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IRAQ: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

OPTION NUMBER 3: SOFT PARTITION

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. POLLACK: Good afternoon. Welcome to the Saban Center at the Brookings Institution and another in our series of events looking at different policy options for Iraq.

Today, we are extremely pleased to have with us the two authors of a brand new paper. I hope you were able to get copies of it. It should be up front. If for some reason, you weren't able to get copies, we'll get more copies and get them out there. It's a brand new paper called "The Case for Soft Partition in Iraq," and it was written by Michael O'Hanlon and Ed Joseph whom I will introduce further in just a moment.

I wanted to just take a moment and say a little bit more about both the series and about the paper. First, the series, some of you already know this because you've been here, but the series was designed with an idea of actually sitting and taking a hard look at each of the options in turn. Our feeling here at the Saban Center was that while there was a great deal of heat in the media with people throwing

around different ideas, there wasn't a great deal of light. No one was really talking about what each of these options might look like, what the requirements might be, how they might play out in the reality of the situation as opposed to just throwing around a lot of bumper stickers about what this one might look like, what that one might look like, and making a bunch of rhetorical debating points in their favor.

And so, what we wanted to do was have a series of meetings that looked hard at each of the different options being advanced. Obviously, partition is an idea that has been around there for some time. My former boss, Les Gelb, first put it on the table, I think, back in 2004, and since then Senator Biden has also picked up the idea along with a number of other people.

What I will say about this paper is that you may agree or disagree with this paper, but I think that you will agree with me that you will not find a smarter, more realistic and more fulsome presentation of the option and what it would entail than this

paper. This goes into detail. This addresses the counter arguments in a way that no one else has since.

I think that for that reason alone, it is an extremely important contribution to the debate. It's not just a bumper sticker. It's not just a debating point. It is a serious argument about what this option would look like, what it would require and why the United States ought to look hard at it and, of course, in the view of the authors, why the United States ought to adopt it.

As I said, we have both of the authors with us, and I will give them both brief introductions.

Ed Joseph, sitting to my farthest right, is a visiting scholar and professorial lecturer at the Paul Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at the Johns Hopkins University as well as a career professional in conflict management, democracy and elections. Most relevant to this, he served for a decade in the Balkans including nearly throughout the entire war in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a peacekeeper with the United Nations, on post-war active duty with the

Army, as a senior official with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and a project director for the International Crisis Group.

Next to Ed is Michael O'Hanlon. Mike, of course, is well known to all of you. He is a senior fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution, specializes in U.S. defense strategy, the use of military force, homeland security, American foreign policy and about a dozen other things. Mike is a prolific author. His latest book is *A War Like No Other: The Truth About China's Challenge to America* which he co-authored with Richard Bush.

Then the respondent to this is Bruce Riedel sitting to my immediate right. Bruce is a senior fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy where he is specializing in counterterrorism, Arab-Israeli issues, Persian Gulf security, India-Pakistan and a few other things to boot.

Bruce has a long and distinguished career in government. He last served as special advisor to NATO in Brussels, Belgium. He is a member of the Royal

College of Defence Studies which I think is the thing he is most proud of, but prior to that he dabbled as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Near East and North African Affairs at the National Security Council. He was also Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs at the National Security Council. He was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Near East and South Asia at the Department of Defense. He is a recipient of the Distinguished Intelligence Medal, the Secretary of Defense Distinguished Service Medal, and the Intelligence Medal of Merit.

The way that today's session will work is we'll ask Mike to give some opening remarks followed by Ed at which point we'll turn things over to Bruce. Please understand that what we've asked Bruce to do is to give his thoughts both on the paper and on the general presentation, on the general subject of soft partition. We're not looking for a debate among different courses of action for Iraq so much as an in-

depth exploration of this single option.

This is emphatically on the record as Mike and Ed have insisted, so please feel free to use everything that is said here.

I will be taking a list of questions. So if at any point during the presentations, you'd like to get on the list, simply put up a finger, preferably your index finger, and I will note you as best I can on my list and we'll take questions in turn.

All right, David, you get the honor of the first question.

Once the presentations are done, we'll turn it over to questions and answers.

With that, Mike, why don't you kick us off?

MR. O'HANLON: Thanks, Ken. Thanks, everybody for being here.

Let me return the compliment. There's no better place to publish this sort of a paper than with the Saban Center at Brookings, given what you've accomplished already in the time you've been up and running and the professionalism of all the people who

have worked with us and helped us out, all the great comments we received along the way, and it's nice to have this lunch forum to speak as well.

I just want to also react very quickly. You heard about Ed Joseph, my co-author. I learned a lot from him, writing this, and you'll hear from him in a second. He has a lot of experience in Bosnia. If we had had a subtitle for this or a different title, it might have been the Bosnia Model for Iraq even though there are obvious limitations on any analogy.

But I do want to admit one limitation right up front, a little bit humorous, but at least it struck me as nice garrulous humor from our commander in Iraq, Dave Petraeus. When I tried to get him to think along these lines about soft partition and mentioned the Bosnia model, he said yeah, you know, that'd be great, but where are Tuđman, Milošević and Izetbegović when you need them, underscoring the fact that in Bosnia, at least you had three bad guys. They might not have been the nicest guys in the world, but at least you only had three. In Iraq, we've got a few

more, and I'm sure that's going to be a subject we come back to in the discussion.

What I want to do in my 10 minutes or so is talk not so much about the broad case for soft partition. Ed may turn to that a bit in his part and we'll, of course, be happy to discuss that subject. I want to talk a little bit about the mechanics of how you would make it happen to the extent we feel like we have anything to offer in thinking through to the next level on that.

This paper is only 30 pages. It's not an exhaustive manual on which neighborhoods in Iraq you give to which group under a soft partition concept. It doesn't have a lot of the detail you would need to create in operational terms if you were implementing this policy. So it's meant more to be one level more detail and rigor than is commonly used in this debate without pretending to answer each and every question. That's the basic philosophy.

But before I get into a few specific points on issues like how you help people relocate from one

part of Iraq to another and how you monitor the internal borders that are created, where you draw those lines and how many U.S. forces might be needed to do this for how long, I want to say a couple words about the broader motivation because I know that's got to be on your minds. While we'll come back to that, let me at least mention a couple things right up front.

First of all, when people say why would you ever want to do soft partition, it's not what Iraqis want. It's not historically what's been supported by their public opinion polls or by most of their politicians. The answer in simple terms, in short, is it's happening anyway. Going back to the first bombing of the Samarra mosque in February, 2006, I think Iraq has been in a civil war. It's not an all-out civil war. Things could get a whole lot worse which is one of our arguments against withdrawal options which are often advocated in the American debate. But it's happening in the sense that you are getting 50,000 to 100,000 people a month displaced

from their homes by violence.

