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CONGRESSIONAL FORUM ON THE McGOVERN-POLK PLAN

Friday, January 12, 2007

Cannon House Office Building

Room 345

Washington, D.C.

The forum convened at 9:30 a.m.

P R O C E E D I N G S

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: May I have your attention, please? Would everybody please take their seats?

Senator, General, Professor, Members of Congress who are in the room, if you'd like to come up?

As you know, there will be members of Congress coming and going throughout this 2-hour period. At the moment, there's a Democratic caucus going on and some of us left because this is where we belong this morning, but there will be others that arrive after the caucus ends and throughout the morning.

So, good morning to all of you and thank you so much for being here. On behalf of my colleague Barbara Lee and Maxine Waters and all of the members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Out of Iraq Caucus, it's a true pleasure to welcome you here this morning. Later on this morning, we will have Congressman Jack Murtha with us, and if he's here in time, he will be the first person, Congressperson, to ask questions of the

panel.

The size and diversity of this crowd, including the leading peace activists that I see out there and military and intelligence experts, is truly indicative of the widespread demand and the overwhelming consensus for a dramatic change in U.S. policy in Iraq.

When I say "change," that doesn't mean doubling down on the current policy, which is what President Bush offered Wednesday night. He continues to head in the wrong direction, and he continues to shield himself from the reality of what's happening in Iraq. He continues to believe that the U.S. military can resolve Iraq politically. He refuses to acknowledge that what he calls "sectarian violence" is really a civil war. He continues to insist that he is supporting the Iraqi government against militias and death squads, when in fact the death squads are embedded in the Iraqi government.

Sending 20,000 more American soldiers to Iraq will only lead to more bloodshed, more misery, and instability. What we need is a 180-degree

reversal, not an escalation, but an end to the military occupation of Iraq.

Today is the fourth forum that we've convened, and each has been designed to galvanize serious consideration of policy alternatives in Iraq, to give voice to intelligent ideas that have been too often marginalized or ignored.

Now, you will all remember, our first forum was in a tiny room in the Cannon Building where we couldn't fit everybody in. The second one was not even on campus; we couldn't even get into one of the Capitol buildings. The third one was in the basement of the Capitol. And look where we are today. (Applause)

Frankly, this is all about hoping to shake up the Congress because the Congress has been in a stupor. This stupor has caused the Congress to lag far behind the American people in recognizing the futility, the cost, and the disgraceful immorality of this war.

Back when we held the first forum in September of 2005, and even more so when I first called for

our troops to come home exactly 2 years ago, we were all of us sitting up here on this dias today and I'm sure you down there, our panelists, we were labeled "dissenters," but because of the courage and because of the convictions of so many war opponents, like all of you in this room, mostly at the grassroots level, we have changed enough minds that ours is now the mainstream position. Actually, if you lead, people do follow.

When the election in November ratifying our position showed that now is the time for Americans who oppose the war and oppose deepening military escalation to assume an aggressive policy-making role, we looked for individuals who we thought would best represent our position and could help us as architects of legislation and catalysts to prompt action immediately to bring our troops home and give the Iraqi people their country back.

So, that's why we invited the three guests who are before us this morning. Our guests will help do just that. Former Senator George McGovern and Dr. William Polk and General Odom have--well, I'm

going to leave General Odom out of this for a minute. They've all known and respected each other for years, but Senator McGovern and Professor Polk have collaborated on a ground-breaking book. I have it right here. It's available also. It's called *Out of Iraq: A Practical Plan for Withdrawal Now*. It's the first of its kind. It's comprehensive. It's concrete. It's a plan for getting our troops out of Iraq within a 6-month time frame. We thought it was important for them to come to Capitol Hill, where we could examine, discuss, and also challenge their ideas.

Senator McGovern hardly needs an introduction, particularly around here. He's one of our most distinguished American statesmen and humanitarians. Most recently, he has served as president of the Middle East Policy Council and ambassador to the U.N. on food and agriculture. Of course, before that, he spent 24 years in the Congress and was the Democratic nominee for president in 1992. I know-- I voted for him.

If our country had heeded Senator McGovern, our

then presidential candidate, if we had heeded his advice in that campaign, tens of thousands of Americans would have been spared death in the battlefields of Vietnam. Although Senator McGovern lost in 1972, there is absolutely no question that he won the verdict of history.

Let me add that these are two men who understand what it means to defend America. Senator McGovern is a decorated World War II hero, having received the Distinguished Flying Cross for service as a bomber pilot.

And Dr. Polk, in addition to his extraordinary academic credentials, first at Harvard and then at the University of Chicago, was a key national security advisor in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. He was deeply involved in policy-making for the Algerian War, and he was a member of the Crisis Management Subcommittee during the Cuban missile crisis.

We're honored to have them with us today, and along with these two gentlemen, we have General William Odom.

Let me introduce General Odom. And we're very, very fortunate to have you here today, General, also. He is also a military, diplomatic, and intelligence professional. General Odom served as director of the National Security Agency in the Reagan Administration from 1985 to 1988. From 1981 to 1985, he served as Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, the Army's senior intelligence officer.

I invited General Odom to join Senator McGovern and Professor Polk because he's absolutely a perfect balance/counterbalance with this discussion we're going to have today. And we've asked him to come, to be direct and ask his questions.

So, let me tell you what's going to happen before we get started with them. Congresswoman Barbara Lee--we are co-chairs of the Progressive Caucus--will give opening remarks. And Congresswoman Maxine Waters, who is the founder and the head of the Out of Iraq Caucus will give opening remarks. Then, gentlemen, it will be your turn. And then after you finish, members of

Congress, starting with Congressman Murtha, will ask questions in the order that they arrived in the room.

Barbara Lee?

CONGRESSWOMAN LEE: Thank you very much, and first let me thank Congresswoman Woolsey for her leadership and also remind us that she actually took that first step and introduced the first resolution calling for the withdrawal of our troops from Iraq. And so, I want to thank you, Congresswoman Woolsey, for making sure that space was opened up here on the Hill. (Applause)

Also to Congresswoman Waters--let me thank you for your vision and for making sure that those who either supported or opposed the resolution to use force against Iraq had now a forum to begin to debate and look at strategies on how to come out of Iraq and for providing that leadership so that Democrats know that--and now we have what?--close to eighty members of the Out of Iraq caucus, and it's building. It's building. And so, I just want to thank you for giving that boost to what the

American people have demanded. And now, thanks to you, I think the American people know that they have a strong Out of Iraq Caucus that they can work with to raise the voices that were so eloquently heard last November as a result of the election.

Let me thank all of our colleagues for being here and all of our guests, especially for being vigilant and for providing the type of leadership that we need at this moment in our time in history: Senator McGovern, Dr. Polk, General Odom--thank you so much for your courage and for your clarity of vision and for continuing to be part of the debate and providing the policy options that we so desperately need at this point.

Of course, we know that the President and this administration got us into this mess, and they need to get us out. Oftentimes we're asked, "What's the plan? How would you suggest we get out?" Well, I think what we're going to hear today, thanks to Senator McGovern, Dr. Polk, and General Odom, we have the specifics, and we hope that they are listening.

