad -- so, we could do it up to a casualty level of 10 million, and then we'd have to rethink it a bit.

Well -- they're very serious about this, and Al Qaeda was working on acquiring nuclear weapons in the early '90s already. And given their resuscitation, or revivification, I don't think anyone should rule out the possibility that they will do this again.

In the book, you are skeptical about the ability of terrorist groups to fabricate nuclear weapons, and you cite Tom Shelling, who is a powerful voice. But I have to say that he is in a small minority on this. And when I was at another think-tank that won't be named, I did a study canvassing nuclear weapon years, as well as terrorism experts. And we found that third of a significant group of people with real experience thought that the terrorists already had the wherewithal to fabricate the weapons, if they could get the

fissile material. The other two-thirds believed they would have that within five years.

And there was virtually complete belief that they would use a weapon, rather than try to -- as Shelling in a personal conversation I had with him, suggested that they would try to become more like a government.

I say this recognizing that we're more than five years after 9/11, and there is a certain amount of threat-weariness, and an exhaustion with being scared. And that's a big problem for policy, and it also suggests some misuses of the current situation by politicians.

But it's a real deal, and it's something that we need to take seriously. And I think that we should understand: the threat we are facing, as you correctly say, it's not going to destroy the world; it's probably not going to destroy the country. But we have to recognize that another attack, even along the lines of 9/11, would have a profound impact on national confidence in our institutions. And the things that have happened in the interim, in terms of civil liberties and the like, I think would be greatly magnified after a next attack. So I think these are things we need to take seriously.

I don't want to go on at great length, but I think that the implied analogy with a group like Hamas is very problematic. Hamas, from the very beginning, has recognized -- as did the PLO, as have all kinds of terrorist groups, IRA, you name it -- have all had a different self-understanding from Al Qaeda, in that they saw themselves as being in a fundamentally political

negotiation process. Hamas has been at the border of this, and has gone back and forth; could they get the Israelis to do things they wanted without actually engaging with them.

Al Qaeda's does not want to be involved in a negotiation process. It wants to build an enormous amount of support in the Muslim world behind its vision of Islam, first and foremost, and its vision of how the world order should be. And that's why it's prepared to kill so many people.

Hamas has actually done a very good job at keeping Al Qaeda out of the West Bank and Gaza -- not a perfect job, but a very good job.

Al Qaeda, in that respect -- the radical Islamist movement, the jihadi movement -- is I think fundamentally different, and has different goals, and will behave in different ways from, say, the way Hamas, the PLO in the past, and others have behaved.

MR. SHAPIRO: A couple of brief points -- and then I think we should let others in on the act, right?

All address Strobe's two points, but in the course, I think I'll address part of what you're saying, as well.

I think on the first point, about the Administration is heading back toward containment, and what's there to say about that: I think they're heading there because it's really the only viable thing to do.

And I think there are three things to say about it. They've made it vastly more costly to pursue, because of the interregnum that we've had.

Secondly, we're in a much weaker position to pursue it -- I mean, thinking about, you know, containing Iran: one big difference about beliefs in Tehran today, as before March of 2003, is nobody takes seriously the proposition that we could invade Iran anymore. It's clearly not in the cards. And that was not the belief in Tehran before we invaded Iraq. So, you know, we played what we thought our --

MR. TALBOTT: Excuse me -- it may not have been the belief in Tehran a couple of months after we invaded Iraq. That's when they made an overture to us.

MR. SHAPIRO: That's right.

MR. TALBOTT: It was subsequent to that, when Iraq went bad.

MR. SHAPIRO: Exactly. But now it's clear that it's not plausible.

So it's costly to do. We're weaker to do it. And then, the Administration is still doing so many things that are at cross-purposes with pursuing the policy of containment in the Middle East, at least. They are flatly unwilling to take the Baker Commission's advice. There was a golden opportunity there to rethink how they're going to deal with regional powers. They haven't moved a millimeter on the approach towards Israel. And they're certainly not willing to think about setting dates for departure; there's been a tussle with the Hill about that.

So even when they are moving in the direction of containment, it seems to me sort of one-step-forward-two-steps-back in the Middle East.

