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WAR OF NECESSITY, WAR OF CHOICE

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. INDYK: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, there are some seats at the front if those of you in the back want to take seats. Welcome to the Saban Center at Brookings. I'm Martin Indyk, the Director of the Saban Center. I'm particularly delighted today to have the opportunity to introduce to you Richard Haass and his excellent book, *War of Necessity, War of Choice*, and I'm particularly delighted because Richard and I go way back.

He's the pioneer and I follow in his footsteps. By my last count, I've held three of the jobs that he held before me. And so the President of Council on Foreign Relations is right in my sight. That's because he is the President of the Council on Foreign Relations, as you probably know. But he once was Vice President and Director of the Foreign Policy Program at the Brookings Institution, and we're very glad to have him back at his old home.

He's also held a number of very senior appointments in the U.S. government, Director of Policy Planning in the State Department under Secretary of State Colin Powell in the first term of the George W. Bush Administration; he was Special Assistant to President Bush's father, George H.W. Bush, and the Senior Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs in the National Security Council of that Bush Administration.

In the second Bush Administration, he was also U.S. Special Envoy for Northern Ireland, and it says here Ambassador and U.S. Coordinator for the future of Afghanistan, as well. That was a good job.

In any case, what we have before us, ladies and gentlemen, is a man of deep experience in foreign policy, both at the policy-making level and at the analysis and understanding of it.

He's the author of several books with great titles like *The Reluctant Sheriff*, and *The Opportunity*. But I think that, at least in my opinion, *War of Necessity, War of Choice* is Richard's best book, and it's no surprise that it's getting rave reviews and a great deal of attention because it combines not only his great analytical capabilities, but also his personal experiences advising both Presidents Bush when they both went to war in Iraq.

And it is that unusual experience being in the cockpit of history that gives Richard a unique perspective on those two defining wars in U.S. foreign policy, and that's what he's going to talk a little bit about today. We have Ken Pollack, the Director of Research at the Saban Center, and the author of his own book on the war in Iraq, to be the respondent, and then we're going to have a bit of a discussion up here before we go to Q and A.

The thing that unites Ken Pollack, Richard Haass and myself is that we all worked on Iraq in the National Security Council in the period of the Bush, Clinton, and Bush Administrations. Ken covered the first Bush and Clinton Administrations, Richard covered the two Bush Administrations, I just covered the Clinton Administration. But we have between us 16, no, actually 24 years of experience dealing with Iraq. And maybe, just maybe today we'll be able to shed some light on that fort issue. Richard Haass, please.

MR. HAASS: Martin was very generous, particularly since I entitled the chapter about the Clinton Administration the Clinton Interregnum, which might have been seen as an ungenerous treatment of that. But he's generous to have me back at Brookings, where I – until recently actually, it was the longest job I had ever held, was when I was here for four and a half years, and now I've beaten that, now I've been at my current job for five and a half years, which you'll be glad to know shows growing stability in my life after all these years. I'll talk for a few minutes, I won't filibuster, and then we'll open it up to Ken's constructive criticism, and then to the rest of everyone here.

I want to say one or two things about the title, *War of Necessity, War of Choice*. Let me get it off my chest. Even though I thought it was original, it's not. Initially I thought I was only off by 800

years, when several people pointed out to me that my monodies had used it in his writings, and now I find I'm off by nearly 2,000 years, after Bill Safire wrote a column about it and all these people wrote in saying that we'd ignored some earlier examples, so the idea is an old one, like most of my ideas, it's not original, but I do think it's a useful idea.

Wars of necessity are just that, they're wars that governments undertake, usually when two conditions are met; one is when vital national interests are at stake, and two, when there's no other policy options available, or the policy options that were available have been tried and found wanting. This was clearly the case in the first Gulf War in 1990/'91. The reason that I believe that vital national interests were at stake were two-fold; one is that people forget. When this war happened, it was less than a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, so this was very much the early days of the post Cold War era. And there was a clear awareness that what we did and how we did it, and this began with the President, with 41, but also with – Jim Baker and others, that what we did and how we did it would set the tenure of this new geopolitical era.

So there was real care about not allowing this sort of aggression. So when George Bush landed on the White House lawn that Sunday, and though I met him – I don't know, how many decades

younger, I was the guy who looked older, for reasons that are still not immediately apparent to me.

And when he said "this will not stand," that really was his view, that this will not stand and this could not stand less there be a tremendous geopolitical price to be paid. And he was there from the get-go, contrary to public mythology. It was not Margaret Thatcher that got him there, he was there.

It was also a war of necessity because of one other part of the stakes, which was oil, not in the left-wing conspiratorial sense that one hears so much, that somehow we were doing this for oil in the commercial sense, but in the strategic sense. Iraq is roughly ten percent of the world's proven reserves, Kuwait is another ten percent, that would have given Saddam a fifth, and if he had been allowed to get away with that, he would have, I believe, reduced Saudi Arabia to an independent country in name only. And the idea that somebody like Saddam would have had that sort of strategic sway.

Are we allowed to use French expressions at the Brookings Institution these days? *Au dwa* over his neighbors we thought was strategically unacceptable, which is why we – why the President decided to do what he did.

And when I say there were no alternatives, well, they were tried. Diplomacy was tried, if you recall, sanctions were tried. The threat of going to war was tried. That's what Desert Shield was all about, starting in August of 1990, running up for approximately six months, and all of it wasn't working, and finally the President determined that unless something was done soon, that there would not be a Kuwait or a Kuwaiti population left to save. So that was a war of necessity. A war of choice, by contrast, is something very different. Traditionally, wars of choice – and, by the way, it doesn't only apply to the United States. Any government can undertake wars of choice, many governments have. Wars of choice usually have two conditions, but two very different conditions; one is that the interests at stake tend to be less than vital, and secondly, and more important, that there are other available options. But for whatever set of calculations, governments determine or judge that going to war is the preferable option, and this is what the United States did in 2003.

The reason I believe it was a war of choice was that nothing had happened to shape our interests at that point. Saddam Hussein was not about to break out. It wasn't as though he was about to reinvade Kuwait; it wasn't that he was about to invade Saudi Arabia or anywhere else. He clearly wasn't breaking out on the weapons of mass destruction

front, as we now know. He wasn't hiding weapons of mass destruction, he was hiding the fact he didn't have weapons of mass destruction. And there were alternative policies.

The United States could have extended the two no-fly zones over the country. The United States could have brought, and the world could have tried to bring Saddam up on war crimes. And most importantly, we could have shored up the sanctions. The Bush – 43, the Administration that just completed, talked about smart sanctions, but only had half of the effort. It made sanctions smarter in terms of allowing Saddam to import a lot more, and that took away the bogus argument that somehow sanctions were responsible for starving children in Iraq.

But they didn't do a lot or much at all to shore up sanctions in terms of all the sanctions violations, all the oil that was being – trade, the oil that was being exported to places like Syria, and in trucks to Turkey, and the goods and oil to places like Jordan.

And for several billion dollars a year, I believe the United States could have done a lot to shore up the sanctions, and it simply wasn't attempted with anything that remotely could be called enthusiasm. So this was a war of choice.