Here, we are greatly appreciative of the Internally Displaced Persons work at Brookings, the project run out of the Foreign Policy Studies Program here in consultation with Bern, Switzerland because they really have documented a lot of this more carefully than many others. If you count internally displaced persons and refugees since February 2006, you're seeing 50,000 to 100,000 people a month violently displaced from their homes, either at the point of a gun or out of fear of that happening to them next.

So Iraq is becoming Bosnia. The question in our minds pretty soon or maybe already is: Are you going to try to control that process through negotiation if at all possible or let it play out to its tragic violent conclusion first and then negotiate soft partition later with another million people dead?

In some ways, that is the stark question I'd like to ask you to consider. Without overstating what soft partition can really do, I do think that that is

the starkest way I can try to motivate why this option is worth thinking through. It's happening anyway. If the surge doesn't do better than it has so far in turning that around, pretty soon the question is going to be: Do you try to control this process or do you let the militias, thugs, insurgents and Al-Qaida create the dynamic and continue to kill 5,000 people a month to make the other 50,000 to 100,000 relocate?

That, to us, is largely the way the choice looks. That's the motivation.

Let me, as I say, go through three or four of the practical issues, obviously, the most important practical one being how would you negotiate it and how would you get the Iraqis to agree to this even if you've decided that it is the best policy or the least bad policy at this point. All I'm going to say about that right now is I plead guilty. I acknowledge the point. If the Iraqis don't want this, it can't happen. At least if the overwhelming majority of key Iraqi political figures don't want this, it can't happen.

You don't want to have an India-Pakistan 1947. You have to have a process that's managed, that's planned, where there are allowances for providing security. I'm going to talk about that a little bit in a second, but you require a large percentage of the Iraq political leadership to bless this idea. We're not there yet. Getting there is going to be hard.

In the end, this is not an option we can decide upon from Washington. So let me just be clear about that right up front. We're trying to help the Iraqis think this paper through as much as anything, and I only wish my Arabic were better because that would have been, in some ways, the more appropriate language to write this in since it is their decision more than ours about what to do.

Let me start with a question that tends to be on the minds of Americans first and foremost. How many American forces would be required to carry out this sort of a plan?

I'm, in a sense, jumping ahead. I just want

to be brief on each of these points as I mentioned. I'm jumping ahead a little bit because I'm presupposing that we're going to have large numbers of people relocate under this kind of a plan.

Ed and I tried to look in a very first order way at demographic maps of Iraq and how many people live in the most ethnically mixed neighborhoods, cities, regions where you would expect a large amount of population relocation to occur under this plan, or I should say where it's already happening, and where we think this process might try to manage subsequent relocations. It's probably up to 10 million people in Iraq, maybe even a little more, who live in the highly integrated interspersed regions. We're assuming, since minority populations would be the ones to relocate, that some substantial percentage of that 10 million, less than 50 percent but maybe 25 percent of that 10 million might want to move under this plan.

We're proposing that the way to think about this kind of an option is that you give individuals the choice of whether they want to move or not. Some

people would say that's unrealistic, that once a dynamic begins whereby Sunni Muslims move out of a Shi'i neighborhood, it's not going to be possible for a certain number of the Sunnis to remain where they've been and if you get this ball rolling, it's going to play out to its grim complete conclusion of almost complete ethnic separation or at least to the extent that's possible in Iraq where a quarter of the marriages are across sectarian lines, which is again another criticism of this plan from people who say it just can't work in Iraq.

Again, our response to that is, well, somehow the death squads, the militias and those who are driving the population movements right now are figuring out a way to do this even with interethnic marriage being so commonplace, even with so many interethnic, intersectarian friendships and so forth. So, at some level, Iraqis are making their decisions about relocating despite their degree of intermixing. We're supposing that that will continue under this plan.

People will have the choice whether they want to stay or move. If they want to stay, they will be allowed to stay, clearly. If they want to move, we are proposing you help them by providing protection as they move, providing some opportunity for a new house. It may not be quite as nice of a house as they had before, but you try to organize a housing swap or some kind of housing voucher system or at least help people sell the house they're vacating so they have some money to buy a house in the new place. Right now, when people leave, they are leaving in fear and they are leaving without any ability to get compensation for their property, which means they can't start over in a new part of Iraq when they relocate.

Also, we would propose joining this with a job creation program of the type that I favored for a long time, that a number of military commanders have favored for a long time in Iraq, and you would offer people essentially a guaranteed low-wage job when they relocated. Now this wouldn't have to be a benefit that was offered only to those who moved. It could be

a benefit offered more generally throughout Iraq.

I think of it as an FDR-style, 1930s-style job creation program that you do for five to seven years not because you think it has any great economic merit but because it is a way to facilitate the movement of populations and dampen the security tensions that result from that sort of thing. It would have been a good idea even without soft partition on the table, but it would be a necessity under our proposal.

How many U.S. forces are needed? Here, I've benefited greatly from Ken Pollack and others who have helped put pressure on me to not understate the requirement. It's true that if you were going to do this absolutely rigorously, you'd probably want the 300,000 to 400,000 that our rules of thumb always tell us are ideal for policing, stabilization, peacekeeping in these kinds of missions, but we all know we're not choosing between perfect options here. We're choosing between a surge type option which is probably undermanned for the kind of mission it has versus this

kind of a soft partition.

I think to first order, you should assume you're not going to reduce forces at all. You don't want to send a message where we are now going to be opening up space for death squads and militias to have more free rein in the neighborhoods that we've been trying to dampen their activity up until now. So while you can make a case for 300,000 peacekeepers or American and Coalition personnel to implement this sort of a thing, I would hope that the increase in Iraqi capability, but more to the point, the lowering of expectations that we all should basically be willing to accept at this point, will mean that 150,000, 140,000 Americans are going to be good enough to at least prevent the violence from ratcheting up when this kind of a policy is announced and undertaken.

We're thinking in terms of 125,000 to 150,000 Americans for 12 to 18 months which is a rough estimate of how long it would take to do a lot of the population relocation, set up the internal borders,

the internal checkpoints, create the internal ID system that you're going to need to use because you're going to want to help Sunnis keep out Shi'i militias and you're going to want to help Shi'i militias keep out Al-Qaida, which means you're probably going to try to man some checkpoints especially in the key places like Baghdad.