About North Korea, I would defer to you. You have vastly more knowledge and experience than I do. I mean, my distant impression, again, is that they have done huge damage to what the Clinton Administration achieved; and, again, I would guess -- again, I say I'm not informed -- I would guess that they're probably doing things at cross-purposes with the containment policy there, as well, that you would know more about than I would.

I think your other point on ideology, top-down and bottom-up and all that, intersects with some of the comments that you made.

Yes, there is a social movement; there is grassroots support. But the question is: Why? And what can we do about that in the medium term?

My argument in the book is that we fuel the grassroots support by our policies in the Middle East. And until those policies change, we can't begin to engage in what Kennan would have recommended which is to make ourselves attractive by demonstration. Back to the point that the 20-somethings want the MTV and the Levi jeans, when it really gets down to it.

And we can't get to the point where that can become a relevant fact, so long as we're conceived as these imperialists who are gung-ho on taking over the region and stealing its resources.

I full agree with you that defensive jihad does not mean stopping at their water's edge. But the goal is to get us out of the Middle East. That is

the goal. The goal is not to take over North America, or to create a worldwide -- what an offensive jihad would call for, a worldwide Islamic state.

But it does seem to me that, to the degree there is a grassroots social movement that gives legitimacy to these groups, the only way we can change that is to change our own policy in the Middle East, and become somebody who's not seen as trying to take it over.

MR. GALSTON: Well, I have a million questions, but I am going to restrain myself completely.

We've now reached Phase 3 of the proceedings, and there is a roving microphone. And I would ask, when I call on you, and the microphone reaches you, that you state your name and institutional affiliation, if you happen to have one.

I'll recognize this gentleman right here first.

MR. COFFEY: John Coffey, retired State Department.

Let me offer three reasons why I think containment doesn't apply well to the present.

First, the original doctrine aimed at hemming in the territorial expansion, or the extension of political influence, by a sovereign nation state that had tangible national interests. And with the phenomenon of radical Islam, we're not dealing with such an animal here.

Second, Kennan said the doctrine of containment would need to employ a great many instruments to carry it out, one of which -- even though

he grew neuralgic, in time, with nuclear weapons -- one of which was nuclear deterrence. And that whole doctrine was predicated on the notion that you're dealing with a rational actor, a rational calculator, who would coldly calculate that any benefits of aggression just would not be worth the cost. And, again, a sovereign nation state with tangible interests is going to think that way. And that's why Libya's not a good example here for how to go, because Libya -- it was a sovereign nation state, too, with real interests at stake. But in radical Islam, we're not dealing with that kind of phenomenon.

And, finally, I just would remark that being a good model in the world is far from adequate in the present circumstance, when you're dealing with a movement that doesn't want to emulate but wants to destroy that way of life.

MR. SHAPIRO: Are you going to let some accumulate?

MR. GALSTON: No. No. With a question of that complexity, you're going to deal with it crisply, but singly.

(Laughter)

MR. SHAPIRO: Okay.

Well, you know, I took your first two points really to be different variants of the same point: that deterrence and containment could only work against nation states that have nation-state interests.

The first point I think to make, though, is that it can deal with that. And if we're thinking about nuclear proliferation to rogue regimes that is

going to be on the horizon, containment is going to be important for that. Iran will develop nuclear weapons at some point. Egypt probably will. The Saudis might.

So we're going to have to contain those regimes, and attacking them would make about as much sense as it would have made to attack China in the 1950s because they were developing nuclear weapons. So I do think that containment is going to have an important role in the coming era of nuclear proliferation, which of course we need to slow as much as we possibly can.

The real question is whether nuclear weapons can get into the hands of terrorist groups without being funneled through and supplied by and enabled by nation states. And to the extent they can, of course, the doctrine of containment works. To the extent they can't, my view is: well, then we're back in the world we were talking about earlier of intelligence -- human intelligence, probably in significant part -- and homeland security, and these other things that we've listed. There's nothing else that you can do.

And certainly nothing that the Bush Administration has been doing addresses this problem, the problem that you are identifying. If anything, it makes it much worse.

