

**CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT  
FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE**

**“AFTER IRAQ: U.S. STRATEGY IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
AFTER THE TROOPS COME HOME”**

**WELCOME AND MODERATOR:**

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KENNETH BAER: I think we're going to get started now, everyone. Hope you had a chance to grab a cup of coffee. Thank you all for coming here this morning, and let me thank Jessica Mathews and the Carnegie Endowment for co-hosting this event. Jessica, Peter Reed (sp), and Trent Prado (sp) were invaluable in making this panel a reality. We at Democracy: A Journal of Ideas were so eager to put together this event because we believe that there are a few topics that are as important to the security of the United States than the future of our policy toward the Middle East after Iraq.

Yet for all the articles written, all the speeches given, all the press releases sent, all the media availabilities held last week in the wake of the Petraeus report, there has been little, if any, discussion of what comes next after the troops come home from Iraq and especially for those most passionate about bringing those troops home. Of course, the very questions of if, how, and how many troops should leave Iraq are still contentious issues, but I think we could say with some degree of certainty that, at some point in the next several months, there will be significant drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq. There is a bipartisan consensus for that in the country and lawmakers on both sides increasingly would like to see it happen.

So when it does happen, the United States will face a Middle East that is profoundly changed. Iraq, once one of the region's major powers, is weak and divided. America, for the first time, has occupied a country at the heart of the Muslim world, and odds are, will leave Iraq short of anything approximating victory. The project to turn Iraq into a shining light of liberal democracy has failed. Iran, a nation whose enmity to the United States is virtually unrivaled, has used the removal of Saddam Hussein as an opportunity to expand its power, prestige, and nuclear weapons program. Across the region, militias and terrorist groups have mobilized to fight U.S. troops in Iraq and have used our presence there as a tool for recruitment and expansion. And while this is all going on, millions of refugees are on the move throughout the region.

With the entire Middle East in flux, we need to look beyond the current debate and begin to formulate a strategic response to this critical part of the world. That's why Democracy undertook a first for a very young publication. We've put together a symposium around that single question: What next after Iraq? We asked 50 top progressive foreign policy thinkers: academics, former State Department, national security officials, think-tank fellows and others, about what we should do after Iraq. Certain themes float through almost all of their replies: the need to rebuild our alliances and work in concert with other nations, the importance of restoring American legitimacy in the eyes of those in the region and around the world, and the obligation to move aggressively to wean the country off of Middle East oil and gas.

But to winnow the flood of responses, we chose the 10 that we felt offered a unique point of view on this question, and they can be read in the issue that we handed out as you came in. But to continue this debate, and to continue Democracy's mission of exploring the big challenges and big ideas facing our country, we asked three of those contributors to join this panel today to have a discussion with all of you. They are: Jessica Tuckman Mathews, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Will Marshall, president of the Progressive Policy Institute and editor of "With All our Might: a Progressive Strategy for Defeating Jihadism and Defending Liberty," and Ray Takeyh, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and author of "Hidden Iran, Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic."

Each have a unique take on this question, and I am happy that they can join us today. I am going to ask them all a question; we'll have a discussion up here; then at the end, we'll leave ample time for Q & A from the audience. So Jessica, you brought about the importance of restoring the nuclear non-proliferation regime: How did it fall apart and why is it so critical to U.S. security interest in the Middle East?

JESSICA MATHEWS: Well, it fell apart, I would say, it didn't – fall apart I guess I don't buy. It ran into trouble after several decades of really striking success with a series of events that began in the 1990s: covert programs in Iran and North Korea; the nuclear tests of India and Pakistan in 1998; the events of 2001; and then the discovery in 2003 of the AQCON commercial network. What these events all had in common, setting apart the covert programs in Iran, North Korea, et cetera, what they have in common was that they revealed gaps in the treaty. The AQCON network revealed that the treaty had never been designed to deal with corporate problems. 9/11 revealed that, reminded us that the treaty had never been designed to deal with non-state threats from terrorists. And so those revealed huge gaps and ways in which the treaty needed to be strengthened.

At the same time, the aftermath of the war revealed one of what the war's greatest costs will be, which is the neglect of almost everything else. And while attention was paid to individual cases – Iran, North Korea, et cetera – the regime itself was just completely ignored. Part of the reason that was ignored was that in 2002, the Bush administration adopted what was a revolutionary, really radical change in policy from the policy of non-proliferation of every prior administration, Republican and Democratic, and that was very simple: The weapons are the problem. The Bush policy was subtly, but radically different, and that was: The weapons in the hands of rogue regimes and terrorists are the problem.

And because of that subtle change, that it's the regimes, it leads you away from arms control and towards regime change. If it's the regimes that are the problem, then it's regimes are what needs to get changed. When this was revealed in 2002 in the National Security Strategy, people thought it was – the people who paid attention because we were right in the middle of the pre-war debate – the people thought it was a case for going to war in Iraq.

But it wasn't; it was the core of this new strategy. And it's a core that has led to a catastrophe with respect to the regime because it has confronted the administration with this problem, that when regime change is impossible by military means, as it is in Iran and North Korea, or impossible without leading to total catastrophe for the country, then you're left with nothing.

So, one final strand, to answer your question, is that the passage of time with too little significant progress towards disarmament on the part of the United States and Russia, led to a problem so that 15 years after the end of the Cold War, the non-nuclear weapons states came to the conclusion – have come to the conclusion – that the U.S. and Russia and the nuclear weapons states don't ever intend to uphold their end of what was a bargain in the non-proliferation treaty. It was, we, the non-nuclear states will give up nuclear weapons forever in exchange for you, the nuclear weapons states, pledging to eventually get to zero nukes.

So what you had was this perfect storm; on the one hand, the revelation and recognition that the NPT needed strengthening in a whole lot of ways. And on the other hand, a feeling among the non-nuclear weapons states that the weapons states had so failed to live up to their end that the non-nuclear states were reevaluating their commitment to the existing treaty and were of zero interest in discussing strengthening it; zero. And that's basically where we are today. And as a result, the regime is in what I would call a real existential crisis for the first time in its 40-odd years.

MR. BAER: Okay, can I get to more of that later, but – Will, to start off, in your essay, you write that, quote, “that it should be obvious, even to the most doctrinaire realists, that the United States cannot simply return to its 60-year policy of supporting moderate autocracies in the name of stability.” While we all prefer dealing with democracies, is that a luxury that we now can't afford? That is, can we still have a foreign policy in the region that is idealistic?