The President said the other night that mistakes were made and he bears much of the responsibility. I really quite frankly expected him to talk about what he would do to rectify those mistakes that have cost the lives of 3,000 of our young brave men and women and countless number of Iraqi lives; but, rather, we heard him talk about how he was going to escalate this war. Clearly, and I say that he has been on his listening tour, but he did not hear. He did not hear what the American people, what the generals, what members of Congress have said for the last few years. The longer we stay in Iraq, the worse it gets.

A majority of American people say that Bush's plan for more troops will make no difference whether the war can be won or lost. There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. There was no connection between Al Qaeda, Saddam Hussein, and 9/11. And after declaring that the mission was accomplished nearly 4 years ago, why in the world would anyone believe that escalating this war is going to bring this to an end?

Given this administration's track record, I say it's time to let them know that their time has run out. Their time has run out. This administration and the President, they're like people who find themselves in a hole and yet they keep digging to try to get out. And I believe that, really quite frankly, this administration has lost touch with reality. Again, we've been working, quite, frankly on many initiatives, one of which is saying that we do not want our country to have permanent dibs on the oil or on permanent military bases in Iraq. The President was asked last year about that, and he did not answer the question when asked did he want to have--or did he intend to have permanent bases in Iraq.

This occupation and this civil war, which is what it is, quite frankly, has got to come to an end. Our young men and women are in the midst of this quagmire that is a no-win, and so I think that what we're going to hear today, hopefully, from our presenters will provide enough information finally again to this administration to know that there are

specifics, there are very concrete ways that a plan can be put together where we can remove United States troops from Iraq very quickly and end this occupation and civil war.

And so, I just want to thank all of you again for being here, for your leadership, for your courage, and for continuing to fight to make sure that this war ends and ends quickly.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: And now Congresswoman Maxine Waters.

CONGRESSWOMAN WATERS: Thank you very much. I'd like to thank Congresswoman (recording interrupted) Sorry.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Before she gets started, you have to know this room that the Republicans delegated to the Democrats for the last 6 years as our caucus meeting room, and half of the microphones don't work.

CONGRESSWOMAN WATERS: ...that we have a forum, and I'd like to thank Congresswoman Woolsey. Am I being heard now?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, ma'am.

CONGRESSWOMAN WATERS: We are not deterred in our mission. (Applause)

Thank you very much. I'd like to first thank Congresswoman Woolsey for the leadership that she has provided in bringing us together today along with Congresswoman Lee and the work that they're doing in the Progressive Caucus to keep this issue alive. They have been wonderful co-chairpersons of our Progressive Caucus, and it has truly because of them that we have had a platform and a voice to voice our opposition to this unconscionable war in Iraq. Please give them a round of applause. (Applause)

I would also like to thank Senator George McGovern and Dr. William Polk for writing this book, *Out of Iraq: A Practical Plan for Withdrawal Now*, and for taking time to meet with us to discuss their plan in further detail.

Iraq is, of course, in a civil war. In 2006, more than 22,900 Iraqis died. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that 3.7 million Iraqis have been displaced internally or

have sought refuge abroad as a result of the violence in Iraq. Since March 2003, when the war started, 3,010 U.S. troops have died, and more than 22,000 others have been seriously injured. The war has cost United States taxpayers more than \$350 billion.

The President's Iraq policy has failed, and sending 20,000 more troops to Iraq, as President Bush proposed Wednesday night, will not reverse the downward trend for Americans or Iraqis. By staying in Iraq, we're making a terrible situation only worse. We're failing in Iraq because of the poor planning on the part of President Bush, former Secretary Rumsfeld, and the other neo-cons in the President's war cabinet for a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. The ill-advised decision to invade Iraq was compounded by the poor management of Iraq by the Coalition Provisional Administration and a fundamental misunderstanding of what we confronted in Iraq--a volatile insurgency that evolved into a full-blown civil war.

The only thing to do at this point is to

redeploy from Iraq, reunite our service members with their loved ones, and recommit to the real war on terrorism--pursuing Osama Bin Laden and other members of Al Qaeda. The Republicans like to claim that Democrats do not have a plan for withdrawal and therefore we must stay the course or, as the President announced this past Wednesday, to escalate the war.

However, this is a false claim. Continuing a failed policy in Iraq is not a wise response to failure in Iraq, and Democrats have offered proposals for how to redeploy from Iraq. Lynn Woolsey is one of the first persons to offer a proposal. She's been joined by Kucinich and Murtha and others who are offering proposals. There are plenty of proposals. In addition, Senator George McGovern and Dr. Polk have developed their plan. All of the plans have their unique strong points and are worthy of consideration. One of the most important benefits of these proposals is that they provide Congress's starting point for developing a plan to finally bring our troops home.

Ladies and gentlemen, what we do here today is extremely important. The work that Barbara Lee is doing all over the country, the work that Lynn Woolsey is doing, organizing forums, providing a platform for discussion, is so important.

We failed to keep this president out of Iraq and from pursuing a failed policy, but we must stop this president from expanding this war into Iran and Syria. He's on a track to do that. Americans should be very much alerted to that. He has sent the second aircraft battery, a ship group to the region, and Patriot missiles to U.S. Arab allies. He claims he's seeking to destroy Iranian and Syrian networks providing arms and training to Iraq.

No matter what this president claims, we are insisting on diplomacy. We want people to talk and we don't buy the excuse that Condoleeza Rice gave to the senators yesterday that they will not talk to Iran until they discontinue their efforts to develop nuclear capability. We don't want any excuses. We don't want any more war. And it's

very important for our voices to be loud and clear.

And I thank you, Congresswoman Woolsey and Congresswoman Lee, for providing me this opportunity to be with you today.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Thank you. (Applause)

So, now, Panel, we will leave it to you for the next half-hour at least. Feel free. I don't know if you're starting with the senator--I believe you would be. Senator McGovern?

SENATOR MCGOVERN: Okay. I see a green light. I noticed, Congresswoman Waters, that you had to keep moving to the left (Laughter) before you could be heard. Maybe this is the P.A. system telling us we have to move off dead center. (Laughter). We've got to get off our duffs-- (Applause)

I'm from Mitchell, South Dakota, my hometown, where I now live. We don't always get early copies of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *L.A. Times*--Congressman, how are you?--so, I rely on the *Mitchell Daily Republic*, the *Sioux Falls Argus Leader*, the *Rapid City Journal*, and they have done a pretty good job keeping me on top of what's

going on in Iraq. As a matter of fact, I don't understand how the President arrives at his conclusions when he has all these great metropolitan newspapers to read.

But because this is sometimes difficult for me in South Dakota, I'd like your permission to read the opening lines of yesterday's lead editorial in the *New York Times*: "President Bush told Americans last night that failure in Iraq would be a disaster. The disaster is Mr. Bush's war, and he has already failed. Last night was his chance to stop offering more fog and be honest with the nation, and he did not take it."

And then this one additional paragraph: "Americans needed to hear a clear plan to extricate U.S. troops from the disaster that Mr. Bush created. What they got instead was more gauzy talk of victory in the war on terrorism and of creating" what he called "a 'young democracy' in Iraq. In other words, a way for this president to run out the clock and leave his mess for the next" president.

