

FORDHAM CENTER ON RELIGION AND CULTURE

Fordham University

113 West 60th Street, Room 224 LLC

New York, NY 10023-7484

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THE ETHICS OF EXIT:
THE MORALITY OF WITHDRAWAL FROM IRAQ

Monday, March 21, 2005

Fordham University, New York NY

Introduction:
THE CHALLENGE FOR U.S. POLICY

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS, CO-DIRECTOR, FORDHAM CENTER ON
RELIGION AND CULTURE

PANEL 1: WHICH WAY? STAY THE COURSE OR STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL?

SCOTT APPLEBY, KROC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE
STUDIES

LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN, NEW REPUBLIC

GEORGE A. LOPEZ, KROC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE
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ADEED DAWISHA, MIAMI UNIVERSITY, OHIO

COL. W. PATRICK LANG, GLOBAL RESOURCES

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS: I'd like to invite Father McShane up to
welcome you.

FATHER JOSEPH McSHANE, S.J.: I promise I will not keep you long. On
behalf
of the entire Fordham family, faculty, staff and administrators, I do
want to
welcome you to this very important conference. In a special way I want

to
welcome the distinguished members of our panel, and to thank the Kroc
Center
for co-sponsoring our gathering today.

I hope you do not mind if in a special way I welcome to our campus an
old and
dear friend of mine, although I suspect we've both gotten to the age
where we
should never say that it's an old friend; a long-standing friend of
mine is, I think,
better: Scott Appleby, director of the Joan B. Kroc Center for
International Peace
Studies. We were graduate students together at the University Chicago.

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Therefore, we know more about one another than we should and we have
more
stories about stories about one another than we should ever tell. I
want to
welcome him and his colleagues from the Kroc Center and again, our
distinguished panelists.

I also want to thank the Steinfelds for organizing what I am sure is
going to be an
important contribution to the conversation that is going on right now
about life in
the Middle East and the future of Iraq and all the countries in the
Middle East. In
a special way I want to bring to you both a greeting and a blessing of
the Maronite
patriarch of Antioch and all the East, Cardinal Sfeir, who was with us
yesterday
and Friday. The university honored the patriarch with an honorary
degree and
he spoke with us about life in Lebanon and the prospects for peace in
Lebanon
and throughout the Middle East. When he heard that you were meeting
today, he

asked me if I would assure you that as you meet you meet with his blessing, you meet with all of his hopes and the hopes of the Maronite people, not only in Lebanon but throughout the world.

So thank you again for joining us. Peggy and Peter, wherever you are, thank you for organizing today.

MS. STEINFELS: Thank you. I want to welcome all of you to Fordham, as well as our colleague from Notre Dame, Scott Appleby and Gerry Powers, who particularly helped organize this, and our third co-sponsor, the Fourth Freedom Forum, represented by Alistair Millar. People keep asking, what is the fourth freedom. There are brochures out there that will tell you that the fourth freedom is freedom from war and freedom from fear. We're happy to have such a distinguished group of co-sponsors today.

We want to get right down to work. As you can see from the schedule, time is a bit compressed. We've tried to fit a lot into one day and I think we can all do it. Just to say a bit about how this conference was organized. It had its genesis in a conversation I had last October during a visit to the University of Notre Dame (I was not there for a football game!). I stopped by the Joan B. Kroc Center and Gerry Powers' door was wide open, and before you could say George Bush, we were talking about the situation in Iraq, grim then, grim now. Hardly had Gerry and I started talking when George Lopez popped in and we were away and running, talking about policy as if the three of us commanded legions.

We want back and forth. It was an odd argument in a way, as today's argument itself may be odd, for three people who had opposed the invasion of Iraq on just war grounds. Here we were caught up in a debate over whether the U.S. had an obligation to stay until there was peace and a resumption of normal political and economic life in Iraq.

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The debate preceding the invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, as you will remember, was shaped by the question of whether such an attack met just war criteria—*jus ad-bellum*. Was there a just cause? Was it being declared by legitimate authority? And were the likely consequences in keeping with our purposes in invading Iraq?

The course and the conduct of the war itself raised further just-war questions, *jus in-bellum*, as to proportionality and civilian immunity. Finally, there were and are a variety of questions about just war criteria, post-war, *jus post-bellum*, criteria that are relatively unclear and undeveloped in just war theory and which need amplification. One of the purposes of this conference is to help us think about.

It is not clear that the United States could simply pull up stakes and walk away from Iraq, even if, as some might argue, that our continued presence was the cause of the insurgency and continuing violence. Not that walking away was a policy consideration last fall when I was talking with Gerry Powers and George Lopez. Even today this does not seem to be an immediate policy consideration. Nonetheless, we need to ask: Under what circumstances could or would the United States leave Iraq? What military, political, economic and/or ethical considerations would warrant or justify such an action absent a peaceful resolution of the war and an end to the insurgency?

This conference will especially focus on the pressing ethical questions, jus postbellum, raised by either the protracted presence or the strategic withdrawal of

U.S. forces in Iraq. That is the focus of the meeting. Does an unjust war still

require a just war outcome?

Our purpose today is to systematically tackle those questions, to advance the

discussion of the morality of post-intervention U.S. policy regarding Iraq, and the

morality governing military occupations and withdrawals generally.

Obviously

an informed, realistic discussion of the ethics of exit cannot take place in the

abstract, and that is why we have organized the conference to look at three

different aspects of the question ñ the military-political aspect, the historical and

the ethical. Ample consideration must be given to facts on the ground and likely

consequences for different populations for Iraq, for the Middle East, for

American policy, for combating terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass

destruction, and for the future of international relations.

If the goals originally motivating an intervention become moot, or perhaps out of

reach, what should revised goals be? Does an invading and occupying power

assume continuing responsibility, regardless of the merits of its original action?

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How should the end game in Iraq be judged from the perspective of the moral

principles distinguishing just and unjust warfare?

The war in Iraq is approaching its third year with the outcome militarily and politically highly uncertain. The United States is formally committed to withdrawal from Iraq, although how definitively and under what conditions remain unclear.

This morning's session will explore the main scenarios – stay the course, or strategic withdrawal. Scott Appleby will chair that session. Following a short break, Stanley Hoffmann will take a look at examples from history of withdrawals from violent conflicts that may play a role in shaping the assumptions and attitudes of policymakers today.

This afternoon after lunch our three panelists will examine what moral principles and obligations based on what ethical and/or religious source could guide policymakers and citizens choosing between staying the course or strategic withdrawal.

The final panel will begin with an effort at synthesizing the day's comments, highlighting points of agreement and disagreement among the presentations, and raising questions to speakers and respondents that might need further amplification. We will have all our panelists here at the end of the day.

It is true that none of us do command legions – well, maybe somewhere in the audience there is someone who does or has commanded legions. This effort at reflection and clarification might be described as armchair strategizing. On the other hand, most of us in this room today are citizens of a country that chose to go to war on what are now seen to be fallacious grounds. We bear some responsibility for the war's continuation and its resolution.

We hope today's discussion will shed some light and give some weight to that responsibility. Thank you very much.

Questions as they occur to you can be noted on the white cards that were available out at the door. They will be collected by our student friends and passed on to the moderator.

Our first panel is ready to begin, and here is Scott Appleby.

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SCOTT APPLEBY: Thanks, Peggy. Good morning. My name is Scott Appleby. I direct the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. I am pleased and indeed feel blessed to be an old friend of McShane. I would like to thank Father and Fordham University for hosting the conference; Peter and Peggy Steinfelds, co-directors of the new Fordham Center on Religion and Culture for conceptualizing and organizing it in collaboration with Gerry Powers, director of policy studies at the Kroc Institute; and our friends at the Fourth Freedom Forum.

This morning we dive immediately into the heart of the matter. Having led a coalition of the willing to invade Iraq and topple the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein, having occupied the country and sustained an ongoing military action against the insurgency, having created conditions within which elections could be and were held, what now for the United States? Stay the course, or strategic withdrawal, as the title of this panel asks, begging the question what is the course precisely?

