

**THE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC
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“THE WAY FORWARD IN IRAQ”

FEATURING:

**THE HONORABLE IKE SKELTON (D-MO)
THE HONORABLE JIM SAXTON (R-NJ)
THE HONORABLE JIM MARSHALL (D-GA)
THE HONORABLE “MAC” THORNBERRY (R-TX)**

INTRODUCTION:

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MODERATED BY:

RAY DUBOIS, CSIS SENIOR ADVISOR

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JOHN HAMRE: Thank you all for coming. I'm delighted you're here. We had hopes that there would be interest in this debate series, but I guess our timing is unusually fortuitous to pick this topic the day before the president is going to speak to the country about plans, so it probably a little bit of something to do with the turnout. I'm delighted that you all could be here.

My name is John Hamre. I'm the president here at CSIS and I'm going to turn to Ray Dubois to run our session this afternoon. I'm going to go upstairs and get Mr. Saxton. He is on a train. It arrives about three minutes ago, and I'm going to go up and get him and bring him down, so forgive me for stepping out for a few minutes.

Let me just say to our members, than you so much for agreeing to do this today. I'm very, very pleased that you've been willing to kick off – this is the first of a series that we're going to have, having debate and discussion on the major topics facing America, looking ahead for the next two years.

Let me just say one little thing by way of introduction. One of the first things I did when I came to CSIS – this was about six years ago – was we held a war game that was called Dark Winter, and it simulated a smallpox attack on America, and it was very realistic and very frightening. And I remember sitting in the middle of this National Security Council meeting and it was truly scary, and I came to realize the only two people at that table that I trusted were politicians. (Laughter.) Now, I say that very intentionally. I mean it. It was true. I mean, we had people that had been former Cabinet secretaries and deputy secretaries, but the only two people in that room were the guy that was a sitting governor who was playing the role of a governor, and a former senator was playing the role of the president – two politicians. And I came to realize what a very, very powerful expertise it is that they have. It isn't that these guys are smarter than these experts that they bring around them in the National Security Council, but they do something nobody else does. They go back and they talk to average citizens, and they have to make sense to average citizens. And what a powerful thing that is.

And I came to realize – I took civics, like all of you, back in the eighth grade, and nothing sunk in like that moment when you came to realize that it's sitting politicians that have to go back and explain their actions. That's the bedrock of this country's government. And so I want to thank you for coming, each of you. I've had the privilege of working with you in various ways.

Oh, Mr. Saxton, I was going to come up and get you and I apologize. I'm glad you're here. Thank you for coming. And the timing is just perfect.

Let me turn to Ray Dubois. Ray is with us here at CSIS. I'm very, very proud to have him here, and I'm going to let him kick this off for real.

Thank you very much again, members. I'm glad you're here.

RAY DUBOIS: Thank you, John.

As many of you know, I spent the last five years at the Pentagon and joined CSIS as a senior advisor last March. During those five years I was usually – not usually, always on the other side of the table than these gentlemen, having testified in front of the House Armed Services Committee probably no less than 12 or 14 times. I am proud, however, to be on the same side of the table as they are.

As you know, Chairman Skelton from Missouri will be speaking first. Congressman Saxton, Thornberry and Marshall will follow. But let me ask you all in the audience to turn off your cell phones so that we don't have any awkward moments during the next 80 or 90 minutes.

Now, let me also set some ground rules and give you a little background as to how this forum – the first of probably a dozen over the next 12 to 18 months that CSIS will have on the major issues in national security policy facing the country. When we asked these four distinguished members of the House Armed Services Committee to spend approximately 10 minutes each to articulate their observations and comments with respect to what they believe the U.S. government ought to be doing in Iraq, there was no anticipation, at least on our part, that 10 minutes each would be sufficient time to detail a way-forward proposal, but our hope was that this forum would give the members – these four members of the House Armed Services Committee – an opportunity to, shall we say, properly inject themselves into this ongoing and contentious but very critical debate prior to congressional hearings and, as John pointed out, just prior to the president's speech on this topic.

Now, as all of you know, there is no shortage of advice or opinion as to new policy initiatives with respect to Iraq, and besides the report from the Iraq Study Group, and even the 6 November Rumsfeld memo, the AEI Kagan-Keane recommendations, the speculation on the part of the Joint Staff in terms of their deliberations, to name but a few the media has been flooded with editorials and op-eds as to where the president should end up in terms of his conclusions and recommendations.

I think all of us are, in point of fact, in search of a concise statement of goals and objectives for U.S. policy in Iraq with some corresponding roadmap to achieve said objectives. And in this context one might also consider the post-conflict reconstruction aspect of our involvement in Iraq and whether or not we should enhance our ability to do those sort of things or whether the U.S. government should refrain from the business of nation building and exporting our political philosophy.

And finally, as I'm sure will come up at certain time today, there is the troubling issue of the capacity of the struggling government in Iraq, consumed as it is by factional fighting, to establish any kind of sustained governing coalition.

Now, after the members have spoken, each in turn, I will lead off with a question or two, and then open the discussion for questions from the audience, with the last question being approximately at 2:25.

Mr. Chairman – the members will speak from the table. As you know, you have their bios in your handouts. Chairman Skelton, I believe nearly 30 years a member of the House of Representatives from the state of Missouri, Fort Leonard Wood, Whiteman Air Force Base, among other military installations in his district. We look forward to hearing your observations, Mr. Chairman. The floor is yours.

REPRESENTATIVE IKE SKELTON: Ray, thank you very much. For as long as I've known him – you know, you can give him a fancy title from the Pentagon, you can make him a high-ranking official in CSIS, and God love him, he still doesn't get it: It's Missouri (pronounces it Missoura), not Missouri. (Laughter.)

This last Thursday I was over on the House floor – we had just finished a vote – and I was walking along toward the back, heading to the door to come back to my office, and I heard a voice say, “Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman.” And then it dawned on me that it was I that he was – (laughter). It's a real thrill to have the opportunity and the challenge that we have today.

I had the opportunity, along with Mike Conaway and John Porter and my friend Jim Marshall, who is seated here at the table, to visit our troops in Iraq on Christmas Day, and that was an experience I, needless to say, will never forget. The troops wrote me, we spent most of our time with the 1st Cav. and with a Kentucky National Guard unit, all from small-town Kentucky with the accents that went along with it. And we had dinner that night with various members of different American troop bodies that gathered with us at the hotel that evening. Heard no one that was discouraged, no one that was not fully understandable of his or her mission. And out of all of this, if there's any star in this whole show, which is a very difficult show, it's the young men, young women in the American uniform, and I hope that we do not ever forget that. We owe them a debt – a great debt of gratitude, and we're very thankful for their dedication and their patriotism.