WILL MARSHALL: Well, I wasn't proposing a program of instant democracy in the Middle East, which, obviously, makes no sense. But I do think that we have come to a sort of historical crossroads here, in which the status-quo, post-colonial order in the Middle East is breaking down, is fundamentally rotten. It has engendered a tangle of pathologies: governments that are good only at repression, stagnant economies that are not able to fulfill the material aspirations of the people in the Middle East. You know, we've seen the population of the greater Middle East nearly doubled since 1980, and yet its share of world trade is plunging. And so you've got all of these young men particularly pouring out of universities with degrees in Islamic studies and no prospects for employment. In a real economy, that seems to be a combustible condition.

And you've got this widespread sense of cultural decline and humiliation, which of course the Islamists feed on; and it seems to me that the current regime has fed all of these currents of discontent and it would be monumentally foolish for us to entrust our security – this has nothing to do with idealism. I mean, it has something to do with it, but I wouldn't entrust our security to regimes that have created conditions that have bred Islamist radicalism, extremism. So it seems to me that the big strategic challenge facing this country is a kind of a grand strategy for the Middle East that pushes in the direction of modernization and not democracy tomorrow, but gradual liberalization.

I would actually start on the economic front. For years, we've been pushing the idea of a really big trade initiative in the Middle East, which is so shockingly missing from the Bush administration's thinking about this, is an economic dimension to its strategy. It's all about war; it's all about military resolve and being willing to fight our enemies and God knows George Bush has amply shown he's been willing to do that. But the question is, how to use the other tools of American statecraft, particularly our enormous economic and that of our allies, to activate processes of growth and to break the greater Middle East out of its economic isolation.

This region is the outlier in globalization. Again, there's not much trade among the countries, between the countries. You know, most countries trade with their immediate neighbors and anybody else; that's not the case in the Middle East because of political and other barriers. So you have these closed, state-directed economies, often driven by oil and

no real broader economic development strategy. So, we're looking at we call a greater Middle East prosperity plan that would dramatically lower tariffs in the West – because this is even more important for the Europeans, which do a lot more business with the Middle East than the United States does – drive down tariff barriers, try to get these countries into the World Trade Organization, and activate again, stimulate processes of growth and economic development there. And that is something that I think will not likely be seen as an imperialist imposition from outside, whereas now George Bush has done a good job of discrediting democracy in the greater Middle East.

But who is going to object to the prospects of great opportunity and openness? Well, in fact, some salafists might, but the vast bulk of the people in the greater Middle East, it seems to me, would find this an area of mutual interest. And if the United States and Europe work to concert a plan, to use our economic power to improve economic conditions throughout the region and try to bring in foreign direct investment – you know, the whole Middle East attracts as much foreign investment each year as Sweden does. So, it seems to me, that if we were, that this would be a first step forward to a kind of a normalization that would provide a basis of common interest; it would create more interdependence in our economies; it would lessen the sense of globalization as a western injustice hoisted on the developing and lower-income countries; it would give these countries an incentive to move away from this, the curse of oil, which is really, it damages Middle-Eastern countries as much as anybody else, arguably more so and again would provide alternative to young men to a career in jihad.

So, I'd lead with economic development, but I would not, I would not give up on political openings and accountability. And we've endorsed – and I do in my piece – something that's appeared in the pages of Democracy, the arguments of – (inaudible) – and others that the United States ought to really engage in a dialogue with political Islam, and engage moderate Islamic parties that have renounced violence and terrorism; not because they're liberal – most of them are a long way from being liberal parties – but because they at least have mass followings and have at least made a tactical decision to try to advance their aims in the political arena

And that gives us opportunities to work with them to open space for real political competition and pluralism and to begin to shift American policy from support for small numbers of inherently unstable ruling elites in countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and others, toward a politics that expresses solidarity with the people on the street in the Muslim world. This is a long-term proposition. Anybody who has looked at the Pew polls knows that right now there's fathomless suspicion of the United States; it's going to take a long time to reverse that. But we're not going to reverse it by going back to the old policy of propping up and making common cause with the people who are oppressing and denying political voice and economic opportunities to people in the Middle East.

MR. BAER: Ray, looking at another slice of this, perhaps the one that's taking the most attention recently, is the question of Iran. And so, how much influence does Iran have, not just over Iraq, but over the region? And, trying to spin to a scenario, if there was a dramatic pull down of troops, what would the U.S. face with Iran and what should we do about it? All in 30 seconds or less, so take your time. (Laughter.)

MR. TAKEYH: In one of the first meetings that took place in Baghdad between Ambassador Crocker and his Iranian counterpart, Crocker said, well, the overall objectives of Iran and the United States do coincide in Iraq, and he's actually right. And I would suggest, at a sort of a macro level, the objectives of the two countries are curiously coincidental. However, at the operational level, you begin to see that coincidence not translating into a cooperative relationship.

So what are Iran's objectives next door? They are probably about four or five to one to the extent to which one can decipher. First, I will say that an important objective of the Iranians is maintaining the territorial integrity of Iraq, in a sense that Iraq not become fractured between three independent states that are actually incapable of maintaining themselves and become part of the larger, sort of the sectarian divide of the Middle East. And that, as initially largely conforms to the objectives of the United States, which wants to maintain Iraq as a cohesive nation-state.

And to some extent, I would say that despite all the pressures and sectarian tensions, it does conform to what Iraqis themselves want, in a sense that there is something called Iraqi national identity that was cultivated over the past century, although that has come under significant duress as a result of the civil war. But I suspect most Iraqis want to maintain themselves within this unit. That includes the Kurds as well, which want to have an autonomous state in many respects, but also want to be part of the larger Iraqi community.

The second Iranian objective would be the Shi'a empowerment. That's not necessarily a gesture of solidarity with what their core religion is, but does have some geopolitical undertones. And it tends to largely derive from Iran's experiences during the Iran-Iraq War, where increasingly there's a consensus within Tehran that the cause of Iraq's aggression and the cause of Iraq's revisionist policies was the Sunni domination of its politics, the way the Sunnis tried to justify their monopoly of power was to pursue aggressive, Pan-Arabist designs.

So, therefore, the Shi'a domination of Iraqi politics has more to do with geopolitical consideration and also for the fact that many of these Shi'a political parties that are coming to power tend to have close and intimate relations with Iran as a result of long years of exile. And you kind of see that in the depictions of the Iran-Iraq War. For the Sunnis, it was a war whereby the Arabs essentially contained the Persian hordes. For the Sh'ias, it's actually a different sort of a narrative comes out, and increasingly they suggest both the Iraqi Shi'as and the Iranians were victims of Saddam's war machine. Now, Iran-Iraq War is an important issue in the historiography and imagination of both countries. And the fact that it is interpreted very differently in Iraq is a reflection of the differences between these groups and the fact that one of those groups does want to have a closer relationship with Iran.