To lead us in a discussion of this pressing issue we have four distinguished authorities on its various aspects, each of whom brings a different perspective to the table. Adeed Dawisha, professor of political science at Miami University, and Colonel W. Patrick Lang, president of Global Resources in Washington, D.C. will offer comments by way of response to presentations by Lawrence Kaplan and George Lopez. Lawrence Kaplan is a senior fellow with the Hudson Institute where he directs the project on American primacy in world affairs. He is also senior editor of the New Republic, where he writes about U.S. foreign policy in world affairs. Mr. Kaplan is the co-author with William Kristol of *The War over Iraq: Saddam's tyranny and America's mission.*

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George Lopez is senior fellow of the Kroc Institute and professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame. In addition to his influential research

and many publications on smart sanctions with his colleague David Courtwright, Professor Lopez is the co-author with Courtwright and Alistair Millar of *Winning Without War: Sensible Security Options for Dealing with Iraq*, published months before the U.S.-led invasion. Lopez and Courtwright argued before the war and during its initial phases that we would find no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq because they did not exist there. See their articles, "Disarming Iraq" in *Arms Control Today*, September 2002, and "Containing Iraq: The sanctions worked," in *Foreign Affairs*, July-August 2004.

Adeed Dawisha, a native of Iraq, is the author or editor of ten books and dozens of scholarly articles on politics of the Middle East and Iraq in particular, including a recent project on the rebirth of Iraqi democracy. Professor Dawisha is currently a Carnegie scholar working on issues of international peace and security.

Colonel Patrick Lang, now retired from the U.S. Army, served as chief Mideast analyst and head of human intelligence for the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency during the 1990s. He is president of Global Resources, an international security and political risk consultancy, which advises NGOs and businesses overseas in physical risk management and security studies.

We'll begin with Mr. Kaplan.

LAWRENCE KAPLAN: Well, thank you for having me, Scott, and thank you as well, Peter, Gerard, and everyone here at Fordham and with the Kroc Institute. This may be the first time I've been hosted by an institution with the word Peace in it, unless you count the Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom, but I'm not too sure how serious they were about the peace part.

I'd like to begin with a number of stipulations or caveats, which actually may end

up being so numerous that they undercut my argument for staying the course.

Nonetheless, I think they point up an essential distinction between the debate we were having two years ago over whether to invade Iraq, and the debate we're having today, which is essentially over whether to abandon it.

The first point I should make is that while I was an extremely vocal supporter of the invasion two years ago, it's been a very long and in many ways very depressing two years. I've seen up close the nearly criminal level of incompetence of the occupation and specifically of the Bush team's direction of that occupation, and the destruction of just about every aim, including one very, very dear to my heart, namely the creation of a liberal Iraq. I know how far the

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distance is between Iraq the place and Iraq as it exists in the administration's imagination. I've seen too much death, whether at Khash hospital in Baghdad, on the highways of Iraq, or even mangled kids at Walter Reed. I've seen too much of it to say with any sense of conviction two years later that it's been worth it.

What I do know is that we are where we are, and having invaded a country and turned it essentially upside down, and having unleashed forces that Iraqis by themselves cannot subdue, we would merely be compounding rather than correcting the mistakes of the past were we to decide today to simply leave Iraqis to their fates. And this is for a very simple reason. Were we to leave

Iraq today, it would come apart at the seams. There's simply no way of getting around this essential truth. Most Iraqis don't like us, to be sure, but with the exception of the Sunnis, who obviously want their perks back, there is a general, if rather brittle, consensus among the average Iraqi man or woman in the street that U.S. forces, no matter how disliked and resented they are, are really the only thing standing between a very relative semblance of order and complete mayhem in Iraq today. I would argue that the problem is still too few rather than too many American troops providing security.

Put another way, I really don't care so much about domino arguments, credibility arguments, or even the effect withdrawal would have on democracy in the broader Arab world. What I care about now is simply the debt we owe the Iraqi people, period. And I hardly think it's evidence of heightened moral awareness, as many on the left, and indeed the right, seem to think is the case, to argue for the abandonment of Iraq today. I think doing so would be in many ways like a marshal or a police officer telling a crime victim or a witness that he or she has been protecting that you're on your own now; fend for yourself.

Now does this mean we never leave Iraq, or that we can't begin a substantial drawdown, even within a year? No, it certainly does not. What I'm arguing against is the case for immediate withdrawal, or more broadly put, withdrawal sooner rather than later. What this does mean is that the concept, the very concept of exit strategy, which has really permeated the American political lexicon, fundamentally misunderstands the nature of the war in Iraq. In the name of caution or despair, I think an exit strategy is really essentially to deny the contingency of human affairs, and in Iraq today everything ñ everything ñ is contingent. In other words, timetables and arbitrary deadlines simply

won't work here. The only thing a reasonable, morally defensible withdrawal can be tied to is the achievement of some sort of stability in Iraq, and that won't be determined by a calendar date. Now of course if the Iraqis themselves—that is to say, the sovereign Iraqi government, asks us to leave—I think we should. There is certainly no sense that any such request will be forthcoming. Jaafari and others

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have made this completely clear, and this extends across the Iraqi political spectrum, Dawa and SKIRI. A clear majority of the elected assembly, the members have come out and said, no. I think it would be a catastrophe if the U.S. would pull up its stakes and simply withdraw.

Now as to the argument that the American presence is fueling rather than compelling the insurgency, I might have bought that a year ago, and a year ago it was probably true. But not any more. First of all, whether in big unit sweeps, targeted raids, the Americans themselves were the only ones actually arresting or killing the hard-core insurgents. And second, Iraqis themselves, government officials, Shia worshippers, Iraqi Christians are the ones increasingly and nearly exclusively being targeted today, whether by Ba'athists or al Qaeda operatives. It is hard for me to imagine that a U.S. withdrawal is going to change this dynamic.

One could even argue that today, and I think we've seen evidence of this in the news over the past few days, that from the point of the insurgents, the Americans have become rather beside the point. I think Pat Lang can speak to this, but I think they have a sense increasingly that attacking American forces is simply too risky a proposition with too small a return. It's far easier, at least from the point of view of the Zarqawi's folks, to attack Shia mosques and Christian churches, and from the point of view of the Baiathists to assassinate government officials. I think we saw that this morning: there was a raid on an American convey south of Baghdad, no Americans were killed, 24 insurgents were. Indeed, over the past six weeks we've seen a fairly sharp decrease in attacks on American forces. Now with this last I simply have no idea. My point is rather that simply withdrawing will hardly ameliorate the situation in Iraq.

I think the most likely and sensible outcome is one based on the actual performance of Iraqi security forces. Fortunately the mechanical aspects of such an outcome are fairly easy to define. Democracy or anything else in Iraq simply won't work until Iraq has a functioning state, and a prerequisite for a state, of course, is that it has the capacity to defend its institutions and its citizens. So withdrawal based on performance as opposed to artificial timelines really depends on the progress of Iraqi security forces. And here I don't mean quantity. I do mean quality.

With the multinational command in Iraq, and even at the embassy, the quantification of success has become a sort of fetish. If you ask someone how many Iraqi National Guard forces we are fielding today, they roll out numbers and details, and inevitably these numbers mean very little, and often they mean nothing at all. But as far as I can figure out, aside from Iraq's border security forces, there are probably about 10 army battalions more or less on

line today.

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Only three of them, unfortunately, are specifically designed to defeat internal threats. With the police, there about 50,000 forces probably on line today, and they're visible everywhere. Whereas a year ago you rarely saw police at intersections in Baghdad, today they're all over the place and you can't go down the street without knocking into a pick-up truck full of policemen. Unfortunately none of them are equipped to battle insurgents either; same story with the National Guard essentially.