We're currently engaged in two wars, and I know some people would fuzz those two together and call them the war on terror when in truth and fact, if you look at the conflicts closely, you will see that the terrorists began with their genesis in Afghanistan, and of course we did the right thing, going in there and toppling the Taliban government, going after the al Qaeda, and we continue. And needless to say, we're very pleased that the NATO troops are in there with us.

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The other war is that in Iraq. The goals of the terrorists, on the one hand that came from al Qaeda, and the goals of the insurgency in Iraq are different. Those from the terrorist group – the al Qaeda – want to create a caliphate all across the Middle East – a religious caliphate – Muslim caliphate. In Iraq, the insurgency – which, of course, is aided by foreign fighters and al Qaeda, mostly Ba'athist, Sunni, Muslim – want to regain control of that government by their means.

On top of that, we have the highly unusual and yet very disturbing sectarian violence that overlays all of this – Sunnis killing Shi'ites, Shi'ites killing Sunnis, Shi'ites fighting fellow Shi'ites for control of southern Iraq. Kind of like Mark Twain once said, "The more you explain it to me, the more I don't understand it." It's a very, very complex situation.

Obviously the Maliki government is struggling to control the violence. Not long ago when Prime Minister Maliki was here, a few of us had the opportunity to have breakfast with him. And I asked him what concerns him the most, the al Qaeda and the insurgents or the sectarian violence. And he immediately said, "The sectarian religious violence," and went on to explain how this is the only thing that can lead to true civil war. And I think we find that the Maliki government is having a very difficult time controlling that violence.

The outcome of this effort in Iraq is of national security interest that can have repercussions literally all over the Middle East and, in theory, literally all over the world. One thing could lead to another. It's rather interesting, Ray. You ask any outstanding historian, what's the connection between the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo, on the one hand, in the trench warfare in France and Belgium on the other hand? And your answer is immediately, none. Well, we, of course, don't know where any of this could end in the Middle East. And that's why I'm concerned that we have a positive outcome there in Iraq. However, it must be up to the Iraqis to do it. It must be up to them to chart their own course. If they do not, it will not be able to have come to pass.

There are other interests that we have, and that is the one of readiness, and General Schoomaker not long ago, and the commandant of the Marine Corps not long ago testified before us about the readiness situation of the Army and Marine Corps in particular, and the dire shape of the equipment that is causing the low level of readiness of those two wonderful organizations. Forty percent of all of the Army equipment, whether it be in reserve, National Guard, or active duty is in either Iraq or Afghanistan. Consequently, it is impossible to fully train so many of your units that are here within the continental United States – in the United States – to prepare them to either deter or engage in conflict elsewhere, heaven forbid. But that is a deep concern of mine.

Let me mention briefly – we see a very recent change in American leadership. I look forward to working with Secretary Bob Gates. I had the opportunity to know him and work with him briefly when he was over the CIA and I was on the Intelligence Committee a good number of years ago, and my impression was very positive then, as it is now. I want to give thanks to General Schoomaker and General Abizaid for the tremendous work that they've done. I know it's difficult in both positions, and I don't want them to go unappreciated. Admiral Fallon I know, General Petraeus I know – they're outstanding choices, and I compliment General Casey on becoming the new nominee for the Army chief of staff. I think those three appointments are very much positive.

A great deal has been said about the so-called military surge in Iraq. I, of course, have some real serious concern about this, and I'm sure we will discuss this at length. I think there should be an overarching goal for a – our redeployment from that country, turning it over to the Iraqi forces, having given them as much solid training as we have and will be, because it is their country to either win or not. There's a certain dependence that is apparent within the Iraqi government and within the Iraqi military, as long as it is known that there is no known policy that we will be redeploying troops. Even if it's a battalion, it should be done in the near-future.

And do I think that the proposed troop increase will be of help? Well, this last summer there was a troop increase, you will recall, that really did no good in my opinion whatsoever. And I think other military leaders will tell you that. So with that, I turn it over to those experts that I have the privilege of working with on the Armed Services Committee.

Ray?

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

In the tradition of bipartisanship here at the center, I'm going to ask Congressman Mac Thornberry of Texas – Republican of Texas – who has been on the Armed Services Committee for more than 10 years, as I understand it, and also a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. And as I was reminded the other day, Defense News referred to him as "a smart hawk who's not afraid to buck the party line."

I give you Mac Thornberry of Texas.

REP. "MAC" THORNBERRY: Thank you, Ray, and I appreciate the chance to be here with my colleagues to discuss this important issue.

You know, we have had a change in Congress, and change always brings new opportunities. I think we have the opportunity to do something good for the country, because I suspect most of us would agree that in the past Republicans have been too protective and compliant with the administration's witnesses, and I suspect most of us would agree that Democrats have been too willing to find differences to be used as partisan attacks.

Now neither side can abdicate responsibility for the consequences of what happens. We both have responsibility. And so there's a chance to not have a policy of one party or another but a broader bipartisan policy. And I think CSIS has helped show us the way on how to do that.

A couple of years ago they came out with a report called "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols," but it also talked about us in Congress. One of the things they said, Mr. Chairman, is that too often in Congress we get bogged down in the minute details of

things or else in the parochial concerns and don't spend nearly enough time looking and talking and debating the bigger national issues, the bigger strategic issues. And the pity of that is that then you end up with a Clinton policy on this or a Bush policy on that and no national policies on just about anything.

We've clearly got to do better, and this is an opportunity to do better, because if the folks that we're against in Iraq or the folks we're against otherwise in the war against the terrorists think they can outlast us, they're just going to come at us harder. And so the importance of having a national policy that will survive administration to administration, Congress to Congress, I think, is as great as it's ever been.

I'm not going to sit up here and prescribe troop levels or tactics for General Petraeus. He's very capable and probably the best we've got. And besides, we've got enough armchair generals on television and some really smart people who are putting out books and articles and proposals that are worth looking at.

I want to step back and just try to make three basic, simple points that I think get overlooked, or at least they seem to to me in this discussion.

One is that the conflict in Iraq and the broader war or struggle against the terrorists is primarily a political and ideological struggle. Now, there's been a fair number of books that have talked about this sort of warfare. If you want to read an excellent summary of it, the first chapter in the new counterinsurgency manual that General Petraeus wrote is a great description of counterinsurgency.