Now, Shi'a empowerment may not have been the American objective, but as a practical matter, it's likely to come about within Iraq, whether they'll be a sort of a unitary Iraqi government that encompasses moderate Sunni voices or not, the demographic reality being that a central government in Iraq is likely to have a Shi'a coloration although its powers may be mitigated by strong provincial representation.

Also, essentially maintaining Iraq as a federal structure. And why do Iranians suddenly maintain Iraq as a federal structure? Well, because weak central governments don't have strong standing armies. The Iranians can live with militias, but not necessarily with a strong, central, Iraqi army. That type of Iraq may actually contest Iranian predominance in the Persian Gulf. So the federal structure is a means of actually devolving much of the power and influence to the provinces. Iran can have influence over provinces more easily than it can have over the Iraqi central government which may, once again, embrace this sort of a Pan-Arabist design to become the leading power in the Gulf.

So, the federal structure is something that Iranians prefer. Again, that has not much to do with the revolutionary ideology or Shi'a theocracy; it has to do with some geopolitical calculations that they have made. And, to some extent, that is the essence of the American policy, to have a sort of a federal structure that tends to represent all Iraqis. And actually that is the reality of Iraq today, it's the Iraqi constitution. That actually calls for provincial assemblies.

The other goal that I think we share with the Iranians is the departure of U.S. forces, for different reasons. I think, at this particular point, the consensus within Tehran, the consensus within Washington, the consensus within Baghdad, is for American forces to leave. So that's a unique sort of a coincidence of agreement. It would be very hard for Iran to emerge as a preeminent power in the Gulf so long as there's a sizeable and important contingent of American forces there. So, that departure doesn't have to be hasty; it doesn't have to be precipitous. It should be planned. It should be gradual. It should, nevertheless, take place.

Again, these are goals that I think the two powers largely share, so why hasn't that translated into more of a cooperative relationship between the two countries? Because, I think at the operational level, it is a different story. Iran's practical operational policy toward Iraq largely resembles their path in southern Lebanon in the early 1980s. Now that's not necessarily a good thing. In southern Lebanon, Iran had a number of objectives: Number one was to politically organize a Shi'a community so its political power is commensurate with its demographic reality. And as a result of that, essentially, you began to see a Shi'a awakening, in the early 1980s, take place. So that participation, in a larger, multi-confessional Lebanese society where the Shi'a would become important voices.

Arming and training and militarizing the Shi'a militias – in the southern Lebanon case, eventually it was the Iranians that amalgamated a number of Shi'a militias and created the lethal Hezbollah organization. A similar policy, I think, is being noticed in southern Iraq, where essentially the army is Shi'a militia. Therefore, in ensuing Iraqi civil wars, the Shi'a not only have ballots, but bullets to defend their cause.

And, ironically enough, also mediation and diplomacy – mediation within Iraq and mediation beyond Iraq. Iranians now are trying to mediate differences between different Shi'a factions within Southern Iraq, and also trying to suggest that there should be a mediation of the Iraqi civil war among the region's leading powers: Saudi Arabia, as the leading Sunni power, Iran as the leading Shi'a power, so it's a sort of a Baker-Hamilton Program that increasingly doesn't involve the United States, the idea being that the American

presence in itself is a source of divisiveness and therefore, the departure of the United States can best yield a result. I'm rather skeptical of that proposition, but nevertheless.

So you begin to see, for different reasons operationally, there's a sort of a collision and a conflict between Iran, as they arm Shi'a militia that become entangled with the American pacification efforts, as they talk about mediation efforts that may not include the United States, that may estrange other leading powers in the region, not to mention important factions within Iraq. And increasingly, this surge policy that the United States policy has embraced is not just designed to disarm at least the southern militias and the Sadrist movement, but in some ways, is beginning to have an anti-Iranian tone to it, where Iran is becoming a sort of a culprit for American difficulties in Iraq, which makes diplomacy between the two states nearly impossible.

So what is the path ahead? Iran is certainly part of the problem; it has to be part of the solution. I don't believe the episodic efforts, diplomatic efforts, that have taken place between Ambassador Crocker and his counterpart can work, they essentially advance where the bill of indictment is read: You're doing this, this, this, this, and Iranians saying you're (haddy, you're haddy, you're hat ?) and everybody sort of has a press conference afterwards suggesting they should meet again to do it.

I think the Iran-U.S. problem cannot be isolated to Iraq; it has to be a part of a comprehensive diplomatic strategy if that's the path one can go on. Iran has interest and incentive to cooperate with the United States in Iraq. It's sort of clear for me what we want from Iranians in Iraq; it's not that clear for me what they want from us in Iraq other than our departure.

So basically, if Iran is going to cooperate with the United States in Iraq, it almost has to be for reasons other than Iraq itself: It has to be with nuclear diplomacy, economic relationship, diplomatic relationship between the two countries, stabilization of the Gulf and so forth. For the foreseeable future, we like it or not, Iran will have influence in Iraq, and the Gulf, and the larger Middle East; and the challenge ahead, and I think it's a rather serious challenge, is how do we marshal that influence in a constructive channel as opposed to this ad hoc destructive one? And I suspect only comprehensive diplomacy can do that.

But however, I think it's time to move or start thinking about Plan C, and Plan C being how does the United States and its allies potentially contain Iranian power, a nuclear-armed Iran, or at least a nuclear-capable Iran, should those diplomatic efforts not necessarily yield the desired result? And I think the previous containment option that we have had toward Iran hasn't worked. And I'm not quite sure what the new robust containment policy involves, but some creative thinking, I think, should go through that channel as well. And the perception that we're sort of in a binary debate in Washington, whether it's a military strike against Iran or engagement of Iran; we have to get to a point where there has to be a Plan C, where the military action is infeasible and engagement impractical, then what?

MR. BAER: Jessica, from there, how does that play into the nuclear issue with Iran? Can we contain Iran from getting nuclear weapons? Or what would be a scenario, what would be advice you would give to a next president to try to stop their march towards weaponization?

MS. MATHEWS: Well, the first thing I think I would urge is that the U.S. ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; not because it will change Iranian thinking, but because it will help to isolate Iran. Right now, we have this travesty where more countries in the world are more disapproving and/or frightened of U.S. nuclear policies than they are of Iran becoming nuclear which is – it makes your hair stand on end to think about it.

Secondly, I would move aggressively to repair relations with Russia. To have, if not sacrificed, at least seriously hurt U.S. capability of working with Russia over a plan to contain a threat that doesn't yet exist with a system that doesn't work is a choice – and I'm talking about the decision to place missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic – is a choice for which, I called it incomprehensible in this piece; it is truly hard to figure out what possible set of reasons could have prompted that decision. As far as I can tell, it moves exactly opposite our own – and Russia's cooperation, I believe, is essential to any successful effort to derail Iran's nuclear program.

