

**CENTER FOR
STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
(CSIS)**

**CSIS-SCHIEFFER SERIES DIALOGUES ON
THE STATUS OF U.S. EFFORTS IN IRAQ**

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PRESIDENT, CSIS**

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**NANCY YOUSSEF,
FORMER BAGHDAD BUREAU CHIEF,
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS**

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*Transcript by
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JOHN HAMRE: Okay, ladies and gentlemen. If I could ask our speakers to join me up here at your seats, we look forward to getting started. Everybody's place is marked.

Hi, my name is John Hamre. I'm the president here at CSIS. I would like to welcome all of you. Thank you for coming. This is the second in the series that we are fortunate to host with the Schieffer School of Journalism at TCU. Where is Larry, Larry Lauer who is – Larry, thank you very much – the dean and we're delighted to have his partnership in this series. Of course, it brings us together with the one man we both admire so much; that's Bob Schieffer. And Bob, thank you. We're delighted to have him. Everyone knows Bob as kind of what you want journalism still to be in America. It's honest and fair – hard, but fair.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Old?

MR. HAMRE: Old? (Laughter.) No, I didn't say old. He said that, not me. And part of what we're doing here is this is not just to bring to all of you an insightful discussion among experts on a pressing topic of the day. It's also to try to demonstrate what quality journalism is about. And that's why we're partnered with TCU and the Schieffer School.

We will have the same format. Bob is going to moderate this discussion, drawing on the expertise of these three remarkable individuals. I'll let Bob do the introductions. You also have programs that you can see who they are. And then, we're also going to be calling on all of you. You know, the quality of this meeting is very much dependant on you. You will be bringing out a lot more of their strength with your active involvement. So thank you all for coming. Bob Schieffer, we'll turn to you.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Thank you very much. And we've got a great panel today. My friend Rajiv Chandrasekaran who is national editor of the Washington Post – and I'm sure a lot of you in this room have read his book. It is called "Imperial Life in the Emerald City," a bestselling account of the American effort to reconstruct Iraq. And I must say, I think along with "Fiasco," there are two great books about Iraq so far. And I think Rajiv's is one of them. He is now the national editor of the Washington Post.

Nancy Youssef is the McClatchy Newspaper chain's chief Pentagon correspondent. She spent the past four years covering the Iraq war, most recently as the Baghdad bureau chief. Her piece is a focus on everyday Iraqi experience, dealing with casualties, how the U.S. military strategy was reshaping Iraq's social and political dynamics.

And then, of course, over on the end there, someone who needs no introduction to this group, I'm sure, Tony Cordesman. He holds the Arleigh Burke chair in strategy here at CSIS. He was the national security advisor at one time to John McCain. He is the author of no less than 50 books. And if anybody doesn't know who Tony is, they probably wouldn't be interested in coming to this gathering today. (Laughter.)

Well, Nancy, you just filed a story before you came over here today about what's happened today in Baghdad. Why don't you tell us what the latest is?

NANCY YOUSSEF: Sure, so today, some of the fighting that we've seen in Basra has spread into Baghdad. U.S. ground forces are now working with Iraqi forces to quell some of the violence in some of the Shia-dominated neighborhoods. On the Pentagon and White House side, they're really saying that despite this violence that what's happening should be celebrated because it's an initiative, an Iraqi initiative. It's a sign that the Iraqi forces can take control of their security problems, that they are willing to take the initiative on key security problems. And they say that this is to be celebrated.

But at the same time, there is already sort of growing concern that this violence both in Basra and Baghdad – Iraq's two biggest cities – could spread and undermine some of the success of the surge, that it could lead to more violence, that it could lead to an end of the cease-fire, particularly at a time when the U.S. military is drawing down its surge forces. They've now pulled out two of the five combat brigades brought in. And so, it's a very unpredictable time in Iraq right now and an interesting one as the Iraqi forces appear to be sort of drawing the Sadrists into a battle over Basra.

MR. SCHIEFFER: And that is, of course, where we're going to focus today. In our first of these sessions, we talked about Afghanistan and sort of where it stood. That's what we hope to do today is just sort of get an outline of what is happening right now in Iraq, what we can expect over the next year, and just sort of where things stand. Rajiv, how is your newspaper going to play this story tomorrow?

RAJIV CHANDRASEKARAN: I think there is a very good chance this will be on the front page, probably on the upper part of the front page.

(Laughter.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: How important in the whole scheme of things is what's happening here, this latest outbreak?

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: Well, it raises more questions than we have answers at this point. One, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker are scheduled to come and testify before Congress on the 8th and 9th of April. And that the U.S. command would essentially allow or encourage the Iraqi military to be engaged in these actions, which may well drag for some period of time – and on the eve of this testimony – that raises an interesting question. And there's more we need to know about just what has been going on between General Petraeus and his deputies and the Iraqi leadership.

As Nancy pointed out, the cease-fire that had been called by Moqtada al Sadr is one of the most significant developments that has reduced violence during the period of this troop surge. And if that is showing signs of fracturing or reversing, that's an incredibly significant development.

The other thing that I'm trying to develop a better understanding of is to what degree is this sort of factional fighting, particularly in Basra? Basra is a city that is under the control of various Shi'ite factions, some of them tied to political parties – the Supreme Islamic Council, formerly known as SCIRI – their principal group, the Badr Corps. You have the Dawa party and its militia. You obviously have the Sadrists and their militia. And then you have a number of other actors, regional sort of thugs and warlords who are vying for power there.

And then, you have the Iraqi government with its own interests. And some of those interests are allied with both the Badr Corps and the Dawa Party. And how those various forces are intersecting in this violence that has been unleashed, both down in Basra and up in Baghdad and looks to be potentially spreading in other parts of the center and south of the country.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Why now, Tony? I mean, why suddenly is this happening?

ANTHONY CORDESMAN: Well, I don't think it's sudden, and I don't think it's now. You go back to last year and what you see is a growing power struggle building up in the south between what you can either call SIC or ISCI and Dawa and the Sadrists. You had the ability on the part of ISCI to dominate most of the governors. You could already see that there were attacks on some of the governors and killings of them that had nothing to do with al Qaeda. They were basically entrenching their power over the police, which is not a national force, but one which is local and regional.

