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BREATHING THE FIRE: FIGHTING TO REPORT — AND SURVIVE — THE WAR IN IRAQ

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Introduction and Moderator

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Keynote Remarks

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to Brookings. I'm Mike O'Hanlon, and I'm honored and very pleased today to have Kimberly Dozier speaking on her book, *Breathing the Fire*, account of her experiences in Iraq. And that will lead us into a panel discussion with Martha Raddatz of ABC and General Pete Chiarelli of the U.S. Army.

We're delighted to have the opportunity to discuss a number of issues that are raised by Kimberly's excellent book, including the broader issue of media coverage of the war and how that factors into the nation's resolve and support for the effort.

We will invite you to chime in fairly quickly in the conversation. General Chiarelli has until a little after 2:00. So I'll invite you also to direct questions you may have for him in the earlier part of the discussion. And on the way out, around 2:30'ish or so, please feel free to take a complimentary copy, as long as they last, of Kimberly's book that her publisher has kindly provided to us here.

So without further adieu, the way we're going to proceed is for Kimberly to speak for 15 or 20 minutes, to talk a bit about her book, to talk a bit about her experiences, a remarkable story, and I think an important story at many levels. And then Martha and General Chiarelli will each speak briefly. At that point, we'll all be up here as a panel and we'll look forward shortly thereafter to your questions. So without further adieu,

Kimberly, thank you for being here, thank you for your wonderful and inspiring story, and we look forward to what you have to say. Please join me in welcoming her.

MS. DOZIER: Thank you very much. And I know you all may have heard this story before, but it is after lunch, so I'm going to wake everyone up. The story of what happened to us on Memorial Day, 2006, goes to illustrating the sacrifice of the Iraqis on the ground, the U.S. troops who have been fighting this battle, and the small arm y of journalists who are still working to bring you the story.

It's both horrible and miraculous. I like to think it's become one of the good news stories, the way a small army of military medical teams have rebuilt people and brought us back to full health.

So, Memorial Day, 2006, we were doing the one thing that we thought would get us on the air, going out with U.S. troops while the rest of America was, you know, enjoying the sales, having their barbecues. It was getting hard to get the story of the coalition on the ground on TV. So this was one of the times you could count on it. It would be a slow news day back in the United States. They would have room for us.

We were going out with a guy named Captain James Alex Funkhouser and a group of U.S. soldiers who had been working with Iraqis to turn the area over, to turn Baghdad over to full Iraqi control.

We were starting in the Corota, it was going to be turned over in a couple of days. Now, when I first met Captain Funkhouser, I was a little concerned, he was a bit positive about the situation, and I thought, oh, great, a boy scout. And then he started talking about what it was like to work with the Iraqis, the doubts he still had, the things that still needed to be addressed, and I thought, okay, this guy is a realist, he's a pragmatist, this is going to be a good story.

With that, he said, we're going to stop first at a place where a road side bomb went off yesterday, it hit an Iraqi patrol, so the Iraqis are afraid to go back to that street. It also went off in an uncharacteristic area. It was safe there. So I think an insurgent cell has moved in, and the Iraqis can tell us who planted that bomb and where they're operating from. With that, we drove through the choked Baghdad traffic. We were about a mile from the famous square where you saw the Saddam statue fall in the opening days of the fall of Baghdad.

We all were outside of our humvees. We had only been out for two or three minutes. We were walking towards an Iraqi t-stand. Captain Funkhouser said, I want to look in their eyes, the Iraqi's won't be able to lie to me face to face, they will tell me where this group is operating from, and he motioned to a bombed out villa next to us and said, they could be watching us right now, and it turns out they were.

They were actually – apparently one of the cells was in an apartment block overlooking this intersection where a car bomb was parked. We all walked within 20 feet of it, and they detonated it with a Motorola cell phone. The shrapnel instantly tore through most of the patrol and killed Captain Funkhouser and his translator, Sam, who I can't identify because Sam hid his real name to protect his family in Baghdad. It also killed my camera crew, Paul Douglas and James Brolin. And with that, the guys on the ground, an Iowa National Guard Patrol, fought to keep us alive for the next hour. I, myself, had a small piece of shrapnel to the brain, both femurs shattered, femoral artery nicked, and I was apparently studded with large chunks of shrapnel from my hips to my ankles, third degree burns, no, second degree burns that showed up later.

I lost more than half my blood by the time I got to the operating room. As Staff Sergeant Jeremy Coke likes to tell me, when he ran into the scene, I was the last person waiting for aid, because I had been talking, and as anyone knows from the ABC's of triage, anyone who's talking or screaming for help has airway and breathing, so you go to the quiet people first. That's partly why, as usual, my mouth gets me in trouble, I was last in line.

At the Baghdad casualty hospital, I coded more than twice, it turns out I coded five times. That meant they had to bring me back five times. They almost took off both my legs there. But one of the surgeons

had just rigged up a month before a device that proved to them that I still had one working blood vessel to each leg. They kept them.

Later on, first they got me to Balad, took the shrapnel out of my brain. Then they got me to Longstool, and my right leg turned black. Again, I was lucky. This is now 2006, not 2003. There had been amazing advances in battlefield medicine, because they had learned from all the things, all the people who had come through those halls before. They gave my leg another 36 hours, even though it had turned black and they thought it had died. They put it – they covered it with heat packs, brought the circulation back, saved my leg. They power washed all the burns and the torn muscle with essentially a fire hose over and over.

By the time I got to Bethesda Naval, it took another two weeks, but I had a 90 percent take on my graphs from my hips to my ankles, and that is an amazing rate, they tell me, it shows that what they've learned about power washing the wounds, well, saved my legs.

And now I am not just walking, I'm actually training for a 10K, so great physiotherapists, great nurses, and great corpsmen put me back together.

With that in mind, I'm now going to tell you what it was like reporting the story from 2003 on. It's kind of like how sausages are made, you probably don't really want to know, but I'm here to tell you, because it was tough.

In 2003, there had been a post-9/11 surge of patriotism that had a really chilling effect on what we could put on the air. Now, this has been widely reported on, and the media has complained about how we should have done more. But I think we have to consider what we were working under at the time. Every time we put a story on the air, we got, if it was perceived as anti-war, we got an amazing amount of criticism and public and blogger blow-back. My bosses were very sensitive to this.

I was a brand new network correspondent, and this was to have a great effect on my three years of reporting. Any attempts to portray the Arab world's consternation in advance of the invasion were roundly condemned. Dan Rather's Saddam interview won CBS News enemies from the White House to the Pentagon, and I personally experienced this.

Dan Rather was trying to fly in from Kuwait to Baghdad, and he was twice put on planes with the U.S. military, and I spoke to the official who later had to pull him off of both those planes, because there was a phone call from somewhere high up in the administration, we've not forgiven him for the Saddam interview.

So, with that, he flew to Oman, and guess who got to drive him in? That's in the book, too. We were menaced by Republican guards, shot at by rogue Iraqi policemen. By rights, we shouldn't have survived that trip, but we made it in. And with that, I earned my way to

that brand new network job, and the job that nobody else wanted because everyone thought the war was won. So there I was doing long shifts and trying to get interviews with the Bremer Administration. I could barely get them to return my calls; "CBS News, click."

The U.S. military slowly warmed up to me. And then some of those people who did, and took me out on stories or on patrols, said they got aggravation from people back in the states, you're going out with Kimberly Dozier from CBS News. And I had to fight that uphill.

When Saddam was captured, I reported how there was a surge of upset, anguish across parts of the Arab world, and I was criticized for that as a war cheerleader. My scripts started going through a fine tooth comb to make sure I had no opinion in them whatsoever. And that was tough, because we were seen sometimes standing in the middle of a car bomb scene literally among body parts, and this starts to have an effect on you. And to try to take any of the emotion that you're feeling from it or the frustration you're feeling from it out of your pieces, it's tough.

As the violence worsened, I tried to keep a level head, despite the pressure on us from the public or the pressure felt within my own editorial board back in New York, and I tried to portray the complex, mixed picture on the ground, soldiers who were trying to do the right thing. Even as they would do a raid, and take the head of the household and throw him down on the ground in front of his entire family, put their boots

on him and flexicuff him, as they learned, as I was learning, that would ensure that that man, thereafter, was always the enemy of the U.S. coalition, even if he hadn't been guilty in the first place. But all the soldiers knew is, they were going after someone they thought was the bad guy.