So what that really leaves us are the key internal security forces under the ministry of interior and General Petraeus, and they now number more or less, at least from what I can glean three or four battalions. They're very good. They fought in Samara, they fought in Fallujah, the second battle of Fallujah, and they fared very well. So all in and all, and this is an extremely conservative, somewhat depressed estimate of the amount of Iraqi forces that can be fielded today, my best guess is there are about six or seven Iraqi battalions that on a moment's notice could actually replace U.S. forces. That's not great, that's not good, and in fact it's almost pathetic. The plan is to field 33 special police battalions eventually, and many of them will go on line, but there's no way it's going to happen in under a year, and most likely there's no way it's going to happen in

under a year-and-a-half.

So what do we do? What does this mean? I think a minimum moral calculation means we wait until this day comes. I think anything less would be a moral catastrophe, much more so, I might add, than anything that went before. And so I think we're really in a sense we're on autopilot here. We just have to wait until Iraqi forces develop the ability to replace U.S. forces. To withdraw before that time comes I think would be really not only strategic, but again really a moral catastrophe. And I think it would be quite indefensible. Thank you.

MR. APPLEBY: Professor Lopez.

GEORGE A. LOPEZ: I'd like to join others in thanking Fordham for hosting this and all who co-sponsored it, even if I'm a member of one of the co-sponsors. But I'm really surprised by Peggy's assertions that no one in this room commands legions. I mean that's what we've heard of Fordham for years: legions sit at their feet. (Laughter) I'm very pleased to be here, and with all the distinguished members not only of this panel but of the day. I have 20 minutes to make an argument that takes about two hours.

In the last six months, in ways that were not possible before, calls for strategic withdrawal from Iraq have become a kind of cottage industry, in the pages of the New York Review of Books to Foreign Affairs and Foreign Policy itself. It's not surprising that when we turn to an analysis of these claims they all lead to at a

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critical juncture, not what's possible to do but what's the right thing to do. The wonder of this conference is that we're willing to struggle, certainly in this first panel, with some of the political and military considerations, but by the end of the day with the ethical considerations. The ethical considerations may be primary because the political and military arguments, claims and facts on the ground are a bit muddled. I think they can go either way. I'll argue for a particular way today in order to pique some of the ethical questions.

It's not a surprise to hear Lawrence's good presentation because I think that's the state of the question: the only reasonable thing to do, the conscientious thing to do, the committed thing to do, even for those who believe we've messed up, is not to abandon the Iraqis. That's a sensible, humane, and very U.S.-focused, Judeo-Christian ethic. I can appreciate that standard under many conditions. But I think we've come to a point in Iraq where we have to ask whether or not it's wrong-headed. Under those conditions, what I offer today is the beginnings of an argument: the goal of U.S. strategy in Iraq if in fact it involves us helping to create with the Iraqis a sovereign, free, stable and self-governing entity is to engage soon and announce very soon a series of steps that, while difficult for the American political psyche to accept, may be necessary in order for Iraqis to achieve the goal that we've announced with them and for them.

First, we must execute an announced, phased withdrawal strategy, to be completed by February of 2006, after the Iraqi constitution is forged and the next set of elections is held. Under those conditions of a year to maybe 13-15 months, a phased and calculated withdrawal will probably leave about 10,000 American advisors. We will have had enough time to train more elite police forces that

Lawrence talked about, more Iraqi police and Iraqi armed forces. Our structured, calculated withdrawal is aimed to serve a particular function: Only a multifaceted U.S. withdrawal, and regional engagement with other partners who will share in the security and future of Iraq, can create the political and cultural space necessary for an Iraqi government and Iraqi civil society to challenge the insurgency on the nationalist, political, religious and cultural grounds through which the Iraqis themselves must determine the outcome of their national struggle.

Those worried about civil war or anarchy once we depart do not, I think, fully understand the character and the nature of daily violence in Iraq. I share with Larry the view that the United States is not the cause of the current insurgent attacks. But we are a proximate force that stands in the way of Iraqis dealing with the political dynamic that undergirds the insurgency. At this time it is increasingly necessary to find a way to bring down the escalating attacks on Iraqis and on Americans in order to move to the political dialogue that the recently concluded election was supposed to spark.

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Second, my view of a phased and structured withdrawal of American troops comes with other particular dictates. I think it's impossible for us to give Iraqis full sovereignty unless we look at the structure and character of the largest U.S. embassy (in the world) that we've constructed in the country, and ask

a serious question about what motivates the scale of the operation we contemplate in Baghdad. It is read by moderate Iraqis, and by many in the region, either as sovereign domination or an attempt to extend U.S. influence in the region. This does not serve our purposes in Iraq. In not scaling down the embassy, we politically undercut everything we gain for the Iraqis. We have to find a way to scale down this embassy to a size that is consonant with other U.S. embassies in the region.

Third, I would suggest it is politically, militarily, and morally incumbent upon the United States to renounce the construction of the bases that are already being built and contemplated for use in Iraq, even after our departure, whatever nebulous date that might be. The need for six state-of-the-art military bases is unprecedented, even if you think about replacing the bases that we held in Saudi Arabia. They cannot serve the interest of a free, sovereign Iraq in being self-governing.

And fourth, critical for those who share the view that we have a moral obligation to the Iraqis: We must do in postwar reconstruction what we have done nowhere else after this kind of venture. We must maintain the economic commitment to the maximum, but do it with local participation and regional and global participation so that we don't base the reconstruction solely on American contractors.

There are some who may look at this call for strategic withdrawal, calculated disengagement, downsizing the embassy, and dismantling U.S. bases as a pacifist, leftist, or antiwar critique. I do not forge it out of those motivations, nor do I see it emerging from that kind of logic. Rather, it emerges from a hardened realism which suggests that whatever benefits we have bequeathed to the Iraqi

people by
deposing Saddam Hussein; we have changed the political calculation on
the
ground in a way that has made us part of the problem rather than part
of the
solution.

I share the concern about increased violence after we leave. But let's
be serious
about the level of violence that now unfolds on a daily basis. Attacks
on U.S.-led
coalition forces since November of 2003, which is the first time we
could get the
Pentagon to start to keep statistics, rose from 735 a month to 2,400 a
month by
the summer of 2004. That figure escalated after the siege in Fallujah,
and then,

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as Larry noted, has gone into kind of a downturn. But the baseline
figure since
the summer of 2004 has been about 2,400 a month.

It is the case that mass casualty bombings against Iraqi
targets—police stations
especially, have increased dramatically in the last year. That's a
trend that's likely
to continue; certainly the presence of American troops hasn't
mitigated those
attacks. But attacks against American troops and the presence of
American
troops have served as a glue to a Sunni-led and foreign-helped (at
least in
minority ways) insurgency that politically and militarily we've been
unable to
help the Iraqis take apart. We have to find a way to help the Iraqis
dismember
the insurgency's political motivation. I am convinced that only an
announced

U.S. withdrawal and action on that plan can assist that goal. Now, what kind of critiques might be mobilized against the argument as given?

Two seem to dominate. I'll address those at the start, and then make some other comments associated with the potential weakness of my position.

The first concern, held by many, is that there is a tactical weakness to my argument. That is, the last thing you want to do with an increasingly organized insurgency is to give them certainty about an American withdrawal and thus increase the credibility of their planning. This giving strength to the insurgency argument might have a convincing character to me if the United States hadn't been increasingly wrong about the character of the insurgency since the start of this venture. Quite simply, we were told that the insurgents would peak after the capture of Saddam, or the turnover from the Coalition Provisional Authority to a

U.S. appointed Iraqi government, that the insurgency would be on the run, that after the election we'd see a downturn in insurgent attacks. At every single political turning point where we've been told the insurgency would decrease dramatically, in fact they've increased. Why? Because we have left in place a group of collaborators who have no choice but to be beholden to us as an occupying force in order to determine their own future, and thereby contribute to their inability to make decisions on their own and work out the differences, however harsh and bloody as they think they may be, with their country people.

Those who believe we have no right to leave, and turn Iraq into a Lebanon, don't understand we already have a Lebanon in which the United States is a participant. That's not a pacifist approach. It's not a leftist critique. That's hard, terrible realism, the outcome we don't like when we hear it. But we haven't talked about it enough in this political culture to actually work

through the ethical
and political dimensions of it.