I would only add to that that I think none of us in this room believe that the President would have sent our army into Iraq had it not been for the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center and one side of the Pentagon. But the irony of that is that Saddam Hussein and Iraq, regardless of the bad leadership, had nothing to do with the 9/11 attack, and one of the most dishonest maneuvers the current administration has carried out is to convince large numbers of our fellow citizens that he sent our army into Iraq to fight terrorism. Iraq was not then considered the heart of terrorism. As I said, it had nothing to do with the 9/11 attack. It was a reasonably stable place.

We're all glad that Saddam Hussein is gone, but the reality is that as long as he ruled, Iraq was not torn asunder by civil war. It was similar to the situation in Yugoslavia under President Tito, also a dictator, but our guy because he was hostile to the Soviet Union despite the fact he was a dictator, but when he died all hell broke loose in Yugoslavia, and they started killing each other on

a scale that was sometimes described as genocidal, and we finally had to intervene to put down the ethnic cleansing that was going on there. But nothing like that existed in Iraq until we moved the American army there, probably the best army and the best fighting men we've ever had. They've done their assigned work and done it as bravely and as well as they were trained to do, but we now have a situation in Iraq dating from our military intervention there in which you have two Iraqi groups warring against each other. There's a full-scale civil war going on between the Sunni Iraqis and the Shi'ite group, which is now in power and which is the majority force in that country.

At the same time and even antedating this civil war, which is now raging out of control, you have an insurgency aimed against the American forces there. That's one of the reasons we've lost over 3,000 young Americans. I think the latest count is 314, and it's now going up at rate of over 100 every month. So, every month we delay, another 100 of these brave, young American soldiers will die.

And something we don't always think about, that perhaps deserves more attention than it gets, is that having sailed into Iraq under the label of "liberators," the leading British medical journal, *Lancet*, estimates that since that invasion 600,000 Iraqi men, women, and children have been killed. I have no idea whether that figure is right. Let's suppose it's 100,000 instead of 600,000. Enormous losses that by comparison pale the number of human beings killed at the World Trade Center on September 11th.

Now, Madam Chairwoman and distinguished members of the Congress, I don't oppose our involvement in Iraq on pacifist grounds. I'm not a pacifist, although one has to admire those who, on spiritual grounds, hold of that view, but as the Chairwoman has said here today, when World War II was on and we were attacked at Pearl Harbor and Hitler was sweeping across Europe, I volunteered at the age of 19 to train as an Army Air Corps bomber pilot and went on to fly a full string of thirty-five combat missions against the most heavily defended targets

in Europe. So, I don't speak here as a person unfamiliar with war. Our President and our Vice President, on the other hand, have had no battlefield experience whatsoever, the Vice President requesting and gaining five deferments from the Vietnam War, although that was a war he supported.

But that being the case, at least our leaders should have read a little history, although they didn't experience it. They could have at least read a simple account of what happened in those long, tragic years in Vietnam, when again we went to war against a little country that was no threat to us, became our friends as soon as we took our Army out of their country. I used to tell my four daughters and my son, during those long years when I was doing everything I could as a United States senator and later as the presidential nominee of my party to end that mistaken enterprise--they'd get discouraged about it. They were sometimes really depressed over what was going on in Vietnam, and I would try to hold out some hope. I would say,

"Look, in history, even a great tragedy or a great blunder may have a good side in that this Vietnam situation is so outrageous, we will never again go down that road." And here we are, Mr. President Bush, going down that same road again. Obviously, there are differences between a jungle and a desert, but the issues are much the same.

And so, the reason my friend Professor William Polk, a direct descendant of President Polk and one of our highly regarded experts on the Middle East and especially Iraq--he wrote a great book about Iraq, 2 years ago, entitled *Understanding Iraq*. So, I'm glad to have teamed up with him on this little book, *Out of Iraq*. I always feel a little awkward praising my own book or one that I co-authored (Laughter) so I'm going to let somebody else tell you about this book, a woman I greatly admire, a journalist first with the *New York Times* and then with *Newsweek* magazine, Anna Quindlen. Here's what she told Charlie Rose on his excellent T.V. program: "There is a wonderful book I am recommending to everyone. It's a very small

readable book by George McGovern and William Polk called *Out of Iraq*, and it just very quickly runs you through the history of the country, the make-up of the country, how we got in, the arguments for getting in, many of which don't withstand scrutiny, and how we get out. It's like a little primer. I think the entire nation should read it, and then we will be united."

Congressman, how can you ignore that?

(Laughter)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've read the book, and I'll come up and join the panel, but I just wanted to welcome you.

SENATOR McGOVERN: We're going to put you on here in a little bit.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, okay. All right.

SENATOR McGOVERN: Anyway, Professor Polk and I decided last new year's eve--I happened to have been in southern France where he now lives--we decided then that most Americans, even then probably, realized that the war was a great mistake, but they didn't know how to get out. So,

what we have tried to do, in 135 pages of bold type, is to tell you how we think we can get out with minimum damage to the Iraqi people and minimum damage to the United States--in fact, to the great benefit of both countries.

Thank you ever so much for the chance to be heard here today.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: You're welcome. And now we're looking forward to Dr. Polk talking about the book--or the plan, I mean.

DR. POLK: I have learned that you have to push this button, I believe.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: And, Professor, put the microphone really close to you.

DR. POLK: A little closer? Okay. Is that better?

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Is that better, everybody?

DR. POLK: I have a hearing loss, and my wife tells me that makes my voice go down, and she kicks when I need it, so somebody here will have to do the same thing. (Laughter)

I want to just mention, fairly briefly, three aspects that I think we all need to pay attention to. As you pointed out, Congresswoman Woolsey, there are several plans out there to talk about. I want to say just a couple of words about the Baker-Hamilton plan to begin with. Then I want to turn to what the arguments and objections that I hear around the country are raised to what we're talking about, of getting out. And finally I want to issue a warning of what I think we all need to pay particular attention to.

I think there are four good things about the Baker-Hamilton plan. The first is it is a clear statement that we must get out of Iraq for our own interests. Secondly, it's a recognition the war is stretching the United States beyond our military capacity. And third is the recognition the war is moving our economy toward bankruptcy.

We're mortgaging the future of our children to pay for it. And to shield the American public from the reality of the costs, we're borrowing vast sums of money, mainly from Chinese lenders who watch as

our currency has fallen vis-à-vis the other major currency in the world, the so-called euro, from 80 cents to a euro, to \$1.30 a euro. So, the Chinese and other lenders to the United States have watched their loans to us disappear in value by at least 30 percent. Presumably, sooner or later, like any lender, they will want to either stop lending or call their loans. If they do that, then we face a possible collapse of our currency.

The fourth thing that the Baker-Hamilton report did was to focus our attention on other Middle Eastern issues: the Palestine problem, Syria, Lebanon, and Iran.

Those are the four good things that I find in that report. What I find that's missing, and what Senator McGovern and I have tried to do in our program, is to set up not what we wish would happen, which is what the Baker-Hamilton Report does, but what we can make happen by the way we comport ourselves.

When I was in the government years ago, I came to the conclusion that every time we heard a policy

statement that set out what we wanted the world to be like, but didn't allocate any money or didn't set up any program to accomplish it, it was just a public relations venture. And the President apparently took it as that in his approach to it.