So I tried to portray all these different points of view. As the security situation worsened, that made it complicated yet again. We were dealing with what we called image fatigue, the cost of the operation, and the increasing risk.

Image fatigue means, every time I pitched a story, I would hear, but you told that one before, we've shown a hospital opening, we've shown a car bomb, we've told the story of how Iraqis are self-medicating with the Prozac they can buy without prescriptions, and on and on. The cost, it cost more than a million dollars a month to run a single network bureau with just one team. If you want to go out and spend more than a few hours with a U.S. military patrol, you've got to have a second correspondent in town so that you can overnight. I got invite after invite to come spend two weeks in al-Anbar with the marines, or come up to Mosul, or come down to Basra. I had to turn them down because I couldn't leave. We couldn't afford to have more than one team.

And then there was the risk factor. Increasingly, they started first targeting the man on the street, then targeting U.S. contractors, then targeting journalists. And then, even as we thought we'd figured out how

to go interview someone and get away, keeping ourselves safe, our interview subjects started getting targeted. If they were seen on foreign television, which could be seen on the internet in Iraq, the Shiite militias were – the Sunni Al Qaeda Splinter Groups might target them.

I showed up at one man's house, a dentist, to interview him about how he wanted to flee the country, he took one look at me, turned white as a sheet, a cold sweat broke out on his brow. Now, Iraqi hospitality meant he went through with the interview, but afterwards he told our crew, my neighbor is from Fallujah, I'm going to have to hide tonight, he might kill my whole family for doing this. So we started interviewing people in their homes less, we started traveling less, and we started getting the criticism that we were all hotel bound journalists from back in the states.

To a certain extent it was true, and that hurt. I started picking my assignments very carefully. Just a couple months before the bombing, I went twice to Dura. I had asked to see the coal face. I had asked to see where U.S. troops were under the most threat. Each time we went, the day afterwards, a car bomb exploded on the spot we'd either driven over or walked over. And the press officers from the army that I spoke to said, yes, definitely, it's a signal. They wanted to show you were trying to show off progress, we're answering that.

Paul Douglas, who was killed in the Memorial Day attack, he asked me at the time, that second story we shot, how's it doing getting that on the air. Well, I wasn't getting it on the air. We hadn't been attacked. Nothing happened other than the ordinary path of nation building, the hard work that it takes to try to turn this situation from a military one to a diplomatic one. And that made me think twice from then on. So on Memorial Day, we had all had a talk the night before, is it worth it, well, yes. As Paul always said, don't risk my life unless you're going to get us on the air. We knew we'd get on the air. After I got hit by the car bomb, I then found myself lauded by the same people who had lumped me in the hotel-bound journalist group for trying to tell the troop's story.

And then, after the 2006 revolt against the Republicans in Congress, there was a shift in the media, and some of my colleagues in Iraq felt more comfortable, as I would like to describe it, doing their own Cronkite, describing how they thought the war was going, and declaring the war lost or unwinnable.

And I found some of my early reporting criticized for not being harsh enough. And I sat there going, I got whiplash in the hospital bed, I was being too tough on the military, and now I'm not tough enough.

So I wondered if that media declaration hurt the cause in Iraq or actually, in the end, helped serve the cause in Iraq by creating the political capital that was needed by U.S. commanders to get a surge in

troops, and that's a question I still haven't answered to my satisfaction, part of the reason I wanted to do this talk today. And now I wonder if some of the media haven't painted themselves into a corner. When I talk to members of the U.S. public, as in, I'm walking in the grocery store, someone looks at me, they look at me twice, hey, wait, you're that reporter chick who got bombed, and they come out with their opinion on the war in Iraq. And from World War II veterans to housewives with a baby on their hip, what I most hear is, we should just get out of there and let them kill each other. And I think, great, they've decided what's happened with the war on the ground.

A recent pew survey said that fewer than 40 percent of people surveyed think that Iraq can turn out in any positive way. So I found some of my colleagues being very tentative about reporting success on the ground. And I found that the U.S. audience is confused, they don't know, is the administration crying wolf, or is it us.

So I'm here to tell you that what I have learned from this whole experience is that I'm going to keep sticking to my guns, telling you what I think I see, even though it's not popular, because that's the only way that I can both serve the fourth estate and the American people I'm trying to educate. Thank you very much.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Kimberly, for this very moving, and we're very grateful for the presentation. Peter Singer and I with 21

CDI here at Brookings, again, are just delighted to be able to then continue with two of my other heroes in this business, Martha Raddatz and General Pete Chiarelli. I'm just going to say a brief word about each of them, and then they'll each make some brief comments, and we'll go to discussion and your questions.

Martha will speak next. As you know, she is also one of our nation's Great War reporters and White House reporters at ABC News, and is just back, I think, from her latest trip to the region, one of many, and I very much look forward to her comments on what Kimberly's had to say.

General Pete Chiarelli, who will soon become the Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, and who was number two commander in Iraq at the time of the Memorial Day, 2006 bombing that we've heard about, is also a great inspiration, and was one of the original proponents of counter insurgency doctrine.

Those of you who remember this debate and discussion may recall that General Chiarelli was the original proponent of SWEAT, the acronym, SWEAT, which they devised down in Texas as they were preparing to go over to Iraq in early 2004. And, by the way, Martha wrote her book about the hand-off in Baghdad that General Chiarelli was involved in at that time. SWEAT stands for, if I remember correctly, Sewage, water, electricity, and trash, in other words, an emphasis on quality of life and on employment, which is something that General

Chiarelli was applying to Sadr City, Baghdad in 2004. And so, again, we are just delighted to have both of them, as well as Kimberly. I'll turn things over to Martha, and then the General, for a few moments and then invite your questions. Martha, please.

MS. RADDATZ: Thanks very much. Listening to Kimberly, of course, is incredibly chilling for all of us. And the bombing of Kimberly and her crew and the military happened four months almost to the day that Bob Woodruff was also badly injured. And I honestly remember conversations or email exchanges with General Chiarelli about both of those and how deeply we were all effected by that.

I also had an advantage, and still do, because I go back and forth. Kimberly had to fight the fight from the ground, she wasn't here in Washington, which I think is both an advantage and a disadvantage in many ways. But I could make the case to my bosses in person to keep covering this. I also -- this may not be just a tale of Iraq, it may be a tale of two networks. Peter Jennings was probably more critical of the build-up to the war than anybody. And if you want to talk about hate mail or people responding to people like Peter, it was very strong. In fact, I know David Westin, the President of ABC News, has said that Peter never thought there were weapons of mass destruction and he wished he had listened to Peter more.

I, frankly, don't think we should criticize ourselves quite as much as everybody is beating themselves over the head for that because we really didn't have the intelligence, so – but I do think, and I remember several times on the air with Peter, talking about it in a way that probably they weren't doing it to get other networks.

I would say that I had – I just got back Monday from Baghdad, and it was my 17th trip in there, and I have had the advantage of coming back and seeing how Washington policy makers work, being at the Pentagon, being at the White House. When I went to the White House beat, I more or less insisted that I continue to cover Iraq, as well, because for this presidency, obviously, it was an enormous part of George Bush's legacy.

But I'll tell you, in the last couple of years, it's been very difficult. I really – when I say I have to fight, I have to fight. And I, like Kimberly, try – I mean the story we did last week, which we have not yet aired, is not your typical story to go to Iraq for, and it's a political story more than anything. So we do try to come up with ideas on how to get this story on the air. I know our Baghdad bureau is frustrated. But I was the second reporter that Kimberly talks about. I was the reporter that would come in, and our bureau correspondent was stuck at the bureau, and I was going out and imbedding with the U.S. military whenever I went over there, and years ago it was usually for two or three weeks at a time,

and hopping all over the country now that I'm covering the White House, it's usually not more than a week over there, but I've got a really efficient way to get in and out, and it is not with the U.S. military. They're a little more efficient on those charter airlines.