And it was quite clear when we were there in February that this had become more serious, that there was the basis of a power struggle coming. And particularly, if anything was heading for a local or a provincial set of elections, this was going to come to be an open power struggle. Now, as Rajiv pointed out, Basra is essentially under the control of Shi'ite Mafia gangs. Everybody had the ability to steal their own share of something, whether it was control of the ports, control of the product imports, control of the oil exports. It was under nominally the mayor of Fadila (sp), a small factional party that really is outside the mainstream of Iraqi politics. But everybody had a share.

And I think we need to be very, very careful about what's happening because certainly, some of this effort by the Iraqi forces is directed against legitimate targets – extremists in the militias. But I think a lot of it, frankly, is Dawa and ISCI using the Iraqi military to serve their own political purposes and gain control over Basra and also to deal with the threat in Sadr City, in Kut, and other parts.

And frankly, when you go out to these provinces in the south – and we visited five of them – what’s interesting is it’s not clear anybody has a broad local base. I don’t think there is any province in the south that doesn’t feel that their government has been almost totally ineffective in moving money, providing services – that even though it’s Shia-dominated, it isn’t legitimate in serving them.

MR. SCHIEFFER: What did you mean, Nancy, when you said some people in the U.S. administration are saying we should be celebrating this? Explain to me.

MS. YOUSSEF: Well, you talk to the U.S. military leaders in Baghdad, and they say we didn’t try to dissuade them from doing this at all. And the Pentagon is saying today that six months ago, the Iraqi army couldn’t even have conceived of going down and taking on a militia, taking on an armed group. And so, therefore, this is a good sign that Maliki was willing to do this, was willing to take on another Shi’a group, that this is a sign that they’re taking increased responsibility for their security.

I think the problem lies in – you know, one could argue that calling these Iraqi security forces as sort of an apolitical group is a bit of a misnomer. A lot of these guys are Badr guys going down to Basra to fight rival Sadrists. And so, it has the potential to morph into a Badr v. Shi’a conflict throughout the country. And in fact, we’re already seeing it. In Baghdad, Sadrists are going after Badr offices and neighborhoods. And so, there is a danger.

I think it’s clear that the U.S. did not object to what Maliki was proposing. And I think they see it as one of the signs that the Maliki government is going to take advantage of the surge and really assert themselves and show that they can take control of their country. But it seems to be a bit of a risky game to be playing because if it doesn’t work that way, it could spread the violence out to other parts of the country and turn this inter-Shi’a conflict into a battle that spreads over the very areas that the U.S. has just finished clamping down the violence in.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I take it, Tony, you don’t see anything to celebrate particularly here?

MR. CORDESMAN: Well, you celebrate outcomes, never beginnings. (Laughter.) And that is a message one would hope we would have learned after 2003. If this all works out, it’s fine. If somehow we are able to suppress the special groups in the Sadr militia, if what you see is a dominant sort of Shi’ite bloc that now has control over what is in many ways the prize in Iraq, Basra, with two-thirds of the oil exports, the ports, the center of the sort of road and rail system, that’s all fine.

But if what you have is a deep, ingrained, ongoing power struggle within the Shi’ites, which is one Iran has already been exploiting since 2005 with considerable success, if what we do is also bring to power in the process a group of essentially exiled leaders who have a strong interest in a nine-province federation, which will basically

serve Shi'ite interests rather than the national interest, that doesn't strike me as much of a celebration. And it's going to be months, I think, before we know.

MS. CHANDRASEKARAN: Well, I don't mean to sound too conspiratorial, but if you say, why now? Why might the government be engaging in this? One data point to consider is that I think it was just about a week ago that Adil Abd al Mahdi, the Shi'ite vice president of Iraq, indicated through intermediaries that he would no longer oppose a piece of legislation sought by the United States to hold provincial elections in Iraq this fall. And obviously, a great concern of the two large Shi'ite parties in the country has been just what is their standing across the center and south of Iraq, particularly in places like Basra. And very worried that if there were open elections at the province level that the big parties would lose out to the Sadrists, to other political organizations.

And so, this could be read – again, this is speculation on my part – but one explanation may be that the leaders of the two big parties decided that they need to start now taking steps to try to contain Sadr's power base so they prepare the ground for a favorable outcome for province-level elections.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, let's step back from the headlines of today and just think about it in a somewhat broader context. Obviously, we're right in the middle of a presidential election in this country. John McCain says the surge has worked. We've got to keep doing what we're doing. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama have a different version of what needs to be done. Both of them talk about some sort of a withdrawal with some sort of a timetable.

How would the three of you – I'd just like to hear the three of you. What is your assessment of where we are in Iraq right now? Just start off Rajiv. Do you think we're at a pretty good shape there? Are things really better or do they appear to be better than they really are? Where exactly would you – how would you rate Iraq right now?

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: Look, you're a Texan. I think the surge can be sort of compared crudely to sort of a two-step. And we've taken the first step, but there is the second step. And the first step is in some ways the improvement of security. And that's happened. It's happened because of a number of factors we all know about: the addition of more troops, a new strategy for using those troops, a focus on protecting the Iraqi civilian population, obviously the Sadr cease-fire, and the deals we've been cutting with Sunni tribal groups that have resulted in some significant security changes in al Anbar province and in some other parts of the country.

But that's half of it. The surge was intended to create – the creation of security was then intended to lead political leaders to engage in national reconciliation and political compromise. And that part of it, that second half of the surge hasn't worked out as planned. While there have been some incremental pieces of legislation passed, for instance, a revised de-Baathification law, which is sort of debatable as to whether it's actually helpful or potentially more hurtful; they still haven't moved, for instance, on an oil revenue-sharing law; the question of province-level elections as we've just discussed

may be actually causing some greater sort-of short-term pain. But more broadly, the broad national compact that Washington had hoped Iraq's political leaders would forge with improvements in security has not occurred. And so, there needs to be –

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, are we any closer or is it about where it always was?

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: It's about where it always was. I mean, we may have inched a little bit closer. But there's still a huge gap to be closed.

MR. SCHIEFFER: What about you, Nancy? What would you say?

MS. YOUSSEF: I think those are great points. You know, I was just in Iraq in December. And you get the sense that the final battle hasn't been fought yet, that people are jockeying and positioning themselves for essentially when the American troops leave, that the Sunnis are doing it in their own way by taking money from the Americans, by setting up a system that would work within Anbar, within the Sunni enclaves. You see it with the Shi'a as well. And so, when I was there, it didn't feel resolved in any way.