So, these things – and then third, of course, goes with the CBT, is canceling efforts to make new nuclear weapons. We cannot engage the support of 180 countries in the world with a policy that looks like it's moving in the 180-degree opposite direction from the commitments we made in the NPT. It just, it doesn't go.

So, all of that is just preparing the ground to start the effort with Iran. And there, A, I think it's extremely difficult but not impossible because, after we've isolated Iran diplomatically, and boy, we have done so little in the past six, seven years to make that case to go around capital by capital at a high level and explain to governments that Iran's argument that it has the right to reprocess, in the context of a weapons program, is just wrong under the NPT. There is no comma in the sentence that says that everything has to be within a non-weapons-related program. It's just not there. And we've just never made the case.

So, we get ourselves back in good standing, we isolate them politically and strategically. We make the argument that they do not have the right they claimed within the context of 18 years worth of unanswered questions about their program. And that's the core of it. There are still questions the IAEA cannot answer that go back 18 years. And then, I think the right way forward, the way forward that has the best shot at success is to try to negotiate with Iran an open-ended suspension of their enrichment program while we attempt to create a new international agreement, which is essential for the overall regime that says that the nuclear weapons states will provide, under some international auspices, nuclear fuel services, that is enrichment and reprocessing to all non-nuclear states in good standing under the IAEA.

And what that would allow Iran to do is instead of being singled out as the criminal state, Iran would be the first mover under a new regime of getting its enrichment services under some inviolable – and it would have to be made ironclad, international guarantee. It's not going to be easy but there is time, I think, with an effort that's sufficiently broad and sufficiently focused and sufficiently urgent.

MR. BAER: Ray, what do you think the Iranians would think of that?

MR. TAKEYH: I think there is a conceptual divide here between where the Iranians are and where the international community is, at least where the Europeans or the Americans are. We look at negotiations with Iran on the nuclear issue as a means of gaining some sort of suspension of the enrichment activities. And that suspension can be, in practice, permanent; it doesn't have to be declared so. They look at negotiations as a means of offering confidence-building measures so they can continue with enrichment activities. And they have found an interlocutor, mainly IAEA; that was the strategy of negotiations with the Europeans, didn't work. It ultimately will be their strategy of negotiations with the United States; it may not work. Therefore there is now a new negotiating partner in IAEA, which is trying to conduct inspections and essentially clarify previous ambiguity in order for Iran to continue its enrichment program under some sort of safeguard measure that IAEA is satisfied with. So that, essentially, places them at a different position than we were.

I think, at the end of the day, the deal that may be, and increasingly I'm not sure if it's tenable, is some sort of enrichment capability within Iran. Now, you can talk about the safeguard measures and inspections regimes and what they will look like to ensure that those activities are not being diverted for military purposes, even if there's an inspection regime that could make that guarantee, which I don't believe exists. But I think the idea of gaining a uranium zero-enrichment practice or a zero-enrichment policy, at this point, is untenable.

Now, you know, Iran is a land of where there can be radical shifts within the regime's perspective and international orientation. However, this position at this point is a consensus within the body polity. How that consensus changes, I just don't know.

MR. MATHEWS: The premise of the NPT was that safeguards could safeguard all non-weapons activities. And what we've learned is that any technology that gives you direct access to fissile material is essentially non-safeguardable at least under any sort of safeguards that have yet been implemented or perhaps even imagined. That's what I was talking about when I said you need these fundamental improvements in the NPT. You just can't safeguard something that is providing direct access to material that you can stick in nuclear weapon and all you need is a couple of kilograms of it.

On the other hand, there are tougher kinds of safeguards than we have yet imagined; much more intrusive sorts of monitoring and physical presence and international supervision and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. There's no question that it's a fallback and it's your least-desirable outcome; but it's imaginable that this – the key I think to what becomes possible besides the unknowability of Iranian politics is what is the cost to Iran? And the key mistake that was made for years and years and years while the Bush administration went back and forth over, gee, we'd like to have regime change but we can't do it – so what do they do – sort of nothing other than bluster, which is the worst possible diplomatic strategy, threat that you don't back up – is that we never raised the cost of making this choice even while it was still under debate in Iran. Is it worth doing this?

Well, you can only answer that question if you know what the international cost will be. And we can only tip the outcome by raising the cost, whether it's through sanctions or isolation or anything else. And our efforts to raise the cost have been feeble.

MR. BAER: Well, to get any of this done, and something which is a theme in the issue of Iran but also looking throughout the Middle East, is about restoring U.S. leadership. Right now, our credibility, as Jessica was saying, with the Middle Eastern public – I mean, people fear us more than they fear the Iranians – but, more importantly is, you would think that anyone we embraced would be the kiss of death. But are there ways or is it a change in our own administration going to be enough to turn the page and restore American leadership? What are some of the things that you think we can do?

MR. MARSHALL: Well, regime change here would certainly help, you know, wipe the slate clean a little bit but we still have a lot of work to. But I think, you know the burden of my argument and democracy is that the next president's biggest job is going to be to regain the ideological and moral initiative against this Islamist extremism. And that's got a few parts. The first part is to restore America's moral credibility, which gives us the ability to lead. And I'm just struck by the price we're paying in the nation for the inarticulate presidency of George Bush. You know, he has – talk about conceptual problems – he has not framed this struggle that we're in for the American people here, six years after we were struck, he still talks in these kind of martial terms of a war on terror, of us and them, and he doesn't do a very good job of distinguishing between various them.

And that sort of rhetoric plays right into the hands of our enemies and feeds the impression that the war on terror is in some way a war against recalcitrant Arabs and Muslims of all descriptions. And you see that reflected in the polling; people don't believe that the United States is acting in self-defense, don't believe that America is championing the liberal, democratic values that we've built a big reservoir of global support really because of our identification with it over the centuries.

And so, somehow we have failed to define this conflict as one that is primarily a civil war within the Islamic world that is a challenge from selfless extremists to the moderate majority, the mainstream of the Muslim world that, I think, has no real interest in an apocalyptic jihad against the West, and is looking for ways to coexist peacefully and reconcile Islam and modernity in ways that don't entail a battle against the rest of the world.

But our president has sort of missed this notion that we have not so much launched a war against terrorism as joined a struggle that's already in progress. And when you begin to think of it in those terms, you try to think about how to use America's powers including our good relations with allies and international institutions to tip the scales toward moderates and modernizers in the Muslim world who should be allies in this struggle. First, we've got to restore more credibility at home; that means junking the Cheney Doctrine, which says that an American president has plenary penitentiary powers to make up the rules for trying, detaining, interrogating terror suspects without any regard to international or domestic law or democratic accountability. That doesn't work; we have to shut down Guantanamo.