I sort of go over this all the time to myself about where we are now. I try not to go over there and say, okay, it's good, it's bad, it's this, it's that. And one of the things about going over and coming back, unlike Kimberly who saw it day after day after day after day, I visit there, in a way, and can see progress or a lack of progress in a way that is different than our correspondents who are based there. I, most definitely, had a different feel this time, and this last week, and certainly the security has improved. But I also look when I go and think the SWEAT program that I sweated through many sewage meetings with General Chiarelli years ago, and I've heard this before, and it was so inspiring, and yet sort of sad to me to see all the soldiers this time taking me through Sadr City, where I've been so many times before, and showing me the progress they've made on the sewage, and knowing that it has gone like this, and they make progress, and then they don't make progress, and they make progress.

So I still have a great deal of caution about what's going on over there, but it is always inspiring, but it's pretty hard to get those inspiring stories on the air, there's no question about it this year.

I mean if you look at any of the studies, the coverage really has just tanked. I mean we really don't cover it. In fact, I got back Monday after a week in Iraq, I arrived 7:00 in the morning on a flight, and I wasn't asked to do a story on Iraq that night, I was asked to do a story on Zimbabwe. So it's – I mean years ago, if I had just gotten off a plane, I would have been on the air in, you know, hours later and talking about my experiences there. So things have definitely changed. And I have to say, there's part of it that – it's interesting, as networks, you think it's this big corporate and we'll decide this and we'll edit that. I have never really been edited in a way that they made me say anything that I didn't see or – I mean they trust me in that regard. But you do have an enormous amount of influence.

I mean I think, because I've gone over there so many times, because I'm a voice for our network to plead for this, that it helps. It is personal when you get to the network, it is not just this big corporate movie, at least at ABC, that I feel that I've had a voice, and I have to just yell a little louder lately. And I'll let General Chiarelli go here. How'd we do, sir?

GENERAL CHIARELLI: Well, you know, it's funny to hear you talk about having a rough time getting stories on the air. I remember when I was in Iraq for the two years I was there, I used to say, the best day in Iraq is a day when there's a natural disaster going on some place else in

the world. I loved bad weather. There was nothing like a good hurricane that was on the air for seven days, blew itself out, and didn't hurt anybody, or didn't have any property damage. I wasn't wishing ill will on anyone. But the idea of getting stories off the air about Iraq in 2004 and 2005, and again in 2006, is something that I, quite frankly, enjoyed. I'm only going to talk about the time that I was there. And I'd kind of like to keep my comments kind of focused on some of the things that Kimberly said. First of all, I was there in 2004 and 2005, and our ability to get the press out with us, to get to some of the stories that were going on, was much greater than it was in 2006.

My 2006 year was book end by January and ended in December. And as Martha indicated, not only was it the horrible thing that happened to Kimberly, but it was what happened to Bob Woodruff on the 29th of January. And in between that, we had the golden dome bombing.

And if I was to tell you kind of how things changed is that I saw, and I think Martha would admit, because she used to opine to me some of the difficulties she was having when she came out to visit us and getting the clearances to travel, that after Bob, we had – after what happened to Bob, we saw a little bit of reluctance on the major networks of allowing their people to go out as freely as they'd allowed them to go out before.

But after what happened to Kimberly on the 29th of May, 2006, we saw a lot of reluctance. And we saw kind of a turnover of reporting the news to what I called stringers. And I've talked about this phenomena. The idea that it was not safe out there, as proved by these two events, that everyone could find themselves in a situation like Bob and Kimberly found themselves in, and the way to do this was to hire Iraqi's who would go out and gather many of the stories and provide much of the information that was being reported.

Now, I would argue for a whole bunch of reasons that this is not good. I come at this with a little bit of bias. I believe the free press, I believe the fourth estate makes me better, it makes me better as a soldier, it makes me better as a leader, when it has free access to go out and report what it sees.

Some of the bad things that happened both in 2004 and 2005, I believe had the press had the ability that they've had in other wars to get out and report things would not have happened, because they would have tipped us off.

Now, I don't ever think they're 100 percent right, but quite frankly, in any report that I saw, from CBS, to ABC, to CNN, to any of the 24 hour news networks, there was always a colonel of truth, always something we could learn from. And when that was cut off, when we had a problem getting correspondence to go out and imbed, and we did, and

Kimberly is exactly right. In 2006, most of the news agencies that were over in Baghdad went down to one reporter. So when I wanted to get anybody out on the Syrian border to see some of the great successes that were taking place in July of 2006 and July of 2007, places that had been really, really, you know, dominated by violence early in the year, it was almost impossible for me to get them out there, because if something happened in Baghdad, and they were on the Syrian border in Iraq, they would not be able to get back in time to report what had happened.

And I found it very difficult on long trips. Most of the trips that I could get anybody to imbed, even with me, were local trips, in and around Baghdad, where they were easily able to get them or I was able to get them back so they could report what was going on. So I really believe that this was part of what we experienced, and I think Kimberly explained it very, very well.

At the same time, I think an organization, we have to be critical of what we do and how we integrate with the media and how we allow them to have the access that they need. I think we, the military, have problems we have to look at. But I sometimes take some concern that the media hasn't been more critical on itself in reporting to the American people, because I don't believe the lack of access that the media has had, particularly in 2006, I don't believe that was by chance. I believe that this was an enemy who realized that if he could take the

American media out of the game, if he could make it harder for them to report, it was to his advantage to do that. And I believe that this was a tactic, not necessarily these two events, but the idea that no reporter felt safe, or very few reporters felt safe, no reporter felt safe, but most would have a rough time getting even clearance to go out and get some of these stories.

I believe this is a conscience tactic, maybe even more so a strategy of an enemy that understands the importance of the free press and fourth estate to our conduct of war and conflict. And with that, I'll stop.

MR. O'HANLON: I'm just going to venture one quick thought, and if anybody wants to comment on either that or what they've already heard, then we'll go to you. As I look, now that we're sort of moving into the discussion of the media's role in this war, something that a few of us have tried to follow also at Brookings, more from an observer, and analyst point of view, my overall impression is that, frankly, the U.S. media did a very, very good for about the first four years of the war. I'm going to paint here with an extremely broad brush and without intending to be specifically critical of anyone and certainly not lumping everyone in together.

But I used to be in some quiet, off the record conversations with army officers who were trying to maintain a can do attitude through

the tough years of ’04, ’05, ’06, and I would sometimes wind up being the person in the conversation who would say, yes, you should keep getting out there, giving your message, staying positive, but don’t try too hard to convince people that we’re winning if we’re not.

In other words, as much as people admire the can do attitude of the military, you don’t want to get to be part of the spin machine. And from what I can see, frankly, in this period of time, we weren’t winning, and I tried to underscore that point.

I thought the media was actually on balance a little more negative clearly than the Bush Administration, also even the military officers on average, speaking on the record when they did. And I thought the media did a very good job through that period of time. I think the media’s overall performance in the last year has been less good. And starting with a delayed coverage of the progress with the surge and then continuing through much of the winter and spring. I think it’s starting to change. You look at the New York Times, for example, and just this past Saturday there was a big story on much of the progress in Iraq.

Martha is certainly right to underscore the enduring challenges and the potential for back sliding. But my overall take is, the media did an excellent job on balance for four years with an increasingly negative message about the war which was justified because the war was

actually going badly despite the heroic efforts of General Chiarelli and his men and women and many others.

But in the last year, there's been a little bit of a tendency, maybe having been scarred by those first four years of experience --

MS. RADDATZ: I was going to say that, exactly, Michael.

MR. O'HANLON: -- to understand what's going on now. Martha, do you want to comment?

MS. RADDATZ: No, I just – I mean it's true, I mean, you know, we heard the administration say how well it was going, and you've got to forgive the military when you get over there. I mean they are looking at the job they're doing, and they see it from a very different perspective. So I don't always feel spun when I go over there and talk to the military; sometimes I do, sometimes I don't.

But the administration, I mean in an interview I did a couple of months ago with President Bush, he said that, you know, throughout that period, when things were really going poorly, that he was saying we're winning, you know, victory is at hand, and I said, why were you saying that, you knew it wasn't true, right, and he said, no, I knew it wasn't true, but I wanted to do that to keep up troop morale.

So you hear things like that, and now you really do have to be a little slow in making any pronouncements that things are terrific. I mean I have no problem saying that this security has improved

dramatically with the surge, but I also want to be cautious and say, and I know things can turn around quickly over there, and Sadr City is a great example – through time and time again.