Let me make clear, I don't think all wars of choice are, per se, bad; wars of choice are just that, they're wars of choice. But in order

for a war of choice to be a justifiable conflict, it's got to meet two criteria. First, one has to look at the likely benefits and costs of going to war, and you've got to be pretty confident that the benefits will outweigh the costs. I mean it would be pretty nuts to undertake a discretionary war if you weren't confident that the benefits would outweigh the costs. And secondly, since it is a policy of choice, you'd have to also be persuaded that not only would the absolute assessment of likely benefits and costs turn out in the right way, but the relative position of using force would be better.

By that I mean that using force, the likely benefits and costs of using force, would be a better relationship or ratio than the likely costs and benefits of turning to other policies.

If you persuaded yourself after analysis that the likely costs and benefits of doing nothing, or doing diplomacy, or doing sanctions or what have you look better than using force, it would be absolutely nuts, to use a technical phrase, to turn to the use of military force.

So it's not, again, the wars of choice are bad, they just have to be held to a different, and I believe higher standard. I thought, you know, not only, though, was the second Iraq war a war of choice, let me say two other things about it. One is, unlike the way it was advertised, it was not a preemptive war. Preemptive wars are wars that are fought on the receipt

of a tactical warning, an immanent threat. There was nothing immanent about the Iraqi threat; at most, it was a potentially gathering threat. This was a classic preventive war. And unlike some distinctions, this is a distinction with the difference preventive wars enjoy considerably less legal and international diplomatic backing, so it was not much of a surprise that this war was not as popular as it might have been.

And secondly, and most important, I would argue that this was not simply a war of choice, it was not simply a preventive war, but ultimately it was a bad choice, and it was a bad choice badly implemented, adding insult to injury.

It was a bad choice, again, because not only did the United States have many other options, but also options that I thought were preferable and far less costly. And I'm thinking about both the direct costs of this war and the indirect costs of this war, the distraction cost, and the opportunity cost.

It was also obviously badly implemented, and this has everything to do with the small number of troops, the lack of planning for the aftermath, the way the aftermath was then mishandled, and the treatment of the Iraqi Army, and the treatment of people who have been parts of the Baath party and so forth. And I think an interesting question for historians of the future is whether had this been handled better -- it's

one of those counter-historicals -- if it had been done with the right amount of force, if it had been done with the kind of planning that several of us in the bureaucracy advocated, and then you'll see in the book, I actually reprint a memo I got declassified, it's the longest memo I've ever written in government, it was a 15 page, single-spaced memo telling – essentially suggesting all the lessons learned from all the previous American experiences with defeated countries, and all I can say is, every lesson we suggested was promptly rejected.

But if this had been done differently, could it have turned out better? I think the answer is, not only could it have, it would have. I believe that more could have been accomplished at a lower cost, which is part of the tragedy of what happened.

But I still believe, given the nature of Iraqi society, it would have been a difficult and expensive undertaking. So there would have been considerable cost and considerable indirect or opportunity cost regardless of – or even if it had been planned, as it could, and should have been, so I still believe it was an unwise choice. And it's not changed by the fact that things are going better now. I'm thrilled that things are going better now. I was just in Iraq recently, that's great that it's going better.

The only footnote to that I would add is, I don't believe it will continue to go better if the United States adheres to the announced timetables that the Administration and the Iraqi government have entered into. And I, for one, believe that it probably will be necessary to renegotiate those timetables once you have a new Iraqi government late this year or early next year, and what I would probably suggest is, we do away with complete withdrawals, we really go back to a conditions-based approach rather than a timetable-based approach.

But, again, even though Iraq is doing much better than it was, and even though Iraq is arguably better than it was with Saddam Hussein gone, it still seems to me it is not good enough to justify the cost, nor is it likely to get good enough to have justified the cost of the war. And, to me, all the costs are, again, the human cost to lives in America and Iraq, and otherwise, the military costs, the diplomatic costs, the strategic costs, which, among other things, include Iran's tremendous increase and influence around the region. There's lots of lessons, and I don't want to go on too long, and I'm happy to talk about any of this in whatever detail on the intelligence side, about, you know, the irony that the first war was begun with two false negatives.

We thought that Saddam Hussein didn't have much in the way of weapons of mass destruction, and we thought he wasn't going to

invade. Well, he clearly invaded and he clearly had quite a bit in the way of weapons of mass destruction.

The second war was undertaken with a multitude of false positives -- to again stand out, one is that Saddam Hussein did have weapons of mass destruction, and the other was that it was going to be easy.

The latter was not an intelligence assessment; the intelligence community called it right about how difficult it would be, but that was rejected by policymakers and selected academics who I believe allowed their policy preferences to get in the way of their analytic capabilities.

Some lessons: let me just suggest three and then I'll stop. One is the power and importance of assumptions. And anyone who's been involved in an analytic process, there's nothing that's more telling or biasing, if there is such a word, as assumptions. If you think Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction, what you do is, you interpret every piece of information and intelligence you get through that lens. And the problem with that is, it can be bias, so if Saddam Hussein does something and you say, he must be hiding weapons of mass destruction, that's the only thing that explains this. Well, it's not the only thing that explains it.

And many of us, and I include me in this, were simply not sufficiently sensitive to how assumptions influenced our perceptions. And the CIA, I believe, learned some lessons with this, and it's institutionalized more types of competitive analysis and red cells and so forth. But it's a powerful influence on the way any organization works.

And I would say in my experience with the CIA, in terms of analysis, because I said they got the aftermath essentially dead right, but when it came to weapons of mass destruction, it was wrong, not because they were pressured, not because they were politically motivated, but simply because, again, of assumptions in getting it wrong, and it may have been the residue of the false negative they had had the previous go around. Second of all, process matters, it's the sort of thing you teach ad nauseam at the Kennedy School, but just because Harvard teaches something doesn't mean it's wrong. In this case, it happens to be right, process matters.

And there's a direct link between the quality of the process and the quality of the policy. The process in the first Bush Administration, under 41, I believe is as close as we've had to the way it was meant to be.

And tremendous credit goes to 41 himself, but also to Brent Scowcroft, as much as anyone, who I believe best managed or balanced the twin hats of any national security advisor, of the dispenser of due

process and counselor to the President, and never allowed, in particular, counselor hat to get out in front of the dispenser of due process hat; on the other hand, didn't hold back from giving his views when he believed that they were unnecessary.

The President needed to hear some other views, even if it made him uncomfortable, just as an aside. If a national security advisor and if a national security process do not make a president uncomfortable periodically, it's not doing its job. The process worked, I believe, for the first time mostly. It wasn't perfect, it got a little bit rough around the edges after the military victory was done, with some of the aftermath the first time around, but by and large, I thought it did well, and it was quite a carefully regulated, shall we say, system.

The second time around, it was anything but. It was one of the less disciplined national security decision-making processes that I believe we've had. Certainly before presidents I've worked for, Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Bush, it was probably the least regulated of the four, particularly in the first term of the 43rd president. It became better in the second term.

And if you look at the process that led to the decision about the so-called surge, that was probably about as good as policy-making got

in the second Bush presidency, and that was I believe a good piece of policy-making.

But particularly in the first four years of the 43rd president, it was unsystemic, to be generous. The idea that a decision as big as going to war with Iraq could be made without a formal meeting that weighed out the pros and cons is staggering even in retrospect. The idea that responsibility for the aftermath could have been simply handed over to the Pentagon, which I always describe as the equivalent of playing tennis with someone and having him call lines on both sides of the court. The fact that so much intelligence and other information was simply allowed to be shunted aside, this is not the way a process is meant to be.