This would be a good policy, again, even today. As Ken Pollack wrote a year and a half ago in the report that some of us were involved in, that he spearheaded on "A Switch in Time" and the idea that identity cards are actually a good thing in counterinsurgency regardless. But for this plan, it would really help in terms of maintaining control of population movements along these internal borders.

In any event, you're going to need a year, year and a half to do these various sorts of things: population movement, creation of an ID card system, creation of internal controls along these internal borders. I think after that point you could envision phasing down to maybe 50,000 American troops, more

like a Bosnia-style mission. I think Bosnia and Kosovo were probably always over-resourced, given the small size of the territories and populations and the huge capabilities at NATO's disposal.

So, like Rumsfeld, I am prepared to contemplate a scenario where you wouldn't go in quite that robustly, but I still take Ken's point and the point of classic counterinsurgency and policing theorists, that you want to be fairly robust in this sort of a mission. If we can imagine 50,000 American troops for much of the next President's term or two terms, I think that's the right way to think about the follow-on mission.

In other words, in short, this is not a plan to get our troops home. This is a plan to stop getting our troops killed because, again, you'd only do it if Iraqi political leadership largely agreed and I would hope that the casualties therefore could go down very quickly, but the troop numbers would not.

I've made a couple of points about population movement, about U.S. and Coalition foreign

presence. Let me now just develop a couple more points very quickly on internal Iraqi governance capacity and turn things over to Ed.

Clearly, the whole idea here is that you are not going to have a strong federal government in Iraq after this plan is implemented. For that reason, it actually is a quite significant change in policy on the ground institutionally. Ed will point out and we all know that Iraq's constitution already allows for this sort of concept, but it would be a radical change in policy nonetheless because of the fact that you would essentially be disbanding much of the Iraqi national army and police and building up regional capacity.

In a way, Al-Anbar Province is the model. What's been going on in Al-Anbar Province where Sunnis recognize that Al-Qaida is a bigger foe than each other or than we are, and therefore they are more willing to help recruit. The sheikhs are helping recruit people for the police forces who then are allowed to patrol their own neighborhoods, their own

cities, not be deployed to distant regions to police other kinds of sectarian groups. The idea is to do more of that, more local security work by the populations who live and care about whatever neighborhood or city or province they are working within.

So, you're essentially looking at a creation of a whole new Iraqi security system where most of the 350,000 people now under arms at a national level would be under arms at a regional level and would work for either Kurdistan or, to use loose terms, Shiastan or Sunnistan, if you'll forgive me for those oversimplified expressions. Therefore, not only security forces but other kinds of government capability would have to be recreated at the local, I should say, regional level. Three regions is what we're talking about.

Governor Thompson and some others have talked about using the 18 provinces as the basis for this sort of a devolution of power, but I think that creates way too many internal checkpoints, way too

many internal borders and sort of like the Vance-Owen plan from Bosnia, it's too complex in terms of the security demands of the situation. You're going to have to segregate populations to get away from the security dilemma that has driven so much of the violence in Iraq especially in the last year and a half.

I've already talked about as long as I wanted to. There's a lot more to say about all these points. I know Ed is going to mention a couple more and Bruce, I'm sure will as well, and we'll look forward to the conversation thereafter.

MR. JOSEPH: Thank you very much. Let me join Mike in thanking Ken for his support along the way and, for my part, extending my thanks to my co-author, Michael O'Hanlon whom I can say it was an honor to work with on this paper.

Mike has, as you would expect, very eloquently laid out the case, and I do not want to go on too long. We want to hear from Bruce, and we of course want to get your questions, but let me just

fill in a few blanks on a few things that Mike alluded to.

One thing, he mentioned that we might have subtitled this paper the Bosnia Model, and I just want to throw out the caution quickly that neither Mike nor I say that Iraq is Bosnia. Let me just state that again. We do not say that Iraq is Bosnia. I served in Bosnia. In addition, I was in Iraq in the fall of 2004 and found the experience of the Balkan model and paradigm quite useful in understanding it, but we do not make the case that the two are identical.

There are some similarities, and there are also some quite significant differences, and those are noted in the paper, chief among them, the fact that the neighbors in the Bosnia context were drawn together, Serbia and Croatia, in their desire to divide Bosnia and we do not have that same dynamic in Iraq. Mike alluded to the point. General Petraeus is correct where we have no Tuđman and Milošević to render coherence on the various factions in Iraq. Let me just say that at the outset.

The other thing, Ken said quite correctly that really a driving effort for my work on the paper was to try to address some of the counterarguments. Chief among them is you have the U.S. cannot impose a solution on the Iraqis. Of course, that is true. We all know in the end and believe -- Mike and I do, of course -- that Iraqis have to decide for themselves.

The thing that I would like to point out here to you all and to really emphasize is that it's really not true that now the U.S. is somehow agnostic with respect to Iraq's political structure. We are not agnostic at present. Both the Bush Administration and the Iraq Study Group do not want to emphasize those aspects of the constitution that Mike referred to, that in fact envision in many very clear ways a move to federalism, regionalism, obviously incomplete, but had that as the ultimate destination for the country. This Administration and the Iraq Study Group both do not want that.

So the notion that somehow the alternative is between letting Iraqis decide or imposing soft

partition on them is not really so. At the moment, as I said, we are not agnostic. We are insisting that, as the Iraq Study Group puts it, it is only central authority from Baghdad, that that is the optimal solution. That's our U.S. conclusion and interpretation. It may be shared by many Iraqis, but nevertheless that is a clear interpretation.

What we have tried to do is in addition to presenting what we hope is a viable policy option. Mike said that, of course, not every last detail is addressed. But in addition to presenting this as a viable policy option is to maybe shift that presumption a little bit and challenge that presumption and get people thinking about: Gee, does it really make sense to insist on central authority in Baghdad when the dominant majority population, the Shi'ah, have very strong innate reservations about that power?

That's the question I think that we want to raise, at least in the initial part of the paper, start to challenge that presumption by marshaling some

of the evidence. Hopefully, the evidence will speak for itself.

Just to sort of highlight what it is, it is to look at -- Mike mentioned this -- the nature of the ethnic flight. It isn't just that people are fleeing violence in Iraq. Of course, they are. But look at the way they seek security. They seek security in homogeneity. By doing so, this is where you get one aspect of what political scientists call the security dilemma because when people flood into majority areas, making them more homogenous, they intentionally or unintentionally make it more vulnerable for remaining minorities. So you have a self-sustaining process that continues.