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The second claim that might be made against my argument is there are huge political costs to the United States for leaving. That is, the Arabs in the region, especially our foes with a particular version of Arab nationalism, and concern, may see weakness in a United States withdrawal, and thereby derive a lesson that would challenge U.S. interests everywhere on the globe. I believe history dictates that great powers determine the way in which others will interpret their withdrawal, and such a withdrawal can be turned into victory if it is not accompanied by an economic abandonment of Iraq.

I want to distinguish between a political, military, strategic withdrawal that empowers Iraqis from an economic abandonment. The economic viability of Iraq is our responsibility because for more than 12 years we participated in its systematic economic destruction.

Now two final points. Politics being what it is, obviously Lopezí announcement for strategic withdrawal by February 2006 will not command the Fordham legions that the Steinfels command. But it might put us on a platform of talking seriously about what it means to drop back to an advisory and training capacity in which 10,000 or 15,000 expert U.S. troops serve at the behest of the Iraqi government for a limited amount of time. It puts a premium on engaging regional parties, a small glimpse of which, the sanity of which, we

received just 10 days ago when the United States announced that it would accede to the European plan of carrots and sticks for dealing with the Iranian nuclear question.

We must go further with the Iranians and the Syrians if we hope to give the Iraqis regional partners in pursuing a viable national identity and national stabilization force.

And finally, my argument forces us to recognize that all arguments to stay the course have to fit proper ethical criteria. My colleagues who will argue stay the course from political or ethical grounds, tell me please, how you justify the U.S. embassy and bases and its exclusive economic control of the future of Iraq, and say this is a moral position?

Those who argue stay the course tell me concretely what are the levels of violence between Iraqis that will serve as a viable point at which you feel U.S. forces can ethically or morally withdraw.

My final point is essentially a cultural, quasi-ethical one because I am an international relations expert and only an amateur ethicist. At the end of the day, I worry about our arguments about the ethics of withdrawal and about an American cultural point of view that is not fully ethical in the global sense. Maybe another way to say that is: Beware of Judeo-Christian ethicists bearing

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new categories, particularly those of jus post-bellum. I'm open to that discussion and I'll be curious to see how it unfolds, but I worry that it will fail to be informed by two critical contributions. The first, some in this room, and particularly a number of our colleagues at the Kroc Institute are not here, have become expert in the politics and dynamics of post-conflict peace-building. There is a huge amount of praxis and literature in this area: findings about how to empower local agents to run affairs on their own, about how to deal with spoiler violence, about how to build peace accords that turn out to be political bargains which at the start almost always have to be between scoundrels in order to get to the next phase. We're coming to an awareness of this. Look at what's happening in Afghanistan, and the deals being made with former Taliban officials in order to preserve the stability of the government. We're looking at the dynamics of spoiler violence, maybe in its last phase, in Northern Ireland. It's happening on the ground in Colombia. This too will have to happen in Iraq, but it can only happen if guided by a non-military power as an external ally to the Iraqis. Long before we get to parliamentary democracy we have to understand that running a foreign army's counter-insurgency campaign does not lead to serious and effective post-conflict peace-building. That's what the literature and the findings tell us.

Second, and my last point: We'd better understand the power and dynamics of culture, both our own and that of the Iraqis. Much of our own stands in the way of an effective discussion of the ethics of exit. We are not a people who walk away when things are, in our own mind, undone. The heart of the American character is the can-do mentality. It doesn't matter to us if we screwed up at the start. If anybody can scotch-tape Humpty Dumpty back together again, we can, especially

because we can continue to bring resources to it. We have to critically examine that cultural dynamic and ask whether or not it stands in the way, or whether, in fact, it is a terrible denial of what's actually going on. You want to test whether or not we're in denial? Try, please, as my research assistants and I have tried, to find out what really happened in Fallujah. How many people are now re-settled? How many homes were destroyed? How many civilians were killed? What's the current state and dynamic of law and order in the city of Fallujah? Having not come up with those answers, I don't have a lot of confidence in our ability to get beyond our cultural can-do attitude and actually get to the ethical needs of the Iraqi people.

Finally, many of us remember ñ I think it was also on the front page of the New York Times. It was on the front page of many other newspapers, but maybe two weeks into the war there was this very poignant picture of a number of Iraqi soldiers surrendering. Their shirts were off, their hands were in the air, they were in a long line marching. American soldiers were guiding their march to wherever they were going. I had a young man who was a ROTC officer in my class, a senior about to

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(END SIDE A, BEGIN SIDE B)

PROF. LOPEZ: (in progress) -- time of year. I said last night, I saw this picture

and I said, dear God, thank you for allowing me to be entering the service of a military where a military will respect Geneva Accords, will respect the rights and dignities of others.

Please, please, no, please ñ because this is an important story. Itís not about other issues.

(END TAPE 1, BEGIN TAPE 2)

-- save us from the conditions in which we find ourselves. I pledge to you I will die for your cause and I will die for my country people so they never experience occupations like this again.

Now if you know that to be a reality, even though we share in this room that thereís a diversity of view about that in Islam, then youíre opening up a better debate about the ethics of exit because if the ethics that we deal with today are solely under conditions of a self-serving, culturally bound Judeo-Christian framework that doesnít recognize the other, our efforts politically, militarily and morally in Iraq are doomed to failure. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. APPLEBY: Thank you, George. Weíll now turn to Professor Dawisha.

AIDEED DAWISHA: What Iíll do is to look at both presentations and tell you where I actually agree with them and then go on to talk about a few of the points where I have either some explanations or disagreements.

First of all, I agree with Lawrence Kaplan that in fact the issue of American withdrawal, at least immediate American withdrawal, is simply a non-issue in Iraq. Nobody, nobody talks about the Americans withdrawing ñ at least the vast majority of people do not. The day before yesterday, the second anniversary of the invasion, there were demonstrations all over Europe and so on. There was

not a single demonstration in Baghdad. The only demonstration in Iraq I scoured the Iraqi press religiously every day, I listened to Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, the satellite TVs and so on was a demonstration by Iraqis against the Jordanians for allegedly allowing a Jordanian terrorist blow himself up in the city of Hilla in the south of Iraq and kill over 120 people. I'm not aware of any massive demonstrations in Iraq against the American occupation.

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This is confirmed by all the statements that have come from major political figures, those who have been elected in the recent elections to the Iraqi parliament, and the moral figures heading the Shiite and the Kurds, and I'll come to the Sunnis in a second. For example, every single political figure that you have heard of, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Adel Abdul Mehdi, Ayad Allawi, all the people who are candidates for being prime minister, every single one of them and not after the elections, but before, as a platform said that we will negotiate with the Americans but we will not ask them to leave immediately. This would be an absolute disaster for Iraqis. This was a platform. People knew their stands when going to the polls and voting for them.

More importantly, all of the major grand ayatollahs, including Sistani but also Ishaq Fayed, Bashir Najafi, and Mohammed Saeed Hakkim, the four grand ayatollahs who make up what they call the marja, the main religious authorities in Shiite Islam, every single one of them has been saying, yes, we want the

Americans out, and I agree with George Lopez. Nobody, you know ñ I mean, occupation is not something that you go out in the streets demonstrating for or applauding. Of course. Everybody wants to be independent, but there is a realism within Iraq, which by the way does not exist in the Arab world, and this is the point that Lopez was making about how the Arabs dislike the occupation.

There is a great difference that you have to draw between Iraq and the rest of the Arab world. In Iraq there isn't this almost knee-jerk instinctive anti-Americanism that you find in the streets of Cairo or Damascus or Casablanca or anywhere else in the Arab world. There is a realism. We want the Americans out, we want to be independent, but we know that it's a disaster. This is echoed by the marja, by the four grand ayatollahs. Every single one of them has said something to the effect that we certainly want the Iraqi government, the legitimate Iraqi government to take office in other words, after the election we will negotiate with the Americans. We want to sit down with the Americans around the table and discuss their stay here in Iraq, but it has to be done within irresponsible considerations of the interest of Iraq. This means that you're not going to ask them to leave now, but we understand that they have to be here for a period until security is established.