Being a good model you say is not enough because these are people who are fundamentally committed to getting rid of our way of life in the world. So were the Soviets. We're talking now about -- you know, my

view is: when you talk about the battle for hearts and minds, you really have to separate the elites from the masses. Of course the elites have these counter-ideologies that are virulently anti-Western. But if you look at the public opinion data about what the publics in these countries actually want -- look at what was going on in Iran until 2004, when the reformists lost. There was a great deal of thaw going on in that country.

Now, I'm not one of those who think that the 2004 Iranian election went the way it did because we invaded Iraq. The data doesn't support that. It went the way it went because the government was corrupt and so on. But we certainly emboldened the hard-liners by our demonstration of weakness and so on,

But the real question is not what the ideologues in charge of the governments are saying, but what the populations actually want. Because over time, that's what you're really playing to, I think.

MR. GALSTON: Other questions.

Yes, sir.

MR. FRIEDMAN: Thanks. I'm Jeff Friedman, from the Council on Foreign Relations.

I thought you made a very good case that containment works for the types of state-to-state deterrence issues we face. But in terms of state relationships with non-state actors in containing global terror, I'm concerned about two particular aspects.

The first is that denying terrorist sanctuary is not just a deterrent requirement but compelling, as well, in that states need to be both willing and able to root out terrorist sanctuaries. So in the case like Lebanon, unable to deal with Hezbollah; or a case like Afghanistan, unwilling to deal with Afghanistan [sic]. This may be difficult for rooting out terrorist sanctuary.

And the second is: in the case of international state sponsorship of terrorism, where the boundaries of containment lie. So, for Syria or Iran, giving weapons to Hezbollah, is the containment around Lebanon, so that we prevent the arms from coming in; that we interdict or deal with the Syrians or Iranians? Or is the containment bubble around Lebanon, Syria and Iran, that we now have to deal with -- they are arming Hezbollah, but we sort of want to contain all of them?

So how would Kennan deal with Afghanistan and Hezbollah?

MR. SHAPIRO: Okay, on your first point, "willing and able" -- yes, if they're only willing but not able, we're talking about a weak state. So we might say, you know, in the case of Afghanistan they were unwilling, but perhaps unable in any case, to have turned over Al Qaeda in the event had they been willing.

Well, it seems to me, in the case where they're willing but unable, then the justification for going in is overwhelming. And—well, we had worldwide support when we went into Afghanistan, I think partly because

people intuited that there was no way, even had the Afghans cooperated, there was no way that they were going to be able to deliver.

So I think that's, in the extreme case, when they're unable, then you can go in. I think it should be done multilaterally, and it should be done with international legitimacy, through international institutions.

Short of the extreme situations, I've argued in the book, when you're dealing with weak states, the only other thing you really have is stronger states in the region that you can work with.

The second question, how do you draw the bubbles of containment? -- I think that is all highly context-specific. There's no generalization to be made about that. And, as I said, containment strategies can overlap, and do overlap, with engagement strategies, both with respect to the same country, where we've had, after all, political and diplomatic containment of China, but economic engagement of them at the same time. Those two things are quite consistent.

And it's also possible to be containing a country and working with a country to contain a different country; so that for some purposes, we would be making Iran pay a price, whether in terms of sanctions or some other diplomatic price when we discover that they are shipping arms to Hezbollah, but, you know, it's a five-yard penalty, not a 15-yard penalty, or something of that general order.

You know, part of the subtlety of Kennan's mind is: you have to calibrate responses appropriately to the level of threat. So I think there are a lot of context-specific judgments about questions of that sort.

MR. GALSTON: Yes.

MS. SAUNDERS: Hi. Elizabeth Saunders. I'm finishing my Ph.D. in Professor Shapiro's department at Yale.

I have a question about how you would build a domestic political consensus for this kind of policy.

One of the problems with Kennan's distinction between defending a peripheral and a vital interest is that when you don't defend what's perceived as a threat to a peripheral interest, for what may be very sound national security reasons, you may suffer a psychological blow when you are seen not to be defending this interest; and therefore maybe attacked for not doing enough.

So, even if the containment strategy is very sound in terms of national security, if there's one attack to what may be perceived as a peripheral interest, does that not leave you open -- as, you know, the President of the United States, perhaps -- to the charge that you aren't doing enough? And does this kind of strategy become more fragile over time? And how might you defend yourself against the charge that this is just going to leave us open to sort of whittling away at this strategy over time?