And President Bush, number 43, got – he may have gotten the process he was comfortable with, he may have gotten the process he wanted, but he didn't get the process he needed.

And one of the ironies is, he wanted to be a consequential president, and he succeeded. And he wanted to transform the Middle East, and he succeeded. But neither case would I suggest was in the way he set out to do it.

Lastly, one other lesson, which is the importance of local knowledge, it's a lesson we should have learned in Vietnam, but didn't, but you better know a country before you go to war with it. And if you go back

– it's actually very interesting to go back and read Frankie Fitzgerald's book, *Fire in the Lake*, and so much of her book is about the American lack of real understanding of the essence of Vietnamese society. Well, forge ahead 20, 30 years, here we are going to war with Iraq. I do not believe we understood important aspects of Iraqi society, between and among various sects within them, relationships between the center and periphery and so forth, the lack of local knowledge. And in both cases, whether it's Vietnam or Iraq, what people tend to do was impose or superimpose global abstractions, anti-communism in one, democracy promotion in the other.

And global abstractions don't fare well when they run up against local realities. And I believe it happened in Vietnam, which was our last major unsuccessful war of choice, and now again in the Iraq war, which is our most recent unsuccessful war choice.

Let me say one last thing and then I'll stop. What I find so interesting about all this, and, in part, what led me to write the book, is not simply that I was lucky or at times unlucky enough to be involved in all this close-up and just the kind of parallelism; I mean who would have thought 20 years ago, when the Wall came down, that the two or two of the defining events of the Cold War era would be two wars between a guy named Bush and a guy named Saddam Hussein. Not a lot of people

would have bet a lot of money on those things. So it's just one of those, you know, curiosities that's hard to resist. But also that in these two wars, to me, encapsulated the principal fault line of the American foreign policy debate. And by that I mean, when you take a step back, so much of American foreign policy, the dispute or the debate about our role in the world, is really over what it is we're setting out to do, what we should set out to do.

And there's one school of thought that talks about – that the principal business or focus of American foreign policy ought to be on the foreign policy of others, limited goals, adjustment and so forth, and this is very much the foreign policy of the 41st president, traditionally described or characterized or caricatured as realism, as opposed to the foreign policy of others, which essentially says the principal purpose of foreign policy is to change the domestic and internal nature of others, be it for moral reasons or also for reasons that mature democracies tend to make, tend to treat their neighbors better.

That may all be well and good, except it's hard to bring about mature democracies, in the mean time, we have a foreign policy to conduct with many countries that are anything but mature democracies. And this is very much the policy of a Woodrow Wilson, and to some extent, became the foreign policy of George W. Bush. And in looking at

the two Iraq wars, what you have is a good example, to me, of case studies that reflect this long standing debate with – over really the principal or correct purpose of American foreign policy.

So I go to case studies, there's instructive, and I think there's lessons for the future about when and how to wage wars of choice in particular, about preventive and preemptive wars.

And I just think that this is about Iraq, yes, but also, if you look at a lot of what's in Barack Obama's in-box, you look at North Korea, you look at Pakistan, you look at Afghanistan, you look at Iran, and you also look at Iraq, these issues, shall we say, are not simply historical issues, these issues are very much with us.

And even though right now the centerpiece of this administration's foreign policy is its handling of the economy, I would bet some money that before these four years, or if he's an eight year president, before the eight years are done, that his decision on several wars of choice would go a long way towards defining his presidency, just as decisions on wars of choice have gone such a long ways towards defining the legacy of some of his predecessors.

MR. POLLACK: Richard, how do you expect me to take this book seriously? How do you expect me to open a book and begin to read it and find the most egregious, the most outrageous, the most unforgivable

omission of sin in an opening paragraph since Vladimir Nabokov sat down to write a defense of pedophilia?

You write, "The prevailing view within the Administration of George H.W. Bush was that Iraqi military activity constituted a crude attempt to bludgeon Kuwait, oil rich, loaded with cash, and widely resented, the arrogance often displayed by its leaders into lowering its oil output and dropping its objection to a higher price for the precious commodity."

"It was a view that I shared much to the consternation of Charlie Allen, the crusty veteran national intelligence officer for warning who was convinced before anyone else that the Iraqis were not bluffing."

Richard, you, of all people, know Charlie Allen only warned of this because he was reading my work. What do you expect me to do with this? How on earth do I get past an outrageous first paragraph like that? How am I supposed to take this seriously? I have a suggestion. I have a penance for you. I suggest that for your next work, you edit the collected intelligence analysis of Kenneth M. Pollack, to be published in three to four volumes by your wife at Random House; we'll call it even.

After reading that, it took me several weeks to turn my attention back to Richard's book. But I was partly rewarded for doing so, because there are some redeeming features. And I would commend this

book to readers who can, like me, be the bigger man and get past that outrageous initial paragraph.

There's a lot of good to say about this book. Like Richard, it is smart, honest, balanced, and reasonable. And there were a couple of points that in particularly I wanted to highlight both positive, and actually one on which I wanted to challenge Richard, and, in fact, in many ways, the most important book, because I think it is – or most important point of book, because I think it is an important one for all of us.

The first point that I wanted to comment on, I think it was a very positive takeaway, and Richard has actually commented on both of these so far, is this point that Richard just made about good process producing good policy. It's something that we down here in Washington tend to get wrapped around the axel about and nobody else in the country gives a tinkers damn about, okay. And the fact of the matter is that it actually really does matter. Richard gave you the encapsulated version already, I won't dwell too much on it.

But what is striking is that, especially as you look over American policy-making over the last 20, 30, 40, I would argue 50, 60 years, it is remarkable how often it is the case that good policy is the product of good process, and how rare it is to find a bad process that resulted in a good policy.

These two things are not coincidental, this is not some kind of statistical epiphany, excuse me, not epiphany, some sort of statistical coincidence, this is something that goes hand and hand, and it's something that I think that we have to pay particular attention to.

We have a great deal of time on our hands to worry about the policy, and this is the policy doing this, is the policy doing that. And often times we miss the fact that it is the process that produces the policy and that ultimately implements it that is what is truly critical. It's something I'd like to see more of in the media. It's a hard thing to do, again, because it doesn't seem obvious to the average reader of the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, or if there are any other newspapers left out there with readers, will they pay attention to it either. But it is absolutely critical. And I thought that, in light of this, I would actually pose a question for Richard to ponder, and he can answer whether he would like to or not.

But the question that I'd like to pose to him is, looking at how the Obama Administration has set itself up, does he feel that it's a process that is a good one, that is likely to result in good policy. Because I absolutely agree with him, as I've already suggested, that when you look across history, and, you know, here I would add the Carter Administration, which did not have a very good process, the early Reagan Administration,

which had a terrible process, the later Reagan Administration, which got better.

Richard has already pointed out, in the initial part of the Bush 2 Administration was an absolutely disastrous policy process, and then later on it did get better and it produced somewhat better policy, although certainly not of the caliber of the first Bush Administration. So there clearly is a very strong correlation, and it's not merely a correlation, it is causation. And as we try to think about the Obama Administration, and as we try to think about whether or not it is handling foreign policy properly, I think it's worth it by starting out and asking the question, does it seem to have a good process, because long before we see the fruits of its policy, we can at least see how the policy is being made.