One that Mr. Saxton and I have talked about before is "The Sling and the Stone," which describes that in this sort of warfare, the enemy uses all available networks – political, economic, social and military – to convince the enemy's political decision-makers that their goals are unachievable or too costly. It does not attempt to win by defeating the enemy's military forces. It directly attacks the minds of the enemy decision-makers. It can be lengthy, measured in decades, and requires patience.

Sometimes when I listen to some of the debate on Iraq, what we should or should not do, it seems like that I've walked into the middle of a conversation where people have lost touch with this reality. Of course we cannot be beaten militarily in Iraq. Roadside bombs and explosive devices are not military weapons. They're political weapons. And the true target of those weapons is here at home. It includes the people in this room. And if they can convince a few hundred people in Washington that it's not worth sticking with it, then they're going to win.

And so I'd suggest that we've got to keep in mind that this is a political, an ideological struggle where nobody can afford to sit on the sidelines and critique by saying, "Bush ought to do that; Petraeus ought to do that; Gates ought to do this." We are all on the field too.

And so the press releases we send out, the letters we send out, the votes we cast, are part of this struggle. And it just seems to me that Congress cannot win this struggle on its own, but Congress may very well be able to lose it on its own if we don't keep this larger political-ideological struggle in mind.

The second point I'd like to make is that we also have to keep Iraq in a larger context. It is often convenient to look at Iraq as in a nice neat little box, and whatever happens is going to affect those people, but the consequences don't really extend much beyond that.

One of my problems with the Iraq Study Group report is that it gave very little attention to the consequences of Iraq and how it fits into the larger scheme of things in the region and in the world. And yet I also note that last month there was a newspaper report of a red team exercise. I don't know if it's true or not, but they looked at what might happen if we withdrew from Iraq. And the result was that, just as the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan emboldened and enlarged al Qaeda, just as our withdrawal from Somalia encouraged them to go find more targets, our defeat in Iraq would expand the numbers of terrorists and embolden them to seek new strategic targets.

Now, you may agree with that or you may disagree with that. The point is, are we even asking the question? Are we able to step back and look at Iraq in the broader strategic context and what it means?

There's an interesting op-ed in the Post this morning that you can't look at these things in terms of six months, but it's in terms of six to 10 years in the historical tradition of countries coming out of a dictatorship. Can we look not only at the broader view but the longer view? I worry about our ability to do that.

The third point is that we have got to demand that the rest of government perform as well as the military. I agree with everything Ike said about how our folks have performed. One of the impressions I have strongest from my first visit to Iraq was you would go and meet these folks, and in the morning they would have to knock down doors and haul bad guys out to jail; in the afternoon they were passing out soccer balls to the kids or getting the sewers fixed. They were having to do everything.

But I know of – and they've done a great job. But I know of no one who thinks the rest of the government, our government in Iraq, has done a good or even an adequate job. You read these accounts of life in the green zone with some dismay at the incompetence, the lack of knowledge and understanding and sensitivity.

One way or another, our country is going to have to get better at these other – whatever label you want to put on them – post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction stuff, because we are not very good right now. As a matter of fact, those of you who have read Tom Barnett's book, "The Pentagon's New Map," know that he suggests we've got to have two militaries – one, big violence, knock down the doors, high-tech; the other more

focused on post-conflict stabilization, because we're going to have a lot of that to do in the 21st century and because they require very different kinds of skill sets.

Now, the Army doesn't like that very much; I understand. But the point is, we'd better look at a way to do it. Nearly every proposal you hear is going to expand the commanders' discretionary funds because it's about the only way we've ever figured out to get money where it belongs on the ground in some sort of a timely, effective manner, because the rest of – whether it's by ineptitude or regulations, we can't seem to do it any other way.

And so my point is that in a political and ideological struggle, we are not fielding a full team. Maybe the military is going to have to do everything, but that's not the ideal as we move ahead.

So I'd just conclude by saying obviously nothing guarantees success in Iraq. They're going to have to want to live together more than they want to seek vengeance against one another. But we, our government and our Congress, are going to have to do the best that we can. We're going to have honest disagreements, but this is way too important to play politics with.

I worry a little bit that there is a soft bigotry of low expectations when it comes to Congress. People are not going to expect us to do more than focus on the minor or the parochial things. You all need to help us do our best, hold our feet to the fire, step up to the plan. And, if so, we have a real success in Iraq.

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you very much, Mac.

Next I'll call on Congressman Jim Marshall, former mayor of Macon, Georgia, re-elected to his fourth term recently, and, interestingly enough, I believe, just completed his 10th trip to Iraq this past Christmas.

For purposes of full disclosure, he was a classmate of mine in college. We've decided that we're the only two, perhaps three members of our class who served in combat in Vietnam, which is a little bit different from the generation of our fathers and our grandfathers. Nonetheless, Jim has, in my view, turned out to be a rather articulate and balanced member of the House Armed Services Committee, and I look forward to hearing what he has to say.

Jim.

REP. JIM MARSHALL: Thank you, Ray. I appreciate having this opportunity. And, you know, Ike mentioned that I was in Iraq on Christmas Day, and I was. I actually hadn't traveled there with Ike. I was traveling with the chief of staff of the Army. But Ike was kind enough to give me a ride back to the United States, and I thought that boded well as far as my future on the Armed Services Committee is concerned. He could have

said, no, I'm not taking you; you can stay with the chief. So thank you, sir. I appreciate that. I think you made the right decision, by the way.

I'm going to start by picking up on something that Mac said toward the very end of his remarks. We as a country, we as a government, we as a Congress, can continue focusing on small details, and at the same time miss some very big-picture items. Goldwater-Nichols for the military, we did that. That wasn't a small detail; that was a big deal, forcing better integration among our different services. We need a Goldwater-Nichols for the United States government if we're going to do these kinds of engagements in the future.

But if you sit back and you take a look at the global threats that are facing us, they go so far beyond Iraq and Afghanistan that it's easy for us to lose our sense of real place here. It's not to suggest that the challenge of Iraq and Afghanistan are small things. They are not. But we've got global issues facing the world that are going to turn into national security threats for the United States that are rather stunning.

Just think about the fact that America – 5 percent of the population of the United States controls, what, 25 or 40 percent of the world's wealth. Think about the fact that, what, maybe 5 billion people in the world live on \$2 a day; climate change; economic integration, which is not very well-coordinated and has no supervening authority governing it, none whatsoever; no real regional or international partnerships that are effective to deal with things like pandemics, rising military threats, global terrorist networks.

We've got real challenges before us a country and a world if we're going to avoid what Robert Wright describes in "Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny," the end of a civilization. He describes civilizations coming and going, but civilizations surviving.