I think this really entails some institutional innovation, you know, those who say that defies a process – doesn't work well for the new threats we face – I think, have a point and we need to create a new kind of terrorism court. We probably need to negotiate new protocols or conventions in Geneva about terrorism suspects. But the fact that America would be willing to show the decent respect for the opinion of mankind, join with other

countries to develop rules that we all have confidence would be one step to restore the moral basis for American leadership.

So, we have a lot of work to do at home; but at the same time, we need to do a better job of discrediting the allure of Islamist extremism throughout the Muslim world. And here again, it's just incredible this moral inversion that's happened where the moral illness has been on the United States, not the people who are out there killing Muslims indiscriminately; the primary victims of this – (unintelligible) – rage, these days, are Muslims.

And turning that around, sort of long-term strategy I'll detail various ways I think we can do it here, but it does, it seemed to me, begin by showing solidarity with people who are struggling to reform their societies, modernize them, and open them up and give voice to the masses as opposed to ruling cliques and sort of join the modern, global economy. These are the folks that America should be throwing our weight behind; but this is a political, diplomatic, economic proposition primarily. But, the United States is going to have to be a part of the balance of power in the Middle East for a long time to come. That's an inescapable fact but we want to show extreme reluctance to use force because that tends to buttress the jihadist narrative of an imperialist, neo-colonial force, you know, trying to shape Muslim destiny.

MR. BAER: How could you be the balance of power if, on one hand, we may need some of these autocratic rulers on our side, the argument would go. And also, as you just ended with, if we need to keep troops presence there, where do you keep it that doesn't enflame an argument which says, these are holy lands that American occupiers shouldn't be.

MR. MARSHALL: It's a great question. You know, we have played the role of offshore balancer up until this invasion of Iraq – or actually to the first Gulf War – but I'm afraid, I think as Ray said, that we're going to have to retain some kind of American military presence for a very long time; I hope a much smaller one.

I think I'm skeptical of the idea when we talk about containing Iran. It'd be nice to figure out how to do that but I don't know who does it. I'm skeptical that can be done without American military forces very present in the region. And so, to stabilize Iraq, to dissuade Iran, to protect our other vital interests in the region, I think military force is going to be present there, but we can't be seen to be arbiters of the destinies of the Iraqi people or other folks in the region.

MR. BAER: – take a stab at that question?

MR. TAKEYH: How does the United States reclaim its influence in the Middle East and its moral standing from which –? In light of its probable departure from Iraq, at least immeasurable, and therefore its defeat in Iraq in a sense that the American objectives, whatever they were, however they evolved, were not achieved. Well, that's going to be tough, but there are several things that can be done.

First of all, I would actually try to engage in some degree of diplomatic mendacity frankly. Right now, the prevailing – everyone, the president and others say, we cannot fail, Iraq is essential battle, the most important that there ever was – well, I would stop saying

that because if we are going to be defeated in Iraq, let's at least have a different public diplomacy approach to it: it wasn't that big of a deal, it's going okay, they're resolving their own differences.

MS. MATHEWS: We see some purpose.

MR. TAKEYH: We achieved the purpose; I mean, so I would actually try to minimize that we cannot possibly fail in Iraq when we are failing in Iraq. So, I would try to have a different public diplomatic approach to it, namely to suggest what we're suggesting about Vietnam. It wasn't that big of a deal that we failed. That's going to be more difficult in this case. So that's essentially the rhetoric that I would embrace; one of concealing the reality of the defeat.

Number two, there has to be some practical reason beyond the war of ideas, beyond urging of economic modernization, why the Middle East as a political society and at the popular level want the United States to be involved in its affairs. And it seems to me that cannot happen so as long as there's a measurable American presence in Iraq. Now, Iraq is something that I have never been able to completely wrap my mind around, but my colleague, I think he's here, Steve Biddle (sp) has finally convinced me that you cannot – the idea of maintaining 50,000 forces in Iraq is just silly. You either go up to 450,000 or you go down to zero. The idea that you can maintain a limited number of troops and achieve the current mission is not necessarily practical or feasible. It might be politically something that people can entertain, but at a practical level it's not achievable.

So then, one you hoped you have some sort of arrangement where the Vegas rules applies to Iraq: what's in Iraq stays in Iraq. And that civil war doesn't necessarily expand and I think in due time, Iraq may travel the turbulent journey of Lebanon. After a period of violence, disorder, and chaos, they eventually come to a new national compact whereby these three entities manage to find some sort of a modality for their coexistence. But the midwife of that particular Iraqi society is likely to be a period of self-fulfilling violence.

Number two, what I would do beyond the efforts is try to mitigate the spread of the Iraqi civil war and the humanitarian consequences of it in regarding to refugees. Four million people have already been displaced and that population is 25-26 million people and that's likely to be more so. Number two is that I would tackle the emotive and corrosive issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Right now, there's not only no peace process, there's three entities: There's a failed Islamist state in Gaza, there's a failed secular state in West Bank, and in Israel, that is ungovernable so long as the Palestinian entities are ungoverned. So I would actually have some sort of approach to that.

Number three, I would try to do something about Iran; some sort of regional framework for containing its power or some sort of a diplomatic accommodation with it. You cannot stabilize the Gulf and the larger Middle East so long as Iran is outside the structure of the family of nations in that region. It's like trying to – for a long time we did, from '48 to '69, try to have an East Asian policy that didn't involve China. And ultimately that proved untenable. So some sort of approach to the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is going to be very difficult.

And five, there's some of the things that Will was talking about, reform. Not, as Will says, a sort of imperial encroachment, but how do you bring this region into the era of modernization? The problems, they're not just that there is no money. The Gulf is a very rich place today. Egypt is wealthy in certain sectors; there's a sort of a provocative class stratification. The previous attempts at economic reform in these countries whether it's in Egypt or it's Algeria and others have created crony capitalism as opposed to an economic structure that tends to be to the benefit of the population as a whole.

So, the idea is how do you move these countries in conjunctions with them? And in that particular sense, I would have to say that the enterprise of reform and democratization have to be separate because the reform of these societies has to, whether you like it or not, has to come in conjunction with the incumbent authoritarian rule. Democratization as such, if you're serious about it, is a regime change policy, and that's what you're talking about. You're saying, Mubarak is an inefficient, autocratic ruler and he should be replaced by someone who's not. Now that's called a regime change. All right, now we had that policy toward Eastern Europe during the Cold War; we never said that, you know, solidarity, you should participate in the Mickey Mouse Parliament that the Polands have. We said, solidarity should replace that communist –

So, reform could possibly come about, but the agency of that reform are likely to be problematic actors within the region and the larger task of regional stabilization is going to require the assistance of these countries and some sort of a successful peace process requires the cooperation of the Egyptians. Some sort of an effort to deal with Iran require the cooperation of the House of Saud. I mean these are just the practical realities of the situation. So, maybe some measure, mixture, of these two even can reclaim the United States' influence; I would say moral standing, we'll have to wait for a while.