And as we've both just pointed out, as this books describes very nicely, and, in fact, in, you know, wonderful detail in terms of his own experience in the policy-making processes of both the first and second Bush Administrations, this is what ultimately may be decisive, what often seems to be decisive in determining whether or not we get good policy outcomes, so that's the first point that I'd like to make, and, as I said, would love to hear Richard's thoughts as we move forward.

Another issue that I found became – I think was starkly revealed by Richard's book is the dangers of group think. I don't think

we've thought too much about the second Bush Administration in those terms. But especially in those early years of the Bush Administration, I would suggest that it was a four year long exercise in group think. You had a small group of people who all believe the same things, who convinced themselves of the correctness of their views, and who proceeded in classic group think terms. It is one of the most dangerous phenomena in international relations.

You get a leadership that convinces itself of something, something that is often very badly misguided, something that they have often convinced themselves of for political or psychological or other reasons having often times little to do with the strategy or the actual needs of the country.

And then the same leadership screens out all disconfirming evidence. It purges dissenting voices, it discounts contrary information, it creates fantastic excuses or theories as to how to get around disconfirming evidence.

And what immediately leaps to my own mind were the semantics that the Defense Department engaged in about whether or not we were facing an insurgency in Iraq, and then whether or not we were facing a civil war in Iraq, when it was blatantly obvious to everyone else on the face of the planet that we were facing both of those things. But yet

this administration was utterly determined, this small group of people, to simply eliminate that as a possibility, to eliminate it as an issue that it needed to deal with because it didn't want to burst this bubble that it had created.

This is exactly the same kind of process that we have found with some of the most dangerous dictators in history. When you think about Hitler, when you think about Mussolini, when you think about Saddam himself, this is exactly what those dictators did. They created a reality based on what it was that they wanted to see happen, what it was that was best for them, they excluded all sources of information that disconfirmed them, in many cases physically removing people, in many cases physically removing the lives of those people, they created fantastic theories about how things were going to turn out their way, and, of course, in every case, including in our own, the results were rather tragic.

It strikes me that, having just gone through this experience, it's worth thinking about it a little bit more, and to think about what we do the next time around if we're faced with a similar situation, because this may not be the last time that we find a small group like this engaging in this kind of process of group think and leading the country down a very dangerous path. And, of course, Richard, as he very nicely describes in the book, had a ring side seat for all of this without ever having drank the

Kool-aid. And so another question that I'd like to pose to Richard as a way of kind of continuing this conversation is, what do we do about it? Not necessarily what should he have done about it at the time, I actually think he does a very nice job of talking about the conflicting pressures on himself and on other people in that situation. But I think that it is worth asking the question of, if we find the country in this grip of the same kind of group think in the future, what might we do about it then, what lesson ought we to learn this time around, and how can we apply it best in the future?

Now my challenge; I'm uncomfortable with Richard's dichotomous typology. I'm uncomfortable with this idea of wars of necessity versus wars of choice. The different conditions that Richard lays out, with the exception, the narrow exception of true self-defense, that is, being attacked by someone else, all of the other conditions are highly subjective. And it makes it, in my mind, very dangerous to try to establish an objective set of conditions for assessing decisions of whether or not to go to war based on these very subjective measures. Let me take the two Iraq wars and kind of put them in a slightly different perspective. Richard, as you know, in the book, very nicely, half the Congress voted, or almost half the Congress, voted against going to war in 1991. There were a lot of

people who opposed the Gulf War in 1991. You and I were not among them, but there were a lot of people.

There were a lot of very smart, patriotic Americans who were arguing to give sanctions a chance, who were arguing to give them more time to let them have their impact. You and I both felt that that was a huge mistake, that giving sanctions time was not going to cause Saddam to change his behavior anymore than it would cause a leopard to change its spots, and that ultimately, our ability to sustain pressure on Saddam was very limited, and it was fleeting, and it was going to perish sometime soon.

There were even people out there, and I suspect that Colin Powell was among them, who felt that our vital national interests were not threatened by the conquest of Kuwait, and who simply wanted to defend Saudi Arabia, who had no particular interest in forcing Iraq out of Kuwait. And again, you and I, and far more importantly, President Bush and General Scowcroft, disagreed. But nevertheless, our position was hardly unanimous. And so by going forward and suggesting that it had to be about vital interests and about not having any other alternative, I'm not sure that the Gulf War meets that test.

Second, the invasion of Iraq, you say rather definitively that the second Iraq war was not necessary, there were other viable policy options available to the United States, you've just made the point again, in

particular, reforming the sanctions regime in a manner that would have allowed Iraq more leeway, it could import, but also would have limited the resources coming under the regime's direct control, inspections could have been designed to provide considerable, it not total confidence that Iraq was not developing weapons of mass destruction.

The United States could well have accomplished a change in regime behavior and a change in regime threat without regime change. I confess I am skeptical. As you know, as you point out in the book, you guys tried to get smart sanctions, in resolution 1241, and despite your best efforts, and despite some very smart arguments about smart sanctions, the rest of the world just wasn't interested.

As you point out, they agreed to loosen the sanctions without agreeing to tighten the controls on military and – use items. And I see absolutely no evidence to suggest that that would have changed. And, in fact, what I read into the Volker report is, in fact, that things would have continued to deteriorate.

The same thing for the inspections; the inspections were over in December of 1998. And the only thing that changed was that when we had 150,000 troops on Saddam's border, he did then agree to inspections. But I see no reason to believe that our ability to maintain that kind of pressure on Saddam, and certainly to keep 150,000 troops in the

desert in 2003 was any greater than our ability to do so in 1991. And I think that Saddam made the exact same calculation.

In fact, it's one of the reasons why I was so unhappy with the second Bush Administration's rapid build-up in 2002/2003, because I recognize that it was creating a use or lose situation. We weren't going to be able to keep that military presence there for very long, we were either going to use it or we were going to have to pull it home because the pressures on it would be too great.

And so, again, I'm not convinced that those alternatives really existed there. It's why, when I look back on the 2003 invasion, I'm perfectly willing to admit, and as I've done in this form any number of times, that the case for war was much weaker than I and many other people, yourself included, believed at the time. But all of the post war revelations, and not just the Volker report, but the K report, and the Delpha report, and all of the work that JIFCOM has done, debriefing Iraqi's and collecting their documents, all of that has indicated to me that the case against war was not necessarily any stronger. And, for me, it's one of the great conundrums going forward in terms of what lessons did we learn from the invasion of Iraq.

There was an anti-war case to be made, but it wasn't the one that was being made at the time. The only person who really made

the right anti-war case was Scott Ritter, and we all thought Scott was nuts, okay.

And even to this day, it's hard for me to understand why Scott got it right. If he would simply say it was just a hunch, I would have more faith in his rationale, because all of the evidence, as we understood it, pointed in the opposite direction. And as I've said, what we've seen since the end of the war is that the sanctions were not holding, they were hemorrhaging, and the inspectors were highly unlikely to be any kind of a meaningful check because it was highly unlikely that we were going to be able to sustain inspections. And that's not a justification for war, it's simply a requirement for greater thought into this and what lessons we take away.

Let me widen the aperture a little bit as I conclude. You mentioned today, you mentioned the book several times, that the most common wars of choice are preventive wars, and I know that you say that not all preventive wars are bad, I certainly agree with that, and I just want to add a little bit to that, because there are different times elsewhere, and I think that it's too easy to take your argument as being one that simply says that all preventive wars are bad, and I'm certainly not going to stand up here and suggest that all preventive wars are good.