We also look at the evidence of the way, the nature that Iraqis vote where in two successive free elections in 2005, Iraqis, by an increasing margin, rejected credible non-sectarian alternatives. That has to be matched up against what you constantly hear people say: Well, look at these polls. Look at these polls that say Iraqis want to live together.

Well, if they do, why didn't they reflect that desire in the most important poll of all which is an election. That's where your answer matters far more in how you vote in a ballot box than what you tell to a pollster. This is another point that we try to look at.

I think the rest of it is in the paper, the evidence that we marshal. As well, we challenge one of the historical views that you hear often marshaled which is that Sunni and Shi'ah are not really different. They're very unified culturally, and therefore it's not at all like Bosnia. It's very, very different. Of course, a lot of that is true, but it's also true, as we cite to historians, that these are groups that have undeniable group grievances and mutual group fears.

So the notion that Iraq is not in the grip of identity politics and that Iraq does not in fact have a historical basis, that this is all just, as some Iraqi officials I've heard say, it's just extremists, it's just a few extremists. I think that

actually if you look at the record a bit broader, there is some underlying basis for the kind of violence that we see.

Then again if you consider that evidence and take it seriously, then the question is: Does this guiding presumption, the presumption that only central authority from Baghdad, does that make sense? That's the challenge. That's the presumption that we hope to challenge in our paper and today hear your views and questions on that.

I hope I haven't taken too much time.

MR. RIEDEL: Thank you, Ken. Thank you for asking me to comment on what I think is one of the most important papers that we'll see on Iraq published anywhere, and I'm glad to see it was published here at the Saban Center of Brookings.

Let me say from the beginning, I am not an advocate of this approach. I don't support the notion of the United States pushing a partition plan on Iraq. That said, I commend the two authors because I think they've given us a really insightful way of thinking

about the problem in Iraq today. I think they've done it on a timely basis, and I think many of their specific practical suggestions are ones that we ought to take a long and hard look at because I think while I don't advocate partition, I think there's a very good chance we're going to end up with partition, and I think they've given us a good roadmap for how to make it better rather than worse.

Specifically, for example, Mike's proposal on housing and trading housing, there are tens of thousands of Indians and Pakistanis today who are still trying to get their housing rights straightened out from what the British did to them in 1947. If this could be done in a methodical way, it would improve the lives of tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of people in the future.

I think there's much in this analysis that is very important and ought to be given great consideration. First of all, as Ed suggested in his presentation, I think the prospects for political reconciliation on the basis of the current politics in

Iraq are unlikely if not impossible. I have known personally most of the leaders of the various militias and political parties in Iraq today for the better part of two decades, and I know there are some people in this room, including David Mack, who have known them even longer than I have.

I don't believe there is one scintilla of evidence to suggest these people are going to come about with a genuine political reconciliation. They're not interested in it. They never have been interested in it. They weren't interested in working together when they were in opposition to Saddam Hussein, and they're not interested in working together today.

With one or two brave exceptions, and I would put Barham Salih into that camp, the vast majority of the Iraqi leadership has a different agenda than the agenda of political reconciliation and the maintenance of a united Iraq. They would all love a united Iraq if they were in charge of it. They would all love a united Iraq if they were in charge of

it just like Saddam was in charge of it. That would be their optimal outcome. They are willing to accept a few checks and balances but not much else. Thus, I think the prospects for political reconciliation under the current American strategy are very slim, and I think this paper lays that out in quite some detail.

If the current Iraqi political leadership is forced under duress by the United States and the rest of the world community to pass legislation which would in theory enable reconciliation, I don't think they would be serious about enforcing it. They wouldn't be serious about implementing it, and they would do everything they could to undermine it. So do not be fooled by the passage of bills in the Iraqi parliament. It does not necessarily mean reconciliation is underway.

If that's true, and I think this paper makes a compelling case, then the prospects for current strategy to succeed are pretty slim, and we therefore need an alternative Plan B. Again, I commend the authors for laying out a Plan B.

I also take very importantly what Mike said at the beginning. The target audience for this paper is more Iraqis than it is Americans, and I think that's a very important way to think about it. They have to persuade Iraqis of the wisdom of doing this. As I heard Mike say, Americans shouldn't force this down their throats. If Iraqis want to do it, we shouldn't get in the way. That's where I think we're going to run into problems.

I think half of it will come true. I think half of it is virtually on the road to inevitability now, and that is the separation of Kurds from Arabs. There are huge differences between the Kurdish population and the Arab population in Iraq. All this talk about sectarian harmony and ethnic love does not apply in the case of Kurds and Arabs. Ninety percent, if not more, of Kurds in Iraq today want never to hear the word, Iraq, in their lives. They don't teach their children Arabic. They don't allow them to fly the Iraqi flag in their part of the country. While they are the best-equipped, best-manned and best-

officered units in the Iraqi Army, they think of themselves as Peshmerga first and Iraqi Army only if forced to do it by the Americans.

I think George Bush will be hated in the Sunni Arab world for a long time. He will also be known in the Sunni Arab world some day as Abu Kurdistan for having created Kurdistan, and that will make him hated even more. It's a little unfair. His father really deserves the title because he set the ball rolling.

I think the U.S. task in dealing with the creation of an independent Kurdistan is going to be to persuade our Turkish NATO ally to live with it, and that's where I think we're going to find the most difficult challenges for our diplomacy. But I think there are ways that we can go about doing that. I think the Turks can be convinced in the end that an independent Kurdistan closely aligned with them is better than the alternative of an independent Kurdistan which is closely aligned with Iran, which is the card the Kurds almost certainly will play.

Here again, though, it won't be easy, and the paper lays out in Kirkuk some of the serious difficulties there. I think there are other difficulties as well. I remember being told in the past many times by Kurdish leaders that Baghdad is the largest Kurdish city in Iraq, that there's somewhere between a half million and a million Kurds in Baghdad. Adding for the usual exaggeration effect, I think there still must be a substantial number of Kurds in Baghdad, and the evidence that you cite in the paper does not suggest very many of those people are moving yet.

I think the much harder part of this is going to be to separate Sunni and Shi'ah. That's going to require much more persuasiveness by the authors and others as to why they should go that route. Let me start with the Sunnis to begin with.

The whole notion of federalism and partition has traditionally been a nightmare for the Sunni Arab community because they have seen it in the past as a way of undermining their dominance of the whole

country. Whether they can now be convinced that this is their best fallback position, I think is yet to be established. Sunni Arabs seem to still be in a state of denial, not willing to come to grips with the fact that the 400 years of Sunni domination of Iraq are over.