It felt like – it felt tenuous; it felt that it could collapse at any time. It felt as though there was an undercurrent going on underneath the surge that the U.S. military and the U.S. diplomatic side could not control – that there is an undercurrent in Iraq of its own, moving in its own direction with its own sort of agenda. And so, you felt that battle between what the U.S. was hoping would happen and what was sort of happening outside of their realm of control.

I think this surge - there's not going to be another surge. And so, I think the Iraqis were aware of that. And I think some of what you're seeing currently is sort of part of that repositioning in a way that they had anticipated. Their timetable is very different than ours. We tend to celebrate victories in weeks and months. And it was clear that Iraq was working on a timetable of its very own.

Moqtada al Sadr, for example, one of the reasons he has a cease-fire is he's been going to Iran to re-brand himself essentially as a Shi'a religious leader. To do that, to become an ayatollah, takes years. And he is thinking in a much more long-term way than perhaps we are. And so, the sense that you always got with the surge was that it would work for now. But it never felt like that the U.S. could force it to happen in a long-term way because Iraq's on its own timetable.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Tony?

MR. CORDESMAN: Well, I think you've heard some very good points. I think that one thing we have to understand is there never was a chance of political conciliation in Iraq. The most you could have was political accommodation. Iraqis may be posturing for the time the U.S. leaves, although quite frankly, I think a lot are posturing for the possibility the U.S. is there for quite a while.

But these are struggles over money and power, which are existential for all of the people involved. They're not sort of having a sort of theoretical political-science session in groupthink and dialogue. Their lives, their money, everything about them is at hazard.

We talked about what is happening in the south, but there is another major power struggle coming. That is how the Kurds, the Turkmens, the Arabs, and other minorities assign territory, power, and oil wealth in the area from Mosul to Kirkuk and beyond. You have, frankly, a longstanding failure to accommodate the Sons of Iraq and the Shi'ite tribal groups with support from the central government. The Sunni political parties that really should be supporting these Sunni tribal groups have no real standing. They're just artificial, almost arbitrary creations about an election system we imposed on Iraq that wasn't open, where most of the people who voted could not possibly have known who three quarters of the names they voted for were. You have this Shi'ite on Shi'ite struggle in the south.

And throughout this, we have the problem. And it's easy to forget our role here. We haven't decided what to do about the fiscal 2008 budget and how that is actually going to impact on our capability to implement aid or capabilities. We have a 2009 budget submission. It calls on paper for a \$70 billion supplement. But the secretary of Defense has already said it could be 170 billion (dollars) and I've heard figures like 185 billion (dollars). And the Congress somehow has to act on that. There is no real plan.

The aid side I think we tend to forget. We've blown through 44 billion in U.S. aid dollars and \$33 billion worth of Iraqi money. The special inspector general for Iraqi reconstruction points out we don't know how many of these projects have been completed. We have no effectiveness measures and no plan to transfer what has been successful to the Iraqi government, which effectively can't spend its own national budget and which has no ability to provide government services, effective police, or criminal justice in the field.

And we have to face the fact this administration is coming to its end. We will be in the middle of a campaign season or the end of one when the election takes place. And the new team won't be on board until some time around June of 2009. Now, I think most people could see a few difficulties there.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, when do you think Iraq will be strong enough that the United States can think about leaving?

MR. CORDESMAN: Well, what's interesting is what happens when you see the timelines on the PowerPoints when you're in Iraq. They're not 2009; they're 2012; 2014; 2020. Now, that's not anything like today's aid or – for that matter – troop strength. But you are talking about strategic overwatch. You're talking about supporting Iraqi forces through the life of the next presidency in terms of imbeds, advisors, air support potentially. You're talking about converting an insurgency force in Iraq to one that can defend its borders.

You're talking about a process of central governance so weak that one of the reasons we've pushed so hard for provincial powers is we're trying to build up local and provincial powers to make up for the fact we know we can't make the central government effective within the next few years. So can we have a lot of progress between now and 2012, yes. Do we have any kind of date certain that says before the end of the next presidency? Only if we lose; only if we lose.

MR. SCHIEFFER: What would you say to that?

MS. YOUSSEF: Well, you know, it's interesting when Mr. Cordesman talks about into the next election because that's the next Iraqi government election as well. Remember when Maliki was elected, it was under this general Shi'a umbrella, and a much more sophisticated Shi'a politic has developed since then. And by having provincial elections, it allows Iraq to promote people who are more connected to their populations, who have done something for their populations, who are a part of this new more sophisticated political process.

And so, what we're essentially asking Maliki to do now is to undermine himself by embracing more provincial elections. We're asking him to take away power from himself and give it to – in some cases – Sunnis who he doesn't trust. And so, I think the reason that you hear about things taking years is that needs to be ironed out. In a way, there needs to be another – there needs to be an election that embraces this more sophisticated political process. And I think that's why we talk about things sort of long-term.

And I think another reason is the truth is nobody really knows. Iraq is so fluid. I mean, how would have thought we would be here just six months ago? I think part of the reason that people frankly throw those dates out so far in advance is we just don't know because it's become such a complex, nuanced process that I think people are almost hesitant to suggest that it could resolve itself in a few years, given how much it's changed just in the last year alone.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So Rajiv, after five years, we just don't know? We don't know what comes next; we don't know what to do; we don't know what's going to be effective.

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: And I think that's why on the Democratic side, you don't see either candidate articulating a whole lot of specifics. They want to give themselves a fair bit of latitude here. I mean, Hillary says within 60 days, they'll come up with a plan to start doing this. Obama has said other similar sorts of things. There is a real challenge there for them because a rapid drawdown without further development of Iraqi security forces and other such conditions that are required to create some degree of sustainability and stability could lead again to a fairly significant up-tick in intra-Iraqi violence.

And that's going to pose a real challenge for whoever takes over the White House in January 2009. Images, once again, of large-scale carnage in Iraq, it is true that many Americans have sort of become inured to the violence over there. But it still could pose a potential political liability to whoever is the president. And so, I think that the national security teams for all three candidates at this point understand that they're going to have to try to calibrate this very carefully. And it sounds a lot like Bush-speak to say this, but I think they understand that their actions are going to have to be a bit conditions-based.