Now that's basically the opinions of the Shiites either the elected Shiite officials or the marja. No one, no one has said that the Kurds are asking the Americans to get out. The Kurds are our biggest allies in Iraq, and if it were up to them, they'd want us to be there forever. So we're talking about 80 percent of the Iraqi population that is not asking the Americans to get out, but want us to stay there and discuss when this could be done and when security could come back to the Iraqis.

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As for the Sunnis, apart from the what is it, 10,000 or 20,000, we don't know the numbers, but apparently now it's about 20,000 killers, brigands and murderers who are going around blowing everybody up, about 50 to 60 Iraqis per American lately apart from these guys the Sunni population is not united in its opposition to the American presence. If you look at, for example, officials such as the Bashashi (ph) group, certainly the Hasheni group or even the Iraqi Islamic Party, which is the main kind of non-secular religious Sunni group, none of these are asking for the Americans to go out. Now the Islamic Party certainly did not participate in the elections, interestingly enough, not because of the occupation but because they felt that the elections should have been delayed for three months, four months, or six months for conditions to improve.

The only group within the established opposition, within the kind of mainstream opposition—in other words, not these killers or murderers—the Council for Islamic Scholars (these are very conservative Wahabiites, in other words, really radical, rigid sheikhs, religious leaders who have contacts with, I don't know whether they have contacts with the Zarqawi group, but certainly have contact with the old intelligence Ba'athist groups) are the only ones who continue to talk about the imminent departure of the Americans. That's the only group, to my knowledge, apart from the killers and those who explode themselves,

who
actually are asking for the Americans to leave.

So generally speaking the vast majority, not just the majority, but the vast majority of Iraqis are not asking for the Americans to leave. While I presume every single Iraqi would like to see Iraq independent, this has been an independent country since 1921; it's not a newly formed country. It's an independent country, and therefore of course by definition they would like to see the Americans go, but the vast majority of the Iraqis do not want to see the Americans go until security is established and they are willing to negotiate and to compromise on that issue.

However, there is a problem, and here's where I would agree with George Lopez. There is a problem, and the problem is this open-ended occupation. I agree. I don't know about February 2006. Anybody here can sit around and throw a date, so let's assume it's February 2006 or October 2006. The problem with the open-ended occupation as it stands today is that it leads to suspicion amongst Iraqis that our goals in Iraq are not restricted to bringing back security to Iraq. But more importantly, we're there because we want to hold dominion over Iraq and certainly over the rest of the Arab world. The more conspiratorial theories relate this to the insatiable appetite for oil. Certainly when you watch the satellite TV stations, when you hear them talk to Iraqis, when you read Iraqi newspapers,

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there is a suspicion. And this suspicion is fueled basically by this open-ended occupation.

When the Americans do not say when theoretically they might be going, it creates a suspicion that they're there for the long haul, and for goals that are not particularly supportive of Iraqi interests. What I would argue is, whether it's February 2006 or another date, Americans should come up with at least a ballpark figure and put all kinds of conditions to it. The notion that we can only withdraw if and when Iraqi security forces can take care of Iraq'surely by now we should have some kind of an idea when this might happen. We have been training Iraqi security forces seriously since last summer. And it is from last summer, in the last nine months when we've begun to produce forces that actually have been doing pretty well in subduing the insurgents. There was an interesting article by John Byrnes in the New York Times this morning about Haitha Street, the center of the resistance in Baghdad and how the Iraqi security forces are doing, and they're doing well.

Well, surely, based on our experience over the last nine months we should have some kind of an idea how long it would take us to produce the 50, 60, 80, 200, whatever thousand that we are supposed to produce that would take on the insurgency. Come up with some kind of a ballpark figure and put conditions to it. We think we're going to be leaving around such and such a date because we think by then the Iraqi security forces will be up to it, and the conditions are. But if not, we will continue. And leave it to the Iraqis. Let the newly elected government make that decision. Say something like we will stay there as long as the new Iraqi government—which is, by the way, who George Lopez talks about

as collaborators, that may have been the case, but it's not the case any more since the new government will be elected by the Iraqi people and nobody can call them collaborators. Let the new Iraqi government, which is elected by the Iraqi people, decide when we should go. Let's simply say that if the new Iraqi government wants us to leave tomorrow, we're quite willing to get on our trucks and Humvees and leave Iraq. And let's put it to the test. Let's see what the Iraqi government is going to tell the Americans, to leave tomorrow, or next year. Let the onus be on the Iraqis. And if that is the case, I can assure you, I'm convinced that we're not going to be leaving until the elected Iraqi government feels strong enough to be able to defend itself and to defend Iraq.

Now I have other points that I was going to take issue with but my 10 minutes is out and we can't if it comes up, we can discuss it in the discussion afterwards.

MR. APPLEBY: Thank you, sir.

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COLONEL S. PATRICK LANG: Well, where to begin. I'm quite different from the other panelists here in that I'm not an academician, although I was professor once, more or less against my will. I'm a practitioner of the interconnected arts of war, especially in the area of counter-insurgency, and intelligence especially as practiced in the Islamic world. I worked at that for a very long time, until I finally decided to leave the government altogether and go straight and try to

make an
honest living somewhere.

So I've been doing that now for a while, but I managed to stay quite connected to a lot of people, especially people who I had something to do with training over decades and decades. They continue to tell me what things are really like on the ground. And guess what? The way things are on the ground are not necessarily the way things sound in press conferences. Soldiers, intelligence officers—they don't have this image generally—are somewhat of an oppressed race in many ways. I wrote an article about this several years ago, which appeared in Middle East Policy, called "Drinking Kool-Aid." It had to do with what I considered to be the corruption of the relationship between the intelligence people in government who have the job of describing reality as best they understand it—that is what they're supposed to do, and the policy or command people who have the job of creating reality as they think it should be. There is an inherent tension between these two groups. In this article I made the case as best I could that in fact that this relationship had gotten completely out of whack in the process that led up to the invasion of Iraq, and it resulted in good people like Mr. Kaplan having an idea about what Iraq was going to be like, which was not correct, in fact.

I had made the case in a number of places, including in Kuwait a couple of times since the war, where it was not well received. I said that it was really Americans who had caused this mess, and that they [the Kuwaitis] should unfortunately not expect us to do a lot better until we start thinking about these issues on a more rational basis than we have done. That was not well received, since the Kuwaitis feel quite comfortable with the situation the way it is now, as opposed to how it was before.

I would maintain—and I'm not going to go into detail about how bad the

process
of decision-making was that led up to Iraq; this is well documented.
It's now
become a kind of 'everybody says that's true,' almost everybody. What
I'm going
to say is: We're now where we are. The problem that took us into Iraq
and put us
in this mess is essentially the same problem that persists in our
decision-making
and in many of the difficulties that have been described here today.
What is it we
intend to do, how long do we think it will take to do it, and how many
people are
we fighting? These seem to be things we still don't seem to be able to
decide
upon.

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I would say to you that the basic problem was that the Iraq we invaded
was
essentially the Iraq of our dreams—the Iraq of American dreams. It
wasn't the
real Iraq. It wasn't the Iraq that Iraqis have lived in since 19 —
actually long
before 1921. It was a place that we had conjured up in our minds as
being the way
people must be, how they would react to certain issues, how they would
react to a
large foreign — and the word 'ej-na-bee' (ph) in Arabic means foreign in
the sense
of not an Arab — force in their country over a long period of time, how
people
would react to that and what would happen to the kind of consensus
that held the
country together.

Now it's also kind of a truism, everybody knows that Iraq — like a lot
of people and
places in the Middle East, the post-colonial construct — was put

together to meet
the interests of the British Empire out of the wreckage of the Ottoman
state, and
that the British tacked it together in such a way as to make various
parts of the oil
industry fit together, various kinds of airfield construction
available on the air
route to India, things of that kind, things that are very convenient
to them.