MR. SHAPIRO: Well, it's always "compared to what?" -- right? I mean, President Bush Senior took some domestic political hits for not going to Baghdad. He was criticized for that.

By reference to containment, that was exactly the right policy, was to not go to Baghdad. And he took criticism for that. But I've yet to hear of any political commentator to say that's why he lost the 1992 election. He lost the 1992 election because of the no-new-taxes, and all of that.

So people ran around saying: Bush is a wuss, and this sort of thing. And "he didn't finish the job." But it would be hard to make the case that it was a big political hit that he took.

Of course, when I say "compared to what?" though, when you do go to war over a peripheral interest and fail, as we did in Vietnam, or as the Bush Administration is in the process of doing in Iraq, you take an even bigger political domestic hit -- as the Administration is now discovering.

So -- yes, I'd just say: compared to what?

Now, there's a broader question. My book is floated on the thought that you can't beat something with nothing, and the Democrats really need to get behind an alternative positive doctrine that can convince Americans that they would be safer than the going alternatives, and would not allow them to be lambasted as weak on national security. I mean, that's really the big question -- whether that's, in fact, feasible.

And, you know, this is a replay of the 1950s in some respects. After all, in the 1952 election, containment was attacked -- Eisenhower, and Dulles and others; and the pushed rollback in Europe and they won. You could say: score one for Elizabeth's point of view.

On the other hand, they quickly abandoned rollback in Europe, as well, and didn't implement it, and basically pursued containment in Europe. They went for rollback elsewhere -- namely in Iran -- but that really wasn't part of the election debate in '52.

But I think none of this is predetermined or preordained. And you could say that the fragility of containment over time would lead public support for it to erode, but it seems to me that right now in the American political electoral cycle, the Democrats are actually in a pretty good position to stand up and defend an alternative as better for national security, and that wouldn't make them look weak, and is not appeasement, and could actually work than they've been for a long time -- because the Bush policy has failed so badly.

MR. GALSTON: Dan, you wanted to get in on this.

MR. BENJAMIN: You raise a very important point, because -- and it's an important point of political culture. And we have become stuck in a mindset, it seems to me, in which you're only serious about a problem if you're using the military.

And this has profound negative effects, not least for our ability to deal with the threat. Because if you tally up all the pluses and minuses, military force has been disastrous for us in terms of fighting terrorism. It's attracted an enormous number of new recruits, and yet at the same time -- as I think Ian rightly points out -- we have a bit of a vacuum in terms of talking about it in other ways.

And this is not epiphenomenal. This is deep stuff. The United States has become overly used to thinking that the military is the hammer for every nail in a very serious way. And I recommend, in this regard, Andy Bacevich's book on American militarism, which I think is a very important work on the issue.

I'm hopeful that the 2008 election opens the door to a new discussion about how we use our power in the world, and what the coordination of the different instruments is. But I have to say at the moment there are very few signs that that's going to happen. In the past, the debate has been in the nature of who can kill terrorists better. You know, we do need to kill terrorists, but we also need to shape the environment we work in, and recognize that what is up for grabs is an awful lot of people's belief in the United States, and their willingness to see us as a benign power in the world. And we're losing that fight right now, and it's going to take a lot of political bravery to change the discussion.

MR. GALSTON: We have time for at least two more rounds of questions.

Yes, sir.

MR. WISHENGRAD: I'm Joel Wishengrad of World Media Reports -- WMR News. I'm also in the State Department press corps.

One of the questions a lot of people have every time there is an instigator of terror, or some large-scale problem in the world -- for instance, in the western hemisphere it's been Castro, and now Hugo Chavez -- recently President Bush has been talking to the Brazilians, and actually has put out the silver carpet to them, gold carpet, in tours of both Brazil, and bringing the Brazilians here in an effort to stem the tide, possibly, with Venezuela's Hugo Chavez.

In Africa we've had Liberia. Charles Taylor, fortunately, is now in prison up at The Hague. We've had Robert Mugabe. And we also have -- I guess you could say -- the failed state of Somalia, with the Ethiopians entering into it. And, of course, with Iraq it's Muqtada al-Sadr, the firebrand cleric.