MR. SCHIEFFER: We want to go to some questions in the audience. Let me just ask – while you're thinking of questions, let me just pose one more question here. What does it take to train a U.S. Marine, about nine months to get them combat ready? Obviously, it would be more difficult when you're in the middle of a war. But why does it take so long to take these Iraqi soldiers? We keep hearing once we can get them up and trained, they'll be able to defend themselves.

MR. CORDESMAN: Well, Bob, the analogy – and I think we've learned this the hard way – is fundamentally false. You can run people through a training system. But unless they're going into an organized effective combat unit, which has NCOs and officers and experience to absorb them, the training is like the police training. It doesn't do anything. It's where they go after it that matters.

Now, the imbeds have made a real difference. And so has the creation of partner units. But it takes time to create units from scratch. And the turnover in a lot of these units – desertions, people who don't come back from leave – is 20 to 25 percent a year out of the people we've trained and equipped. A lot of them have half the NCOs in the units they need. And many of them only have half the officers.

This doesn't mean you can't succeed over time, but when you couple that to the fact many of them are right now being reequipped; they're being deployed without experience in some basic things like getting fuel to their units or vehicle maintenance. As I think General Dubik and others would say, this does take a process not of six months but three to four years. And right now, we keep generating new battalions and new forces all the time. We've had a new set of requirements emerge this spring. You've got 70,000 people floating through the training system and absorption into a relatively small army right now.

So I don't think we should be pessimistic about this; we should be realistic. And we should understand that this emphasis on training may have relevance in the United States. But it is not relevant to the Iraqi experience where you're starting from scratch.

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: I'd like to add one other element to that, and that is fighting for something that these Iraqi soldiers believe in, fighting for a government they trust, they feel that represents them. And I think that political developments are in some ways just as important in terms of building troop morale, in terms of building a commitment to them, creating sort of basic patriotism.

You have a lot of Sunni conscripts – not really conscripts – recruits in the military who don't really see the Maliki government as legitimate. They're in there fighting because it's the only decent job they can get. And when push comes to shove, they don't really want to go and pull the trigger in villages in Anbar Province.

And the same thing with many Shi'ites. They're in there just for employment purposes and not because they really relish the tough fight. I think maybe one of the reasons – and I don't know if my fellow panelists would agree or disagree here – that we've seen some of these awakening groups fight or at least stand up with a little bit more conviction, because they see themselves as loyal to their tribal sheikh. They're in an organization where they feel there is some *sui décor* (ph). They believe in their leaders.

And so, aimed at the sort of political development, I think, is essential to sort of getting training developments on the ground. I also think that as we move to a strategy of increased regionalization and as, perhaps, more Iraqi security force units somehow come under sort of nominal command, or at least feel like they're more tied into perhaps regional administrations, you might at least have Shi'ites able to look up and see sort of fellow Shi'ite leaders and say, okay, these are people we trust and believe in. We'll fight for them. And the same on the Sunni side. But there's also a real risk that you get into a great factionalization in that way too.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right, yes, go ahead.

MS. YOUSSEF: If I could just add to that real briefly, you know, Rajiv raises an excellent point because this army that the U.S. is trying to build is in a midst of a time when Iraq is really asking itself what is it to be an Iraqi? What is Iraq? I mean, they are literally ironing out that issue right now as we speak. And at the same time, what is a military but really the most nationalistic body that there is?

And then, there are the practical things that need to be ironed out. I mean, I've been on some of these imbeds with the military training teams. And you'll talk to a guy who served in Saddam's army and he wants to run the army the way he was trained to do it. And he's commanding officers who were trained under the U.S. system. So you'll ask the Iraqi general, what happens when the U.S. leaves? We'll go back to doing it our way. And our way is not taking people to court but beating them up to get the answers. It's just a fundamentally different approach. And so, those two sort of concepts of what an Iraqi army should be, they hit up against each other all the time, which I think makes it harder to form that cohesive unit.

So I think Rajiv is absolutely right. With the CLCs, you might not know what it is to be an Iraqi, but you know what it is to be a Dulaimi (ph), you know what it is to represent that community. The leader that you're representing, you know him; you worked with him; you respect him. There's some sense of order and identity that people can wrap themselves around on that very local level. That's really much harder on the national level.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let's try some questions out here. Oh, did you want to say something, Tony?

MR. CORDESMAN: Well, it's just we need to be very careful here. The Iraqi army is only about a third of the Iraqi security forces. And I think, in fairness, it is moving toward a more national force, although it still has Kurdish and other units. What Rajiv described, however, is exactly right for the police. The police is becoming extremely local, very regional. It is very much tied to the governors and local authorities. We have this national training program, but very large numbers of the people who went through it are gone. And very large numbers of the real-world police are locally recruited and not vetted or subject to the kind of background checks, unless they happen to be Sunni, in which case they can be subjected to a great deal more in terms of biometric scanning.

So, when we talk about Iraqi security forces, we need to remember that and also the fact that in most areas there are no courts, no criminal justice system, and no government presence. And in every other place in the world this has been tried, without a criminal justice system, the police become part of the problem, corrupt, tied to local political factions, and don't bring the kind of security people want.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right, out here. You just raised your hand, go ahead.

Q: Hi. Doug Brooks with the International Peace Operations Association. The U.N. seems to have their A team working in Iraq right now. There seems to be a lot of interest from the Americans there in the role of the U.N. It seems to be a renewed sort of vigor. I'm interested in your perceptions of what the U.N. could do or how much of a role it's going to have in the future.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Who would like to answer?

MR. CORDESMAN: Well, let me just say, there are two things I know the U.N. is doing that are very important. One is, it's trying to broker divisions between the Kurds, Arabs, and other minorities at the district level. So before there is any kind of vote under Article 140, they will have worked out an effective way of a compromise or accommodation. It will have an ethnic line that isn't tied to the existing governorates, which is critical, because those lines don't in any way coincide with the ethnic and sectarian lines.

The other role that it's playing that will be critical is in the elections. If anybody is going to supervise the elections, it will have to be a U.N.-sponsored or supervised effort. As was pointed out, these elections could be very productive. But they also could easily at the provincial level be exactly the same as the Iranian elections. The only people allowed to run in practice will be the ones that the central government chooses to have run. And that means creating open lists, not only for the provincial elections in October but one of the other key roles of the U.N. is to try to reform the electoral process

nationally in 2009, which the United States turned into a hopeless mess with these closed lists, and have something approaching real democracy with open lists and local representation.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yes, back in the back.