Unfortunately in that process, as in Lebanon and a bunch of other
places, a
number of people were brought together who had very little to do with
each other
except that they had been servants and subjects of the Ottoman state
and most of
them were Muslims of one kind or another. This persisted for a long
time. What
we didn't seem to understand when we set out to invade Iraq was the
fact that
Iraq, although there were people who thought of themselves as Iraqi in
their
essence and foremost, was a project in the process of becoming. In
fact, the
various groups that have been described here, and you know all of them
by now,
were in the process of being manufactured into something
new over the
last 70 or so years. The process of holding that country together
until that took
place and these people came to feel they were all the same thing, was
nothing like
completed when we invaded the country.

And as a result of that, if you look back at the history of modern
Iraq you see in
the period of the Hashemite monarchy an attempt to construct the
country on
what I would call a relatively benign, somewhat liberal, parliamentary
basis with
a constitutional monarchy that disintegrated in a torrent and raging
river of
blood in 1958, and you can argue all you want about the reasons for
that. Then,
the country was held together with police power and brute force under
various
revolutionary institutions, including the Ba'ath government, until we
invaded the
country.

So what were the things that held that country together before? There were in fact the forces I just talked about, and there was an emerging sense of national identity. My experience and I have a lot of experience in Iraq over a long period of time is that those people were essentially the people who subscribed to

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various pan-Arab nationalist ideas, among them the Ba'ath Party, which served as a very convenient avenue for secular Shia advancement into the larger Iraqi state. Nobody talks about that very much. That's how people like Allawi got into the mainstream of Iraqi society. We eliminated the Ba'ath Party on the basis that we believed this was an analog of the Nazi Party, which was an interesting kind of proposition in itself. And then, you have the officers and senior enlisted men of the Iraqi armed forces, who although they may not have been able to fight the

U.S. army surprise in fact, did think of themselves as Iraqi nationalists. What did we do with that? We abolished that force. We sent them all home, a lot of them to join the insurgency when it arose. So you have to ask yourself, who are we fighting in Iraq, in fact? Who are we fighting? Are we surprised that when we screwed the lid off this jar of things that were fermenting, all this stuff comes boiling out? It is said quite often in this country that the Sunni Arabs, who are 20 percent of the population, ruled Iraq for 35 years. That's not true. In one way or another they ruled Iraq

for 1,000 years. They are accustomed to ruling Iraq. They consider it be their place in life, in fact. They look upon the Shiia Arabs as a despised underclass and are very unwilling to be ruled by them.

So what you have out there fighting us right now is a projection of the will of the Sunni Arab population not to accept the revolution in political status that our presence has imposed upon them. Now it's been said here by my good friend Adeer that the vast majority of Sunni do not support this insurgency. Absolutely true. I absolutely agree with that. But you know what? I've been involved with a lot of insurgencies and a lot of counterinsurgencies: You don't need the vast majority of people to support you. All you need is a few hundred thousand people who are willing to support the existence of the guerrillas, 20,000, 15,000, whatever they are. Then you need a couple million people who are fairly sympathetic so they at least won't turn the guerrillas in. There you've got the problem right there. You've got a situation that will run on forever unless a political solution is reached, a political solution which will reconcile the different peoples into which the population of Iraq have resolved themselves in the aftermath of our occupation of the country.

Now people ask, hasn't the election taken care of that? After all, it was proven that this works. Well, as my friend Adeer said very clearly, they've had elections for a long time. They've had some pretty good elections up until the time the Ba'ath Party settled in to run the place. In fact, they know how to run elections. The idea that they don't comprehend our form of government is absolutely ludicrous. We seem to think sometimes that we're dealing with children; nothing could be farther from the truth. They are very sophisticated people in many ways.

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But how on earth why on earth although the election was an admirable exercise in democratic process, how could it possibly affect the outcome of the war when the people who are fighting us and the people who are supporting them didn't vote? They didn't vote. They're voting now by conducting ambushes along roads and being willing to tolerate the presence of Zarqawi's international jihadi crazies. The people who are fighting us did not vote and they are waiting to see whether or not eventually somebody is going to be willing to make a political deal with them a deal that will give them power disproportionate to their numbers. Don't kid yourself that's what they want because they've always had it.

So far the Kurds and the Shiia and the marja and the various Shiia parties have not been able to make a deal amongst themselves to divide up power in the country. How are you going to reconcile the people supporting the guerrillas, even though they're not a majority of Sunnis? This is a very hard thing to do. A lot of the discussion here, I think, is essentially meaningless because in fact we have a war in which the guerrillas have decided, as Mr. Kaplan said, that they're not going to attack American forces very much any more. I would say from observing the beast and its actions that, in fact, this is a deliberate decision as to targeting strategy. They know very well when you fight American soldiers, you die. They tried that at Salman Pak a few weeks ago against a big

police convoy
and they did pretty well, so they tried it again today and they lost
their shirt. In
fact, they're not going to do that anymore. Instead they're going to
attack the
economic infrastructure of the country. They're going to continue to
attack police
officials, government officials of all kinds, with the objective of
making the
country ungovernable. If they can do that then eventually somebody is
going to
have to make a deal with them. That's what they're all about.

All this talk about how we're going to withdraw is probably a nice
idea but it's not
likely. If you're familiar with what happened in places like Algeria
and Vietnam,
when the sponsors of the counter-insurgency withdrew, what happened to
the
people who allied themselves with them? You know, you might not find
that
quite so attractive an idea. I certainly do not, and I was in one of
the bigger ones
of those. Thank you.

Questions & Answers

MR. APPLEBY: The good news is that were we to give the responsibility
to this
panel of setting a timetable for anything, they would likely succeed
because
everyone has been within their time limits, very succinct, and I
appreciate that.

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That means we have some time for interaction and discussion. There
are, as you
know, index cards. The students are picking up questions, and we
already have

quite a few. As we collect them, I'm going to start by asking ñ taking the privilege of the chair and posing one question, which is to ask the panelists to interact with one another for a moment on the question of the nature of the insurgency. Because it seems to me unless we get that right, the question of timing and who's going to set the criteria and who's going to follow the criteria ñ one proposal was for the U.S. to set criteria for withdrawal and let the Iraqi sovereign government determine it. That raises to me the question of whether the insurgency is primarily political in nature, is it religious in nature, is it regionally political, is it global? That is, we've heard different kinds of testimony as to who belongs to the insurgency, including pan-Islamic forces. The question would be what are their specific goals?

You might have political conditions within Iraq itself that would lead some to conclude it's time to withdraw, but there are other elements in the insurgency that would continue to fight on, and who would make that decision. Another way of putting this is: If the United States is training Iraqi military personnel to fight the insurgency and there are different evaluations at a certain point of the nature of the insurgency, including the possibility of that insurgency withdrawing tactically in order to have the U.S. withdraw, how do we think about that? My first question, as I sort through the others, is to say a word about diagnosing the insurgency, its elements, and whether or not that political climate that's being created would be sufficient to overcome it. Anyone who would like to take that, please do so.

COL. LANG: Are you asking us?

MR. APPLEBY: Yes, I am.

COL. LANG: I'd be glad to talk about that. We continue to maintain as a matter

of policy in Washington that, in fact, the insurgents have no popular support, and that they are basically a lonely band of soreheads who will eventually go away and won't be a problem any more. I think that is an absolutely ludicrous. There are very bad effects in maintaining that kind of position because what that does is this: the government at the top having a position exerts a kind of back pressure down through the system, all the way down into the field in Iraq. There general officers in the field feel it necessary to plan within that structure of reality because it is the limits of their planning guidance, in fact. And if you're a soldier, you understand what that means. I have the experience of listening to friends of mine, associates in the field who are expert Arabists and intelligence officers who find themselves going to talk to very senior people in the government here and in Iraq and trying to tell them essentially what I just told you. They find that

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people say, you are really a wonderful guy to talk to and very entertaining to listen to and I could just talk to you all day. Come back and talk to me next week. And then they just go right on with what they're doing because to not accept in fact what you're being told from the national government in Washington is about as suicidal a thing as anything you could do within the kind of hierarchical structure that we have. People didn't get to be senior people and I was actually a pretty senior person, somehow they put up with me for a while by being

the
kind of person who refuses to accept the boss's view of reality.