What we have seen is that the report suggests that we hope that people in Syria and Iran will help us get out of Iraq. But why would they want to help us pull our chestnuts out of the fire at the same time that we're talking about perhaps invading them and destroying their societies? Moreover, it's doubtful whether Iran or any other country could get the Iraqi population to do what they don't think is in their best interest. And so, these are wishes, not a program.

We have tried to set out a fully articulated program with the costs, a timetable, the estimates of success of failure, and based it on comparative historical studies of other guerrilla wars with a program that's been vetted by American, English, and Iraqi experts. So, I think that what we're talking about is a very concrete thing.

Now, the questions that are frequently posed every time I have spoken--and I believe this is Senator McGovern's experience too--are these:

Will Iraq just implode if we leave? And the honest answer is that we can't possibly prevent it if it does, but we do offer in our plan the best means we can find to make it less likely to happen. Experience in a dozen other insurgencies over the last 50 years illustrates that when the irritant, that is the foreign occupier, leaves, fighting dies down.

Why is this? It's simply because we're all human beings of all religions, nationalities, races, political systems, are territorial, like territorial animals. We don't like foreigners, and we won't tolerate being ruled by them. Our own Revolution demonstrated this. It was the presence of British troops in Boston that triggered the American Revolution, and French troops in Indochina and Algeria, the Russians in Afghanistan, the Germans in Greece and Yugoslavia, the British in Palestine that triggered all those insurgencies.

So, although Generals Patraeus and Amos wrote a very good study--it's recently been published by the American Army--on the techniques of counter-insurgency--incidentally, the Army which loves--pardon me, sir, for teasing you about this--but loves acronyms, the acronym for counter-insurgency is COIN--they dodge the central issue: They fail to address the issue of nationalism. We can't simply flip the coin, if you'll pardon my teasing about this. So, when the main objective, getting us out, is held to be by at least 80 percent of the Iraqis, when that's accomplished, they won't keep on sacrificing to support the combatants.

The fundamental fact was laid out in 1937 by that great practitioner of guerrilla warfare Mao Tse Tung. He said that people were like water; without the support of the water, the combatants, who are like fish, cannot survive. In Algeria, Greece, Ireland--that is, Eire--the Philippines and other insurgencies, that's what happened. Then the remnants of the guerrilla forces are suppressed with public approval, by their own people.

President De Valera did that in Ireland. President Bella did it in Algeria. President Tito did it in Yugoslavia. Foreigners, no matter how strong they are, cannot accomplish their task, but natives can and usually do.

The second thing that is raised as an objection to our position is, should we not wait until Iraq becomes stable before we leave? The history of insurgencies demonstrates that stability cannot be achieved before sovereignty. The order must be reversed to succeed. Only when people believe that they have accomplished that basic objective, they're willing to put down their arms. The Iraqis, both the Shi'ias and the Sunnis, the Arabs and the Kurds, recognize that, for better or for worse, Iraq is not truly independent today. President Bush's speech on Wednesday made this crystal clear. Here merely confirmed what our actions and statements have shown over the past 4 years.

The third thing is, how can we help Iraq make the transition from occupation to full

independence? There are several pre-conditions and they all will sound very familiar to all of you or everybody in this audience. No society can survive as a coherent unit with an unemployment rate of up to 50 percent. So, we have urged that, instead of spending \$2.2 billion to create a useless and dangerous new army, which in the past has been the source of dictatorships, we need to create--we need to change the army into something comparable to our development corps, the Corps of Engineers, that can build the infrastructure on the basis of which the Iraqi economy can be restarted and unemployment diminished.

Experience in other insurgencies indicates that there will be a period of chaos following the withdrawal of foreign forces. We've not been able to prevent that with roughly 150,000 of our soldiers and 50,000 or so foreign mercenaries. We believe that the withdrawal of American force will diminish and shorten the period of chaos, but during it, we have a program to help that process. We urge that a non-American multinational, probably

Muslim, stability force be hired by the Iraq government for a limited period to prevent the rise of warlordism, as we have seen in Afghanistan, and crime--not just to fight the insurgency.

Help must be given to encourage the return to Iraq of its most precious assets: the skilled men and women--doctors, nurses, teachers, scientists, technicians, and others--over a million of whom have now fled the country. Assistance must also be given to strengthen what you might think of as the civic capacity of Iraqi society through the training and encouragement of judges, lawyers, trade union officials, professional societies of doctors, engineers, lawyers, et cetera.

We did this with great success following the Second World War in Europe, and if we look at our own society, that's what really basically has made America great. We have a balance between the various components that make up this society so that they all can function vis-à-vis one another, balance one another off, and to some degree work together to create the things we need. Only if

these civic grassroots organizations prosper can we hope that Iraq will again become a stable society.

Now I want to turn briefly to a warning or two.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: General, can you talk more into the microphone?

DR. POLK: I'm sorry.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Bring the microphone to you. You don't have to go to it.

DR. POLK: You have to get closer if you're going to kick me, now. (Laughter)

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Well, I'm kicking you from here.

DR. POLK: My warning is that we should beware of half measures. Compromise always sounds very statesmanlike and, incidentally, of course protects reputations, but taking firm, clear action seems precipitous, dangerous, radical, et cetera. Asking for more time seems sensible--a few thousand more troops, another \$50 or so billion to stay the course, just give us a bit more time. That's what we did in Vietnam after the Tet Offensive, but remember that in the 4 years of Nixon's failure to

face the reality of our failure in Vietnam, we suffered an additional 21,000 American casualties-- almost as many as during the Johnson Administration's war.

So, we predict that if we do as President Bush asks, we will be saying to one another, a few months' time from now when another thousand or so Americans service men and women have been killed, 5,000 or 10,000 more end up in our veterans' hospitals and we wasted \$50 billion or so, why didn't we face reality in January?

Finally, let us be frank. Iraq is not the end. Unfortunately, as Senator McGovern pointed out, we don't seem to learn these lessons very well. As one of leading neo-conservatives wrote, the long war, which they have called it, may last for 40 or more years, and estimates have been made to predict that the cost will be upwards of \$17 trillion. And as the Chinese proverb put it a long time ago, every journey of 10,000 miles begins with a single step.

Mr. Bush suggests that we are considering the

next step. Indeed, we may already have taken it in Afghanistan and are now taking it in Somalia. They are very similar, many political problems for us, and to them we have no real answers but military force which, we should have learned by now, doesn't work.

Somalia, the latest step, is a particularly glaring example. It would be amusing if it were not so tragic. What most of us know about Somalia comes from the movie "Black Hawk Down." In that particularly explosive film, you will remember that our brave young men went in to beat the bad guys, the vicious warlords who were looting, raping, and killing their own people. The film opens with a gruesome scene of the warlords doing these horrible things. Then our troops try to stop them, but they suddenly find that the whole population is against them. We give up and get out, taunted by the very people we thought we were there to save. And then what happened? The Somalis created their own movement, not one that we like and not an attractive one, not one under, frankly, which I

would like to live, but their own movement to run the warlords out of town. They succeeded, but now we've brought back the warlords, the very people we went into Somalia to suppress, in order to chase out the religious fundamentalists.

We can see much the same thing in Afghanistan. The warlords there, who now control most of the country except for downtown Kabul, are so fed up with the warlords that they're welcoming back the Taliban.