And as we as a globe become more integrated, as the acts of just a few folks somewhere in a remote place in the globe can have an impact throughout the globe become more frequent and more significant, we've got to wonder about how we, as a civilization, a global civilization, organize ourselves in order to meet the global challenges that are in front of us for the sake of our children, our grandchildren, for the future of the earth.

Those are big issues, and they face us in the immediate future. And it calls for an awful lot of work by an awful lot of great people, and a bunch of you here in this room know exactly what I'm talking about. You've been working on these issues. But you've got to get Congress working a little bit more on these issues.

John Hamre told me that he'd bumped into Ike, I guess, recently, and he asked Ike if Ike couldn't manage to get the size of the Armed Services Committee reduced from 60; it's too large. And I said, "John, you know, why didn't you put it in the alternative? 'Ike, either reduce the size of the Armed Services Committee from 60 to a smaller number or let's reorganize Congress and the American government sort of along the lines of

Goldwater-Nichols.' Take those two choices. Which task is going to be more challenging?'"

And John and I looked at one another and agreed that, well, maybe we won't do either of them, which is a shocking statement, given the opportunities and given the challenges that we've got in front of us.

Wright also has coined this term, which I find wonderful. It's called "the growing lethality of hatred." And we absolutely have that worldwide. There are hundreds of thousands of very bright scientists scattered around the globe. It takes a very small percent of them to become ideologically warped and conclude that their objective, their real cause, is to do something that really hurts the entire globe. It's a stunning challenge for us.

Now, I'm one of the few members of – I'm the only Democrat that voted to table now-Speaker Pelosi's motion to conduct investigations concerning Iraq, how we got in there, whether we are conducting ourselves appropriately. I did that about a year, year and a half ago. I voted to table the motion, along with the Republican side.

I did so because I didn't think it was appropriate to talk about those things. I thought that dwelling on how we got there is just inevitably going to weaken American resolve. And what we really need as a public here, joining my colleague Mac, is focusing upon the resolve of the American people. We are the target. There's no question about this or these kinds of actions by our enemies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Well, I now think it's actually helpful to talk about those mistakes. They're all on the table. Any number of people have written very effectively about them. And the reason to talk about them, very briefly, is because the American people have to understand there's a reason why things have not progressed as well as we might like them to have progressed.

It's clear, it seems to me, that the largest mistake we made was initially, and that was a failure to prepare the American public for how difficult this was going to be. We just didn't do that. We built expectations with any number of poor moves.

Take one. We were somehow going to reconstruct grand reconstruction projects for Iraq. How naive. Somehow we're going to reconstruct the oil system, the electrical grid, et cetera, in the face of what was inevitably going to be a very effective insurgency that didn't want those things to happen. That just was naive. But it built expectations.

We've built expectations time and time again. And I think it's a shame that the American public has been led to believe that this was going to be a lot easier than history would suggest it was going to be and a lot easier than it actually is.

Now, we obviously didn't do particularly good preparation for the post-conventional part of this, de-Ba'athification and disbanding the military. It left literally –

it humiliated and idled literally millions of people who know how Iraq works, many of whom are real experts in violence.

And I don't think we have, until recently, fully appreciated the extent to which Iraqis have to do this. It cannot be done by Americans constrained by our rules.

So, you know, I mention those things for two reasons. One, it's just by way of explaining how difficult this has been; and two, because of the absence of something that I didn't mention that is among the first things that people mention when they say, "Mistakes made in Iraq" – size of the force.

There are any number of people who have said the big error here is that we didn't have a sufficiently large force, a larger force immediately after the conventional part of this. You notice that we did not need a larger force in order to do the conventional part of this, to depose the government. We frankly could have done it with an even smaller force.

But a larger force, post-convention, yes, might have helped a little bit with the initial looting, initial sectarian violence, might have secured some of those ammo dumps a little bit quicker, might have kept the insurgency from developing as rapidly as it did. But it also would have had these effects – cost us more, more lives, more limbs, more money, which would have worn on our psyche. It would also have angered the population more.

That's inevitably what happens with conventional forces. A conventional force among an indigenous population, trying to deal with an insurgency as it develops, reacts in ways that anger the population. So the liberating force, which everybody predicted, would become an occupying force, would have become an occupying force even quicker, the larger it got. And inevitably the insurgency would have developed anyway.

So, yes, there would have been some benefits to larger force. But the fact of the matter is, those benefits might well have been counterbalanced by the things that I described. And ultimately it doesn't matter what size force of Americans you put over there. The key to these kinds of engagements lies with Iraqis, lies with the indigenous population.

Another little error here is we weren't as serious as we should have been right from the get-go at the development of Iraqi security forces. Well, that's changed. We're fairly serious about that now; made 10 trips, three Christmases, a couple of Thanksgivings, rolled around in a vehicle with Ike, in fact, during one of those Thanksgivings. We're quite serious about the development of Iraqi security forces now, and that is progressing reasonably well, given the time frame that these things typically play out in.

What this calls for is patience. It calls for a recognition that American conventional forces can't be very effective in the face of this kind of threat. As people

have argued for larger forces – you know, "Add troops, add troops" – the Armed Services Committee, a number of different times when this has come up, I've said, "Well, I'm not on that bandwagon. I actually think we could have a smaller force over there."

I do think we could do what Ike suggests and easily draw down; not draw down for the sake of satisfying some political demand here in the United States – that's not what we want to be doing here – but draw down, recognizing the reality of the situation, and that is that our conventional forces cannot be particularly effective in this kind of fight – more embeds, more training of Iraqis, more side to side with Iraqis, continue to develop the capacity of the Iraqi government and to put Iraqis out front.

Baghdad's a real challenge because of the anonymity of the city. You don't see the same level of sectarian violence elsewhere in Iraq, either because the populations are homogeneous or because the population is heterogeneous – Kurds, Sunnis, Shi'a, Turkoman, that sort of thing – they're intermarried; they're intermingled. They know one another. It's just less likely that they're going to spontaneously start hating people and killing people.

Baghdad's a big challenge. A surge of American forces may make sense only if somehow it gets Iraqis to deal with this situation. The key is Iraqis. I hope that the president – you know, he's from Texas. You know, Texans are famous for their nerve. I hope the president doesn't lose his nerve on this and just feel he's got to make some move for the sake of satisfying the politics of the situation here in this country.

I certainly hope that the president does not build expectations inappropriately among Americans, among Iraqis, among our allies and our enemies with regard to any move that's made. And I would simply ask and suggest that the president tell the American people this is going to take some time. We can do this at less expense and cost to ourselves. We can get smaller and get longer.