More than that, their compatriots in other Sunni Arab countries are going to be terrified of this idea. Anyone who suggests carving up the boundaries of the 1919 settlement of the Middle East throws open all the boundaries of the Middle East. If Iraq is an artificial state and should be partitioned, why not Lebanon, why not Jordan, or more specifically what is the point of Jordan if you begin to carve up the Middle East on a new formula? So there will be tremendous opposition from Sunni Arab states to this notion.

A footnote here, ironically, there is one political party, if we want to call them that, in Iraq who not only supports this idea but has already set in train the process of implementing it, and that's Al-

Qaida in Mesopotamia which last November declared the creation of an Islamic State of Iraq in the Sunni sectors of Iraq: Anbar, Mosul, the city of Baghdad or at least most of it and surrounding provinces. Al-Qaida in Iraq will not be an opponent of this idea. They will be an opponent of the American implementation of it, but they will be supporters of creating a Sunni state.

The Shi'ah will need to be persuaded why they should take less than the whole bargain. Why should they settle for something other than all of Iraq at this point? They may be willing to give up on Kurdistan because after all the Kurds are extremely well armed thanks to the smartness of their moves immediately after the American invasion when they took over almost all the equipment of the old Iraqi Army.

But why should they give the Sunnis anything? They might be persuaded to let them have a mini state in Anbar Province, but I don't see how you will persuade them to give the Sunnis any money to run that state. We might come up with a formula. It

might even be fair and equitable. Don't count on the Shi'ah to deliver one penny. In the Middle East, if your enemy is dependent on you for money, they starve to death, and that's what will happen I think in this case as well.

But let me make two other points, and then I'll stop. I think if we do go this route, one of the most important things we could do to make it succeed is, from the beginning, make clear we are not going to stay there permanently to enforce it. That may sound counterintuitive at the beginning, but I think it is in fact the mechanism by which this just might work. As long as Iraqis believe this is an American dictate which is going to set the stage for a permanent American military presence in the country, they will oppose it because it is exactly what Al-Qaida and others have said from the beginning the Americans wanted to do: Carve up Iraq into small pieces so we can control the whole thing in perpetuity.

If we go this route, we should say explicitly, we intend no permanent military bases in

Iraq. I think we should have said that from 2003 and on, and I still don't understand why we don't say it today. It's ironic to me. It's one of the recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton Group. It's the one recommendation that Secretary of Defense Bob Gates seems to have completely flaunted and ignored with his comments that we should create a South Korea-like Iraq in perpetuity, having an American permanent military presence.

If we take our presence off the table, I think this might become more palatable to Iraqis, but it would also put on the table the question of who is going to facilitate the transition from Humpty Dumpty to the three little pieces of Humpty Dumpty that are left over. One of the parts of this paper that I think further research should be done on if we were to go this route is who could play that role. Who might be willing to be the outside long-term guarantor? Who might be willing to replace those 140,000 Americans in 12 or 18 months or even shorter presumably? Who could be the partner that provides equity and enforcement to

any agreements?

QUESTIONER: Who do you have in mind?

MR. RIEDEL: I don't have. I don't have someone in mind. I think that's going to be very hard to find a player who will want to do that. I think you would need to look around the Islamic Conference perhaps, the U.N. maybe, but I don't see a lot of people volunteering for this long-term duty on the Tigris and Euphrates, and I think that becomes a real problem.

QUESTIONER: The Iranians may volunteer.

MR. RIEDEL: The Iranians may volunteer 150,000 men for it. I don't doubt that they may already do it whether asked or not.

My last point, and I'll be brief on this one, is I don't think we should kid ourselves. Soft partition is the road to hard partition. It isn't going to be putting Humpty Dumpty back together again down the road.

As I said, I think we're going to end up with at least part of this, the Kurdish-Arab

partition. I don't see that ever being reversed once it's been put in place on the ground. If I were a Kurd, I would never reverse it. What has the State of Iraq done for the Kurdish people other than decades of genocide and attempted genocide? I think once they're out, they will never want back in.

Sunnis and Shi'as, I think too, will find once they've broken apart, it's much harder to make up than it is to live in two separate states.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you, Bruce.

We'll move on to question and answer. I've already got some on my list. Please remember to put your hands up.

QUESTIONER: Thank you very much, a very valuable presentation all around. I want to ask the advocates of this strategy a couple of practical questions that may be covered in the paper -- I don't know -- but I don't think they were addressed in the presentation so far.

What do you do about Kirkuk?

What do you do about the existing Iraqi

Government, the national government of Iraq?

Let's leave Kurdistan aside. I agree completely with Bruce that that's a fait d'accompli and a good one actually from most perspectives, from the American perspective, if not as an independent country, then as a separate part of Iraq. But in the other two regions, who is going to govern those two regions?

MR. O'HANLON: Thanks for your question and thank you, Bruce, for excellent observations.

I'm going to mention a couple things about the federal government. Ed is going to handle the even harder question about Kirkuk, although admittedly the federal one is hard enough because in a sense what you're asking people to do is to negotiate themselves out of power.

In fact, our concept is consistent with something that Carlos Pascual is pushing these days of a U.N. special representative to help the Iraqis negotiate a new kind of Plan B, whatever it may be. We have our option on the table. Carlos would be more

agnostic about what the outcome.

Regardless though, the problem is that you are asking people who have power in a current system to change that system, meaning that on balance they'd have to suspect some of them could lose some of that influence. The only responses we would have, and I don't claim to be able to predict that you could get the government to do this.

One response is what they're governing now is a failed state that's in a civil war. You're still in power. It's something, but it's not a great accolade on your resume.

Secondly, there would still have to be a federal structure in this kind of a new Iraq, and some of these people could very well be part of it.

Third, of course, they would hopefully have interest in running for office in their regional appropriate spaces, and there's no reason why they wouldn't or shouldn't or couldn't. The process of transition to that regional concept would be a tough one to work out, and we haven't proposed a detailed

implementation map. In other words, would you want to simply take some of the people who had been elected in previous elections in the existing concept for Iraq and give them authority for a transitional period of 24 months or something, running up to new elections at the regional level? That would probably be the simplest and probably the most prudent, but we don't pretend to have that one worked out in the paper.

Again, central points, you're going to have to ask these people to recognize that what they're governing now is nothing to be hugely proud of or feel secure in. Offer them a route to keep power more within their own regions in the future and possibly have the regional leaders constitute one of the elements of a federal government because if you want to have the good people and the powerful people in Iraq in the future under this system, they're going to have to be people who have positions where the real power is in the regions. So some federal structure will still have to be made up of the Al-Malikis and so forth, and we would hope that this concept might

appeal to them.