Q: I am Leonard Oberlander with People to People International. But this question does not represent the organization; it's my own. Aside from the military, tactical or strategic approaches to solving the problems, there is the development and reconstruction side. And recently, there has been quite a bit written about that in the Russian media, discussing negotiations between the Kremlin and Iraq officials reducing Iraq's debt from the former government of Saddam Hussein.

This in connection with visits of Iraqi leaders to Moscow, Moscow to Baghdad; some taking place in Iran. And with the very visible Russian participation and energy development in Iran, and with the last couple of days in the Russian media, articles about the visit of the deputy foreign minister of Russia with Foreign Minister Zebari of Iraq, and a letter from President Putin to Prime Minister al Maliki in the last couple of days saying, Mr. Prime Minister, I am counting on your cooperation with Russian businesses for the reconstruction and development of Iraq, and lastly, with the negotiations going on for development of the oil fields.

How do these dots connect with the military side that we have been discussing? And where does that take us in a direction of our military issues, which we focus on with Iraq, and the development and reconstruction business issues, which are being discussed from Russia. If you look at it through one shade of glasses, saying we're dealing with the military side; for someone else to come in and help develop? How do you read this?

MR. SCHIEFFER: Who'd like to?

MR. CORDESMAN: Well, why don't I give my colleagues a chance.

MS. YOUSSEF: I don't know. That's a hard one. I just don't know.

MR. CORDESMAN: Let me first, I think Russia is in the so what category. Everybody is doing the same thing. Arguably, Iraq has got 12 percent of the world's oil reserves. It has an oil industry which is over-producing, which is damaging its wells and reservoirs, and desperately needs capital; everybody knows that as well as the opportunity.

Now, the technical nature – the one thing the Iraqis agreed on is none of the oil agreements Saddam Hussein had signed are binding. Debt forgiveness is a problem not only for Russia but for Europe. And it is above all a problem for Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which have not forgiven the debt and hold most of the debt. So everybody is going to be out there trying to get some share of this.

But until there is an oil law – and one of the key provisions of the oil law and one of the most debated isn't sharing it between ethnic and sectarian groups; it's a basic debate over the role of the state and how independent private investors and outside firms can be. Similarly, when you talk about outside investment in Iraq, there are lots and lots of new companies in Iraq. They also don't do anything. They're just sort of paper entities. Somebody is going to have to go in – and this has not been decided by Iraq – and try to rescue the state-owned enterprises. Somebody is going to have to have an investment law.

And none of this is really going to happen until there is a functioning banking system and some kind of local security. So this is one Russian menace that I am not really going to get concerned about any more than I am about the Chinese menace or all the other potential menaces: French, Italian, British. Maybe in two to three years, it will be a real issue. But right now, it'd be nice to believe anybody could come in and make a really solid oil investment or really from the outside invest in Iraqi economic development.

MR. SCHIEFFER: You had a question?

Q: I am Harlan Ullman here at CSIS. The panel was understandably heavy on diagnosing symptoms, and understandably light in producing prescriptions or solutions. So I want to know if I could ask each of you, including you, Bob, if you had a silver bullet or a magic wand or an opportunity to influence policy, what would you propose as one thing that we are doing that we should not be doing?

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: I dare say, some of the reasons you did not hear silver-bullet solutions is that there really aren't any. And also, as a working journalist, I sort of shy away from prescribing policy. That said – (laughter) – I do think one thing to watch with interest is the effort at regionalization – and regionalization not in terms of the neighbors but in terms of the effort to essentially take power from Baghdad and push it down to the province level, sort of the states' rights model for Iraq, if you will. To do what the Republican Party has long wanted to do in the United States – take power from Washington and return it to state capitals.

I think that, you know, there is obviously, people have talked about partition of the country. There is no real political will here in Washington, nor is there in Iraq save for among the Kurds for a three-state type of solution in Iraq. But I think it is clear, at least to me, that this sort of sectarian genie is out of the bottle. And it's going to be very, very difficult to get it back in. And I think that we have to understand that we're in a period of really heightened tension between the two principal groups of Iraqi Arabs, the Sunnis and the Shi'ites. And efforts at either full-on reconciliation or perhaps a lesser version of simply accommodation may not yield the sorts of results that would allow for a really sort of stable, big-tent, strong central government.

And so, as a consequence – and it sort of pains me to say this a little bit – but I think that perhaps one of the few approaches we may have left in our toolbox is one where we seek to sort of empower in a bigger way provincial-level government and giving them a greater authority over spending their share of the national budget, giving them slightly greater authority over security forces in their parts of the country, greater inability to pass legislation. The constitution, as drafted, enshrines federalism. It's a question of sort of implementation here. And I think they're trying to create more effective local government structures.

And I know this is something that is of great interest and a priority for General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. I think that that is a direction in which we need to continue to place our efforts and energy.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I think there is no longer a military solution to Iraq. I think we have to draw our troops back. But I think we have to be very careful about withdrawing. I think this is no longer about Iraq. I think it's about the neighborhood. I think as quickly as we can, the more of the war that we can turn over to the Iraqis, I think we have to make every effort to do that. But just to turn around and leave, I think, would be a terrible signal. I think on reflection, we probably shouldn't have gone there. But now that we're there, I think that changes everything.

And I think this is as much about Iran now as it is about Iraq. I mean, we have reached a point in Iraq where there are no good answers. We're long past the stage where there were good answers. There are only bad answers now and I think we just have to make the best of it as we can now.

MS. YOUSSEF: You know, I'm always surprised as a reporter, going around and talking to people in the Pentagon, that no one can sort of answer what success is. I mean, it's a secure and stable Iraq. But nobody can really define it. And you could ask 50 people in the Pentagon and get 50 different answers. And so, I guess, you know, in my effort to try to be objective, I won't answer it, but also say I think that question really has to be answered.

And within that question, what influence can the U.S. have on obtaining that goal? How much of it is outside of the U.S.' hands and how much is within it? But what concerns me is, if nobody can answer that, that the policy that is being executed is not out of some grand, precise, sharp vision of where Iraq needs to be, but out of a fear of not knowing what would happen if U.S. forces withdrew. So I think if that question were answered in a really specific way, I think it would lead to a more specific policy versus what I think we're tending to see now, which is policies executed out of a fear of the unknown.