GENREAL CHIARELLI: You're always going to get that, though, Martha.

MS. RADDATZ: I know you're always going to get that, but what am I supposed to do?

GENERAL CHIARELLI: I mean when you get a soldier – I understand. But when you have a soldier over there for 15 months, you're going to find it very, very difficult for any commander at any level not to be part cheerleader in –

MS. RADDATZ: Oh, no, that's what I'm saying, I totally agree –

GENERAL CHIARELLI: -- you know, in trying to get –

MS. RADDATZ: -- I totally agree with that, I totally agree, but that's not my job.

GENERAL CHIARELLI: And that's why it's so important that you have the access to get out and report the stories as you see them, I think that's just absolutely critical. And we have to get better at how we handle it. I mean we have never adapted to the 24 hour news network. I mean I know things now about the media that these two have taught me, but just through pure understanding. Number one, the wires, once it's on

the wire, the only way you're going to get it changed with a 24 hour news network is to get the wire to change its story. You can stand up to a CNN, you can stand up to a FOX, and quite frankly, I didn't find FOX any better than CNN, quite frankly, I didn't, that you could go up to them, give them irrefutable evidence that what they just reported was incorrect, and until you can get the wire to change the story, the story is not going to change, that's just a fact of life. They are tremendous braces, they must have news. So they've got to have something to report.

And that's what's so wonderful about a hurricane. A hurricane provides you constant news, you know, as everybody is trying to understand whether it's going to hit the mainland or not hit the mainland. And when the hurricane happened, it was a wonderful day for me, because we had kind of a little bit of a free period here for a couple of days where we didn't have to worry about, you know, being told that 100 people were killed, when in reality, two were killed. But we have to get better at understanding how the information age has changed the way that news is reported.

MS. DOZIER: Well, one of the things that was important for me there was getting Washington out of the equation when talking to the military, because for the first couple of years, I would have commanders on the ground looking with the military mind, this is what's happening, and they'd tell me. General Swannick out in the Fallujah, Ramadi area, I'm

seeing an insurgency, we report it, he gets rockets from Washington, you said what out loud. Mark Hurtling, there's a picture of General Hurtling in my book, he was the number two in Baghdad I think the year before Pete came in, and he was saying the Baathist, the old Baathist officers, they're hitting my soldiers, they're behind all the road side bombs.

He'd organize this amazing conference, where he invited all the old Baathist generals and officers for a meeting. Now, he wasn't offering them jobs, he wasn't offering them money, he was asking their advice.

So I put this story on the air. He got rockets from Washington, why are you bowing to the enemy. What he was doing was one of the smartest things early on that I've seen. So time and time again, I saw commanders reacting on the ground to the facts on the ground and then getting in trouble because it didn't conform to the ideology coming out of Washington.

And the more that got silenced back in D.C., as whatever they were saying didn't turn out to be true, the more I found people on the ground willing to tell me really what they saw. By the second and third year, when U.S. officers were telling me things that either I had known about the Middle East for years or things I didn't know about the Middle East, and I had lived there for years, that's when I started getting encouraged that they were learning enough to turn things around, and that

they were also learning to trust me enough to tell me what their doubts were. And I always believed that a lot more than when I was spun.

GENERAL CHIARELLI: I just need to go on record as indicating that in the two years I spent over there, I didn't have a single time that I was ever called or that I ever called a commander or anyone else on the carpet for anything that they said to the media, nor was I ever called from Washington, D.C. that said you shouldn't have said that, never.

MS. DOZIER: But it did happen, not to you maybe.

GENERAL CHIARELLI: I'm just saying that –

MS. DOZIER: I know. I didn't get a chance to put the counter insurgency story that I filmed with you on the air; you would have gotten calls. There are definitely some people who –

MR. O'HANLON: Why don't we open it up –

MS. DOZIER: Do you want to talk about Admiral Fallon?

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, please, and please identify yourself and wait for the microphone also, if you don't mind. Thanks very much.

MS. SHERADON: Thank you, Mary Beth Sheridan, I'm a reporter at the Washington Post. General, I was just wondering if you could elaborate a little more on what you had said in your opening. You had mentioned that you didn't think the media were self-critical enough, and then you mentioned the whole issue where the fact that journalists

were somewhat – their ability to report was so reduced by the danger, that that was sort of a strategy on the part of the insurgents.

Were you suggesting that, you know, that journalists should have done something differently in the face of that, you know, that danger?

GENERAL CHIARELLI: I find some journalists have I think a more difficult time understanding that the move to stringers and the use of stringers, particularly in Iraqi culture and the conditions we were in, changed the color of the news. And I don't necessarily think that I'm the one who should have to point that out to them. I would hope that they would understand that through time. You know, when you have a stringer who lives in the Red Zone, that portion outside the forward operating face, and he is coming in and working for you to go out and get stories on a daily basis and report to you what he sees, he is prone to be influenced, particularly in a counter insurgency, both he and his family, by individuals who understand that he can provide a service for them by reporting the news in a certain way that they want that news reported.

Now, that's not necessarily to make up an event, but that is, in many instances, an opportunity to go out and report numbers that seem and are much higher than the actual numbers on the ground.

We saw this phenomena begin in early 2005. And I got to the point where I was willing to provide security at the time when a

reporter could still get out, to any reporter that wanted to go on the scene and report what had happened at a particular incident.

But for all kinds of reasons, and I think we, the military, and we, reporters, kind of have to get together when we're in this kind of environment. They did not want to have to rely on me, they did not want to have me taking them around to different incidents, because they felt that, in some way, you know, rightfully, that I would – in some way try to influence what was being said and reported. But I had a tremendous desire to get our reporters out to report incidents. And I found that very difficult early in 2005, and I found it very, very difficult in 2006. And I think there should be an understanding by the media that this is a reality, you know, that when you are relying on someone to report the news who can be influenced by folks who realize that they, in fact, can provide a tremendous service for them, I think that's something the media ought to understand and hopefully report to its readers, kind of like the warning label on a Pak of cigarettes.

SPEAKER: I think, you know what, I think we do talk about it, and I think it's an excellent point, and I think media organizations realize that that's not an ideal situation. I mean some of the people –

SPEAKER: It drives them crazy.

SPEAKER: Yeah, some of the people you're relying on, not only influenced, how about intimidated or threatened. It's not just subtle. I mean, you know, I remember –

SPEAKER: Most of our staff has had to leave.

SPEAKER: Yeah.

SPEAKER: We've had to smuggle out most of our first two year staff. They're in Syria and Jordan.

SPEAKER: Yeah; I mean it is not ideal by any means. There are not enough reporters over there, there simply aren't, and frankly, I would say there never have been. I mean this is an enormous undertaking on the part of the U.S., and we have, you know, even at the height of when we were all over there and the bureaus were plussed up, there are not a lot of reporters, and then you add the security in there because it's so terrible.

I mean that's an interesting point about, you know, are they influencing you so you'll get out of there. I always think they were influencing us, they wanted us there in terms of blowing stuff up and seeing things, and then maybe they went on to a different tactic when blowing up things and suicide bombings weren't getting on the air as much.

MS. DOZIER: I felt like we were before standing next to the target, and then in a sense we became the target. Press officers would

report to us that they'd noticed this pattern. I mean I went down to the fourth ID's headquarters at Fort Hood last year and got sat down with the commanders who were in charge of the area where I got hit, and they started telling me about all the behind the scene stuff. First of all, they had done many sweeps on that neighborhood before we went the next day because they wanted to make sure we didn't get attacked after what happened to Bob Woodruff. And I was also told that every senior commander in Iraq knew where I was going to be that day, because from then on it was like you know where the network people are after what happened to Bob.

But still, the pattern held that they detected before that when a media crew, foreign or Iraqi, would go to a neighborhood, within 15 to 20 minutes, there would be some sort of violence, either the crew would be attacked or there would be an attack near them, because they knew we would get it on the air, or in our case, we would become the story.

So, you know, I have to ask myself hard questions about, do we, in the end, partly do their job, but can we help it if we still are trying to do ours. It's one of those things where you just have to be aware, look, you get spun by a military PAO and by the other side you get attacked. I think I'd rather take the spinning.