In fact, I'm quite squeamish about preventive wars. I think that they are very dangerous and you do have to add a great deal to it. But as a student of history, what stands out to me most is that the key difference between preventive wars and preemptive wars is really the matter of time. And I mean that in two different senses. First, there is the question of the eminence of the threat. One of the reasons that I was quite squeamish, and I know that you were quite squeamish about the invasion of Iraq, too, you more so than me, was the timing. Neither of us saw the threat as eminent. Both of us believed that we could wait. And I still think that that was absolutely correct and that has been born out.

But again, it is simply a matter of time and determining when the threat is most pressing. And that's a tough one to get right. I think back to the six day war, as you pointed out, Menachem Begin pointed out that the six day war was a war of choice, and it was a war of choice.

I think the evidence is pretty clear that the Egyptians were not planning to attack the Israelis, and what's more, the Israelis knew it, and the Israeli general staff, led by Yitzhak Rabin argued to Levi Eshkol this is our opportunity to eliminate a critical threat to Israel. And Levy Eshkol was deeply torn about this decision, and in the end, he decided to do it.

Now, of course, there are two different issues there with regard to time; one is, when would the Egyptians have gotten around to attacking Israel, because they almost certainly would have. And as the Israelis pointed out, and this is one of the great virtues of preventive wars, if you launch it, you get to fight at a time and a place of your own choosing, not of the adversaries. That's why preventive wars are so attractive, okay. And you never know exactly how much time you're going to have, or how little time you're going to have.

But in addition, there's also time in terms of hindsight, in terms of looking back on it. At the time, in 1967, the Israeli victory was miraculous, and the only people who were really unhappy about it were the Arabs themselves. But for most of the world, this was a great victory for not just the Israelis, but for the western world, for free people everywhere, okay.

And even for just the Israelis themselves, it was seen as an unmitigated relief from all of their fears and all of their problems. And, of course, now, looking back on the six day war, I think that most people would still agree, and certainly most Israelis would still agree, that the six day war was a victory for Israel, but it's seen in a very different light, because it brought with it the territories, and it brought with it the Palestinian problem, and it brought with it the terrorism, and all of these

things now that dwell on Israel's mind and on its security. And so the six day war has a different image in people's minds. And even our Gulf War, you know, one of the things that strikes me, and I know you responded to it in the book, was that in the years before the invasion of Iraq, the Gulf War had a kind of mixed reputation in many peoples minds.

You'll remember that the U.S. News and World Report book on the Gulf War was called Triumph Without Victory, and there was another one called Hollow Victory, and another one called Desert Mirage, and a whole bunch of others, all of which suggested that, in fact, the Gulf War hadn't been so terrific, and it was a mistake not to have gone to Baghdad, or not to have aided the Iraqi opposition, or not to have prevented the helicopters from flying.

I always thought that those were mistaken, I thought that, yes, there were some issues there, and maybe it wasn't a perfect war, but by God, it was a pretty good war, as wars go, and I think that's something that you and I both agree on.

But one of the things that strikes me is just how wonderful the Gulf War now looks in retrospect because we have the comparison with the Iraq war, where we can look at the invasion of Iraq and say, they did everything wrong, as you pointed out, every single thing you could ask them to do, they did wrong, and in the Gulf War, they got it pretty much

right. And all of that criticism is now gone. Nobody talks about it at all, whereas beforehand, the Gulf War had a kind of a mixed perspective – perception in peoples minds, it's now an unadulterated good.

Two last thoughts; one, you'll allow me to use the mother of all analogies, Munich. There's a lot of scholarship today on World War II that argues that the British and French should have fought Germany at the time of Munich. That was the moment to do so, okay, rather than waiting until the Germans were fully ready and launch the war on their own, the allies should have attacked then and waged a preventive war. There's a lot of scholarship in this. Williamson Murray's very famous book, The Change in the European Balance of Power in 1938/1939 is all about this.

And I think that most people, if you were to ask them, would say yes, that the world would have been saved a great deal of misery had the British and French attacked then rather than waiting. But, of course, again, when you look at it in hindsight, it's clear that that war would have looked very differently to people had it actually been waged without the knowledge of the actual war that was fought. Because at that time, in 1938, all Hitler was doing was collecting German minorities from other countries who wanted to be part of Germany, for the most part. All he was doing was revising the terms of a treaty that was widely considered unfair by most of Europe, and certainly by the British and most Americans.

And at that point in time, the British and French might have been seen as the ultimate aggressors, and the war could have looked very different. And that's not to say that the British and French shouldn't have fought in 1938. My concerns about British and French military capacity and what that would have looked like aside, I think that there is a very strong case for them to have been made – them to have fought then, and that it would have been a much better world.

But today, looking back on that war, how much would historical opinion have been divided? How many people would have considered that an unnecessary war of choice? And that's what concerns me moving forward.

As an ardent centrist like you, what bothers me most is the swinging pendulum. After World War II, we concluded that the mistake made in 1938 was not to have mounted that preventive war, and that landed us both in Vietnam and in Iraq. What I fear is that a categoric sense that only wars of necessity are worth waging is going to wind up producing something in the future that we'll regret just as deeply. Thank you.

MR. INDYK: Thank you, Ken. Richard, I presume you want to respond, but let me, before you do, while we get your mic on, is relieve

you of the need to respond to the first expression of outrage on Ken's part, because –

MR. HAASS: I want a promise in writing.

MR. INDYK: -- as Director of Research at the Saban Center, he's forced us to produce this volume, and the edited works of Ken Pollack's days in the intelligence agencies, and all he really wants from you is a blurb.

MR. HAASS: Well, as the President of the Council on Foreign Relations, I do not give blurbs, so that's easy. It's also easy to not answer Ken's first question about the Obama Administration process, it's too soon. And for God's sake, it's 130 days. I can't do the math, but they do have still approximately 44 months to go. A lot of the senior people are in place – are not in place, they haven't had a crisis yet on the National Security side really, it's just too soon to be making judgments or pronouncements about their process. This question about what to do about small groups of people who get it wrong, that's why we have this thing called not just the Constitution, but we have something called checks and balances, and we have independent institutions in this society exercising independent judgment and voicing it. And the problem in the post 911 moment in this country is, a lot of groups and individuals grew

mute. They were scared to voice their doubts for fear of looking weak or unpatriotic or worse.

I mean it's stunning to me that the vote on the 1990/1991 Gulf War barely passed by a few votes, and I thought then and think now it was a war of necessity, and the vote on the 2003 decision, which was a war of choice, passed overwhelmingly. And there's not a person on the planet, I can't say that, there are; it's hard for me to believe that an intellectually objective person would say that the reason the second Iraq war passed in a much more one-sided way was because the case was that much stronger.

that strange credulity and then some.

Now, you can be generous or you can be ungenerous, and the generous person would say that after 911, people were not prepared to run any risks, and even though there was no evidence that Iraq was involved in 911, just psychologically, people were not prepared to run risks and thought if there was any chance Iraq could break out of sanctions and the rest and become a threat, we had to act with it. The ungenerous analysis would simply be politics, that in the post 911 environment, there were not a lot of profiles and courage, and this was true of the Congress and this was true of the media and a lot of others. And I lean towards the ungenerous interpretation if I were to be honest.

I disagree with Ken's basic critique, which is not to say there's not subjectivity there, of course there is, this is analysis, this is not arithmetic, so, of course there's subjectivity, as there always is in any – in the formation of any – but policy is ultimately made, be it intelligence policy or public policy on the basis of judgments.