MR. CORDESMAN: Harlan, I have to say that I am shocked and awed that you would use the silver-bullet analogy because you simply don't win a game of three-dimensional chess by shooting yourself in the foot. And the problem is, we really have to play this game out by dealing with all of the variables. And that does mean dealing with

aid, with governance, with security, with political accommodation, all of these things. And we're going to have to do it, and I think both regionally and nationally.

Now, how do you do it? One problem is, because it is now opportunistic, because Iraqis essentially control most of the decisions, you have to use your influence as carefully as possible. I agree with Bob that we need to phase down. I'm worried about the word quickly. I am worried because I think effectively means phasing down very carefully and very slowly in response to conditions. And I'm not as much concerned in saying that about troop levels as I am about the advisory efforts, the imbed efforts, the enabling efforts on the military side, about creating a more effective way to move from dependence on U.S. financial aid to U.S. aid assistance to Iraqi use of the budget, to building up effective local and provincial authorities as was pointed out earlier, which takes a lot of time and effort. You don't simply do it by holding an election. So I think we have to understand that if we're going to succeed, it's an exercise in complexity.

Now one last point about the definition of victory: the definition of victory is going to consist of what we can get over time. When I was in Iraq somebody raised the phrase, you're not going to get democracy; you're going to get Iraq-racy. I think that's a pretty realistic picture. The minimum definition of success is we leave with Iraq at least as a reasonably buffer to Iran. There isn't a power vacuum. The best is we have a reasonable degree of pluralism, it's fairly secure, and it's moving towards self-sustained development. Where are we going to be in between those two alternatives? I don't have the faintest idea, but unless we play the game out and play it with some sophistication, we're not going to get even Iraq as a stable buffer to Iran.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, talk a little bit, panel, about Iran since we've brought that up. Where are we on that and how does the fact that we have this large force in Iraq, what impact does that have on our dealing with Iran? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

MR. CORDESMAN: Well, I think at this point, you can't go out to the Gulf without hearing about a war scare. I don't think there's anybody in this room who's been out to the region who hasn't been somehow confronted with questions about are we going to war next week or next month in the latest scare. But the truth is that Iran, I think, is playing a fairly careful and well planned game. It is working with the central government at the same time it's working with each of the Shiite factions. It is providing training, some assistance to each of the Shiite militias, sort of an equal opportunist – opportunism rather than opportunity. It certainly is expanding its economic influence in the south.

When I was there we heard that Iran has actively supported Hakim and ISCI in the idea of a nine-province Shiite federation, which would give Iran leverage. And while we can deal with elements of the al Quds force, they've reduced their forward presence; they can always throw in a few more advisors and most of the activity now that affects the security dimension is a flow of arms across a border you can't secure for training activities taking place in Iran.

I think the only last point I'd make is I'm all in favor of dialogue, but the general result of dialogue is dialogue; it is not solving critical issues or problems. And I don't think Iran wants this particular problem solved because we aren't strong enough to convince them there isn't a really great opportunity for them and one that could give them a great deal more power and influence in the Gulf.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Can we live with a nuclear-armed Iran?

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: I think that for –

MR. SCHIEFFER: Will we? Would we?

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: I think that would be a bright line for quite a number of American policymakers. It's hard to sort of game that out, but I think that that would be something that there would be many officials in this country who would not want to see happen and who would try to take some more overt steps to deal with it.

MR. SCHIEFFER: What do you think?

MS. YOUSSEF: Absolutely because if Iran has it, it's – Saudi Arabia will say, well we need it because we need to defend against that threat. And the trickle will start to happen. How many nations then in the region will say, well, if that country has it, I have to have it and it will go from there?

When I was in Iraq, last time I spoke to Abdul Aziz's son and he said, we feel that we are stuck between the Axis of Evil and the Great Satan, the two sort of names for the U.S. and Iran. So it's an interesting dynamic in Iraq because they feel, at least at the central government level, the Shiites do anyway, that they're stuck between two allies of sorts. The U.S. is defending their government and keeping it upright and Iran is a key force behind them and the things that they do there. And so I think as we move ahead, Iran has a seat at the table, not only by proximity, but by the amount of influence that they have over this government.

And I think moving forward, I think in terms of looking at policy, one could argue that they have been great beneficiaries of what's happened, that it's kept the U.S. occupied, that it's allowed them to sort of really be key test players in the game there. But I think they have to be seen as key players and remember that the Iraqi government sees them as key players and treats them as such. And so I think that is something to keep in mind as we move forward.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Tony, do you think, well, why aren't the Russians worried about a nuclear Iran?

MR. CORDESMAN: Well, I think they are.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Why don't they see that as a threat?

MR. CORDESMAN: I think that we need to be very careful about Russia. Its fuel cycle policies have been fairly strongly designed to limit the risk of proliferation, but – and they have cooperated with the United States on the sanctions. They could certainly have done more, as could China. It would have been, I think, far more important to have limits on arms imports in the most recent sanctions in restricting the movement of senior Iranian officials, but I do think we need to be very careful that we have an almost religious focus on missile defense, and the Russians have an almost religious focus on not having Americans present in the near or abroad and expanding their influence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

And one thing we also have to remember here is, as yet, we keep telling the Russians that Iran probably won't have a weapon until 2015 and just having a weapon doesn't mean it's on a force and deployed and you have a measurable capability. And we have to keep that in mind. I think that they're – are the Russians concerned? Yes; are they also concerned about influence in sales to Iran, about selling more nuclear reactors, about potential arms transfers? Of course they are, but they don't have the values we have in terms of either proliferation or missile defense.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let's go back to Iraq on the ground though. General Petraeus, I guess, is going to make – when will his next report be? In July, they're going too –

MR. CORDESMAN: April.

MS. YOUSSEF: April 8th and 9th?

MR. SCHIEFFER: April 8th and 9th, and we expect to have all the troops from the surge withdrawn by July, that's right?

MR. CORDESMAN: Well, most. Most.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Most.

MR. CORDESMAN: Most. Be very careful. It will still be higher, 140 rather than –

MS. YOUSSEF: Versus 132.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yeah. What do you all hear about – what's General Petraeus? I mean, everything I hear is that they're going to ask for some sort of a pause now once they get the surge troops out.