It's what I would advise. I'm prepared to be an armchair quarterback on this subject; and in any event, that we as a country remain committed to this effort, recognizing that it's in a very important part of larger global threats that face not just us but the entire world.

Thank you for the opportunity, Ray.

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you, Jim.

And to complete our four-member HASC panel, I turn to the second-ranking Republican, Jim Saxton of New Jersey. He was a great mentor and coach to me in my early days at the Pentagon as the deputy undersecretary of Installations and Environment as he was the chairman of the Military Construction Subcommittee and helped me learn my way.

I appreciate it very much, Jim, and we look forward to hearing from you.

REP. JIM SAXTON: Well, Ray, thank you very much. And I think that we all owe you a debt of gratitude for inviting us to come here to discuss what is likely to be one of the most important national security issues to be discussed in Washington, D.C. in the history of our country.

Let me just begin by trying to frame this discussion, at least from my perspective. Recently I had the thought that it would be a good idea for members of Congress to come together to discuss these kinds of things, as Mac and Jim pointed out, now in an atmosphere where it doesn't have to be a political discussion. And I thought how good it would be if we could get together and frankly discuss what has gone right and what has gone wrong in the context of an ongoing conflict.

In the meantime, I happened to read a book about the Civil War, and this put it in great context for me. The name of the book is "This Hallowed Ground." It was written by a fellow by the name of Bruce Canton. It was written in 1956, and so it's been around for quite a while. And I got it off my shelf and dusted it off, and I began to read. And I found out that the old saying that things don't go as planned in a war was as true today as it was during the Civil War.

When Lincoln and his advisers decided to go to war – before I picked up the book and started to read it, I always thought they decided to go to war because of slavery. Their strategic reason for going to war was not – was stated not – in very clear terms – that they did not want to disturb existing institutions – referring indirectly to slavery – but they wanted to hold the union together because they thought it was a unique opportunity to have something very special called the United States of America. And it wasn't actually until 1862 or 1863 that the strategy of the Civil War became different than it was at the outset when Lincoln needed to rally the northern – the Federalist people together against slavery.

And so that war changed dramatically right in the middle of it; the tactics changed too. At Bull Run and up as far as Gettysburg, when the Northern Army and the Southern Army came together, they tactically just took each other on. And it wasn't until Grant learned how to wheel his forces toward Richmond and stay out of that bloody head-on – head-on-head fight where they were losing as many as 50,000 troops in a battle, that the tactics began to change. And Sherman found out the same thing in Atlanta, down in Macon, Georgia.

And so it was a learning situation. And I would make the point that when a Western society like the United States of America and our allies engage in a war, an insurgency with a culture from the Middle East, there might just be some lessons that need to be learned along the way there as well.

And so the opportunity, Ray, that you give us to get together to talk about this situation to me is a very valuable one.

Mac Thornberry mentioned a few minutes ago a book that he and I have both read written by a retired Marine colonel by the name of Hammes – H-A-M-M-E-S – and the book is about fourth generation warfare. And as Mac correctly stated, it's about how to attack the will – or how to affect the will of your enemy, to make the enemy less likely to continue in battle or to make – to continue in the conflict. And Hammes gets into significant discussion about what an insurgency is, about what an insurgency is like, about how an insurgency builds its capability to be effective. And I think it's important that we at least get his perspective on this. And so let me just very quickly say what this is and then just say why it's so important in this situation.

An insurgency, according to this theory, must initially gain popular support. Without popular support, there can't be an insurgency. And so the leaders of an insurgency need to find a niche, if you will, or a common belief among a people that something is worth carrying out an insurgency for.

And they're all different. In the 1920s it was Mao united the peasants in China. In the 1960s and '70s, it was the communists in Vietnam. It was a different insurgency.

And the insurgency that we face today is still a different insurgency. It's unique in its religious overtones. It's unique in its cultural overtones. It's unique in its international overtones.

And so the insurgency goes through an initial stage of developing grass-roots support. And then it moved to a level of capability where it can actually attack and harass the government. And it carries out those harassing activities until the government says, "I've had enough," and then the insurgents have to be able to disappear. They have to have the political will and the ability to survive to disappear and withdraw.

And then in stage three they develop more capability, and finally in stage four they develop the conventional capability to take the government down.

Now, I think this is an important frame of reference because we need to decide where the Iraqi insurgents are in those four stages. And we need to decide whether we want to do as some in the U.S. have suggested in recent months and withdraw our troops, or whether we want – or whether it's in our best interest to decide that we're in stage three of this insurgency, and we better darn well not let them get to stage four, which is what my perception of the situation is.

And I guess when you're the last speaker, sometimes you have to find different ways of saying things, because, again, both Mac and Jim talked about us needing to exhibit some patience here, because, as my notes here that my smart staff put together say, insurgencies thrive when it senses the adversary is contemplating withdrawal. I think we all know that.

And as Mac pointed out, history is replete with examples of where insurgencies have caused a superior – a military superior force to withdraw. I think it happened in

Beirut, I think it happened in Mogadishu, and I think it happened to the Soviets in Afghanistan. And on each of those cases I would ask the question, were the forces that were trying to prevail, the U.S. forces trying to prevail and be helpful in Lebanon, the U.S. forces trying to save people from starvation in the Mogadishu area, and the Soviets in Afghanistan, were they better off having given up and withdrawn? Obviously, the answer is no.

So I look forward to the rest of this discussion, Ray. And thanks again for inviting us here.

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you very much, Jim.

I think we all would agree that we've just listened to four very serious and thoughtful members of the House Armed Services Committee. I'm going to exercise prerogative of the chair, if you will, and ask the chairman first and any of the other members if they'd like to comment on the following.

It has been said that the president of the United States is on the cusp of the most important decision of his second term. Now, notwithstanding the constitutional provisions of the commander in chief in his role as commander in chief, I personally believe, and I think most of us would, that the Congress must engineer a partnership, a working partnership with the executive, and vice versa. After all, our leadership in the world derives its legitimacy, and certainly if not legitimacy, it derives its impetus by virtue of that partnership. Some have commented that that partnership was on the wane in the last Congress.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that you're going to schedule hearings here in the next week or so. I'd be interested in your views as to how one goes about engineering that partnership with the executive on this very contentious issue. Perhaps even you might want to comment on the topics of the hearings that you contemplate, and perhaps even the witnesses.

REP. SKELTON: Your initial question was whether the president was on the cusp of making the most important decision, and it was put in political context. I wish it hadn't been that way, because decisions in war and conflict should not be made in political context. Decisions make a difference. I'm used to studying and I was fortunate enough to personally know this man from Independence named Harry Truman, who listened to his advisers, made a decision. And maybe that spoiled those of us from Missouri.