The new American counter-insurgency doctrine is very good technically, but it doesn't address the central issue: nationalism. Military force is not an answer. We are not welcome and cannot do more than exhaust ourselves and make more enemies by our current policy.

Iran is different from Somalia or Iraq, but Iran is an intensely nationalistic country. It regards America as a bully and fears that we will seek to "regime-change" it. It can quote our government, proving this. We are very worried about its having nuclear weapons. We should be.

Nuclear weapons anywhere are a danger to people everywhere. But the way to be sure that the Iranians will do all in their power to get them is to threaten to invade them. The way to get them to stop is to work for nuclear arms control and back off from our threats of pre-emptive military action.

So, I end on a note that I think you will find perhaps important and I believe will cheer you up somewhat. I want to bring you a good piece of news. I've managed to get my hands on a very secret document. The government has decided to get out of Afghanistan. I can't directly quote the document because the code would be cracked, but I will paraphrase it. It goes as follows: "We will leave it to the Afghans themselves to create a government amidst the anarchy. To force a sovereign upon a reluctant people would be inconsistent with the policy and principles of our government. The enormous expenditure required for the support of a large military force in a false military position at a distance from ourselves will

no longer arrest every measure for the improvement of the country and the people."

Unfortunately, there's just one problem with this highly sensitive document. It was produced not in the administration of our president, but in the time of our tenth president. The date was January 10, 1842. (Laughter) And the government was that of Great Britain.

Thank you. (Applause)

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: General Odom?

GENERAL ODOM: Well, thank you, Representative Woolsey, for allowing me to participate in this panel. I did not come with a prepared statement, but I will respond to what I've heard and add a few points.

I would like to commend everything I've heard from Senator McGovern and Professor Polk about what they've said about their book. I'm very much compelled by it. I want to add a technical point or two about counter-insurgency and then go on to a larger, overall perspective for you.

When I was involved--and you should know that

I'm not just talking about this academically. In Vietnam, I was a planner for pacification and development for a year, and we did a great number of assessments of how we were doing in training troops there and how these programs for civil development went on. So, you know, I've had a hands-on view of that. And I also was a planner in the Carter Administration, the NSC, for Dr. Brzezinski, when we developed the Persian Gulf Security Framework after the fall of the Shah. And the CENTCOM and those organizations and much of the structure that was built there was put in place by President Carter before he left office. And I want to bring that background to this too.

Now, on counter-insurgency, I feel sorry for my military colleagues. They are now repeating another phase of the cottage industry of counter-insurgency. The last one was in 1961 to 1963 or '64 or on up through the sixties at Fort Bragg, where the JFK School for Counter-insurgency was set up. And if you look back, we've had other periods of counter-insurgency. The Marines have a "Little

Wars" book, which they think is the solution to counter-insurgency.

After my Vietnam experience, and watching and being involved in the intelligence side of our support for the governments in El Salvador and the Philippines, but not much support for the Guatemalan governments to 1980, I decided to do a book which I called *On Internal War*. And when you start talking about counter-insurgency, you are absolutely ignoring the central thing that Professor Polk was talking about, and I'll say it in a little different direction: You cannot consolidate militarily before you consolidate politically. If there's no political consolidation, there's no way for soldiers to be sure they want to commit their loyalties to any particular commander. My term for this is "colonialism by ventriloquy." We come in and train these people up. We're not like the British, the French, where we've taken direct colonial control, so we pay them to say what we want them to do, and they say it and they don't do it.

The other thing about colonialism by ventriloquy is that my definition of a war, watching it in Vietnam and watching it elsewhere-- in Vietnam, I discovered one day that research had shown that the government of South Vietnam was collecting probably no more than 10 percent of its tax base. How was it deriving revenues to govern the country? It had turned the United States into its tax base, and the V.C., the Viet Cong, had come in and set up village organizations where they were collecting the taxes.

So, an internal war is really about who's going to tax and raise the resources. If you can tax, you can rule; if you can't tax, you can't rule. Now, I don't see much discussion of that issue in Iraq. Rather than taxation, the game there is to get control of the oil resources, and there won't be peace there until somebody takes them over by force and owns them indisputably. And that's going to be the crux. It's not going to be what makes sense for a constitution or another sort of government. And the poor military is left to kind

of pretend that it can build, put a roof on a house without any foundation, without any walls up. And that's what a counter-insurgency amounts to.

Now, I think a lot of the U.S. military understand that, but they're constrained. When you're in uniform, you have to act within the policy. And I feel very sorry for General Patraeus. He's a very intelligent man, and I think he will do about as effective a job in trying to make this work as anybody possible. But I would not bet much money on the outcome. Now, so much for the insurgency there.

Let me go back and make three points I would use if I were you on thinking about how to go forward on this. I've been famous or infamous, depending on your viewpoint, for writing articles called "Cut and Run" or "How to Cut and Run." My old boss in the White House, Dr. Brzezinski, has suggested that that was not a politically astute answer. He's probably right. I'm not very politically astute, but it does get people's attention, and you need to get their attention

before you can get them to recognize some realities that we can't get around. So, it's that purpose that I've used that sharp, attention-getting title.

And the first reality is we can't prevent the turmoil and the killing. I don't disagree with the measures that have been suggested here to try to moderate it, make it less. But we are the cause, and the best thing we can do to let it die down earlier is to leave. While we're there perpetuating this--the key thing to remember--we are strategically and diplomatically paralyzed. We cannot get allies to help us out. The precondition for a strategy, for a new strategy, is to get out first. Once we start leaving, other countries will start paying attention.

The aftermath is going to be far more devastating for the countries around Iraq than they will be for the United States. I think the Europeans will wake up to the fact that they will also be more devastating for Europe than they will be for the U.S. Russia knows they will be devastating because the Al Qaeda cadres and others

will head north after we get out. That's the next one they want to take on.

So, by getting out, we free ourselves up and give us the latitude to develop a larger strategy for the region. So, that's my second point.

Now, the third point is cutting and running does not mean leaving the region, in my view. It means designing a new strategy to defend and perpetuate U.S. interests in this region. Forgive me a brief history lesson here, one that I had to learn in dealing with the Persian Gulf Security Framework for 2 and a half years in the Carter Administration. I didn't know much about this region. When I look back, it seemed to me that there was not only the Arab-Israeli quarrel that greatly defined the politics of the region, but also the Iranian-Arab quarrel. That one is over. And it's very serious, and if you remember that time, we were always trying to balance both. We had what I call a double strategy--"double-straddle strategy." We kept a foot in all three camps. Now, all three sides tried to pull our legs out now

and then. It was not in their interests for us to succeed at that. They may tactically have thought that, but strategically it would be a disaster. When the Shah fell, we lost our footing in Iran. Balancing, keeping a regional balance of power and regional stability was going to require projecting a military power until we could establish relations, better relations, with Iran. As long as we could keep this double strategy position, the military requirements for regional stability were fairly small. So, we saw, at that point, in the long run, getting out of this box was to re-establish that.

I think today regional stability should be the war aim, not victory in Iraq. We've got the wrong war aim. Our war in Iraq serves primarily the interests of Al Qaeda and Iran. It does not serve the U.S. interest. My answer to the President, no question, would be, Why do you want to continue to pursue, with more U.S. troops, Iranian and Al Qaeda interests? Or as General Goodpasture used to say-- he was a staff secretary to Eisenhower for 6 years--

-the first step for getting out of a hole was to stop digging. (Laughter)

I think until you recognize that's why you've got get out, no matter what the price is, you cannot lower that price; you only raise it by staying in no matter what the aftermath is.