Under normal circumstances in the intelligence business the very most senior people in the government, the elected people, understand that people below them cannot be allowed to muzzle all the intelligence guys because if you do you end up receiving a lot of garbage as information that is structured in order to make you feel good about what you want. So instead you end up with garbage out in terms of policy recommendations, things like this.

But that doesn't seem to be going on now. In fact, there seems to be a great deal of certitude as to what the situation must be. This isn't the first time this has ever happened. We had the same kind of rubbish in Vietnam, too. We had people telling us all the time from Washington exactly who we must be fighting and how many there must be. If you had them lined up and you could count them and you'd point out to them, they'd say, well, they're lying. I actually had that happen to me once. So you know, this is not the first time it's happened, but it is an active phenomenon, I think, of what is going on now.

I will tell you right now as a guy who knows a lot about insurgencies and you'll have to accept my stipulation on that point is the fact that this group of people could not exist in the numbers they have and I'm not talking about the international jihadis, but the people who are doing most of the fighting against the infrastructure, the police, the oil industry, they couldn't exist unless there was a substantial number of people who were supporting them. I don't for a minute say that they're the majority, even among the Sunni Arabs, but a substantial number of people.

The international jihadis are a different phenomenon: these guys are, as the Blues Brothers would have said, on a mission from God. So they have a

different set of
criteria with regard to all this. But this insurgency is a hell of a
lot bigger than it is
being given credit for in Washington.

MR. APPLEBY: There are a number of questions from the audience on this
point, to develop it a bit further. Four questions on the relationship
between the
insurgency in Iraq and terrorism more generally. This questioner says,
the
emphasis on Iraq in itself is misplaced because the larger question is
terrorism.

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Arab-Islamic culture is this is how the question is read is the enemy to
Western
nations, a fairly un-nuanced statement, but nonetheless the question
is: what we
might define as the jihadist culture. Does withdrawal from Iraq offer
security to
the United States, or will we suffer attacks in the future more
broadly from
terrorists as a result of the perception that they've won here?

I'm going to list a couple of these and let you have at them.

This one is directed to George Lopez. Please discuss further how we
protect and
promote the dynamics of Iraqi culture. The point George made as an
exit
strategy, inasmuch as the Iraqi situation is composed of very
different ethnic and
religious backgrounds. What does it mean to promote a culture of peace
or
nonviolence? Given the various backgrounds, how does one begin to
think about
this? Do we have the kind of planning and thinking currently to
implement this?

Another question very similar to the one earlier, aren't we in Iraq, according to President Bush administration, in a war on terrorism, and how will our options before us affect this larger war on terrorism?

There's enough there to chew on for a few minutes, so please George, maybe you want to begin?

PROF. LOPEZ: Only if I can pass the next 16 questions along to the others as I do this. (Laughter) I certainly want other panelists to join in this answer because I don't have exclusive insight into this, even if the question was directed to me.

And I think the perception of outsiders on the war on terrorism I look at all foreign policy ventures, even one in which you're deeply steeped, like the Iraqi venture, as an exercise in global perception management. The notion that it's a given that a withdrawal from Iraq would be perceived as weakness for us, or as a victory for the terrorists, is only partly a function of the real outcomes on the ground. Unfortunately it's also a function of the kinds of casting we'll give that in terms of larger regional and global questions.

I'd be much more concerned about whether or not our own professional military people would feel that on the verge of some kind of strategic victory on the ground we'd be politically pulling the rug out from under them. That would be more persuasive to me for holding off an argument about strategic withdrawal than it would be that we will lose in the global marketplace of ideas.

To suggest that we're somehow now winning or at least staying even in the global marketplace of ideas with the venture in Iraq is to not understand the fundamentals of that marketplace, it seems to me. I think not only can you

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architect the way the perceptions of withdrawal will be managed, but you can also establish some strategic victories against terrorism and jihadists, having drawn them into the Iraqi debacle, by the way that you withdraw.

No one is interested in providing an argument for strategic withdrawal that somehow lets the jihadists win. What I think we want to do is forestall a continued, pragmatic, and increasingly beneficial alliance between jihadists who come from the outside and those who exist from within, from those who are simply arguing and acting out of sane nationalism. We've allowed that alliance to forge and increase the numbers and strengthen the support, even tacit support, in ways that no longer support the military and political objectives. That is what I believe we have to disengage.

With regard quickly to the question of a culture of peace: I don't think that is the issue. I think Patrick and others have stated well the notion that our entry into Iraq was in the midst of a culture that was yet still being formed and debated by Iraqis themselves and is yet to come to fruition. Any claim from the outside by Westerners that we want to forge a culture of peace needs to be decided by those within the country. The framework, the question that emerges from Western concerns, may not be the agenda of the folks on the ground at this moment. There has been a certain amount not only of cultural imperialism but cultural condemnation of what Iraqis can and can't do on their own, and whether or not we believe they're up to the task of government, or whether or not

they view the world through our lenses. They need to view it through their own lenses and need to be allowed to do so. I do not have a lot of confidence that current policy will permit that to unfold.

MR. APPLEBY: Any other responses on this point?

Let's go to another series of questions around the building of the six bases and the embassy. Does Mr. Kaplan or anyone on the panel think the U.S. should be building these bases and this large embassy? Please provide specific reasons if so.

On the other, slightly different take, how would downsizing the American embassy be interpreted in the Arab world?

And a question for Lawrence Kaplan, do you share Lopezí concerns regarding the size of the embassy and the sense of the Iraqi people.

MR. KAPLAN: Yes, I guess I was somewhat puzzled by thisóthe fixation on the size of the embassy, and the question of the six bases. These are factors that other than at the margins of the conspiratorial thinking in Iraq, which is more

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mainstream than here, have not had an effect on the dynamic in Iraq and the insurgency. For what it's worth I think we could use a smaller embassy. But the Green Zone is, for those of you who've been there, is quite a surreal, in many

ways ridiculous place. Now I think we've downsized the embassy staff from 3,000 when we had the CPA to 1,000. But the fact is, America is involved in a war that has 150,000 troops on the ground. Quite naturally it's going to have a large embassy. Do I think it could be reduced? Sure. Do I think that we'll have even a marginal impact on the war itself, Iraqi perceptions, or the course of the fighting? No. I think they could open the bridge, there could be some modifications so it wouldn't be such a pain in the butt for Iraqis to drive around Baghdad and for reporters to drive around Baghdad. But I think the question is largely irrelevant.

On the bases question, I actually happen to agree with George. I think anything that lends the impression that we're there to extend American hegemony, however, marginally, and that we're acting out of pure self-interest or out of imperialistic concerns, which of course is a staple of Iraqi political discourse, is a bad idea. So I do think that if we're planning and I'm afraid I'm not even sure of the specifics about this if we're building bases for 10 years down the road, I do not think they should be there. On the other hand the bases, many of which I have visited, Liberty, Victory, other forward bases, this is where American troops live. So I would think having these bases is rather important. In fact, they're really the only islands of stability and comfort for American forces in Iraq and they're quite necessary.

I'd just like to add on to this talk of cultural imperialism, bases and the size of the embassy, economic control. I have to say I think it's rather beside the point. I mean, Iraq, you can't have an economy in Iraq without security. I really think security is ñ is really the answer to 90 percent of Iraq's problems. You can't have a state without security, you can't have an economy without security. You can't have much in the way of culture. The fact is you cannot walk down the

street if
you're an Iraqi today, you can't walk down the street in Baghdad
without fear of
being kidnapped, blown up, shot, or otherwise dismembered. I think
absent
security, really all of these questions are just beside the point.