Decisions made early on make a big difference. A lot will say, and I think my friend would say, that the biggest decisions that – errors that were made – not having enough troop strength, de-Ba'athifying the teachers and all that went with it, and our dismissing the army of the Iraqis, rather than give them a shovel, a paycheck, and make them part of the security – and all of those were important decisions.

Let me go back in time for a minute. 1943, a major general whose name I cannot recall was summoned to the offense of General George C. Marshall. He told him, I'm going to give you the most important job in the European conflict. I wish I could remember his name. And he thought he was going to get a major command. And he was given the job that the Army had already been working on since 1942 – the occupation plan for Germany.

If we made a major mistake, it was not having a plan before that was carried out. Now, I understand there were a couple of plans made. This is reflected in a book or two. Tom Ricks, I believe, wrote about them – one of it – on one occasion. But the plan was scrapped. Jay Garner was given little or no – Lieutenant General Jay Garner was given little or no direction; same with Jerry Bremer when he took over. Without a plan that was well worked out, it was day by day, catch what you can. Each of those decisions that was made by either the secretary of Defense or by the president was on the cusp of the next – of all the following years of this presidency.

So to answer your question, it is another decision that, to my opinion, a great deal of hype has been made of – far more than I think should be, because we have increased troop level back in last summer. Whatever the president does, it is still, as all three of my colleagues will – have stated, it's up to the Iraqis to make it or break it themselves. So let's not put anymore spotlight on this decision anymore than those of the past, which sadly have no been good ones.

MR. DUBOIS: In order of seniority, Congressman Saxton, would you like to comment on the issues as you see them in terms of the working between the Congress and the executive branch on how we go forward with respect to formulating a policy in Iraq?

REP. SAXTON: I would say just very quickly that it is an opportunity, as was pointed out previously, an opportunity here for us to do things – at least for most of us to do things in a less political atmosphere. And I think the opportunity exists for people who understand the seriousness of this situation, to work together. And a matter of fact, let me just say, Jim Marshall came to me two or three weeks ago and asked if I would be willing to take part in these kinds of discussions for the purpose of fostering a broader discussion in Washington, D.C., and in this country, which I think the administration and Congress can certainly follow. So that is why I am so pleased to be here today because I hope this process leads to an opportunity not only for Republicans and Democrats in the House to work together, as we are here this morning, but for the administration and the Democrat-controlled Congress to work together.

Just it should be – it might be interesting for the folks who are here today to know that I believe that when you see folks like the four of us sitting here at this table who wake up in the morning, and before our feet are actually on the floor, we are trying to figure out ways to move this process forward for the good of the country, and I think that is what is important.

MR. DUBOIS: Congressman Thornberry, want to make any comments, about either that issue or what your fellow colleagues have said.

REP. THORNBERRY: Well, as I tried to describe, I think we do have an opportunity to do something that is good for the country. I think it's going to require some discretion. That is something politicians don't do very well. We like to be out there with the press release first giving our opinion about things. Sometimes it may be helpful to just wait and listen to what the president actually proposes before you send out the press release that says you're for or against it. But I do think it's an opportunity where serious people can come together. And as I say, the bad guys are watching what we do, so we need to make sure that the best of us comes out of it too.

MR. DUBOIS: Congressman Marshall?

REP. MARSHALL: I would just say, in my brief period here in Washington I have been very disappointed by the extent of the partisanship on both sides. I recall when I was a mayor, I was real interested in government matters, and there were a number of issues that were being debated in Washington that I tried to follow, and I couldn't; I mean, just could not really figure out who was right and who was wrong; everybody sounded like that they were right, that they were very adept at that. And I had a lot to do, so I just kind of gave up and trusted that the process worked.

Now that I have been here for a while, I'm not so trusting of the process. I don't think it works particularly well. I certainly don't think it's good for the country to have the presidency and both Houses, both chambers of the legislature lined up in the same party. And the reason I say that is because in an era in which we are so polarized and so much political advantage is sought by so many people on both sides, the solutions that people come up with, the direction that people take with regard to any number of issues – this could be one – is one that is – it's off the mark from where most of America would be on this issue if it understood the issue and was trying to tackle that issue itself. And so it doesn't have political legs. It doesn't last.

Now, these kinds of military engagements are engagements that have to last over a long period of time. So somehow coming together – the president had a reputation before he came to office as president of being able to work both sides of the aisle. He lost that reputation during his first term, maybe in the last – in the next couple of years, he can get that reputation back, and if he gets it back and deserves it, then he has done a wonderful thing for the country because he'll find a better direction than he is going to find if he is only paying attention to one side of the aisle, or if he is only paying attention to sort of the hard-right think tanks as opposed to listening to some of the ones on the left, and then trying to find somebody in the middle who makes some sense.

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you. Now I am going to take questions from the audience. We have microphones available. Please keep your questions to questions, not speeches, and we'll try to get as many in as possible over the next 20, 23 minutes. In the front row

here. Please address your question to one or more members of the panel. Identify yourself, if you would.

Q: Colonel Datta, Foreign Policy Association, and also the president of Indian Regiment (?) Officers' Association, North America.

My question to the panel is what are the aims now after advent of fundamentalist Islam, terrorism, al Qaeda, where religion is the integral part of the politics, and daily life, and lack of understanding of the psyche. Mujahideen won the war in Afghanistan because they were driven by this psyche. Ironically, neither the politics, nor the military doctrines has an answer to the suicide bombing.

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you. Any member. Mac, would you like to start?

MR. THORNBERRY: I think it is very important for us to try to try to understand what it is that causes someone to strap explosives around their waste, walk into a school or some other place, and blow themselves up. It is one of the issues that I have been encouraging the intelligence community to do in-depth research and discussion because it will not have a simple answer. I think some of our preconceived notions may be in error, and yet, as I tried to describe, if we are going to really deal with Iraq and the broader war against terrorists, we have to understand what is happening, and why.

So I agree with you that it is very important for us to dig down in a deeper level, and then it is going to be up to our government to be able to deal with what we find. One of the concerns I have is we may have researchers who do great work and say there is some motivations about fitting in and about some of the things Jim talked about, about shame and embarrassment that they are trying to overcome, but then what do we do about it. And, again, I think we're going to have to field a full team from the United States government in order to deal with those complex psychological, cultural issues that go beyond just the military ones.

MR. DUBOIS: Mr. Chairman?