So then, if we take that as the goal and we get out, I think we can stimulate interest in U.S.-led diplomacy. Let me suggest how I think that will be crystallized. If we ask Iran and Syrian to come to some sort of meeting today, why should they come? They're enjoying our pain. They have no incentive to cooperate. When we start getting out, things change. They will want to come because they'll want to have a say. Iran does not want instability on its western border. A lot of other people around there don't want that kind of instability. None of them can convene a meeting to which others will come. They will--maybe they don't like us, but we will be the least bad alternative to convene those things.

The Europeans, if they want to do something

about this, to go in and form a strategy, create a strategy to stabilize the larger region--who in Europe is going to lead it? The Germans? The French? The British? The distinguishing thing about Europe, it had never been able to allow one country to lead the continent. They will, reluctantly--no matter how much they're irritated with us--soon be begging us to come back and take a role. And we can play that role if we go back with a certain amount of humility, having faced up the reality and shown that we can make a tactical retreat in order to redesign and have a winning strategy.

So, when the President challenges you to have a plan, my first answer would be to say, "Well, you and the Vice President retire and then we'll make Representative Woolsey the president" (Applause) "and we will have the obligation to do it, but until then we're going to give you some unsolicited advice. And the unsolicited advice is that you're pursuing the wrong war aim. Regional stability is what we want, and you are undermining it. Regional

stability cannot be achieved until you get out of Iraq and gain some, restore some respect and willingness to cooperate on the part of allies."

So, those are the three things I've said. You can't let yourself be trapped by this argument, "Oh, think how terrible it will be in Iraq." Of course, it's going to be terrible, Mr. Bush. You made that inexorably the case. If you've just shot a man and you say, "Oh, I can't afford to have committed murder"--he hasn't quite died; he's bleeding to death, what do you do? Fire two more rounds in him? That's what it seems to me going forward is. So, you have to psychologically get past that.

And the second is to realize getting out frees us up strategically, diplomatically, in a way that we can design a new strategy. There's no way to offer a new strategy until you've done that.

And then third, the only thing you can do there is throw out a general approach by defining what the goal ought to be and asking other people to help us, well having acknowledged that the U.S.

cannot do this alone.

Let me may end by saying I think we've made the region much more insecure for any country we have good relations with or we have any kind of what could be called an "alliance" there. That's not only Israel, but Saudi Arabia, the countries on the Persian Gulf. So, the task of maintaining that stability is going to require a considerable and wise U.S. deployment of troops there.

So, rather than sitting back and being afraid to attack this war because you're going be called soft on defense, I'd say, "You people don't know how to use force." We're not against using force. We believe in using in for our interest to win, not to support our opponents.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Congressman Jack Murtha, thank you for joining us.

CONGRESSMAN MURTHA: Yeah.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: And you are the first member of Congress to respond. (Applause)

CONGRESSMAN MURTHA: Let me just say a couple

words. I said a year ago this policy was a failure wrapped in illusion, and I think everything since that time has proven it. These three gentlemen, I'm honored to be here with them. They're way ahead of me. I'm a little slow. I voted for this resolution to go to war, and it took me longer than it should have--everybody on this panel is way ahead of me. Everybody saw that this was a mistake long before I did, and many people voted against the resolution because they didn't trust what was going to happen in the war.

But we now we've got to face what can do now. I think what General Odom said is absolutely right. Stability in that area is the key, and I think all four of us agree with that. And I don't think you have stability by our troops being in Iraq, and when I called for redeployment of our troops, I think it was absolutely essential, the first step in establishing stability.

Now, what can we do in the appropriation process? We're going to everything we can to present to the Congress a plan that helps with the

stability. For instance, what other problems do we have? We have a problem with the Abu Ghraib. That was such a disaster, and I think it ought to be closed. I think we have a problem with Guantánamo Bay, and I think that prison ought to be closed there. (Applause)

We have no strategic reserve in this country today. All the units that are in the United States, except for the two being deployed, do not have the readiness level they should have to be deployed. We're going to be sending troops back before they have finished their cycle of 1-year retraining. We're going to be extending people who have been in the war zone, in this intensive war, longer than they should have been.

And so, I believe we need--before we send more troops in--we need to stop this increase in the number of troops by eliminating the surge, by putting restrictions on no permanent bases in Iraq--all the things that many of you suggested I hope to present to the subcommittee and it will be part of the subcommittee's deliberations. And if we get

to supplemental in the 5th of February, as we anticipate, it will give us an opportunity to have extensive hearings about all aspects--the contractors over there, the problems that they have had, the fact that it hasn't worked well--and we'll be able to put restrictions on. And the thing about it is, if he wants to veto the bill, he won't have any money. So, we've got to talk about a \$99.7 billion bill which is going to be sent over to us that we'll have to address. And I'm hopeful, within a month, we'll be able to address that in a way that we can come to some reasonable stability in the Middle East.

I am absolutely convinced the first step to stability is to redeploy our troops out of Iraq and to re-establish our credibility by working with our allies. I said a year ago--2 years ago--Nancy Pelosi and I had a news conference and we said, Mr. President, we to Iraq-itize. We need to internationalize and energize. In other words, we need to put people to work. We need to get the international community involved, and we'll let the

Iraqis take over. They're going in that direction, but they're going the wrong way. Putting more troops in piecemeal will not solve this problem.

So, I feel very strongly about this, and I think the Congress--I spoke; that's one thing. But the public spoke in their election, and they anticipate something needs to be done, and I'm convinced the Congress of the United States will do that. (Applause)

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Thank you, Panel. Now, I have--one thing I want to remind people: There's coffee in the back of the room. Have it.

I'd like to introduce somebody who's in the room. Former Congressman Jim Symington from Missouri is here. Thank you for coming.
(Applause)

And now, my colleagues, we have to be out of this room by 11:30. So, we're going to--in the order that you arrive, and I will call out that order if--many have left already--but one question each or one statement each, and that'll be it. You'll have a minute each. And then the panel can

respond.

So, here's the order, and a lot of these folks have left already.

Mr. McGovern from Massachusetts--oh, no--yes. McGovern from Massachusetts; Mr. Hare from Illinois; Mr. Tierney from Massachusetts; Yvette Clarke from New York; Diane Watson, California; Tom Udall, New Mexico; Jim McDermott, Washington State; Mr. McNerney, California; Mr. Pastor, Arizona; Mr. Conyers, Michigan; Mr. Nadler, New York; Mr. Moran, Virginia; Mr. Kucinich, Ohio; Ms. Jackson Lee, Texas; Ms. Kaptur, Ohio; Ms. Brown, Florida; and Mr. Ellison, Congressman Ellison, Minnesota.

So, I'll call your name, and I'll start crossing off people who aren't here. Mr. McGovern has left, so we will start with you, Mr. Tierney.

CONGRESSMAN TIERNEY: Thank you (off microphone)

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: That doesn't work, remember?

CONGRESSMAN TIERNEY: (Off microphone)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Push the button.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: No, you have to go down to the next one.