When we seen problems that erupt, why don't we say that these particular people have the potential to cause problems? And one of the failures appears to be that we will only talk to governments. We don't talk to, let's say, these -- and confront them directly -- the perpetrators themselves. And we've had the uproar, for instance, in the last two weeks, when Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House, has just visited Syria.

What are your thoughts concerning this? And is this something that's been either overlooked, or not delved into more thoroughly?

MR. SHAPIRO: Well, I think -- I mean, Syria is a government, and I think it's inevitable that we're going to have to deal with the Syrians -- which is not to disagree with what Lynne Cheney wrote in the *Washington Post* yesterday about what the Syrians have done.

But I think it was Rabin who said a long time ago: you don't negotiate with your friends. The notion that people must be sufficiently benign before we will be talking to them I think is self-defeating.

I think we have to be working with the Syrians. It's inconceivable that we can make any headway if we're not.

As for going directly to the perpetrators, it just reminds of a point I meant to make in response to the earlier discussion about nation states and transnational groups.

Of course, if you think about our failure to actually apprehend Al Qaeda in Afghanistan after we went in there with the Northern Alliance, from the perspective of the \$7 billion a month we're pouring now into Iraq -- and you think if that cumulative \$1.6 trillion or whatever it's going to be -- if we had gone in with those kinds of resources into Afghanistan after 9/11, we might well have actually been successful in apprehending -- of course there are no guarantees in this.

But it seems to me that we've become spread so thin, we simply can't go after every threat. And so you come back to Kennan's logic of vital versus peripheral interests; start with the most dangerous threats and go after them in a serious way, and use other implements against others.

MR. GALSTON: Yes, the woman in the back.

MS. ROGERS: Yes, a question for Mr. Benjamin. Margaret Rogers, an independent consultant. I'd like you to elaborate on the containment-plus.

If you were told "implement that starting tomorrow," can you just give some more specifics about what that would contain?

MR. BENJAMIN: Well, in fact, I wrote a book about it. Happy to recommend it.

(Laughter)

I think that, first of all, we're not going to make headway on the radical Islamist threat in terms of dialing it back until we're out of Iraq. So that is an important part of all this. As long as the United States is seen as an occupier, we can't rehabilitate our image in the Muslim world.

This is a really tough problem. I'm not going to make light of it. And in all of the reviews -- in several of the reviews of this book, everyone said, "Boy, this is -- I don't know if their ideas are going to work --" -- but one of the things that we proposed was: essentially make some pivotal states in the Muslim world an offer they can't refuse, in terms of subsidies, in terms of

market openings, in terms of a long-term schedule for a transition to democracy on the basis of meeting certain benchmarks, in terms of institution-building and the growth of prosperity and a middle-class. I'm fond of saying that you could buy a lot of democracy with the amount of money we've spent in Iraq.

There's no guarantee this would stop terrorism very quickly. That's something that everyone needs to be very clear on. But it would certainly convince the rest of the world that we were not the demons of Bin Laden's rantings. And that, to me, is the essential task of American policy right now: to jam the narrative; jam the jihadist narrative.

And a lot of this money might get wasted. But the fact that the United States was taking this approach I think would make a difference.

You have to recognize: we're dealing with decades of suspicion about the United States. Every time we've intervened on the behalf of Muslim populations -- in Somalia, in Bosnia, in Iraq, in Kuwait -- in the Muslim world's view we haven't come out looking very good. So we really do have a lot that we're up against.

But I think that it would take a rather dramatic policy innovation to begin the process of changing things. And I have to say we really do need to have a very viable, energetic -- even if not conclusive -- peace process in the Middle East. That would make an enormous amount of difference.

Right now you would be hard pressed to find many Muslims from, you know, the Midlands in Britain, to Indonesia, who think that we care about the sufferings of Palestinians. And that damages us enormously.

MR. GALSTON: Okay. I'd like to give this very patient gentleman in the front an opportunity. After that, I'd like to give the President of this august institution the opportunity either to pose a question, or to offer some concluding statement of his own -- after which I will wrap this up.

MR. RICHMAN: I'm Al Richman, former State Department.