So we've got to – to say that judgments are, to some extent subjective, doesn't mean you shouldn't exercise judgment, it just means you've got to be aware of it. And, yes, there were people in 1991 who thought that if sanctions only had more time, they would work, but they could never muster an argument that had any persuasiveness to it, in my view. And there were those who thought that maybe losing Kuwait was – national interest, I just – that's where people disagree. Just because I say something is a war of necessity or others reach the same conclusion doesn't mean that it will be universally accepted. Again, this is not arithmetic, this is analysis, but I believe it's a compelling analysis.

The second time around, the second Iraq war, where I disagree with Ken is, the Administration of George W. Bush never made a concerted effort to shore up sanctions. There was never a foreign policy priority, not even remotely. It could have been done for several billion dollars, maybe not perfectly, but okay.

It's important to remember that all the Volker report corruption added up to is 15 percent of the money that Saddam Hussein got. Eighty-five percent of the dollars that reached Saddam Hussein was because the United States looked the other way. We looked the other way when oil was exported to Syria, we looked the other way when trucks went across the Turkish and Jordanian borders. We knew about every truck, we just never stopped it, because these were our friends.

So, you know, shoring up sanctions was never a serious priority. And when people like me proposed other ways of shoring up sanctions, there was zero enthusiasm for it. So, again, this was just, you know, there were alternatives, they just did not excite people. People wanted this war ultimately because after 9/11, the President and those around him wanted to show that the United States could be an agent of history and not simply a victim of history; they thought Iraq was going to be easy, they thought it was going to be easy to build democracy there, they thought it would then be a model, and they thought that momentum would prove irresistible to the region, that is why the United States went to war.

Lastly, and I don't know why Ken and others have trouble with this one point, which is, hindsight doesn't change any of this. Hindsight does not turn a war of necessity into a war of choice or vice

versa. Hindsight may allow us to make a better judgment about whether a war of choice was well implemented or not and so forth, but it doesn't change the basic characterization of what people were thinking at the time and why they went to war.

And again, the point is not that all wars of choice are bad. I think wars of choice can be very smart, I think wars of choice can be poor choices, and whether they're good choices or bad choices, they can be well or poorly implemented. But none of this changes because of hindsight, which is – so the first Gulf War was a war of necessity. And Ken is right, people were criticizing her for a while because the United States did not march on Baghdad and complete the job, but then after the second Iraq war got going, as Jim Baker said, people stopped raising questions when – out and speak about why we didn't go to Baghdad, because the same arguments that we used the first time around were used the second time, well, should have been used the second time around, and if they had been, those arguments would have held up.

But it doesn't change the difference in how you understand these wars. And it's still important, because any time a government of the United States, or any other country for that matter, exercises a war of choice, it had better be – it had better do its homework and do its analysis,

because it's going to have to, particularly in a democracy, it is going to have to explain to its own people why it undertook a war it didn't have to.

Wars of necessity we're far more forgiving over. By definition, you have to undertake them. We may get better as we get along, like we did in World War II, but there wasn't a debate about whether to do it. But wars of choice are just that. It pressures governments to perform up to a higher standard, because otherwise, people are going to say why did you bother, you could have done this, this, this, or that instead, and that's why it seems to me wars of choice are a risky undertaking for a government. It's not – I tried to develop this concept of justifiable war. It goes beyond the just war categories. I mean wars of choice can be totally justifiable if they turn out to be the best available foreign policy option, but they've got to meet that test.

MR. INDYK: Thank you, Richard. Just one comment and then a question. I was responsible for shoring up the sanctions regime in the two years before you took over again, and I reached the conclusion, it wasn't just me, but it was the conclusion of senior officials in the Clinton Administration that the effort was collapsing at the end of the Clinton Administration, and we – believe me, we spent two years working on shoring it up.

Now, I know you guys think we were feckless, but I can tell you, we succeeded in stopping the Syrian leakage by engaging in peacemaking with Israel. We failed to get the Saudi's to provide an alternative to Jordanian shipments of oil, and not for want of trying, we simply could not get them to do it. And we failed to get the Turks to at least escrow the proceeds from the smuggling that was going on across the Turkish border, because they would have cut off our ability to support the – in the north if we did that. And so I mean they were all very good reasons why we were unable to do the very things that you'd think were possible and were not tried in the Bush Administration.

So that's just – having said that, I still agree with you that it was a war of choice, but not because sanctions could have worked and weren't tried, but rather because, as Ken also said, Saddam Hussein did not pose an eminent threat to the American national interest, and that seems to be the critical definition, what distinguishes a war of necessity from a war of choice.

In that regard, the question, which is – all three of us believe that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. I don't know about you, but I know I can speak for Ken in saying that in the last years of the Clinton Administration, we would go to bed at night thinking for sure they were going to discover – the inspectors were going to discover where

the weapons of mass destruction were the next day. We had the intelligence, we had – and they never discovered anything in all of these inspections, and yet we never asked the question, well, maybe they're not there. Why was that? Why was there such a conviction that he had weapons of mass destruction that we never really stopped to think that he was actually bluffing us?

MR. HAASS: Well, I was wrong in the same way also, and I'd add, not in my defense, but just in partial explanation, I had a lot of company, not just the two of you, but a lot of other people. I don't remember ever reading a memorandum suggesting Saddam didn't have weapons of mass destruction. I don't remember any analyst ever voicing it at a meeting. And people knew I was against the war; no one ever took me aside and said, hey, by the way, Saddam doesn't have chemical or biological weapons, that never happened, so partially it was that.

I think a lot of it is, though, if you assume something, and we assumed that when Saddam would not be fully compliant with UN Security Council resolutions, that he – that was indirect proof that he must be concealing something.

But when you assume something, you fit everything into that edifice, or to switch metaphors, you see everything through that lens. So when we saw dirt being moved, therefore, Saddam must be taking stuff

out before the inspectors got there, or we saw a truck driving around which looked to be refrigerated, oh, that must be because there biological things in it. So every single piece of analysis, I mean of intelligence, was framed by or viewed through this intellectual mindset.

And Ken mentioned before the power of group think, the other power is mindset. If it becomes your lens, then everything fits. And I believe the lens was, not just for U.S. government officials in and out of the intelligence branch, but also for UN inspectors, even the French and German governments. They thought going to war was wrong, but they didn't doubt that basic fact. They just thought that the Bush Administration was overreacting to it and provoking a conflict. But they didn't challenge the basic assumption that Saddam was hiding stuff, and it shows to me the power of mindset.

MR. INDYK: Okay. Let's go to questions. Yes, please. Wait for the microphone and identify yourself, please.

MR. COVERT: Stanley Covert with the Kato Institute. I'm surprised that in a discussion of wars of necessity and wars of choice treaty obligations have not been mentioned. Mr. Haass said the first Iraq war was a war of necessity, but Vietnam was a war of choice. But we went into Vietnam because Vietnam was part of SETO an associated member, but nevertheless, part of

SETO, and we were the guarantors of SETO that was a treaty obligation.

Read the State Department's legal justification back then. They emphasized the treaty requirement. And so far in this discussion of wars of necessity and wars of choice, treaty obligations have not been mentioned, and they would seem, to me, to be critical in this distinction.

Now, I'm curious why – don't our treaties define the wars – distinguish the wars that are necessary from the wars that are matters of choice?