CONGRESSMAN TIERNEY: Being from Massachusetts, Senator, you weren't surprised that I moved to the left to talk to you--

SENATOR MCGOVERN: (off microphone)

CONGRESSMAN TIERNEY: --on this. We've had the pleasure before, and I want to thank all of our witnesses for their testimony here today, thank all of my colleagues, obviously, for their efforts in this regard.

Professor Polk, I wanted to address my question to you, if I could, with your expertise on the Mid-East in particular. My question is, if we're talking about creating an Iraq or an Iraqi nation that could be supported internationally, is there in fact an Iraqi nation in the true sense of the word? Or is it really the Kurds in the north, who are seeking independence or total autonomy in one respect or another, and the rest of that area, that region, where Sunnis and Shi'ites may think that they are Iraqi in a sense, but have totally

different concepts of what an Iraq would be? And, in fact, some of the Shi-ites probably have a different concept, national versus sort of a broader, regional Arab or Shi'ite sort of concept on that. So, how is it that we feel that we can support their concept of Iraq as opposed to letting them determine whether or not in fact they want to be an Iraqi nation or they want to be sort of distinct areas in some other respect?

DR. POLK: Yes, sir. I think there's no way that we can force them to be what we want them to be. I think they would--a lot of them who I know well would recognize that it would be very dangerous for them to split apart. The Kurds in the north, who you mentioned, would certainly be immediately under threat by the Turks, who are very disturbed that they have a large Kurdish minority, and they believe that Kurdish minority is protected, paid for, helped, et cetera, by the Iraqi Kurds.

If we re-create the Balkans in Iraq, which some people, as you know, have advocated, I think we're

looking toward a very long future of instability and danger in Iraq. Whether the Iraqis decide to go that route or not is problematical. I think they're certainly moving in that direction now, and the longer we stay there, the more they're going to move in that direction. They're certainly trying to divide the country as rapidly as they possibly can. Unfortunately, the way the elections were held in 2005 promoted that division, and most of our policies have, unfortunately, pushed that too. There will be a long period in which they will shake out and try to figure out what to do. Every insurgency goes through that. We can't prevent it.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Congressman Hare? He's one of our new members, from Illinois.

CONGRESSMAN HARE: You can tell by the name tag that I'm new here. (Laughter)

I just want to say, first of all, Senator, I was very proud to vote for you for president in 1972, the first chance I got to vote--

SENATOR MCGOVERN: Thank you.

CONGRESSMAN HARE: --so, we were right then and

we are right now.

My question is, given the division between the Sunnis and the Shi'ites--which is an inherent part of the problem in Iraq and it should be, it seems to me part of the solution--how does you plan for the withdrawal satisfy the vested interests of the three predominant groups in Iraq and ultimately afford stability there?

SENATOR MCGOVERN: Well, my understanding is that--Professor Polk is the expert on this--that one thing the three disparate groups have in common is that they don't want foreigners running their country. The Kurds, the Shi'ites, and the Sunnis--they all agree that while they have differences among themselves, they have even sharper differences and more resistance to foreigners coming in to run the show for them, and that's perhaps the basic reason why this war hasn't worked, that we're bumping up against, as Professor Polk said, the force of nationalism.

I can understand that some are suggesting we split up that country into three portions, and that

if we can't do it, maybe they'll do it themselves. I don't think they will do that by themselves. I think that the one thing that has unified them is opposition to our presence in Iraq and that, if we get out of the way, they'll find methods of living together.

It may be difficult for a long time. I think one of the reasons the President doesn't want to face reality is that he probably is thinking, why not try to patch this mess over, that we've created, and dump it in the laps of the next president? More and more, I think that's his strategy, and I think it's regrettable.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: In this order: Clarke, Watson, McDermott. Congresswoman Clarke?

CONGRESSMAN CLARKE: Thank you very much, Congresswoman Woolsey.

Gentlemen, Senator, McGovern, Dr. Polk, General, my question goes to the issue of the supplemental funding that is required of the Congress to vote upon and some of the challenges that we face in, I guess, the paradigm that's set

there. There are those in the Congress who believe that the President is heading in the wrong direction, and certainly, you know, the thinking is, if we can in some way impact on the funding that goes towards this policy decision that he's made, we can somehow maneuver a change in direction. On the other hand, you don't want to send the wrong signal to our men and women who are serving, that we don't support them.

Could you give us your thinking around these supplemental funding requests and what you think could be an appropriate way of addressing the American people's concerns without compromising our troops on the ground?

SENATOR McGOVERN: People have been asking me for sometime, knowing that I'm a strong critic of sending our troops into Iraq, "Don't you support our troops?" And my answer is yes, a loud yes, and that's why I don't want us to desert them and leave them in this slaughterhouse in Iraq when most of our thoughtful military leaders know that war is unwinnable. We're not going to have a decisive

military victory.

You know, the answer that was always given during those long years of the Vietnam War, when the trouble was most intense, the answer always was "more troops" until we finally got 550,000 American troops in that tiny little strip of jungle. It makes me shudder, as an old bomber pilot, to know that we dropped more bombs on little Vietnam in that long war than were dropped by all the air forces of all the countries in World War II. It makes me shudder. And yet that, basically, is the patchwork the President came up with on Wednesday night: more troops, more billions of dollars, more time. Every day that we twiddle-twaddle over this business of extricating ourselves from a war we never should have entered, every day three or four young Americans die and several hundred more Iraqis.

So, we're not deserting our troops when we use, when Congress uses the power of the purse to say no more troops, no more funds except to finance the extrication and safety of our troops.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Dr. Polk, I believe you want to say something.

DR. POLK: Senator McGovern is too conservative in his own estimation of himself. He has come up with another answer that I'd like to force him to bring out to you.

One of the things that I think was the best point that was made in this book that we did together was his: He said what we must do is to show our troops that we're sufficiently concerned about what they've been through and how to get them readjusted to our society that we re-create something like the G.I. Bill of Rights. We should tell the troops-- (Applause)

One of the terrible tragedies of this war is that we are discovering, almost month after month, new categories of the cost of the war. As I've spelled out in a fact sheet we passed out to a lot of people, one of the things we didn't even know about until this last year was that something like 40,000 or 50,000 people had severe concussions, which means that the rest of their lives they're

going to have headaches, there's going to be memory loss, there's going to be inability to sleep. They're going to be, quite selfishly among other things, forced to go to veterans' hospitals, which runs up the cost of the war. In addition to that, we have about the same number of people who have severe psychiatric problems as we've learned about the Vietnam War. We have twenty-some-odd-thousand people who've been wounded, about half of whom have been so seriously wounded that they'll never be able to readjust to this society.

What we need to do is to tell the troops that we do care tremendously about them, and what we want to help them to do is to come back to reality, to come back to our society.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Thank you. Watson, McDermott, Conyers. In that order.

CONGRESSWOMAN WATSON: (Inaudible)

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Diane, do you want to come and use this microphone? That one's not working. Or try that one down there. Try the one down there. We know this one works, and that one.

I repeat: This is the room--the only room the Democrats had for 6 years. (Laughter)

SENATOR McGOVERN: I wondered why it was sometimes hard to hear the Democratic dissent. (Laughter and applause)

CONGRESSWOMAN WATSON: I want to thank also the three gentlemen for their sage input. I am just sorry that the person with the mega-microphone is not listening.