MS. YOUSSEF: Yeah, they've certainly sort of put that out there. I don't think there'll be any – it doesn't appear there will be any real surprises in terms of what they're going to say, that once the surge troops come out that there will be an assessment period.

How long that period will be, we haven't heard the details of that yet, and how they go about making that assessment, we're not really clear on the details yet. And so I think those will be some of the new things that we'll be hearing and listening for when General Petraeus gives his testimony.

On the military side, one of the things they're watching, for almost as closely, is whether they will be able to announce at that point that deployment times can go down for the Army from 15 months to 12 months. General Casey, the Army Chief of Staff, has said that once we get down to 15 brigades that that will allow the U.S. to reduce those deployment times. It's a big priority for the Army because they see this as something that could break them. You've got guys now in their fourth tour, those three months are under an extraordinary amount of pressure.

So among the soldiers, there isn't as much anticipation about what's going to be said because we've essentially sort of heard it. The military guys try to shy away from that word pause and try to get that out of the lexicon, but among the soldiers, what they're listening for is when can they stop going on 15 months or 20 months because it really is seen as something that could break the strength of the Army.

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: The biggest thing to watch, I think, may not be what's coming from the mouths of Petraeus and Crocker, but the committee itself. All three presidential candidates, the Senate side, are going to be there and questioning Petraeus and Crocker. And it's going to be, I think –

MR. SCHIEFFER: The Armed Services committee?

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: Yes. It's going to be a fascinating show and I think we're going to want to watch and see what they have to say and what they ask just as much as what they're hearing from the two witnesses.

MS. YOUSSEF: Yeah, it won't be like last time that the anticipation, the hanging on every word; it doesn't seem like we're headed down that road again.

MR. CORDESMAN: Two things, Bob: one, what I suspect you won't hear is any mention of the fact that between FY 2008 and 2009, there's a little matter of \$100 billion pending in terms of funding requests versus what they're likely to get, which would bother me a little if I were General Petraeus or Ambassador Crocker. But I think that you will probably get some frank statements about the need for more effort on political accommodation from both Ambassador Crocker and from General Petraeus, some calls for improvements in governance from Ambassador Crocker. I don't think you're going to get any kind of panacea.

And I think that there will be warnings that al Qaeda can reassert itself, that there are likely to be bloody bombings and killings. They're likely to coincide with this panel of Crocker and Petraeus. They're likely to coincide with the conventions. They're almost certain to coincide with the elections. And there will be warnings about the issues

we've all discussed, what's happening in the south, the intra-Shiite problems, the failure to absorb the sons of Iraq, the problem with the Kurds. I don't think people are going to ignore those, not certainly either General Petraeus or Ambassador Crocker, who have been very frank both about the progress and the problems.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let's go back to the audience. Anybody? Yes, back there? Here's a mike.

Q: My name is Charles Dahan. I'm with the Moroccan Federation of Moroccan Jews. The one thing I was very impressed by the way, Nancy, you talked very briefly on the culture, understanding the culture and the conflict between what's happening between the different way of dealing with the soldiers. Do you think that the Americans need to do more and that's probably like the biggest part of the problem? That's one of the problems, and the second part is you just talked about the influence of Iran and what it does. You haven't mentioned Syria, and Syria is also another factor, probably not as important as Iran, but it is.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Who would like to talk about that? Nancy?

MS. YOUSSEF: Well, in terms of the evolution of the soldier, having traveled there since the day after the regime fell, I've had the opportunity to watch that evolution firsthand. And it's really extraordinary. I mean, we talk about this war as a way to transform the Middle East, but the truth is that it was the military that was transformed as they moved from sort of a conventional war to a counter-insurgency one, at times ad hoc, but to see that 28-year-old captain on the ground make that evolution is really extraordinary.

When I went in they were patting down women and breaking down doors and not linking what the arrest of that Iraqi man meant to the insurgency. And now when you go and they're in these outposts and they're living among the Iraqis and working with the tribal sheiks. They're sitting down and they're drinking tea and they're speaking a little bit of Arabic and it's been an extraordinary evolution by those soldiers. And the connection that they make with their interaction and the future of the insurgency and the militias, it's been, I think, one of probably the most under-reported stories in that it's really hard to get at. When you ask these soldiers, they talk about Iraq in a much, much more sophisticated way. Just in the last six months, I think the surge is part of that because we've asked these soldiers to go out and live in these small outposts, not on the big mega-bases that they used to live in and really trust their lives with people who were fighting with them just a few weeks ago.

So you ask a soldier, he'll sit there and he'll be negotiating and be very charming with the tribal sheik and say, you know, he was killing your comrades just a few months ago. And they'll say, well, he's not killing us now. I mean, it's just a real sophisticated, practical approach, so I'm really lucky to have been able to see that. And I think it's one of the most important parts of the surge, the interaction between the individual captains

and colonels, who are really implementing the surge policy and giving out the CLC money and walking the streets with these guys. That's been a key part of the surge.

In terms of Syria, you're right. It's a critical part of it. One of the reasons that Mosul, for example, is a key al Qaeda stronghold is because it has access to Syria, and that's been a key part of the insurgent element. And so as we move forward, I think that will be one of the things to watch, how they're able to close off that route, if at all, and what it means to where al Qaeda moves next because I think it will be harder to move to say, someplace like Samara, even though it's majority Sunni, because there's no connection to Syria. The Syria connection has been a key reason, I think, why Anbar was a key spot at one point and why Mosul is now.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Another question? Yes? Go ahead.

Q: Hi, I'm Eric Rischel, a TCU graduate and currently with the Department of Defense. My remarks, of course, are attributable to neither. (Laughter.) I just want to say for those of us that had the opportunity to see last month's presentation, to see if we could tie those together. Is there anything that anybody on the panels sees as a possible roadblock because of activities either in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, somewhere else in the region that would throw off all our projections in the region we've been talking about tonight?

Is there anything that anybody on the panel sees as a possible roadblock because of activities either in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, somewhere else in the region that would throw off all our projections in the region we have been talking about tonight?

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: I wasn't here last month, I mean, I am flipping around. I do worry that the continued troop commitments in Iraq have really hindered our ability to ramp up as needed to deal with resurgent Taliban activity in and around Helmand and Uruzgan provinces in Afghanistan. And I'm sure that was a subject of some discussion. And even though the surge is drawing down, the continued commitment there and the rotational issues that we are dealing with with Iraq really do tie the hands of the military going forward.