GENERAL CHIARELLI: Let me be a little self-critical of ourselves. How should we, the military, reacted to that, the thing that I just

kind of laid out for you? Well, I think we did exactly the opposite thing that we should have done. We tend to centralize the release of news. Our news releases, our releases after an event happened were centralized and had to be run up the chain and signed off by the first general officer in the chain of command, always making them four or five hours after the fact.

What we should have done in an instance like this is, push down to the lowest level. We pushed – in the army, we pushed Public Affairs officers down to the brigade level. They need to be at the battalion level, and in some instances, the company level, so at least they can report what they're seeing and offer a counter or at least another side to what actually happened at that event.

But I was one of the worst violators of that. I had a horrible thing happen to me with Operation Swarmer, okay, I won't go into that right now, and the natural tendency was to centralize the release of that information –

SPEAKER: Well, you can't just leave it like that.

GENERAL CHIARELLI: -- to ensure that it was as true as you can get.

SPEAKER: What was Operation Swarm?

GENERAL CHIARELLI: Swarmer.

SPEAKER: Swarmer?

GENERAL CHIARELLI: Swarmer; 101st in an operation on the 26th of March, 2006, the same day that we sat the COR in Iraq. We were looking for a big win, something that would be important to us that we could report that would kind of capture the fact that – now, we didn't have a prime minister, because we didn't get one until the 28th of May, but at least we had 275 duly elected members of an Iraqi Parliament, and we wanted to see them, and we picked, I think the day was the 16th of March, quite frankly, it went back and forth, at the same time, because we weren't as finely tuned an organization as we thought we were, and that we wanted this to kind of dominate the news for a couple of days, that 275 elected Iraqi's had come, sat, talked, and dispersed with nothing happening to them, and that's exactly what happened.

But you didn't read about it, because on that very same day, the 101st did an operation called Operation Swarmer, and a brand new brigade PAO who didn't necessarily have all the training in the world, but understood the rules, counted up the number of helicopters that were being in use in this particular event, and he reported it under the good news rule that said if you've got good news to report, you don't have to go through all the different wickets to get approval, you can send it directly out, and he did, and he called it the largest air assault in the history of mankind.

And I remember coming back from the IZ after watching the successful seating going on and turning on my TV. knowing that all I'm going to see is this wonderful thing that had happened, the seating of 275 individuals duly elected by the people, only to see somebody pointing at a presidential spokesman saying, are you telling me the largest air assault in the history of mankind was conducted and the President of the United States didn't know about it, and I had no idea what had happened.

It was, in fact – it was, in fact, an operation that the 101st had been planning to go to an area that was 200 kilometers by 200 kilometers with a whole bunch of Iraqi soldiers and basically move from one end to the other looking for caches. I don't believe in the ten days of Operation Swarmer a single shot was fired in anger. However, it surely stole the thunder from the seating of the Iraqi COR. You can go back and look that up. It was above the fold, as they say, the next day.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, sir.

MR. JAYSON: Yeah, Kernon Jayson with Forecast International. I'd like to quickly go back to the way you opened up, Kimberly, about the military treatment from the medical end of it. Military medicine tends to be sort of leading edge on trauma treatment and things like that. You talked about the things they came up with that basically saved you. Do you know, was there any linking to medical sources back in the states or back at the hospitals out to the front line at first? That's

something new they're working on that's going to work wonders in medicine and trauma treatment. Was any of that implemented at that time; do you know?

MS. DOZIER: Well, there's always been this great linkage and cooperation between military trauma and civilian trauma, because essentially, civilian trauma is the poor step-child of all medical research in the United States. It gets about $1 for every $4 or $5 that's spent on things like cancer or Aids.

It is, however, the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 20 to 55. So, you think the more money spent on this the better. Instead, civilian researchers have to essentially wait for a war. And that's when the U.S. military pours a lot of money into fantastic advances. The tourniquets that were used on me, for instance, a simple advance, but now they're being carried by some of the EMT's back here in ambulances, at major trauma centers in the states.

Some of the techniques that they used – I had massive bleeding throughout me, they used something called Factor Seven. It's a controversial drug, it's FDA approved for hemophiliacs, it causes clotting all through your body, which, in a trauma patient, is a good thing. I got two or three doses. And at, you know, $6,000 a dose, that's pretty amazing. And since then, there's been wide spread use of it at some trauma centers back here, because it helped.

That said, we're all talking about the stuff that keeps you alive on the ground. There are second and third and fourth order symptoms, maladies that develop afterwards, like heterotopic ossification, which means when you've got a blast injured break, like in my two femurs, and you've got a head injury, for some reason the bone heals like crazy. It also happens to amputees. I have coral-like spikes that grew into my muscles. You've got to wait six to nine months after the original injury, and then the only way to remove it is to chisel it out. And so that meant cutting back through my leg and chiseling it out, because otherwise, it was keeping me from walking and running properly.

HO normally only happens to motorcycle accident victims in the states, so nobody had looked into it before. I write about some of these things that happened to me in the hospital afterwards. I kept thinking, okay, now everything is done, the graphs are on, I'm safe, no, I got an acinetobacter infection that nearly killed me, and then the HO, and on and on and on.

So after I got well and got back to work, I wrote an article in the *Washington Post* about the need for more extremity – more injury research, it's called, four out of five soldiers getting wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, it should say troops, soldiers, airmen, marines, have injuries like I had, injuries to the arms and legs, and have all of these second and third order things happening to them. TBI has gotten a lot of attention,

now PTSD, post traumatic stress disorder, is getting a lot of attention. Amputees, even though I think at last count there are only about 1,000 out of the 30,000 war wounded, it's very visual, the media, again, we give that a lot of attention. These other injured, they need advances in care. And so I have been – I've testified before Senator Inouye, and I've just had a meeting with General Shoemaker and Doctor Ward Giselles last week, so they are trying to funnel more money into this through RAMCI and places like that out at Fort Dietrich, Fort Belvoir, the medical research centers.

GENERAL CHIARELLI: Both.

MS. DOZIER: -- the military medical research centers. So it's happening, but it's going to take years for some of this stuff to catch up with what's happening on the ground and what's happening to us right now.

MR. O'HANLON: Very quick, I can't help but mention one of the doctors who, as I was reading Kimberly's book, realized to help save her life, is David Steinbruner, who is the son of John Steinbruner, who used to run the Foreign Policies Studies program here. So for those of you who are long standing Brookings fans or attendees or what have you, that was an interesting coincidence and a very happy one to see these worlds coming together and David helping Kimberly. The next question, please. Yes, sir.

MR. BURN: A two person team, good idea. I'm Jim Burn, I'm an editor of Community Development Publications. I'm curious, both from the journalist and from the General's point of view, how much of a factor is the very limited knowledge of Aerobic that our people have over there, how big a factor is that in causing problems and mistakes in doing your job?

I was told by Jim Kickfield who covers the Middle East for National Journal, he said a tremendous amount of energy goes into getting the translation right, just tremendous. But I'm interested in all your points of view as to what kind of a problem our limited knowledge of those languages are.

GENERAL CHIARELLI: Huge, absolutely huge. I did what we call an after action review that I had run by a major, who's standing in the back of the room, quite frankly, of all my captains and platoon leaders after my first year in Iraq. Now, these were soldiers that had spent 11 months in downtown Baghdad walking point and on patrol.

In a normal military fashion, I wanted to find out, you know, if you could go back and change the training program that we had given you prior to coming over here, what would you have changed, what would you have done more of, what would you have done less of, and two things came to the top. Number one, we wish we had more language training. We were all forced at about the third month to be able to speak and have

the basic terms and understand the terms down in the street, but I wasted three months, because I should have had that same kind of proficiency when I got over here on day one rather than at the 90 day mark.

And the second thing that really surprised me, I expected to hear fire maneuver, you know, some kind of a kinetic thing that they wished they had had more of was, I wish I had had more cultural awareness training. And that I found absolutely amazing, because it was something we worked very, very hard.

But we were trying to break through some kind of glass ceilings and getting people to understand before they experienced Iraq, the importance of understanding the culture and how the culture would effect them on a day to day basis.

And I thought we had done a pretty good job of that, but that was the second thing they wished they had had more of. You should have forced us to do more cultural awareness training. We had to learn in many instances by doing it and it wasn't an efficient nor safe way, it did not provide us the force protection that we wish we would have had.