COL. LANG: I think it's not surprising that we're building permanent
facilities
for our troops to live in. General George Casey said when he was back
a week or
two ago, insurgencies like this run about nine years if you're
successful, you
know. So the Army being a rather conservative institution in many ways
is
starting to emplace itself in such a way so that the troops can live
in these places.
As you know, Mr. Kaplan's been to Iraq a lot recently and he knows how
much
that Burger King out at the airport is valued by the soldiers in town.
If you're

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going to keep these guys at this for a long time, these are not
robots, you have to
provide some kind of facilities for them.

In fact, keying onto something he said, this place is a lot more
hostile than
Vietnam. I spent a long time in Vietnam, and I used to wander around
by myself
in little villages surrounded by enemy troops and sit in the little
restaurants and
drink soup with them and noodles and get my hair cut in their
barbershops all
over the country. Nobody ever even looked at me twice. If you tried to
do that in
Iraq very long, you wouldn't be around very long, would you? And so
you've got

to have some place the troops can live. If you're going to stay there, if you're going to keep them in place, there has to be some kind of facilities.

On the other hand, having announced that it is our policy to reorganize the Middle East and reorganize their lives to our taste, it's not surprising that they see us building all these things and assume that these are the bases we're going to use for this project. Now I don't know that that's true. It would make sense to me just that we're trying to protect the troops.

MR. APPLEBY: There are a series of questions that build on this point that ask about the sustainability of an open-ended military presence in Iraq militarily, and they're on all sides of the question. One question draws on the Washington Post article from Friday, "Two years later, Iraq war drains military," with quotes about recruiting for the U.S. military won't improve. As long as the war drags on it's going to get worse. What is the relationship between the growing problems within our military and the ability to sustain military presence in Iraq? A variant on this is, really on the other side of the question, why the urgency to get troops out of Iraq when we're sustaining troops in Germany, Japan, Korea, and we'd still have troops in Vietnam if we hadn't abandoned our purpose there.

And then another variation on the question: Why could not the U.S. and its business interests withdraw now from Iraq, to be replaced with the United Nations or world-supported peace force?

So a variety of questions on larger military questions. Have at them.

COL. LANG: The fact of the matter is, our forces are too small to sustain our present commitments. That's the truth of the matter. Look at the number of people it takes to having the force overall, the worldwide-size force. To maintain this many people in Iraq, this many fighting organizations you have to have units

that have just come out of Iraq and are resting and refitting. You have to have units that are preparing to go back into Iraq. You have to have the ones that are actually in Iraq. So you end up with about three times as many people in units, in fact. We're doing rotation by units, by battalions, by brigades, by divisions, which

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is the right thing to do. We didn't do that in Vietnam, and after a while it caused people to fall apart because they didn't cohere to each other any more.

So it's not surprising you have somebody like the vice-chief of staff of the army say in testimony before the Senate, we hope to get people out and have it down to 106,000 people by next year. Well, of course he would say that. You know, the Army is responsible for generating the forces that have to take part in this process I was just telling you about, right? So he desperately wants to get the numbers down so that it's a doable thing within the strength that is presently allowed by the Congress and which exists. And then you have a recruiting problem, which is compounded all the time as this gets longer and longer and more and more deprivation of family and all this stuff.

I know a number of retired four-star generals and a few active ones, and they're a club. They're the guys at the top and they talk to each other all the time. Most of them in private will tell you that the U.S. Army is well on its way to becoming a

broken force. Just by the fact that we don't have enough numbers, we don't have enough of anything, equipment's wearing out. If you're going to do this, you're going to have to have a lot bigger army, in fact, a lot bigger army, and there are implications in that that you can think about.

MR. APPLEBY: Please.

PROF. DAWISHA: I just want to add one thing in terms of how long we're staying in Iraq. I think everybody agrees on this panel that it all depends on when we're going to be able to provide the Iraqis themselves with their own security forces. The problem here, and I've noticed it when I've given talks and things like that in the State Department or CIA. Whenever I get Pentagon people who come and listen, they come to me afterwards and I always advocate that we should come up with some kind of a ballpark figure date, as I'd said here. I got twice, individually, separately from people from the Pentagon, who say that it takes much longer than you think it takes to actually train these people. As I said, I heard it twice separately. They told me maybe Pat can add to that that it takes them here in the United States Army, said three years to train, to put a company onto the field, to be sure that this is a well-trained fighting force, put it in the field. The point is that if they're going to go by this kind of standard it's going to take 20 years before we're going to be able to have a security force in Iraq. I mean, we're not producing a security force that's supposed to be fighting the United States.

I know the Arab world very well. I'm telling you, the Egyptian army does not take three years to produce a company, more like three days, you know. I've seen these guys.

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COL. LANG: I've seen them too.

PROF. DAWISHA: So to apply these very, very exacting high standards of the American army to the Iraqi forces is somewhat overblown. We should lower our perspective here and think in terms of where the environment is and what the region is and that probably would allow us to leave earlier rather than later.

COL. LANG: Well, you can leave, but the thing may just collapse around you as you leave. The problem is that there are certain basic requirements necessary to generate a force that will fight in the field under its own leadership and be able to plan coherently and sustain itself. I see people nodding out here who probably wore a uniform. [audio break, tape change] ÖÖ

But you know what? They have former soldiers from the old army who were sent home, and an awful lot of them are Sunni Arabs who are in fact Iraqi nationalists and who want to get back to the game. This one friend of ours refers to this as his Sunni outreach program, and that has not been a popular thing to say. But in fact, if you start with people who already have a good deal of experience then you can do this a lot faster. That was the best argument for keeping the cadres of the previous army, you know. You could have had trials, you know, and get rid of the ones you really couldn't live with.

But the social structures and the knowledge, the staff officers of the Iraqi army would have been invaluable and would have helped to make to his process easier.

MR. KAPLAN: Briefly on the UN question, why can't the UN replace us? The simple answer is they don't want to. This was a staple of the Kerry campaign. He kept saying he had a secret plan to get the French and the Germans on the ground in Iraq. The fact is, neither have any interest in aiding the operation. In fact, even our most stalwart allies, the Brits, the Poles, we saw last week the Ukrainians, now the Italians are all leaving. And this is our enterprise from here on out, for better or worse. And no one, save the Iraqi security forces if they could get up and running, will come to our rescue.

COL. LANG: You know, this solution which was proposed assumes that this situation is essentially policing, that this is peacekeeping, because the UN has a well established record in the Balkans and places like that. When it comes to fighting they're not going to do it because home country politics and things interfere with this. Also a lot of these armies don't have any power projection capability. Other than France and the UK, the idea of being able to send an expeditionary force overseas and maintain it there is absent in almost all the

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armies today. So we would still have to be heavily involved to keep them supplied and whatever in the field.

MR. LOPEZ: I agree with all that's been said. It seems to me to continue to beg the political question. If we assume that the structure and size and

competence
of the security forces we need to fight the size or growth of the
insurgency we now
see then it's pretty ominous. But if you can find a way in which you
can in fact
decrease the power of that insurgency and have lots of folks who
support it,
decide instead to support a government, then you buy a little bit more
time and
you buy space for that police force and others to establish security.

So the dilemma is not just the beefing up the competence of the police
and the
army. How do you create a political situation in which at least some
if not many
on the other side see it's no longer in their political interests to
achieve objectives
with the barrel of the gun. They may achieve it a different way.

MR. APPLEBY: We're out of time for this panel. Let me apologize to
those who
offered questions we didn't get to. I'll say there is one cluster of
questions that we
can keep alive for future sessions today—questions that ask about the
relationship between the conditions under which the U.S.-led invasion
occurred,
and the conditions for withdrawal. That is, how has there been a
change in
opinion about the U.S. presence, pro or con, as a result of the
overall
involvement, and how do we understand exit when, with a sufficient
understanding of attitudes toward the way in which we entered Iraq in
the first
place. How do the beginning and end games tie together?

Let me ask you to join me in thanking this excellent panel who started
us off.

(Applause.)

(End of session.)