MR. HAASS: It's an interesting question. For the most part, in my experience, treaty obligations are needed so loose nor so tight as to be determinative. In virtually every sort of arrangement, there's a degree of discretion, indeed, American treatment commitments talk about, in accordance with our constitutional processes in every case. The idea is not to make them lockstep, but it's to allow the exercise of discretion. So it's a consideration, but it's not, to me, a determinate. And to your point, in many cases people raise legal or treaty obligations often to strengthen an argument that's not there based upon interest, and I would argue that was, in part, what we were doing in Southeast Asia.

MR. INDYK: Yes, please, over here.

MR. ROTHCHILD: Hello, Kenneth Rothschild. This applies particularly in wars of choice, and it's surprising to me how little the word

foreign policy has come up in this whole discussion because, in a choice, it's going to reflect on your foreign policy.

So my question is, there's been such a great underbelly in our foreign policy, if you go back to the history of the United States, a dark underbelly of imperial – conquest, what is, in your opinion, going to be a manageable foreign policy that America can work with as we go forward, and recognizing the changes in the world now and how we're going to set ourselves up regarding oil, regarding American hegemony and all those kind of issues, because we're going to be stuck in this position continually, not knowing why we're doing what we're doing, and we need a real public debate on this.

MR. HAASS: It may make you feel better or worse, probably worse, that's the subject of my next book. But the – let me say two things; one is, some of the trend lines are not good, that all things being equal, we're moving into a world in which the ability of the United States to control history is increasingly diminished. Or to put it another way, the ability of others to go their own way or push back is increasingly greater. And we're moving into a world of a greater, not a lesser, distribution of power in various forms. So for all these reasons, I believe this is going to be a more difficult era of history.

This is not to say the United States is in decline, we're still the most powerful country, so let me get in front of those who would caricature what I just said; it's just our ability to influence the course of history, all things being equal I believe will be lesser, not greater as we move ahead.

I do believe it has some consequences for what we're discussing here, which is, if I'm right, there may well be some wars of necessity popping up over the next generation or two, which leads me to think twice about wars of choice as a matter of course. So to come back to what Ken and I have been talking about a little bit, again, it's not that wars of choice are, per se, wrong or bad, but they are discretionary. So we don't want to exhaust ourselves or totally commit ourselves, all things being equal, to wars of choice, on the off chance one morning we wake up and we've got a war of necessity.

So I would simply say that ought to be a consideration, because, for argument sake, we face all sorts of challenges out there, including North Korea, conceivably including Pakistan, Iran can go many ways. Places like Afghanistan, which I believe are something of a war of choice, therefore, have to be viewed differently, or at least by a different measure.

But I would just say that the United States has to think very carefully about wars of choice, which, by the way, we've begun to do. And as everyone in this room knows, one way or another, we haven't gotten involved in things like Darfur in the military way, because people were just very worried about increasing the pressure or burdens on the U.S. military at a time it was already fairly stressed.

But I would suggest, going forward, that's – some of those trade-offs are going to become even more salient for the United States.

MR. HUGHES: Hi, Art Hughes – Institute. I want to come back, Richard, to your comment about Bush 41 being "there from the get go." I remember the morning after the invasion, after all that great work that was done overnight under Brent Scowcroft's leadership, with your hand in it, the President called a meeting, and Cheney, I was working for Cheney then, came back over across the river, called a few of us in, Colin Powell, Bob – myself and a couple of others, and was clear that, at least in that meeting, the President did not declare himself and was very reserved about what might be done.

And I remember when Cheney asked Powell, Powell was very, very reserved, very reluctant, and there was really a messy, bad meeting. But there was no doubt about that Cheney thought, he had us do a memo. So my question is, was President Bush convinced that we

need to go to war by your great memos, or was it the great memos that we did for Cheney that he sent over?

MR. HAASS: Well, first of all, there's room enough on the planet for many great memos, Art. And I don't want you to feel in any way that your great – you shouldn't feel that any of those memos – no, you're right, the first National Security Council meeting in 1990 was – messy would be generous, it was all over the place, I think, in part, because when a crisis begins, it takes a little bit of time for people to get their footing, but the President came out of the meeting upset, and so was Scowcroft, and so, in part, because it was so messy, and he was genuinely unhappy over the mood of it. And that's why literally as he walked out of the first meeting, he said, second meeting can't go the same way. And that's when he – Brent and I come to the same position, and Brent said you should write a memo for the President, send it to him. He was going out to Aspen and all that.

And the President agreed, and he actually said, I want to set the tone at the second meeting right at the outset so it's not a repeat of the first meeting. And Brent said, you can do that, Mr. President, but it would be wrong, because once you set the tone, there aren't going to be a lot of people volunteering disagreements.

So he said, why don't you let me do it, this being Brent, and Larry Eagleburger, who was then acting because Jim Baker was off killing moose or something somewhere in Asia with Chever Nadzi hadn't – was a day still away, and then Dick Cheney because the – so at the second meeting, Scowcroft, Eagleburger, and Cheney all made the point essentially that this was unacceptable. And the word unacceptable is used all the time, but every once in a while people actually mean it, which is a good thing, and this was one of the times when they meant it. So I thought the consensus formed pretty good. Bush had an unfortunate phrase, I can't remember if it was the first or second meeting, he invited the press in, and the question was quickly raised, are you yet debating or contemplating military force, and Bush said no.

Now, what he meant to say was, we're still trying to resolve this diplomatically, it's too soon to be talking about military options. But the press ran with that to mean that we weren't yet prepared to do everything that was necessary to reverse the aggression, he hadn't intended it that way, and it was one of those groan moments, so it created the impression that he wasn't quite – and that it was Thatcher or whatever who stiffened this fine, and that's where the don't go wobbly, this is a 30 second aside on that.

So this phrase, don't go wobbly, entered into the political lexicon, and people thought Margaret Thatcher had to stiffen George Bush's spine. It turns out she actually said the phrase several weeks later, and it was when there was a debate in the Security Council about whether passing yet another resolution that would give the international community the right to use force, I think it was, to impose the sanctions. And Thatcher said, we don't need another resolution, I hate all these resolutions, I hate the United Nations, we can do all these things under Article 51 in the right of self-defense, we don't need to wait for UN authorization, and Bush and Baker said, you're right, we don't have to, but it's smart to wait, because Baker said, just give me another 24 hours and I will keep this international coalition together, and she said, well, don't go wobbly, George, and that's when she said it.

But it wasn't in the context of whether to resist the aggression, it was really a tactical moment on whether to literally take an extra 24 hours to give Jim Baker a chance to weave together a concerted response, which he was able to do.

So I thought the consensus was pretty strong, if not universal about the – but also, let me say one other thing, you know, history looks a lot neater in retrospect. There were some big ideas out there – you're going to send 500,000 American soldiers across the world,

park them in the desert for a couple of months, go to war, that's a big idea. I mean it's not actually a matter that had a lot of other people been elected a year and a half or whatever it was before the – all of them would have come to that conclusion and done exactly that. That was a big idea to do that. I mean we didn't know that the war would turn out exactly the way it did. So anyhow –

MR. INDYK: Gary Mitchell.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks; Gary Mitchell from the Mitchell Report. Richard, I want to ask a question about process, but not the kind of process that you and Ken have been talking about in the development of policy, but it comes from your book, it's about the process of having written this book.