SPEAKER: It's one of the silver linings in the multiple deployments, because the soldiers and marines who have been over there again and again and again are far more culturally aware now and far better at the language, but I completely agree, it was huge, it was just huge. And to go out, particularly in the early days, and you know, if they

didn't have an interpreter with them, and bump up against the situation, there's no way they can diffuse it because they didn't know the language, and I think that probably led to a lot of bad things happening.

SPEAKER: I have enough Arabic that I could frequently tell when my translator, both under Saddam and then after Saddam, my translator was mistranslating to tell me what I wanted to hear, and that I learned was a very Iraqi trait. And I would catch them at it, and either I would embarrass them in front of the person we were talking to or take them aside and say, all right, now tell me what he really said. I saw it effect a number of raids that we were on, because they just did not have enough translators to explain to the people whose house that they were invading, you know, we just want to look for this. And I'd see children crying, wives screaming, and they would turn to me and spout out questions in Iraqi Aerobic. My Aerobic is Egyptian, so I can only understand maybe half of what they were saying. And then I would try to calm them down, but then it wasn't my place as a reporter. And then I'd be stuck, and it's like, well, if I explain to them what they're doing, then it's as if I'm part of the U.S. military, what do I do.

And also, I couldn't tell them. They wanted to know when are we going to get our husband back, when are we going to get our son back, and I couldn't answer that either.

So the other thing that it effected was daily newspaper coverage, radio coverage, TV. coverage. My understanding of how Iraqi's saw their world depended on which translator showed up for work that day in our office, and that really hog tied me through the war.

MR. O'HANLON: If I could follow up on this, General Chiarelli, I'm thinking about the institutional army, and of course, right now the institutional army is focused on two major wars so you can figure out which two languages are the priorities. But what's the long term solution here, is it to try to teach some foreign language and hopefully pick the right six or eight to everybody as they come in, or is it more to have the ability to do, you know, crash courses as people potentially get ready to deploy? I mean I'm sure you've thought a lot about this, and I know some changes have already occurred, but what do we need to still think about?

GENERAL CHIARELLI: I think there's so many ways that you can teach languages much more efficiently today than before, particularly a lot of young kids can pick up on it very, very quickly. I think it's going to take a cultural change, an understanding in the army that, you know, we have the responsibility to send soldiers into harm's way who can always defend themselves.

But we also have a responsibility to work some of these non-kinetic kind of capabilities and requirements into their training programs. You know, when you start crunching down training cycles and you've got

to take things out of the training schedule, the very first things that even today you see kind of drifting on out, or conducted at 5:00, where leaders go off to do other things and they put their soldiers in front of somebody teaching them basic Aerobic phrases or cultural awareness, we've just got to understand, our culture has to change to understand, and in this particular kind of fight, how absolutely critical it is when you're working with the populous on a day to day basis. But I think that Martha is exactly right. I mean it is the school of hard knocks, but we have all learned over time, some quicker than others, that this is just an absolute requirement when you're fighting this kind of conflict, and I happen to believe that it's the conflict of the future, it's not going away, as much as we want it to, it is the kind of conflict we're going to see at least in the immediate future.

SPEAKER: My question is for Mr. O'Hanlon. What are the very most under reported stories of progress in Iraq? And what is your opinion of the process of political reconciliation and the reintroduction of former Baathists into civil society?

MR. O'HANLON: First, again, I want to thank General Chiarelli for coming, and apologize to you, sir, the last bit of your question I didn't catch.

SPEAKER: Sure; what is your opinion of the process of political reconciliation and the reintroduction of Baathists into civil society in Iraq?

MR. O'HANLON: I think it's critical. I was just in Iraq, it's only my third trip, I'm a little shy admitting that compared to the people I'm on stage with. But one of the things that one was working remarkably well was the effort to bring a large number of Sunni back into many of the Iraqi institutions. And they're not high level Baathists typically, although some of them had some interesting military jobs under Saddam.

There are some people in the military who are now back in important jobs in the Iraqi military who did have important jobs under Saddam. So this is a line that always has to be watched.

But one of the remarkable things is just how well these integrated units are performing. And I'm not suggesting sectary intentions are totally resolved inside Iraq at all. In fact, that's one of the reasons why I'm a gradualist when it comes to our downsizing. We've got to keep an eye on those sectary intentions resurfacing.

But in recent times, you don't hear a lot of discussion about them. The recent concerns in Iraq and things concerning people are much more the interest of problems. And, of course, we've seen even this week, it's been a tragic and very sad week for Americans in Iraq, I believe six killed, four in Sadr City and two in Salman Pak, a place we had visited on our trip ourselves, and this is a process of reconciliation that's been going on. In Sadr City, the killing was probably from Shi special groups, who are also suspected in the car bombing in the Northwest Baghdad the

week before. In Salmon Pak, it may have been more of an ongoing sectarian problem, not really clear, or just one lone ranger.

Anyway, in any event, the point is that the institutional performance of the Iraqi army and National police, which has been so much greater, so much better in the last few months than it ever had been, is largely being done by ethnically and sectarianly interspersed units.

So a big part of the story of Basra that hasn't been well discussed or is only gradually getting out into the American public's eye these days is what happened in the second week of that battle. The first week was a disaster, and people tended to hear pretty well about that. The media coverage of the first week was pretty good and pretty accurate. And Maliki accelerated a campaign that was going to happen either later this year or next year, according to original plan, just pulled Petraeus aside and said, we're launching this thing tomorrow, not next month, not next season, not next year. The 52nd brigade of the Iraqi army, which was almost all from Basra, performed very badly, didn't have enough ammunition, the recruits were very recent, they had just come out of training, the British did not include any military transition teams with them as they went into battle, they were trying to defend their own neighborhoods, being asked to take up arms essentially against people they knew, everything was done wrong in that first week.

By the second week, you had the arrival of a number of brigades, largely from al-Anbar Province, which were mixed sectarian groups, Sunni, Shiia. Apparently the – one of the brigades from the first division was about 60/40 Sunni Shi, and a brigade from the 7th Iraqi army division was more like 80/20. But in both cases you had very mixed units, and they performed extremely well, to the point where now in al-Anbar, the worry is they're never going to let these brigades come home to defend their own turf because they're being sent from there to Sadr City up to Diyala Province and then Mosul, where the fighting continues in a very robust way.

I'm sorry, giving you a little bit of an anecdotal answer to your question because there is no overall answer to say sectarian issues have been definitely resolved. But the main story line of recent months it that bringing Baathists back in, or bringing, I should say, former higher ranking Sunni's of one stripe or another back into the security forces is actually one of the most encouraging things that's happening, and the sectarian intentions are being quite well contained, at least for the moment.

One caveat to that and I'll stop, Martha and Kimberly may want to comment here, too, the Sons of Iraq Program is a brilliant idea that's still in a very unstable place right now.

More than 100,000 of these volunteers, well, they're no longer volunteers, they're getting paid a halfway decent stipend by Iraqi standards, $300 a month, they're getting paid by us, and the reason is, they're almost all Sunni, and Prime Minister Al-Maliki isn't that happy about having them brought into the Iraqi security forces because they still scare him. He's nervous about a Sunni resurgence. And so the integration process is going very slowly. And I think we have to keep up the pressure on the Iraqi's to do that integration. But this is where you need sort of the good cop, bad cop of America being willing to say, you've got to do more, and if you don't do more, this mission won't work, but if you do more, Maliki, we will stay with you, we will work over a longer period, we'll be more gradual in our withdrawal strategy. You've got to maintain the pressure in both directions to get the Sons of Iraq Program gradually, taken over by the Iraqi's themselves, have those people brought into the Iraqi security forces, because otherwise, the Sunni are not in a stable role in their own country right now, for the most part, and many of them are working in these unofficial or quasi official groups, and haven't yet been integrated into main institutions. So it's a little bit of a mixed bag, but that's where we are at this moment.

SPEAKER: Excellent answer; we'll stick with that.

MR. MAYER: My name is Burt Mayer, I'm just a federal employee. I guess my question is for Martha. There was a piece in the

New York Times this week indicating that for some reporting period last year, there was 120 minutes of air time devoted to the war in Iraq by one of the major networks. For the comparable period this year, it was 18 minutes. It seems to me that that phenomenon feeds the notion that the media only wants to report bad news.

MS. RADDATZ: Oh, I know.