One last point I'll make as I transition here to Ed, if you ask me the overall prospects of this thing working, given that you yourself have pointed to just one problem and Bruce to a number of others, I would admit the chances of this are no better than 50-50. In a sense, what I'm hoping is that if we and when we decide the surge is not working well enough to sustain, that we can essentially help the Iraqis make the final decision. Are we just going to leave or are we going to help you do an alternative strategy, having concluded that we ourselves are no longer willing or able to do the existing strategy and devolve to them the final choice.

If you want to take this in broader philosophical terms, this is helping Iraq make the decision about ending the U.S. role instead of ourselves simply pulling the plug on something that we started in the first place. I would hope that it would work, but I wouldn't want to oversell the prospects, and I take all of Bruce's points about the

dangers and risks.

MR. JOSEPH: Let me address the Kirkuk part of the question. Before I do, I'd also commend Bruce for his remarks and for pointing out very clearly, as I had neglected to do but which is done in the paper, the futility of trying to pry an adequate number of concessions out of this Shiite dominated government in order to assuage Sunnis and promote what is called, I think mistakenly, reconciliation.

The question of Kirkuk. Again, the theme that I tried to make in the opening remarks is one of our overarching purposes with this is to challenge the tenability of the current approach. So I will deal in a second with an alternative on Kirkuk but query -- query -- whether it is viable to endlessly delay the Kurdish aspirations in Kirkuk and in a practical matter to endlessly delay and protract the referendum which is spelled out in the constitution and can't be spelled out any more clearly than it is. That's, again, sort of the backdrop to challenge the tenability.

Then so what is our alternative? What do we say? What we say, number one, is rather than fighting that and insisting that Kirkuk must remain at all costs this hotbed of very turbulent ethnic claims, why not consider -- why not consider -- as Human Rights Watch does, and we quote that and cite that in the paper, the willingness -- the willingness -- expressed to Human Rights Watch of the Arabs settled into that very tense area? Why not consider their willingness to move out provided that they're given alternative housing and livelihoods elsewhere? Why not consider that?

Instead of seeking an accommodation that may not be possible or will be extremely difficult, why not consider actually moving out some of the Arab settlers? We know the history is rather clear and undisputed about how most of that population got there and what the intentions were of the Ba'athist regime that put them there. So that's one aspect of it.

In terms of what about then the other part of the Rubik's Cube, the Turkish claims and so forth?

Absolutely, true. Iraq is the Rubik's Cube, and this is one of the quite foreseeable problems that one might have thought about before invading.

Unfortunately, we're stuck with the situation as it is.

I do not presume and I think Mike does not either to be the world's expert on Kurdistan, Iraq, Turkey. But we did, I did have the great fortune to sit at the Wilson Center last week and listen to someone who is, and that's Henri Barkey who portrayed, spelled out, not that he necessarily subscribes to our approach, but the possibility that there is a deal to be done between the Kurds and the Turks and the Americans on Kirkuk, that it isn't an absolute zero-sum game where to the extent that Kurdish aspirations are met, necessarily this is going to provoke conflict.

There is a deal to be done. It can be done. It will be difficult and require a lot of diplomacy and activity, but there is a deal to be done. He suggested Kirkuk as sort of a stand alone district,

and that might be something to consider, and I think it's consistent with our approach. As part of a soft partition, you could have special arrangements for Kirkuk.

But we, in the paper, are suggesting look hard. Look hard at the idea of rather than on insisting on keeping this as a bone of contention between Arabs who were forced in there, moved in there by Ba'athists. Consider that, by their own volition, finding housing and livelihoods for them elsewhere as a component of a solution.

MR. POLLACK: David Mack.

QUESTIONER: Yes, I am really trying to stifle my temptation to say (inaudible) --

MR. O'HANLON: -- pretty eloquent and I don't have a lot to comment. I think I actually agree with much of what you said, but the last point I will, maybe for the sake of argument, push back a little. You know the region better than I, so with apologies. But in a way I feel like that argument is one I'd be prepared to live with.

I'll make an analogy to Bosnia here. Two hundred thousand people or so died in Bosnia as we all know, and yet Dayton is still seen as an accomplishment of American diplomacy, I believe, even in the region and certainly internationally. Now I don't want to say that the Balkans are the same as the Middle East, but the Balkans have some pretty long memories and some pretty nasty people and pretty good conspiracy theorists as well.

Without trying to claim they can rival those in the Middle East, I would still suggest that if we could actually help through our good offices, help the Iraqis reach an agreement that is seen as theirs -- and that's a big if for all the reasons Bruce has said and I would concede the odds are against it -- I would live with that risk. Otherwise, I really have no rebuttal to anything you said, I'm afraid.

MR. JOSEPH: Could I just add very briefly? I agree with Mike. These are valid concerns that you lay out, and hopefully we address some of them in the paper. I encourage you to have a look and see whether

we do.

Let me say on this question because it's quite interesting, the one about Iranian influence, and it's not really pursued that much in the paper. So let me just say, again, a valid concern, but I would also say that you have to choose your disaster scenario because the other counter argument to soft partition is oh, my God, it's going to lead to chaos. Look at these Shiite factions. Oh, look how fractious they are.

I think as a matter of both reality and logic --I'd defer to Ken, of course, on this -- you have to choose one or the other. You cannot both have chaos reigning supreme throughout the Shiite area and this expanded Iranian influence. If it's going to be Iranian influence, then they're going to render order to it. Let's at least whittle down our worries to see which is the predominant one and how valid it is in the end.

Again, just to underscore what Mike said, consider the alternative of arriving at a similar end

state as what you're talking about but with a vastly escalated number of casualties and who ultimately will bear the blame for that as well.

MR. RIEDEL: I just want to make two very brief comments. I think David made a lot of very strong points.

I think one of them boils down to this, that the United States, if it wants to consider this option, needs to think about it not just in Iraqi terms but in terms of our overall posture in the region. It might make sense in Iraqi terms, but does it really make sense in terms of trying to maintain support from Saudis, Turks and others? It may even be that we want to look like we're an opponent of this approach as we know it is going to come about in any case.

The second thing I would say, you're right; there are many Kurds and friends of Kurds in America who believe that their state will survive in perpetuity because of American support. If there's one thing the Kurds should think about up front is

that they can be guaranteed the United States will not be there when the crunch comes. If they haven't learned that from 1973, 1991 and 1996, then they really need to study their history a little bit harder. When push comes to shove, the Kurds will be abandoned by the Americans as they have every time in the past. They better have a good deal with the Turks. Otherwise, they'll find themselves once more in the soup.