MR. SKELTON: I think Mac hit on something very, very important. We don't do a very good job, either as Americans or as the American military in understanding other people's culture as we should. We don't understand other languages as we should. I once heard Senator Fulbright before he died say that Americans can't remember what people in other countries can't forget. And I think it's very important that we do a much better job in our war colleges, whether they be at the intermediate level, or whether they be at the senior level, in the training of our young troops that are going to be elsewhere. And they have done amazingly well without cultural training or maybe getting two or three days of it.

If we were really – if we really studied the cultures in which our troops would be immersed, and understand where they came from and how they think, and why they think that way, and understood their religion, I think we would have a lot better chance of

positive outcomes in whatever region we find ourselves. I think it's a basic push and I think the Armed Services Committee, I have done a great deal of work, as you may or may not know, in the area of the war colleges, PME, professional military education. And that is one thing we need to improve upon, the understanding of other people's cultures because when we're there confronted with difficult situations, we make the right decision, whether it be at the level of the sergeant or a general. Good question.

MR. SAXTON: I think this question is just at the heart of the situation, and truly represents something that we need to concentrate on. On my way here today – I came from Philadelphia. On my way here today, I was thinking about this very question. And I thought to myself about what the American people and we in Congress as their representative were thinking at various stages of this conflict. And I can remember the prevailing thought being something like these Iraqis will treasure democracy; Iraqis will be grateful when we offer them freedom and hope; Iraqis will treat each other fairly; and Iraqis will show respect in most cases.

Working back from the last one to the first, the reason I – the reason I kind of entered into this process of thinking this morning was because of the – of what happened at the execution of Saddam. None of us, even after having lived through this conflict since 2003, at least speaking for myself, as a close student of this conflict, I was shocked to death, and I think it's because we don't have a chance to understand that these kinds of things might happen because of a lack of understanding of a society and a culture. And so this is a question that I think that we should have at the front and center of our consideration as we move forward.

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you, Tom. Right here.

Q: Do you want me to say something like that?

MR. DUBOIS: I'll give you a translator.

Q: Hi. Tom Ricks with the Washington Post.

I have a question for the Republican members of the panel. The president gave a series of speeches –

MR. DUBOIS: Speak up a little bit, Tom.

Q: Sorry. I have a question for the Republican members of the panel. In the fall of 2005, the president gave a series of speeches on the way forward in Iraq, and unveiled a document, the way to strategic victory in Iraq, and so on. Do you expect his speech this week to have any more effect on the situation in Iraq than those speeches did?

MR. SAXTON: That is a real good question, and I don't know that I have a great answer to it. I'm hoping that what his speech talks about is in fact a new policy toward the war generally. And I hope that we have now learned that we have made some

mistakes, and I hope that we now have learned that we need to do some things differently, and I hope that that is what the speech is about. I hope that is what the substance of the speech is about. I only know what I read in your newspaper and others about what might be said because the administration hasn't conveyed that to us directly yet. So I'm hoping that there will be a new way forward, as has been said, and that the policy statement that we hear offers new evidence of that policy.

MR. THORNBURG: I guess my answer is that what a president says is one weapon we have in this struggle, which is, as I said, primarily political and ideologically. There are other weapons out there, including what comes out of a new speaker's office, or what comes out of the chairman of the Armed Services Committee Office. There are a lot of voices out there, as well as what really happens on the ground. So obviously we don't know until it happens and we see what the new commanding generals there decide to do, and how they – how they choose to implement it.

But I guess what concerns me a little bit is that much of the discussion is putting this into a finite amount of time; this is Bush's big decision. The next six months are critical; the next six months are always critical. Do we have the staying power to stay engaged, even if we change tactics, and even if the president gives another 10 speeches? Do we have the staying power to stay there, because if we don't, then the bad guys are going to know it and it will just encourage them.

MR. DUBOIS: Congressman Marshall, I'm sorry. I'm going to give you an opportunity to respond to that prior question on the psychological understanding of the enemy.

REP. MARSHALL: Well, back to the specific question having to do with these religious suicide bombers, martyrdom for religious reasons is not unique to this century; it's something that has been around for millennia, and it's going to continue into the future. We have to obviously worry about the fact that the weaponry available to proposed martyrs is far more lethal today than it was two decades ago, let alone two millennia ago. And obviously because that weaponry is so much more lethal, we've got to be paying close attention to who around the world is willing to use that weaponry, for whatever reasons, whether it's religious or otherwise, and probably network like heck, build partnerships. We've done a poor job of that. We need to do a better job of building partnerships with countries throughout the world, security forces throughout the world, to try and identify who those folks might be and try to address either their concerns – and alleviate those concerns so they don't do it – or capture, jail them. That's, I'm afraid, the future that we're facing over the next few decades and longer.

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you.

Question here.

Q: Hi, I'm Marc Sandlow with the San Francisco Chronicle. Can you hear me now? All right. I'm Marc Sandlow with the San Francisco Chronicle. Speaker Pelosi

had suggested that the House might withhold funds if the president doesn't adequately justify any kind of surge or increase in troop levels. And what I'm wondering is what it would take from each of you to have the president – what it would require for the president to justify an increase in troop levels, and whether you think there is any appetite in the current House of Representatives to withhold money if he does not do an adequate job.

MR. DUBOIS: Mr. Chairman?

REP. SKELTON: I don't believe that's exactly what Speaker Pelosi said. My recollection is that she said that he would need to justify if there is – to us – justify to us any increase in troop levels. We still don't know what the president will recommend. We do know that without all the hype there was troop level increase of at least a brigade if not more last summer, and of course the outcome really made no difference.

There are three things that Congress can do. Number one is to cut off funding. We're not about to cut off funding for troops. We know that. That would be injurious to our troops and their families. Number two would be some limitation type of language, which can be done. And number three would be to have oversight hearings and ask difficult questions, tough questions of people within the administration. And that's why I'm establishing an oversight subcommittee for the first time since 1995 in the Armed Services Committee, so we can have the oversight, and ask those difficult questions.

I just think you may be jumping to conclusions before there is even a speech or a recommendation made by the president. We do know this: We do want to have a redeployment of American troops. We do know this: that we want to put the burden more and more on the Iraqi government, on the Iraqi military. And they're going to have to understand that. That's why I think we should redeploy within the very near future – and actually late last year would have been a good time – at least a small number of American troops, to let them know we mean business other than just telling them you're going to have to shoulder this burden and let them know for sure, by at least a beginning of a redeployment.

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you.

Right here.