MR. MAYER: Can you explain anything about what the dynamic is, because it seems that the war is just as important this year as it was last year?

MS. RADDATZ: Hey, I'm with you, and I'm sure Kimberly is, too. And that's what I was referring to, is the number of minutes on the air that Iraq has, I mean it is really – it has just tanked up the network news, it has. And probably, because there aren't events every day that are dramatic, I mean that surely has to be part of it, it does.

And I think, you know, Kimberly fights to do stories that give you a notion or an idea of what's happening there now in terms of the good news. I do think Mike's right, that we do tend to be a little more skeptical because we've seen it before and sort of, you know, burned before.

But I think it's a shame that we don't do more, I really do. And I feel very strongly about it. I mean I'm always struck when I leave there, like, you know, walking around Sadr City the other day and just

thinking, there's 142 – 145,000 Americans there. I mean in that sense, it hasn't changed. We are still, on average, losing one soldier or marine every single day. And where, you know, we could talk to this where, you know, I sometimes think – like yesterday, there were four Americans killed, I was out of town, I don't know what my network had on, I don't know what any of the networks had on, but I'm doubting that –

MS. DOZIER: -- on ours.

MS. RADDATZ: -- yeah, I'm doubting there was very much coverage of that, where years ago that would have led the newscast, absolutely led the newscast. So, in a way, we're not reporting a lot of the good news, but we're not reporting the bad news either. So in that sense, I guess it balances out. But I think it's a shame we don't do more because we have so much invested there in our human treasure and our money and everything else that I think it deserves to be told.

Now, it's true, the networks, it's a million dollars a month or more, and that's security, it's just moving from place to place. I mean I do know that our bureau people get a little more – they get out more.

MS. DOZIER: Now they do, yeah.

MS. RADDATZ: Because the networks aren't as worried that there's going to be some catastrophic event, so they can go out and imbed. But I mean I still have stories on the shelf that didn't get on. And when I go, you know, I hate to say it, but it's kind of a big deal when I go,

and you know, people say if anybody is going to get any – going to get on the air, because she doesn't, you know, she goes back and forth. But, you know, there are times I haven't gotten anything on the air either.

MS. DOZIER: I've had a lot of time to think about this and study this. I think we've got two different things going on. First of all, we have two huge domestic stories, the most historic election probably in my lifetime, and an economic story that's got everyone sort of looking inward, I think what's you do in an election year.

The other thing is, what you alluded to, the rollercoaster of Iraq, we've seen it go well before, and then seen it tank. So nobody wants to say this is working. I'm starting with the U.S. military, nobody wants to say this is working and then get proved wrong again.

So there's a reluctance, I think, on the part of my bosses and on the part of some of the people out there to go too far with rose colored glasses. The other thing is the image fatigue. These stories look the same unless something is blowing up. And then the last and most positive thing, the reason that it's not getting on the air is that good news generally doesn't. So I think a lot of people also checked out when they heard that the surge was working last fall, and if it's still kind of working this year, check that box, let's move on. And so you have the occasional up tick of some of the more violent attacks over the past couple days. We're not seeing a trend that you can grab onto.

MS. RADDATZ: I'm remembering walking down the streets, as you said, the rose colored glasses, with General Chiarelli in 2004, and he opened up an area called Abanwa Street, and he had great plans for it, and you know, had the bulldozers out there, and it was a marvelous idea, counter insurgency, and it was, you know, we're going to clean this up, the restaurants are going to come back, it'll be like the river walk in San Antonio, it'll be like, you know, Central Park, and I said, sir, I think you have rose colored glasses on, because please look around, we're all still in our body armor and helmets as we walk down.

And that always, you know, when I'm walking around in Sadr City and everybody says it's great, it's great, and there you are just heaving in 120 degrees with your body armor on and helmets, and you have snipers all around you protecting you, and you're now in MRAPS, the guarding against the Buff's and everything else, so it is still very much a war zone.

MS. DOZIER: We're all waiting for the other shoe to drop, because every time we saw it doing well, then you can't discount what the opposition, whoever the opposition is, is going to do. Things were kind of doing well, and then you had the Golden Mosque Samarra bombed, and that launched a whole new spree of killing.

So right now it's like, okay, I'm seeing U.S. troops on the ground doing things that I saw them do since 2003, it's not the patch work

it was before, it's more wide spread, it is a uniform policy from the top down, but still, again, I've been to Sadr City over and over. How many times have they repaired the sewers in Sadr City?

MS. RADDATZ: I know.

MS. DOZIER: They should work fine.

MS. RADDATZ: But I have to say I genuinely felt different this time, I did. I mean I really felt like there was a change in security. And sitting through briefings, too, which they'll do, and you know, you hear numbers like there were two attacks in Baghdad today, which is just extraordinary, and that's been happening month after month after month after month. So you have to – you do have to feel good about that. And I help in, you know, whatever venue I can and do, whether it's ABC or PBS, talk about that, and do feel there is a change, and yet feel, you know, you can't be jumping up and down quite yet because there's still a great deal of risk.

SPEAKER: One point I want to add to this is that, I guess it's sort of a plea to your bosses and maybe a reminder to all of us in my business, you know, instead of always worrying about what's the overall trend line, is it, you know, and on balance it is favorable, but as you both have said, there are a million caveats.

Maybe we should try to think about how we report at one level down of detail, because there have been some fascinating

developments this year that have not been getting enough coverage. The battles of Basra, Sadr City, and Mosul are fascinating. They're not conclusive, they still leave a huge vacuum that needs to be filled by job creation and political transformation, so this is not, you know, Maliki going in and defeating his political rivals. I don't think that is what happened, by the way, but it could become that. Al Qaeda is still – and other rejectionist groups, not just Al Qaeda, are still very active up in Mosul. The violence in the north of Iraq is still very high, it's down by half, but it's very high. Baghdad is remarkably better. But anyway, there are big battles that have happened and have been going on that are just inherently interesting, and Americans, a lot of people like to watch military history. This is military history happening in real time. It's not just how many people got blown up today, it's, you know, what are the campaigns, the tactics, what are the Iraqi officials doing, how many of them are performing well, how did the Iraqi first army division perform pretty well, but the 52nd brigade out of the 14th division perform abysmally, what are the reasons?

I think these are actually inherently interesting things. Now, admittedly, I'm a military wonk, but still, a lot of people are.

SPEAKER: We kind of are, too, though.

SPEAKER: I know; but half the country, I mean bottom line, people like to learn about these kind of campaigns, there's always huge history in, you know, huge interest in military history, and here we have it

happening before our eyes, with an inconclusive outcome, huge implications for our country, those are the stories that are – or the Sons of Iraq Program, it's a good story, but it's also a very worrisome story. On the one hand, you have the 100,000 people who used to be shooting at us, who are now working with us. And with the exception of the tragedy in Salman Pak this week, which may have involved an awakening member, most of them, almost all of them have fought with us royally, they just switched.

On the other hand, they could switch again, and they might very well if they aren't given a greater role in the new Iraq than Prime Minister Al-Maliki has accorded them so far.

These are very interesting, and they're dynamic, they're not just how many attacks happened today, and if we get to that level of detail, I think there are a lot of stories to tell that Americans will find interesting.

SPEAKER: Yeah.

SPEAKER: One of the things, when you talk about – I mean I think these are fascinating, but I'm sure both of us would have, but we've seen that before, we've seen that before. I think Basra is an unbelievable story, and gave them the confidence that they didn't have, and I mean there are a lot of details there that definitely are under cover. One of the terms that I saw in one of the briefings this time, which drive me crazy, was, irreversible momentum, that we're trying for irreversible momentum,

and I said to the Colonel or Lieutenant Colonel who was briefing, I said, you know, you really want to watch out for that term, the first person I heard say that was John Batiste in 2004, and he was talking about Samarra, so you really want to watch that, because, to me, the only irreversible momentum is if you're falling out of a window, and I think that's not a term you should use in Iraq unless you're waving the flags as you leave.

SPEAKER: One last quick point before we move on. The other thing that I found in looking into this, why is this story not getting on the air, anecdotally from friends at major news magazines, they will tell you, if they put Iraq on the cover, sales plummet. If you put Iraq in your first news block, you know, now they don't measure ratings in hour long trenches like they used to, it's minute by minute.