MR. CORDESMAN: I think that when you talk about the area interacting, there is no question; we are dealing with the problem of Pakistan and Afghanistan. It essentially is one war. It isn't simply in the FATA; it is in the Balochi areas as well. Success in Afghanistan depends, to some degree at least, on success in Pakistan. What I think you really see in both cases though – and it is going to have more and more impact in the future – we talked about the tremendous changes inside the U.S. military.

And I thought you heard one of the best descriptions of what has taken place there possible. You can't go and see the military in either Afghanistan or Iraq without a constant focus not only on security, but on development and governance. But what we don't have in either country is an effective aid program. What we don't have is support for the kind of governance that is needed. We don't have the civilian partners for the

military. When you look at the real PRTs in Iraq, time and again, their military officer – and often one that hasn't even had civil military background because they simply can't staff the teams properly. You ask why does the money go to a given place in Afghanistan or in Iraq – and I think we all agree that unless we can solve the problems of governance and developments and jobs, we are not going to get the security we need. And there really aren't any answers.

In the case of Iraq, all you have to do is read the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction reports, and it is a devastating indictment of the civil side of our operations, and if you will forgive me, our inability to exercise soft or smart power. In the case of Afghanistan, what is kind of interesting is you can't read anything. There is no meaningful description of the aid programs in Afghanistan. The Afghan Compact is a series of sort of unquantified clichés. The U.S. government doesn't have a breakout that is meaningful on its activity. But when you look at the money going in, we are going to phase out the aid money to Iraq before they demonstrated they can spend their own budget. In Afghanistan, we are not providing enough aid to put the thing together. In fact, there was a report I think just in the last week that we are only spending about half of the money that we have actually pledged. And unfortunately, what you also see there is fragmentation. Every PRT is doing something different under its national host with no coherence and no overall concept of development.

MR. CHANDRASEKARAN: We talk about the military's adaptability and how it has changed from five years ago. And I think everything Nancy was saying was spot on. For such a large institution, the U.S. Armed Forces, I have found from my time out on the field, is remarkably adaptable. You can argue that they should be more adaptable, but for such a large entity, they are surprisingly willing to learn from mistakes and change and improve training, sometimes very quickly. The one area where I think we have not done nearly as good of a job is on the civilian side, you know. Shortly after the invasion of Iraq if my memory serves me correctly, Senators Biden and Lugar proposed the creation of an emergency sort of stabilization civilian response corps that would be based out of the State Department that would have contributions from other cabinet agencies, that would be sort of a government sort of civilian reserve corps. And then a broader reserve corps drawn from the private sector and from non-governmental entities.

Well, you know, the White House never went to the map for funding. Appropriators in the House never decided to put real money behind it, partially out of worries that it might encourage the administration to go and invade another country. Needless to say, as of last year or so, that outfit, SCRS as it is known at the State Department, had something like 11 people ready to deploy to deal with crises. I mean, five years into this, we should have developed a much larger response corps. You know, I sympathize with diplomats at the State Department who say that, you know, we don't have the skills to advise Iraqis on matters of agriculture or running city council meetings. And we got into this to go and analyze national politics and write cables back or issues visas or whatever.

But there needs to be a real full on harnessing of the skills across the United States government. Why was it that as of some point last year – my figures are a little dated here – the Department of Agriculture had like two people in Iraq? You know, they should have had a couple of dozen people working with PRTs in provinces where agriculture is a principal driver of the local economy. We should have done more and need to do more going forward in terms of taking the skills across the federal government and creating a meaningful civilian response corps to work alongside the military.

The Pentagon has been doing much of this by default, largely because it is big and it has resources and it has people. But despite their best intentions, they are not the best people for the job. There are other people both within and outside government that need to do this. And, you know, it is sad to say, but I don't think five years on, we are much further along in developing this capacity than we were when we got into this.

MS. YOUSSEF: You know, if I could just add to that. One of the reasons, I think, that this is happening – you know, in the Pentagon, it wasn't, I think, some sort of realization that we have a new theory that we want to adopt. It was born out of necessity. It was that those soldiers were out there getting killed, getting attacked every day, facing a more vicious enemy. The State Department wasn't frankly. It wasn't an immediate threat. I mean, the transformation in the military was born out of a need to bring down the violence and bring down attacks against U.S. troops. And I think that is what led to – a big part that led to that evolution is very ad hoc and quick and came out of that demand, whereas in the State Department, it was never an immediate, pressing threat to the institution or to their lives. And I think that is why one could argue that the State Department has been so far behind the Pentagon in making that transformation. The Pentagon had to make it out of their own safety. The State Department didn't.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, I think at that point, I think we have sort of come to an end to another of these discussions. Again as we did last time with our discussion of Afghanistan, we didn't come up with any magic solutions. We didn't come up with any answers.

MR. CORDESMAN: No silver bullets.

MR. SCHIEFFER: And I think maybe the value of extended discussions like this is that it helps us to understand that these are simply very, very complex issues, and that if there were easy answers, someone would have already found them. We are dealing with the very difficult issues here. We may not be reading as much in the paper and seeing on television about Iraq as we were six months ago, but I think as this discussion underlines, Iraq is still there. It is still not done. It is still going to have to be resolved in some way. And the United States is going to be involved there, it seems to me, for some time to come in one way or another.

On behalf of TCU, I would like to thank all of you; this partnership that we have formed with the CSIS has been a wonderful thing for us. We are trying to train young journalists at TCU to cover the world. And we think the best way to do that is to expose

them to as many of these serious issues as we can and bring together smart people to talk to them and to see them and to let them see the experts.

Next week at TCU, we will be having our annual news symposium. We will be having Roger Mudd, who has a wonderful new book that I recommend to all of you about the CBS News Bureau in the late '60s and early '70s called "A Place to Be." It was the greatest experience in my life to be a part of that team. Andrea Mitchell, who is writing, I think, covering this campaign is going to be with us. Al Neuharth, who founded USA Today, will also be with us. And also Robert Novak, the columnist, is going to be there. Every year we try to bring together a diverse group to just talk about the state of news and the state of world affairs. We will be back here next month with another of these discussions. Thank you all very much.

(Applause.)

(END)