MR. BAER: Okay. Let's take some questions. I guess we have to wait for our microphone here. Gentleman, yes, sir.

Q: Thank you. Good morning. I'm Steve Monblatt with the British-American Security Information Council. Just a couple of very short things: Ray, how do you square your idea about public diplomacy spinning the war is not that big of a deal with Will's comment about the need to restore moral credibility in the United States for the United States?

I look at – you know, I look back at the Second World War. The Germans didn't retreat from Stalingrad and they lost the war. In Korea, U.S. retreated to the Pusan Perimeter, which led to the Inchon landings, which were pretty successful. A battle is not a war. There are ways to look at this that are not that – that don't lead us to a dead end. But it seems to me to try to spin it as not that big a deal, it doesn't lead in the direction you want to go.

And a short one for Will: You talk about the war in Islam, and I agree completely; what we are really looking at is a war in Islam. But isn't it more like the religious wars in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century than what we have seen in the last century? And really, doesn't that – you know, if you look at Martin Luther and some of those guys, they weren't that nice

either. Where does that put us? One the side of the reformation or the side of the counterreformation in something like that?

BAER: Will you want to take that first about the hundred-years war?

MR. MARSHALL: Well, yeah, I'm having trouble seeing Osama bin Laden as a kind of Calvin, but – well, I think that what we have here is a kind of a toxic hybrid of religious zeal and politicization. We have a politicized Islam that – and I'm not great expert on the sources of political Islam, but you have an ideology that wants to erase all boundaries in fact between politics and religion. And so, you know, whether it's I think some of its proponents want to reform Islam to its original purity and impose a kind of strict puritanical regime everywhere – and certainly the Taliban did that, and we see some signs of that in Gaza now actually and a reaction of that in Anbar province.

So yes, there are parallels, broad parallels, but I wouldn't push the analogy too far. I think that the fundamental problem here is a crisis of legitimacy in the Middle East. We have regimes that I agree we have to work with them in the short term. There is no question. I guess that was really the burden of your question, Ken. But we have to have a two-track strategy that in the short term tries to secure the cooperation of the regimes and counterterrorism and counter proliferation and other – Israeli peacemaking and other mutual interests. But over time, we have to shift the emphasis of our policy. And I think to – to society and reform and openings, and of people who want them. But I think this is a – the Islamists now have a corner on moral legitimacy in a region where the secular rulers don't have anything to evoke. It used to be a kind of an Arab socialism or nationalism. Those ideologies have gone bankrupt and died. No one believes them anymore, least of all the Arab rulers who used to profess them. So Islam is the answer.

Well, if Islam isn't the answer, what is? There has to be some other theory for reconciliation of these countries with the modern world. And it seems to me that that points us toward a policy that tries to hasten the currents of change in the region. But yes, it's somewhat reminiscent of the religious wars and the ferocity, and the violence and the barbarism that has been unleashed. But I think what we have here is a fundamentally political project launched by a small group of theorists and thinkers who can only win if we let them, that is, if we sort of play into the hands of the identity politics narrative that they have been spinning. Can they actually gain wider adherence in the Middle East, and unfortunately that has been what has happened in the last six years, what we need to change.

MR. BAER: Right, can we square the spinning of the war and moral credibility?

MR. TAKEYH: Well, as someone who advocated measure and mendacity, more credibility is probably not that high my list of – (laughter) – list of priorities. I don't – ideally, the United States would be respected as a moral power, but those ambitions are just – were we are? We basically have to preoccupy ourselves with a means of realizing some of our practical interest as opposed to speaking moral redemption over policy. It is just where we are at.

Now, what I say about Iraq is the president and others who suggest, this is the most important battlefield that United States. This is a contest for generations. Well, if that is

true, then you have to operationally realize that. Namely, you have to commit half-a-million American troops for decade-long and engage in serious pacification, reformulation, and restructuring of the Iraqi society. If you're not going to commit the resources, then your rhetoric and your policy has to come in line.

And policy of the United States at this particular point is one of gradual withdrawal from Iraq, and that is essentially a consensus within the political parties. And the rhetoric is that this is the most important central front in the history of American civilization, not to mention the global civilization. Well, there is incongruity, inconsistency between those two. You can't claim that this is the most important battlefield while preparing to lose the war. I am prepared to lose the war so I'm just having some rhetoric that accommodates that realization.

And I don't think that rhetoric is necessarily false. I don't think Iraq is the most important central front. I don't think American credibility and interest abroad forever are going to be diminished and tarnished by what didn't happen in Iraq. So I don't think we cannot fail in Iraq. Ideally, I hope we didn't fail; but now that we failed, I'm just trying to adjust to it and I'm hoping others will share that adjustment, that is all.

MR. BAER: Okay, Karl.

Q: Carl Leubsdorf of the Dallas Morning News. Following up on what you said, Ray, about the growing consensus on withdrawal. Do you really think that – there is certainly a consensus in certain quarters of both parties – but do you really think that President Bush has bought into that. And to what extent does that matter after January 2009?

MR. TAKEYH: I suspect – I don't know what goes on in the president's mind. I don't have any connection with him. But if he thinks that somehow, Iraq is going to be transformed – what he said in his speech – into sort of an inclusive, democratic society that will become a model for transformation of the region, then he's either deranged or mendacious. It's possible that he's both. But it has to be one or the other. It cannot be neither. So I just don't believe that's in the cards.

And increasingly, if he withholds to that perception while his administration is preparing for gradual drawdown and his party is preparing for gradual drawdown, and the Democratic Party is preparing for a gradual drawdown, and if there's a national consensus for a gradual drawdown, then he's not just lame duck, but increasingly superfluous.

MR. BAER: Jessica, you want to take a crack at it too? Looking at January 2009, is that just we're looking for – and also is there really consensus? I mean, if Rudy Giuliani isn't saying that we should be withdrawing troops and he's the frontrunner right now in the Republican Party?

MS. MATHEWS: Yeah, I guess I don't. I was struck when Ray first said that in the opening. I don't see it. I don't think the American people are anywhere near willing to in effect sort of pull the plug. And I think the argument of sort of more time is one that is very hard, given the American allergy to losing wars, and that this has been framed as this is a war

we can either win or lose, which I don't happen to believe to be true. And I don't think that defines what's going on in Iraq.