And if you've got another, you know, bad news Iraq story in the first news block, click. So our bosses listen to that. And this is an economically driven business to some extent, so it becomes a tell. It's got to get to the point where –

SPEAKER: A tell being just --

SPEAKER: Fifteen seconds or 20 seconds, this is what happened in Iraq today, next, you know, health story, consumer story, and you know, how to survive the economic crisis. So I hope that the public will get used to the idea that it's not always bad news coming out of Iraq. I

hope it gets to the point where it's not bad news coming out of Iraq. But then, as we've discussed, it'll fall off the air entirely, but for the right reasons.

MR. O'HANLON: Peter.

MR. SINGER: Pete Singer with Brookings. I first wanted to thank you both for joining us again. And I wanted to ask about a different disparity in the reporting. There was a study that showed that while the number of private military contractors in Iraq is roughly the same number as the number of U.S. troops there, that there were only one percent of the amount of news coverage, just a mention of contractors in news stories.

Could you comment on what you think are the causal factors of that and maybe some of the difficulties in reporting on the industry as it is on the ground?

SPEAKER: I think it's probably, again, a manpower thing, Peter. I mean we just don't have enough people over there to do that. That statistic I think is surprising. In fact, I didn't know that was – I probably did at one point or another during the Black Water stuff know that was true. I don't know anybody who really goes out and imbeds with – you know, it's probably that sort of new world and we don't quite know how to do that yet and we haven't quite looked at it yet. I mean –

SPEAKER: I tried.

SPEAKER: Yeah.

SPEAKER: Do you think Halliburton really wants me to come along? Huh-uh. The only contractor story I was ever invited to do was, I think it was the Halliburton contractor who was a secret Santa for the hospital, and that was it.

SPEAKER: That they let you do.

SPEAKER: Yeah; and then, you know, in the meantime I'm like, oh, you're the press person, and I started like pelting her with all these questions and requests, and no way, she said I'll get back to you, yeah, never. I got –

SPEAKER: Which, you know, we should still cover it even if we can't get in there. But it's true, I think we haven't covered that much at all, either the good part of that, that they take away a lot of the responsibility, I mean they're doing a lot of jobs that we would have a bazillion more military personnel there, but also how unregulated they are or were, you know, all that is certainly a story. So we fell down, I'm sorry, Peter.

SPEAKER: Well, the other thing, I think a lot of people assume there's always this crazy reporting that we never got out of the Green Zone. Heck, we could never get into the Green Zone. For the first two and a half –

SPEAKER: Yeah, I don't think either one of us have ever stayed in the Green Zone.

SPEAKER: It's – towards the end, when it got really dangerous, they let a couple of news organizations rent out one of those high priced villas in there. I think ABC had a fall-back space, NBC had –

SPEAKER: Safe house.

SPEAKER: A safe house, had a safe house in –

SPEAKER: Things got really bad.

SPEAKER: -- or had some work space in the GE building, but other than that, we weren't allowed. I remember fighting for the right to drive into the Green Zone for all of the journalists. I campaigned for a year, and finally General Rick Lynch threw some of the PAO's on the ground, like Steve Boilen right now, who's General Petraeus' press officer, got me to the right people to make my case. I had to say, look, you're making all the journalists walk through the one shicane, into the one check point into the convention center that gets bombed more than anything else, you know, let us in some other way.

So we physically couldn't, for the first two, two and a half years, get into the space where the contractors were. And even once we were allowed to go in, we were supposed to drive straight to our meetings. So we'd sneak over to the PX, where the fast food stuff was, and hope that the gircas didn't card us on the way in, and we tried to, you know,

flash our card and hide the media part, and that was the only place you could maybe run into a contractor.

And so having access to the diplomats and the contractors, that was the only way in a place like Afghanistan or Pakistan that I was able to get to that side of the story. In Iraq, I simply couldn't get to them.

MR. O'HANLON: We have time for one or two more. I'll take them all – if there are a couple of questions, we'll take them both, and then we'll wrap up here. Maybe it's just the one, okay, go ahead.

SPEAKER: Hi, I'm – I'm here working with the Brookings Foreign Project on Internal Displacement this summer. As I'm sure you're aware, there are about four and a half million Iraqi's displaced at this time within and outside Iraq, and I'm wondering, compared to places like Darfur, why does this seem, even though there is increasing coverage on the issue, why does it still seem to be under reported, and what needs to be done to increase the awareness on the issue?

MR. O'HANLON: Do we have any other final questions before we wrap up? We'll add one here, please.

SPEAKER: I'm just kind of wondering, in this morning's Post, I think on the front page of the Post, it had an article about an Iraqi that was here, brought over for his own family security, and he speaks Arabic, and he, of course, is aware of the cultural differences; why

wouldn't these people be brought in to assist in the lack of both Aerobic and cultural awareness into military and other activities in Iraq?

SPEAKER: There's a whole huge vetting process to bring – I remember there was this incredibly talented interpreter who worked for Carter Ham up in Mosul, and he tried to get her in, I mean it's just impossible. There's just this huge complicated – I mean I think they would be enormously helpful. Do you want to do Darfur? Basically Darfur, you're right.

SPEAKER: It's under cover.

SPEAKER: Oh, yeah, you mean the Iraqi – I'm sorry.

SPEAKER: The Iraqi's have been displaced.

SPEAKER: Go ahead, Kimberly.

MS. DOZIER: I was just going to say, you know, it goes to, again, the level of interest in the story and access to the story. Within the country, it's hard to get to some of those spots. I did do a story on some displaced Iraqi's early on in Mosul, but again, once you've done the story a couple of times, you know, how many different ways can you tell it.

I think, also, they're in Jordan, they're in Syria. I know Liz Palmer, one of my colleagues who's based in London, she had to – she pitched a four part series that got her to Syria and made it economically viable to tell that story. But unless you were watching that night of the evening news, yeah, you would have missed it.

MR. O'HANLON: I was going to add one thought on this, as well, which is that it's an issue that requires attention by the Iraqi government, as I think you would probably agree at this point, because, and again, you can correct me being part of the Brookings program on this, international law essentially says that those four and a half million people should be allowed to come not only back to their nation, but into their original home. That's a problem in a place like Iraq, it ain't going to happen.

In fact, it's a recipe for reigniting some of the sectarian cleansing that, thankfully, is at a much lower level today. So there needs to be a full throated policy debate in Iraq about how you encourage people to come back and where they are encouraged to come back to.

And my own view is that the best solution here, while you don't want to give up on peoples' you know, hopes of reclaiming their homes in some cases, is it offer them government vouchers, to go out and either buy or build new homes.

There's one thing Iraq has right now, it's cash, because we're all paying 4.25 a gallon for gas, there is one bit of good news about 4.25 a gallon for gas, it's that Iraq is getting very wealthy in many ways and they have fungible resources to devote to this sort of thing. And they also would, thereby, create a bit of a construction boom, which would help with the unemployment problem. So I think it's an issue that is calling out

for attention from Iraq's. But until the Iraqi Parliament starts debating this sort of thing, what can Martha and Kimberly really cover about the issue?

They could be policy entrepreneurs and make up the stories themselves, or if they want to interview me later about this, I'll be happy to help them, but that's not really the story. The story is, what is Iraq going to do about this, and so far it's an issue that just hasn't gotten the attention it requires.

It's, by the way, one of the reasons why I think we have to be gradual in our downsizing, because as long as you have this powder keg of four and a half million people who might want to try to get back to their homes, and then you say, we're going to pull out quickly and let Iraqi's hopefully manage that, that's a little bit optimistic.

MS. RADDATZ: Can I say one final thing?

MR. O'HANLON: Please.

MS. RADDATZ: I just want to say one final thing about Kimberly, and that is, she has taken what happened to her and helped so many other people. I mean she is just amazing, and Bob Woodruff, as well, and I just want to say how much I appreciate that, and read her book, and tell everybody to read her book, because it's incredibly inspiring, and it will help soldiers and marines and airmen and everyone else who's over there in the future, and civilians here, as well. Thank you, Kimberly.

MS. DOZIER: Thank you very much. And if you choose to put yourself through it, there are copies waiting just outside, and believe me, yes, the first part is painful, but we turn it around, and let's hope that's the story of Iraq.

MR. O'HANLON: Very nice.

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