You quote Halberstam; Halberstam said to you, a book like this does not have a simple preordained linear life, a writer begins with a certainty that the subject is important, but the book has an orbital drive of its own, it takes you on its own journey, and you learn along the way.

And I wonder if you could share some thinking with us about the Halberstam syndrome, if you will, about how the writing of this book changed your thinking, did you – did it go in the direction that you thought it would, just, you know, this is also – this is a memoir and that's not the genre' you're known for.

MR. HAASS: Many will say I will continue not to be known for it. It's not often I'm at a loss for words, as I proved here today. Whenever you write, you always drill down several layers more, so some of the lessons about assumptions, my own and other people, about the lack of local knowledge, some of those things were not as salient.

I was quoted a few years ago in the New Yorker saying I would go to my grave not knowing why the United States launched a second war; I'll still go to my grave, but I think I've got a pretty good idea now of why we launched this war, and it was not weapons of mass destruction.

The more I talked to people and thought about it, the more I really did get a sense that taking out the Taliban didn't do it for people, that Afghanistan was this one off country which people were strategically pessimistic about and thought that no matter what we invested in it, there wouldn't be much to show for it; we couldn't change Afghanistan, and even if we could, there wouldn't be a ripple effect, which is one of the reasons why being the person in charge of the future of Afghanistan was one of my many frustrating incarnations, because I couldn't get people to commit forces and dollars to the proposition. But Iraq was something very different. And also the more I – I kept thinking that maybe stuff was going

on that just I didn't know about, that I had been frozen out, and the answer was, yeah, I was.

I mean I'm very honest, I was not nearly as close to the center of the second Bush Administration as I was to the first Bush Presidency. But then I found out that there was no center in some formal way. The informality of the policy process was quite stunning to me, and the lack of a kind of careful, almost handicapping and weighing against things.

I'm struck by how the President got a process he was comfortable with, and how that's a really dangerous thing for any president. Comfort levels are really – and it's easier said then implemented, though, because when you work in these jobs, these are, you know, seven day a week jobs, and it's very hard for – I mean the dilemmas of being a policy-maker, Ken alluded to it, are very real, and to be the skunk at the garden party means you don't get invited necessarily to a lot of garden parties, and it's just very tough. How often do you – and it just forced me to think through, because so many people were emotional with me and angry at me for not resigning or not speaking out, including my wife, you know, at times, calling me an enabler, and these are rough issues, which is, how do you balance the idea that – you still believe you

can have influence in all that without, you know, selling out what you believe.

Anyhow, when you write books like this, you struggle with the – but I keep coming back to one thing. When I was a professor at Harvard, I couldn't get in there as a student, so don't think I'm bragging, I got rejected from there, but I did get into the back door of teaching, and one of the things I used to teach when I taught foreign policy to these overachievers was the idea that foreign policy is hard – foreign policy is hard.

And thinking about the trade-offs at time, what your priorities are, and trying to get things accomplished, where do you compromise, where do you hold the line, these are tough, practical, as well as ethical decisions, and for me writing it, it was a way to try to come to terms with that. But like a lot of hard things, you don't really solve them, all you can basically do is set them up. But Ken and Martin both have – you should ask them because they both have experience in the policy-making world, Ken's had the experience in the intelligence world. This whole question of telling people what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear is, again, it's easier to describe than implement, because very quickly you can find your access badly diminished, and you've got to constantly then weigh the trade-offs there.

Better to get in the room with a little bit of intellectual honesty than be shut out of the room with complete intellectual honesty, and that's a real issue.

MR. INDYK: Let me just pursue it, and this might not be a fair question, and I'm trying not to make it a hypothetical question. But if you found yourself in a future administration in a similar situation, would you resign?

MR. HAASS: Well, the reasons you resign, it seems to me, and I talk about two reasons to resign, one is when it's a really, really big issue, and it goes against you, and you feel, not like I did in this, that I was 60/40 against, but it's a 90/10 or 100 to nothing. If you're Elliott Richardson, you know, the massacre, you just can't live with the decision of a Richard Nixon. Well, for reasons I still don't understand, I'll be honest with you, Cy Vance – why that was a matter of principal I don't understand, but anyhow Cy Vance felt it was so – other people over the expansion of the war into Cambodia and – who left, or the people who left over the Balkans, when they felt that we weren't doing enough in Bosnia, if it's big enough, and your opposition is also big enough, I think that's a situation where you'd say, Mr. President, if I were in a senior position, you need someone in this senior position who can go out day to day and

represent this policy enthusiastically, not just with great discipline, but with great conviction, I can't do that for you; so I can imagine that.

Or in this case, my reasons were more prosaic, that it wasn't – because, again, my opposition to the war wasn't that fundamental, because I did think they had weapons of mass destruction, but it was just a series of decisions.

I lost – I mean, look, when you go into government, you don't expect to win them all, but you do expect to win some. And it gets very hard to just about lose them all and then to have to go out and defend the policy as though you had gotten your way; again, you do that – I'm prepared to do that on Tuesdays and Thursdays, that's part of what being a professional is, but to do it Monday through Saturday, week in, week out, gets old, and that's the other reason, that you just basically say this isn't a good fit.

So I could see in the future, if I ever were to be back in government, those situations coming up, and that's why you want to think hard before you go back in, you know, you're at a level where you think you – but also you feel that you're somewhat on the same page.

MR. INDYK: But you wouldn't say this is a war of choice rather than a war of necessity, therefore, I'm not going to go along with it?

MR. HAASS: Well, I could argue against the war of choice in an administration. It doesn't mean I necessarily would resign over it. It would depend upon – it could be a big war or a small war, my opposition could be fundamental, it could be muted, it just depends. It's not a cop out. I don't think you want to – I mean resignation should not be your default option. I think resignation is a pretty extreme option. You get in the habit of resigning every time a decision goes against you, you're going to have a fairly truncated career. I've learned not to say certain things. It's good, you can report this. Every once in a while the thing trips in and you don't necessarily say every thought that comes into your mind. But I think in extreme, you should do it, but I think resignation is a fairly rare situation. And I think there is a case for not resigning in many situations because you believe you can still have influence, you still fight, you shape the implementation of the policy, or there's 26 other policies you can influence.

People forget in government, in the time of Iraq, in this situation, or at any time in government, you've got 86 other things in your in-box. So if you can't win the day on this, then focus on some of the others.

Was it Richard Revere's book, Richard Reeves, I'm getting my historians mixed up, the one about the Kennedy presidency.

MR. INDYK: Reeves.

MR. HAASS: Reeves, which is – it's a sensation book, and one of the reasons it's sensational, and it was one of the books that influenced me in writing this, is it lets you know what it's to be like on the receiving end of the in basket. And historians forget that policy-makers almost never, at a senior level, work on one issue, they're working on multiple issues. So if you don't have your way on this, then you've got to fight ten other battles. It's when you're losing every other one, too, that you wonder whether you're in the right place. But I don't think resigning is the normal or default option for any official, and I don't know if either of you feel differently.

MR. INDYK: Well, unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, we have to bring this to a close. It's not a matter of choice, it's a matter of necessity.

MR. HAASS: Well done, Martin.

MR. INDYK: I'll finish the sentence, that you buy this book.

MR. HAASS: Better done, Martin.

MR. INDYK: I think you've been treated to a fascinating entry to it, and I hope you will all go out and now buy it, if you haven't already. But in the meantime, please join me in thanking both Richard and Ken.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

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