I don't see it. I think there is going to be a succession of give me another six months for a very long time. And I fear that moving beyond that is going to precipitate a very ugly domestic coming apart in this country in something akin to what Vietnam did. I think it's going to be extremely terribly hard to end this thing. And I don't see a consensus.

MR. BAER: So even if a Democrat president is sworn in January '09, they'll face the reality of I just can't do what my constituency wants?

MS. MATHEWS: Well, I mean, there's two things here. One is the political – domestic political aspects of this thing. And you know, one of the tragedies of this war has been that the decisions have been made on the basis of American domestic politics far more than realities on the ground in Iraq ever since the beginning. And that has accounted for a whole lot of the terrible mistakes that have been made. And at least as I see it, that's where it will continue to. So what it's being set up for, I think, is the stab in the back. We were winning until the Democrats came in and pulled the plug. Just where we are now 30 years later about Vietnam. I don't think it was true then; I don't think it's true now. But I think that's the dilemma a new Democratic president would face, and a wise one is going to be unwilling, I think, to embrace the dagger.

MR. BAER: Right, I think it's Rand?

Q: Rand Beerson, the National Security Network. You all have talked about the inevitability of withdrawal. But one of the considerations that people have talked about for some time is, and then where do the troops go?

And so my question to you is a three-part question. The first part is a lot of people talk about going back to the Gulf. We had a problem in Saudi Arabia that in some ways precipitated al Qaeda. So do we go there? And Ray, does that simply slightly move the proximity of U.S. forces to Iran so that they still feel concerned?

Secondly, the Kurdish area, there has always been a concern about what the Kurds would do if we left or what the adjacent powers, Turkey and Iran would do if we left. And so, can we simply walk out on the Kurds again?

And then thirdly, none of you mentioned Afghanistan with respect to the proximity of U.S. forces to Iran. Does the withdrawal from Iraq take care of that, or is Afghanistan, which was once a common effort, and now seems to be a divisive one, have a play in that with respect to dealing with Iran?

MR. BAER: Who wants to take a stab at part of that?

MR. TAKEYH: First of all, in terms of sort of an offshore American presence, Rand, there is an American presence in places like Bahrain and Kuwait. And I suspect that will remain as a sort of –

Q: But will it be larger?

MR. TAKEYH: I don't necessarily think it needs to be larger. We have to figure out what is the purpose of those American forces? And that has to do with ascribing some degree of content to a concept. What does containment of Iran mean? A military force is a useful component of that containment strategy if you feel that Iran is a territorially revisionist state, determined to use its military power to absorb other countries. It's just not that case. The way Iranians project their influence is more subtle, in some cases more sinister. But it is not one that requires immeasurable American presence in terms of NATO alliance trying to stop Soviet military incursion into Western Europe.

The second justification that is proffered for American military presence, it give the Gulf States psychological confidence to in some ways defy and deny Iranian requests. In that sense, the question is, how many troops does it require to provide psychological solace? Because if it's not designed to have any practical operational capability, then what does that require? Does that require not necessarily too many troops, but some sort of a security guarantee to the Gulf States? I think it would be very difficult to get a security guarantee for the Gulf States, given the fact that such security assurances have to be appropriated by Congress and I don't think that will happen, but is there some sort of informal way of doing so with the Gulf States that gives them that psychological substance without necessarily having significant American forces?

I'm not sure if it's healthy to have excessive militarization of the Gulf with plans to sell \$20 billion of armament to the Gulf States that will only provoke further arms races in the region and, in fact, legitimize Iran's quest for a nuclear weapon. Given the asymmetry of power, they probably rely on the unconventional capability to negate the impact of such conventional forces. So we have to figure out what containment means, what role our troops have, and whether or not – according to Charlie Kupchan's essay in this – can there be some sort of a regional framework where all these powers are participants as opposed to a regional framework designed to exclude the leading power of the region. So that's a decision and consideration that one can have.

Afghanistan – rehabilitation of Afghanistan, some think that the United States has not committed an extraordinary level of resources to, and you see that with the resurgence with Taliban, and, increasingly curious enough, Iranian connections with Taliban, which again has to do with the amorality of the Middle East politics. Whether or not American withdrawal – I suspect if there is an American president determined to withdraw from Iraq, they will probably shift some resources to Afghanistan, because you don't want the entirety of the two fronts of war on terror to collapse, which is essentially the British policy. They're going to withdraw Afghanistan, but augment presence – or withdraw from Iraq, but augment presence in Afghanistan. So in some case, Afghanistan may be a beneficiary of American drawdown in Iraq.

MR. BAER: Jessica, want to add to that?

MS. MATHEWS: No, I just wanted to say that I think that's the critical question. Because so much of what is being said now about the fear of the consequences of losing is a conflation of leaving Iraq with leaving the region. I mean, if you read this stuff, pick up the

Wall Street Journal editorial page on any given day, there is at least one column about the terrible things that will happen if you leave. And some of them are real, and some of them everybody shares. And many of them are fantasies, you know, where you can say almost everything. Joe Jaffe had a piece that says China becomes expansionist in the Western Pacific if we leave Iraq.

And many of these arguments are based on, oh, we're not leaving Iraq; we're leaving the Middle East. So if you then turn around and say, no, we're actually not leaving the region, then you say, okay, but where can we stay where our presence does more good than harm. And I don't think there are very many obvious answers to that. When I was in Kuwait, we were told the American base was way out there and they wanted it further away from the city, just so people didn't have to even imagine it, much less see it.

There are not a lot of good answers, at least that I know of. But I think Ray's question about how many troops do you need, and how many do you need for the psychological reassurance to be credible, it's very hard to answer. And how many do you need, actually also for military quick reaction forces, and what kind, and do we have them? These are real questions for which I don't believe there are good answers.

MR. BAER: Okay, Bill? (off mike.) I will call – (inaudible).

Q: Well, I'm here wearing three hats that don't fit on one head very comfortably. I work next door at Brookings in the government studies program, member of the board of this magazine – congratulations to the editors on putting together a really splendid issue and on this forum. But third and most relevantly for the purposes this morning, I'm a board member at the National Endowment for Democracy. And I'm scratching my head a little bit, and I'm not palming the ace I generally am. So just a comment and then a question.

First of all, I absolutely agree with one of the premises of Will Marshall's piece that we are losing the war of ideas, if indeed we're actually waging it. And I am deeply skeptical that we can make very much progress with the institutional means currently at our disposal. The U.S. information agency was abolished at a time that it seemed of limited relevance, but there's no way that it would have been abolished after September 11, 2001.

And I think that what has happened in the State Department under the current structure has been a series of fiascos that in part reflected weak leadership down to the present day, but in part reflected the institutional location of public diplomacy efforts. And so, I would put on the table the proposition that we need a new institution, a USIA for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that is capable of advocating for public diplomacy within the government, and then conducting it in the world. And I'd be interested in your thoughts about that.