Dr. Shapiro, you mentioned a need to prioritize interests and threats. One might say that a situation in which several additional Middle East countries had nuclear weapons -- perhaps initiated by Iran's possession -- is a more serious threat than we face by international terrorism. In addition, Iran is a source of recalcitrance, let's say, in resolving the Middle East peace process.

I just wondered if you placed Iran a little bit higher, in terms of potential threats -- at least part of the regime -- how you might deal with this more complex situation than maybe Kennan faced?

MR. SHAPIRO: Well, I agree that Iran has the potential to be a greater threat than it is now. I think it's more or less inevitable that Iran will develop nuclear weapons.

I think we can, and should, do everything we can, to slow that process, just as we should slow all nuclear proliferation as much as we can. But, after all, containment was never, ever thought of as a doctrine to stop

powers from arming, as nuclear weapons. It was a response to powers that were already armed with nuclear weapons. You know, if we could stop our adversaries from arming we wouldn't need a national security doctrine.

So I do think that we have to plan for the eventuality of a nuclear armed Iran, and possibly some other countries in the region, even while trying to prevent or slow that.

It does seem to me that fairly traditional policies will come into play in that eventuality. After all, Israel has a sufficient nuclear deterrent for dealing with the Iranians. They could wipe out every Iranian city many times over and still have weapons to target on the capitals of any other country that might threaten it.

I don't for a minute want to suggest that Iran could not be a very serious national security threat to the United States. I don't think there's anything in the behavior of the people actually in control of the levers of power in Iran that has ever suggested that they're anything other than rational. I mean, just if you think about the ways in which they have dealt with Ahmadinejad since his election -- you know, they landed with this guy, but the mullahs have been very careful to marginalize him, to make it clear that he doesn't control foreign policy, to create a new national security council on which they put some of the reformers who had lost in 2004; to admonishing him in public for his Israel remarks -- his genocide remarks.

There's nothing in the behavior of the people who have actually been running Iran's foreign policy to suggest that they're anything but rational in their calculations. And, indeed, you know, I actually just recently -- on this point about "rational Westerners can't deal with irrational Islamists," I've actually been toying with doing an op-ed: you could go down the list of the ways in which the tactical choices made by the Bush Administration have been vastly less rational than the tactical choices made by the Iranians in the last five years.

Strobe?

MR. TALBOTT: I think I'll just confine myself to an observation, then turn it back over to Bill.

I suspect that everybody in this room, wherever you're from -- both professionally and geographically -- knows that there is a perception of a gap between the academy and the policy world of which Brookings is a part; and that academic work -- and particularly in the political science -- of the highest quality, as practiced in universities and colleges is at some remove from the kind of policy-relevant research that we try to do here at Brookings and other think-tanks around town.

Ian is a walking, eloquently talking, refutation of that. This was, I think, a masterpiece of exactly the way in which the most rigorous, fact-based kind of analysis can be of immense value in this city. And it's also a sad

fact that since the '60s, there has been a decline in the shuttle traffic, as it were -- there's no shuttle connecting Washington with New Haven, Connecticut.

MR. SHAPIRO: No, it's back.

MR. TALBOTT: Oh, it's back? Okay. Good news. But it's a small plane with little props.

MR. SHAPIRO: Yes. And too late for you, Strobe.

MR. TALBOTT: But in any event, there ought to be more such shuttles. And I hope that you'll be back down here soon and often, Ian. We talked earlier about the value of examples, and I think you've set a terrific example, both for the way we do our work here at Brookings, and for what I hope will be coming out of political science departments around the country.

So -- thank you. And back to you, Bill.

MR. GALSTON: Well, let me just bring this event to a conclusion by -- in the words of Yogi Berra -- thanking Ian Shapiro, who made this event necessary.

(Laughter)

And Strobe, who made it possible. And Dan Benjamin, who enriched it greatly.

And I want you all to know that since Strobe's radically Yale-centric opening remarks I've been struggling with my own questions of legitimacy:

(Laughter)

“What am I doing up here?” And then it suddenly dawned on me that I had nothing to apologize for: I am the son of a Sterling Professor from Yale.

(Laughter)

So that validates me.

Thank you very much for coming.

(Applause)

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