QUESTIONER: Thank you because I failed to mention the Kurdish historians who thank us for 10 years and then curse us for the rest of time.

MR. POLLACK: Before I keep going with the questions, just for clarity's sake, the Saban Center takes no positions on anything. We are incredibly pleased to have published this. We think it's a first rate effort, but we've also published other pieces recommending very different courses of action on Iraq, and the members of the Saban Center have very widely different opinions.

Just as a follow-up point, I'm not

suggesting that David said anything else, but the reason that we started this series is it was started in the spirit of there are no good options for Iraq, and it follows very nicely on a point that Ed has been trying to make, which is that all of these options suck. Pardon me using the technical terms. We are not in the era of good options on Iraq, and it really is about choosing among the bad ones.

So with that in mind, Phil, you've got the next question.

QUESTIONER: Okay, well, I certainly agree with that last point. I congratulate the authors on a serious look at serious questions. There are so many, but let me just raise a couple.

Aside from the difficulties of implementation which you've referred to and we can talk for a long time about those, even before that, what about the process for deciding what it is we're trying to implement and who gets to decide the end state that itself would be really hard to implement, but how do we decide it?

You said right up front that it can't be us. The United States can't just do this for the Iraqis. The Iraqis have to do it. But I thought that was part of the problem to begin with, that there's no such thing as Iraqis in this equation. Indeed, it seems to me that the premise of the paper is that there's no such thing as Iraqis. So how do we even know what it is we're trying to use all these resources to implement?

If the criterion for implementing it is a degree of violence, there might be some areas that are fine and we're not going to touch those. We'll let people stay there. But in the areas where there's some violence or ethnic cleansing, those are the ones we'll try to fix. Isn't that introducing a moral hazard problem where you're almost inviting people?

We're not going to help you move this population out, but if you can show us that there are some people being killed there, we'd be happy to offer housing, money and assistance and so on. I worry that we would actually be creating potential for more

ethnic cleansing.

As Bruce said, finding an equitable process for doing this seems, to me, impossible frankly. I mean India-Pakistan, you mentioned there are still people looking for their homes. Cyprus, you've had the international community engaged for decades, and they still can't even come close. Even with lots of money available for compensation and all the rest, they're not willing to accept it.

So even before implementation, I have a real question about the process, and I'd be interested -- maybe you address it in the paper -- in how you think that through.

Second, Bosnia, you said yourselves there are millions of differences, and we won't go into them, but one key one strikes me as relevant. Actually, I agree with the Bosnia model for reasons that others have said, but what strikes me as really important here is are we talking about Bosnia in 1991 or Bosnia in 1995 because it seems to me that that is a very different model. I mean this actually happened

before we went into Bosnia, not after.

If you had come along in 1991 and said let's do soft partition in Bosnia, that would be the analogy. But then we'd have to think through what did we mean by that. Would we be proposing to take all the Croats and Serbs and get them out of that region and the so-called safe areas where the Muslims were living in the Serb areas, we would have them leave. Of course, they wouldn't have done it, and so we would have been faced with the issue of dragging them out as I fear we will be in Iraq because we're actually in 1991 and not 1995.

Then just very briefly, I agree with the point about getting the U.S. involved in all of this because I also agree that, as Mike said right at the start, this is happening anyway. I'm not saying that there's an alternative to this sort of outcome, but I would actually posit at least that if even if the outcome is exactly the same -- a lot of displacement, ethnic cleansing, something resembling civil war -- that happening while the United States is there on the

ground, claiming to orchestrate it is different from not. There's a greater risk of loss of credibility for the United States even if the outcome within the Iraqi borders is exactly the same.

MR. O'HANLON: Thanks, Phil, great points, and I've thought about the last issue as well. I think you're pretty convincing on that. I think that it's a very useful point. If the outcome were going to be the same regardless, even leaving aside our casualties, we'd be better off. Even leaving aside our over-strain on our military, just in terms in terms of our credibility alone, we'd be better off not being part of it. So I think that does raise the bar on what you have to hope from this option.

I just want to say two things that are not perfect responses to either of your first two points but at least partial responses. One of the reasons we did this work in 2007 and we began it with a short article at the end of 2006 is we didn't want to write this until the civil war had happened. We didn't even talk about it because we would have been worried, I

think. I speak for myself at least. I would have been worried about encouraging or facilitating in whatever tiny, little way a Brookings scholar can, a dynamic that at that time hadn't yet fully taken on a life of its own.

Now you're right. It could get worse. There could be places where it hasn't yet happened in great frequency, that it could become much more common. But the point is, at some point, there's a crossover line where the danger of encouraging this on is much less than the reality that it's happening anyway. So that's all. We just think this is the right time to face this kind of a question.

Maybe a third of the population transfers or ethnic cleansing that would happen with a logical outcome here has already happened. I mean we've seen about 100,000 people a month displaced for a year and a half. We're well on the way towards this plan being implemented, and therefore it didn't seem unduly dangerous to be talking about how you would manage it instead of letting it happen on its own. That's not a

perfect response, and I still take your point.

In terms of who negotiates, I have a short answer, but it's not going to be totally convincing, which is at least I have no problems with Carlos' suggestion that you would need to have in this case a U.N. mediator of some kind. But how do you find somebody with the stature and the bullying power of a Richard Holbrooke at a time when it's earlier on in this war than it was in Bosnia by 1995 and do that under international or U.N. auspices?

I take your point that it would be hard. The other player would be the U.N., I think, under this concept or some other group that's not the United States because we're too much a partisan to this conflict and also not just the Iraqis because they can't do it. Still, that's the only answer I can give. Whether it would work is an open question.

MR. JOSEPH: Just a follow-on on the how point, again, we mention, we cite Carlos Pascual's idea of a U.N.-sponsored conference, and that would be the ideal to try to get some agreement. We shouldn't

forget that Lakhdar Brahimi performed a very useful role, a very successful role back in 2003-2004 in dealing with Sistani, dealing with Shiites directly in their impatience to get on with elections first and so forth, and he's past president of the Arab League. It isn't like there are no even theoretical interlocutors out there. I'm not saying he would be the only one.

The other thing, though, I think to verify a point that you said about what the U.S. is going to do, and I come back to my point in the original presentation. Let's not compare a very deeply engaged U.S. imposing soft partition as against some current thing where the U.S. is hands-off. No, we're not hands-off at present. That's one of the points I'm stressing today. We are not agnostic. We are throwing all of our exertion into those aspects of the constitution that we believe make sense and working with the political aspirations of those Iraqis whose vision is consistent with ours. So let's not kid ourselves that we're, oh, gee, somehow neutral and agnostic now, but if we move down this road, we would

somehow be losing our purity and neutrality. That's not the case.