Q: Chairman, gentlemen, my name is Tim Sikes. I work for the Marine Corps' culture center at Quantico – the Center for Advanced Operational and Cultural Learning – and I'd like to ask, based on the previous discussion, given that many of our adversaries in this irregular warfare fight, the kind of strategic (?) fight, are low-tech, I would suggest that the most effective weapon against them is a foot soldier with his M-16 who has been properly trained. Do you agree that the military needs to readjust its priorities and place more emphasis on the training and recruiting of the Marines and soldiers who will be on the ground as opposed to the high-tech weaponry that is more useful in a conventional

fight, and if so, how can Congress support that role to give our forces more endurance in this sort of fight?

REP. SKELTON: I don't think this is a choice between boots on the ground and high tech. Needless to say, all of the above are important. The real issue is whether we teach what you're advocating: the cultural awareness of those that come in contact with a populous or a potential enemy or an enemy. I think that's far more important than the decision that you're placing before us – boots on the ground versus high-tech – because even a smaller number of Marines or soldiers, whoever they might be, that fully understand the people around them, whether it be Iraq or elsewhere, is a far more important tool than just the numbers or the high-tech. It's a thing called information operation. Insurgents know about it. We have the Madison Avenue experts on how to sell soap. We have some of the finest public relations people in the world running campaigns. And it's interesting that we can't identify and understand and get our information operation in gear with the sync of the people with whom we are working or the populous with whom we're working. I find that to be rather ironic.

REP. MARSHALL: You know, soldiers, Marines, infantry folk – that's what I was – recon, platoon sergeant, arranger, Vietnam. The challenge is that the enemy – and this is certainly the case in Iraq – doesn't run around with orange jumpsuits on just to let us know who they are. That's the real challenge.

And so, yes, our soldiers and our Marines, those who are on the ground, need to be trained very well, and we need to recognize that they are a very important key to the deal, but it's the relationships that they can build with the local population that is most important. And ultimately it's the indigenous security force – the security force from that county that's going to wind up handling these counterinsurgencies most effectively. And with that in mind, as we think about how we spend our money, yes, we should be doing some of the things that you just described, but as much as anything else, we ought to be building relationships with armed forces, security forces generally – not just militaries but police forces worldwide in all these areas. We need to be building their capacity.

I get letters all the time that ask me to push to close the School of the Americas. They don't have the current name for it – the School of the Americas. And the response I give is, you all are still in the '60s. Wake up. This is a new millennia and we don't just need a School of the Americas; we need a school of the world in order to address these challenges. There is no entity out there that's in a position to address global terror networks unless it's us, and the only way we'll effectively do it is if we team with a whole bunch of other folks. Our young men out there on the ground can't do it without that teamwork. And so we, thinking about the right kind of training and how we fund, et cetera, need to be thinking along the lines of developing that network that enables our young men who are on the ground to have the support from the local population, the local security forces, to deal with counterinsurgencies effectively.

REP. THORNBERG: I just wanted to add that while I agree with everything Jim said, I don't think any of us should be satisfied with how long it took to get protective body armor and other essentials over to the folks in Iraq.

Our job in Congress is to continue to push the Pentagon to do better, to do more faster, and that includes some things that the infantry soldier and Marine has to have to do his job. There are some folks who think that we are not looking at better rifles and radios and some other things that could really help them on the ground. And so those are some of the questions that we need to prod and probe about to make sure that that person who is the tip of the spear has what they need while we continue to see if we can't continue to reduce all of the tail that is supporting that tooth, which just takes an incredible amount of our resources.

MR. DUBOIS: Jim, did you want to say something?

REP. SAXTON: I'd just say real quickly that this is a very timely question. It is a question that goes directly to the war on terror, for all of the reasons that the gentleman said. But it's also a question that involves how to defend ourselves against nuclear weapons launched by intercontinental ballistic missiles, potentially by countries like Iran and North Korea and others. It's a question that requires us to think about how we're going to defend ourselves from a possible conflict with other countries that are concerned with the development of submarine technology and other types of technologies.

So I don't think there's an easy answer to it, but I think we have shown – I think the situation has shown quite clearly that we continued during the decade of the 1990s to develop soldiers and capabilities that were in keeping with what we knew how to do that was developed during the Cold War.

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you.

One last question. I'm going to see – in the back there. Way in the back. Way in the back. The gentleman with the shirt on and the tie. There you go.

Q: Thank you. Can you hear me? Hello? Can you hear me?

MR. DUBOIS: Yes.

Q: Okay, first of all, I'd like to thank you, Congressman, for your remarks.

MR. DUBOIS: Speak up.

Q: I said I'd like to thank you all for your remarks today, and I think what comes up overall is –

MR. DUBOIS: Would you identify yourself?

Q: Oh, I'm sorry. My name is Jerry Durrant (sp). I'm from the LYM.

I think the discussion really puts on the table the reality of how much work is ahead of us in dealing with the international crisis we're in today. The only concern I have is the rate of progress that the United States is going to be able to make in our responsibility in taking up the leadership on this question of the Iraq War.

MR. DUBOIS: So what is your question?

Q: My question is, will the U.S. Congress take immediate action to impeach the vice president before there is an attack on Iran?

(Laughter.)

MR. DUBOIS: All right, thank you.

MR. DUBOIS: Mr. Marshall?

REP. MARSHALL: I'll respond. No, we're not going to do that.

And can I add to what I said about soldiers on the ground? There is some real hope here, folks. I was in Ramadi with the chief of staff of the Army, what, Christmas Day I guess it was – maybe the day before Christmas – meeting with the leadership of the brigade that's supposed to be taming that city. This is Al Anbar Province we're talking about. Many people here are familiar with what a tough go that's been. That brigade, in just six months, had had 75 killed and over 500 wounded, and yet they were entirely upbeat. Why is that? It's because the local sheiks had decided they were tired of the al Qaeda nonsense. They don't really need al Qaeda out there trying to return the caliphate, the one umma, and fomenting disputes between the Shi'a and Sunni just to satisfy their needs. They were tired of that so they decided they're going after al Qaeda. The team up with the United States.

And you know what that colonel said? He said, you know, I think in three months to six months this province will be secured. The Iraq Study Group has got it exactly wrong. And he said, you know why? You know, if you could really help me out, turn the cell phones on so these folks can talk to one another. Give me 1,000 Silverado pickup trucks – pardon me, 100 Silverado pickup trucks and 1,000 rifles with appropriate ammunition. We'll just give it to these young men that the sheiks are producing, and they're going to take care of these guys. It's just an example of how – you know, when the right thing happens, the local indigenous population can take care of a security situation that we have struggled with for two or three years and had an awful lot of Americans killed over.

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in applause for these four gentlemen. If you could just wait and give them a chance to exit;

they've got to get back to their offices. I appreciate it. Thank you much. And thank you on behalf of CSIS.

(END)