On the practical democracy promotion front, let me put a concrete case on the table, Egypt, which has come up. There is no doubt in my mind that if a free and fair election were conducted today, the Muslim Brotherhood would win it. And I don't think the Mubarak government is under any illusions about that either. And it is also the case that if we had pushed for democracy in Egypt 30 years ago, there never would have been an Egypt-Israeli peace treaty. So there are some really concrete issues here.

And the question is this: For the foreseeable future, secular liberals – and numerous Carnegie publications have pointed this out – secular liberals in the Middle East will be unbelievably weak – numerically, culturally, in every respect – so the choices will reduce to autocrats or Islamists we think we can live with. Can we live with them? Is the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt more like what the Islamist party in Turkey has become, or is it more like our worst nightmares? And what do we do about this? Because the next president is going to have to have a view on that question, and in some ways is going to have to act on that view, either maintaining the status quo relationship with the current Egyptian government or shifting our emphasis in ways that we've been reluctant to do up to now. So what do we do with Egypt?

MR. BAER: Will, quickly?

MR. MARSHALL: Well, Bill, as usually, you've very sharply pinned the dilemma. Two points – one I strongly agree with your points about public diplomacy. I don't think we've even begun the debate about how to overhaul our diplomatic institutions to wage this battle of ideas. First of all the disparity of resources we throw at it is just ridiculous. Public diplomacy, we spend about a billion and a half dollars. We spend about \$400 billion or more on the Pentagon – actually a lot more – and so we haven't made a serious commitment to the kind of institutional changes that I think are necessary and Bill alluded to. And there are some thoughts in my piece on other things we should do to wage the battle of ideas more effectively.

I mean, I don't have a good answer for either, Bill, but it seems to me it's a balance of risk. Right now, the Muslim Brotherhood does not seem to be pushing a harsh Islamist agenda in Egypt, and it's being cracked down on brutally by the Mubarak regime. And as you just said, it would probably win an election, so that suggests to me it has a popular following that Egyptian liberals sadly don't have.

To me, that suggests the basis of a real tough dialogue – the United States and the Muslim Brotherhood and similar parties in Jordan and Morocco and elsewhere – on what it means to compete. But I think that we ought to champion their right to compete in a political arena. And that doesn't go for every Islamist party. Those that have not made some kind of fundamental commitment to renounce terrorism and violence, as the Muslim Brotherhood has in Egypt, don't deserve any support from us. But it does seem to me that we need to engage them and test them and work with – for years, we've been trying to pressure our friendly despotic friends in the Middle East to open up. And the result is sort of what Dan Bromberg called illiberal democracies. And we just need to push harder, it seems to me; we need to up the pressure and try to create larger space. As Larry Diamond says in his piece, to give up some power doesn't mean to give up all power. Negotiations can be had about institutional and constitutional constraints that would be imposed on any regime that wins power, including the Muslim Brotherhood.

Does that absolutely eliminate the risks that when they get elected, they would say we didn't mean it; this was just the way, our tactic, our ruse for getting power, and now we're through with all that; let's bring on Sharia and everything else? I don't know. But it does seem to me that there is ample historical precedent for the view that participating in a democratic arena, democratic process has a tempering effect on former revolutionary and

radical parties. And we need to apply that logic and learn on those experiences in the Middle East now.

MR. BAER: Quickly, Jessica, then Ray.

MS. MATHEWS: Okay, my view is it's much more important what we do than what we say in restoring moral credibility to our policies. And I mean, I've never seen effective public diplomacy done in my lifetime, so I've come not to believe in it. And so, I would not put creating a new institution high on my list. But I would focus on what are the things we can do.

Number one thing – it has to do with Iraqi refugees. It is sort of the depths of immorality that we are making it impossible for the people who worked with us and whose lives are at stake as a result to come here. And Sweden has taken in 25,000, and we've taken in 400, or whatever the numbers are. That one is going to be a big one; and dealing with the situation in Jordan and Syria that has resulted from the movement of two million people. Secondly, when elections happen, we ought to endorse their results. I think we lost – I don't believe elections are the test of democracy, and they're sure not the first test. And we should learn; we should be much more sophisticated. But when they happen, we cannot turn around and say, gee, we didn't like the results. And indeed, in the Palestinian territory, I think we lost the real opportunity to say to Hamas, okay, govern. You know, it's a whole hell of a lot harder to solve these problems than to criticize them. And I think we made a mistake there.

And finally, I think we ought to be opening a dialogue with political Islam. We have to. I mean, it's the same point Ray made about going for 25 years with an Asia policy that didn't recognize China. That's where the locus of political power is. We have started one here at Carnegie, which, if you read our stuff, you probably know about, where the director of propaganda of the Muslim Brotherhood came back to us as a result of a publication we wrote about gray areas in political Islam and wanted to open a dialogue with us, which we have, about the issues that we had raised. So there is, I think, a much more productive war of ideas that they are quite willing to engage in – indeed, interested in engaging in, and that will advance things. So that's it.

MR. TAKEYH: I'll just say something brief. I think that this debate on democratization has a number of propositions that need to be contested. Number one, that there are Islamists out there that oppose the United States and there are secular liberals that do not. I am unaware of this, but maybe I can point out in Carnegie literature or something, what are the significant measurable secular liberal parties or individuals with credibility and stature that are willing to support the United States policy, outside Said Ibrahim, whatever he is.

I'm actually not convinced that opposition to the United States has religious coloration. There is opposition to the United States from Latin Americans that aren't necessarily religious or East Asian countries. So I would actually suggest that the American dilemma is much more acute, that there is a sort of unity between Islamists and secular liberals that object to American military presence, America's relations with Israel, America's relations with other countries and regimes.

Second of all, the notion that Islamist parties' inclusion in the political process yield moderation. There are two cases that can point to that negate that idea – Hamas and Hezbollah. Maybe it will be different in Jordan; maybe it will be different. Iraq is the other case. The Islamist parties that are part of the political process and have not necessarily given up their goal of American military eviction or essentially assumption of power through violent means. So the debate is much more complicated. We might just be in the Middle East, our presence predicated on autocratic structure, as opposed to the masses of the public, whatever their religious affinities or secular tendencies. And that's much more of an acute or structural problem.

MR. BAER: Well, we are really letting out at 11:00, so I am going to wrap it up, because I know it is the morning. Everyone has a full day ahead of them. But thank you to our panelists. Thank you all for coming. I would like to keep the discussion going as long as we can in our pages, on our website. Please read and respond and thank you all very much.

(Applause.)

(END)