While it would ultimately, and Mike and I absolutely agree, be vastly, vastly more desirable and successful to have full agreement, there are subtle things the U.S. could do to now or soon to give green lights or work with Iraqis on those parts of the constitution that deal, that speak to federalism and regionalism. I just throw that out there, that there are things that could be done that don't require a wholesale, dramatic public display of a shift in policy.

Just very quickly about Bosnia and Croatia, just to mention that the movement, you mentioned it, in fact, the movement of Krajina Serbs. The movement of Krajina Serbs in 1995 contemporaneous with the Croatian assault, Operation Storm, was done with U.S. not only approval but U.S. assistance. We were providing intelligence and logistics and training to the Croatians. This was no surprise to us, but more importantly it was no surprise to the Serbs.

That's the point that we make in the piece, that this was done with the tacit agreement of Belgrade and for that respect, as tragic as it was for the Serbs and we are not saying, oh, gee, it's wonderful to uproot people from their homes. We're not saying that. It was far less traumatizing and far more stabilizing than the unagreed cleansing that was meted out by the Serbs in Bosnia. So there is a precedent from the Balkans and we allude to that.

Thank you.

MR. POLLACK: I've still got six different people who'd like to ask questions, and they're all very good, important questions that are eliciting very long, understandably so, responses from the presenters. What I'd like to do in the interest of time since we are starting to run low is I'd like to take all six of the questions and comments and then allow Ed, Mike and Bruce to respond to all of them in kind of closing statements. I think that's the best way to handle all this. Otherwise, we won't get all this on the table.

Again, a lot of the points, I think you all are making are good questions. As Mike and Ed are saying, yes, they are good points. Those would have to be dealt with. It's a hard situation.

So I think it's better, let's get them all on the table. We'll start with Gary Mitchell.

QUESTIONER: Good. Well, I have a quick sort of six-part question if I might. I will say that I think Phil's question about who decides is really sort of the key issue here, and I know there was talk about the U.N., but I wondered if anybody up there thought that maybe the pope's new representative Tony Blair might be able to be helpful here.

So, we've listened to these options: surge, containment, disengagement, soft partition.

My question is: Is there anyone up there who believes that the outcome of this will be other than this? Surge first, then disengagement by the United States forced by domestic politics, some containment as we disengage, soft partition begins to take place out of which comes full civil war in Iraq,

out of which comes hard partition, out of which becomes this regional partition domino game that Bruce was talking about.

QUESTIONER: I'd like to raise the question of the U.S. domestic political support for any such policy. It seems to me that the Democrats are going to win the Presidential election unless lightning strikes in some way and that they're going to be very reluctant to maintain the kind of force that you're talking about even for any length of time. They're going to be under what they think is a political mandate to withdraw as quickly as possible. How is that consistent with the kind of programs that you're laying out?

QUESTIONER: I had two quick questions. I wanted to ask how you all dealt with oil and resources which would be divided up in some way, I imagine.

Second, the underlying logic, as I understand it, of your argument is that a large amount of the violence we're seeing in Iraq is because communities are mixed and in close proximity to each

other. If the logic then is that we should separate them and that will reduce the violence, I had a two-parter to that.

One is how close to one to one to one separation, i.e., total separation, the communities have no mixing whatsoever? How close do you think you have to get?

Second, even that, would even 100 percent separation address all of the sources of violence? It seems to me that terrorists may wish to go into mixed communities. You did address kind of a card, an ID card, but it seems to me that there would be still sources of violence that would not necessarily stem simply from living in close proximity. I wonder if that's accurate or inaccurate.

QUESTIONER: I just actually wanted to probe a little bit further on the oil and make a comment. One is that the formula that you propose, suggesting 25 percent of oil revenues distributed to individuals, seems to me to be a very optimistic overview of what Iraq is going to have available. I don't know of any

realistic assumption at this stage that in the near or medium term that suspects that sort of fund is going to be available to distribute on an individual basis.

But if you could speak to who actually does the distributing. Is it the federal government? If so, how and why would the federal government take on that role? If it's some credible third party, who, what sort of external institution might be trusted by each of the major ethnic groups to take on this sort of a function?

QUESTIONER: Bruce pointed out, I think, perfectly correctly that the current Iraqi leadership has a lot of problems sharing power. I was wondering, noting that it is difficult to come to some kind of power-sharing deal at the national level in the context of ethnic tensions. Why would it be easier within any of the regions for the people who would wind up in leadership positions to share power there?

QUESTIONER: David Mack said that it's a bad idea whose time may have come and just about everyone who has spoken has agreed that some kind of partition

is inevitable. You've tried to soften it with these humanitarian programs about housing and employment that are very idealistic and social engineering.

What if we skipped all that and concentrated on managing the consequences of the inevitable and focused our very limited resources that are going to be much more limited in the future when the Democrats take the White House and insist on withdrawal much more rapidly and concentrate our remaining energy on trying to reduce the negative regional and global impacts of what is going to be an enormous upheaval?

QUESTIONER: (Inaudible.)

MR. JOSEPH: Just on oil, I would only flag that there are already constraints in the constitution, again, the constitution that the Iraqis themselves approved that still retain the idea of regional supremacy. Even under the existing constitution, not necessarily what we are advocating but under the existing constitution, it is clear that oil is not just an exclusive federal responsibility. It's rather murky and a very good argument can be made

that even under the existing constitution, you have a very strong regional role that's envisioned that obviously would have great ramifications.

As we speak, they're working through another draft of the oil law. But I just point that out. That's easily overlooked, this Article 115 that's basically the clause that provides that regional law is supreme to federal law.

MR. POLLACK: Just a note about future programming, again, this is another in a series. We are planning on doing several more looking at, in particular, an option that's already been thrown out, Carlos Pascual's idea of some kind of a negotiated settlement. We'll have one at least on containment. We'll probably have some more as well.

Brookings is revamping its conference rooms, though, during the month of July, so we're a bit up in the air as to exactly when the next event will be held, but we'll let you all know as soon as we figure that out.

In the meantime, please thank me or please

join me in thanking --

(Laughter.)

MR. POLLACK: Yes, please thank me for a wonderful event. Please join me in thanking our two authors and Bruce Riedel for their comments.

(Applause.)

MR. POLLACK: We put more copies of the paper out in front for those who have not been able to get a copy.

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