As I look at the recent developments, I have learned that we have been instrumental in getting the Iraqi Parliament to consider a bill that would give 75 percent of their proceeds from oil for 30 years to American contractors. Also, day before yesterday, I heard that we went in and we stormed one of their consulates in Kurdistan and it was the Iranian consulate there.

So, two things come to mind: that we are being used as a country and that this administration has perpetrated a scheme. They really want to go into Iran. I don't think anyone has ever forgotten the "Axis of Evil": Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. One

down: Iraq. So, we're slipping in, distracting all of us, at the same time the President was making his statement on the surge, we go in, we invade, and we take five hostages, prisoners, detainees--I don't know what you call them.

What I'd like to ask of the panel is, are we doing nation-building in Iraq, occupation, or are we perpetrating a scheme to take over and control the Middle East for the reason of oil revenues or whatever. Would you respond, please? (Applause)

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: General Odom, you wanted to say something last time. Would you like to respond first or--

GENERAL ODOM: Yes, I will. I was just going to make one point on supporting the troops. You could have a slogan, a program, to support the troops or bringing them home. I've talked to a number of young officers and enlisted people lately, and I think you would find, if you had a referendum, on how you could best help them out there, you'd probably have about 95 percent of them vote to come home. So, I don't think you ought to

be timid about--you shouldn't let somebody get away with saying you're not supporting the troops, you know, because you don't put more money out here to keep them involved where more of them die without much of a prospect of doing anything that's in our interests.

I would like to comment on this point that was just made about the "Axis of Evil" and expanding the war. I, too, am very worried that the administration's strategy is to get us involved in a war with Iran. And I read an article by a distinguished neo-con, Joshua Muravchik, and the American Enterprise Institute, called "Operation Comeback," for the neo-cons, and its two key points were to bomb Iran and to get a strong supporter of the war, Senator Lieberman, nominated to the presidency.

So, I think you should be suspicious of that, and I think you should be suspicious of incidents that are being created to generate public support to back that, because it can be seen as kind of another 9/11 or one more terrorist incident, et

cetera. I also would not rule out that terrorist incidences can be perpetrated by other than the terrorists. So, yes, I think you really need to start laying down markers about spreading this.

Furthermore, I think you have--the strongest argument for not doing this is the administration's non-proliferation policy is the strongest incentive for proliferation of anything we've ever done.

(Applause) If a foreign government told us not to get nuclear weapons or that we're going to change our regime, what would we do? We would build nuclear weapons as fast as was humanly possible. So, we now have a strategy. Remember I mentioned regional stability should be our aim. Our policy not only toward Iran, but also toward North Korea is destabilizing the regions. We are pursuing that policy at the expense of what's really in our interests. So, you've got to not be knee-jerk about nuclear proliferation.

One point that's almost certain: Now, at this stage of the game, preventing Iran and North Korea from having nuclear weapons is not an option. You

can use all the sticks you want to, but you won't get any positive result. You should consider creating concessions on that to see if you could buy something.

I have suggested, if you look at the common interest between the U.S. and Iraq and if you look at the record of their supporting us in Afghanistan, they detest Al Qaeda. They detest the Taliban. They were delighted to see us overthrow Saddam. They want to sell oil. They want to buy our oil production technology. We have two issues with them: the Hezbollah in southern Lebanon and the nuclear issue. If you were to write the nuclear issue off the table, I think a rapprochement with Iran would not come soon or be raised to the normalization of embassy level, but objective cooperation under the table could be begun rather shortly.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Gentlemen, can we move on? Are you all right with that?

All right. McDermott, Conyers, and Nadler.

CONGRESSMAN McDERMOTT: Can you hear me?

I want to assure you, Senator, that we are in this room because of the election in November. We were in the basement before the election.

(Laughter) So, we're doing a little bit better.

My question really goes back to Ms. Watson's question around oil because it seems to me that the United States has a foreign policy that, over and over again, has picked a despot some place and backed them as long as they did whatever we wanted from them. We threw out Mossadegh and put in the Shah. You could go through Central America--there are lots of examples of this behavior.

And it seems like the oil in Iraq is now the central issue. If you read the newspapers in Britain, that's all they're talking about, is the oil law which they are trying to push through the Maliki-controlled government. Now, I can understand why we're backing Maliki, on one hand, if we want oil; but on the other hand, I have trouble because he's controlled from Iran. So, here we are backing an Iran-backed government and giving them control and giving them our support.

We're sending--the President's sending 20,000 people to do ethnic--or, excuse me--sectarian cleansing in Baghdad of Sunnis, in exchange for "give us this law around oil that gives us 70 percent of the profits."

Now, it seems to--explain how that's come to be. Has it always been about oil, but it's just been below the radar screen? Or is this some--is there some understanding I'm missing about what's going on here?

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Senator?

SENATOR MCGOVERN: Congressman, I don't know exactly what percentage of the administration's interest is in oil and what percentage in other factors, but I would try to answer your question with another question: Is there anybody in this room that thinks we would have spent \$500 billion going to war in Iraq and sacrificed 3,000 of our best young people if Iraq had been producing watermelons instead of oil? (Applause)

CONGRESSMAN McDERMOTT: It's a question well put, and the question is, why has the American

people--how have the American people had this kept from their view, that they're really sacrificing blood for oil? Is it simply everybody's so addicted to oil in this country that they don't care where it comes from or what we have to pay for it?

SENATOR McGOVERN: How much more intelligent and commonsensical it would have been if, instead of spending \$500 billion tearing up a country and killing people, we had invested that \$500 billion in commonsense development of alternative sources of energy so that we wouldn't be so heavily dependent on Middle East oil and on burning a fuel that pollutes the atmosphere?

This administration, it seems to me, has had its priorities wrong from the very beginning, and maybe one of the reasons for that is that we--I doubt if we've ever had a president and vice president more drenched in oil than the two that have been running our country for the last 6 years.

CONGRESSMAN McDERMOTT: Thank you.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Thank you, Senator. I

have to remind members that if everybody's going to get to speak, you only get a minute. The answers can be longer because that's why these gentlemen are here.

Conyers, Nadler, Kucinich.

CONGRESSMAN CONYERS: I'm so glad that we're meeting today because we're in the era of the Martin Luther King birthday celebration, and as well-known as Martin Luther King is for fighting for an end to discrimination and racism, he was our foremost exponent for peace and non-violence and alternatives to war. We have a rally coming up in January, at the end of the month, in Washington. Don't we have an obligation to inspire our citizens, as we come into this period, by determining that we must cut off the funds? The issue, the first issue that we will be confronted with in Congress is to cut off the funds or not to cut off the funds by using other kinds of protest.

And so, it seems to me that those progressives and members of Congress that realize that this has to happen and the citizens, moving together, will

inspire each other to make some very important moves between now and February when these discussions begin.

I'd like any of your comments about this relationship of citizen action and the Congress.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Dr. Polk?

DR. POLK: Let me just warn you once more about another thing that is, I don't think, too well known: A number of billions of dollars disappeared in Iraq. We don't know what happened to them, but one particular fund was \$19 billion, which was turned over during the Bremer Administration by the United Nations. I am told, by some of our better journalists, that an awful lot of the money that you would like to cut off from Iraq the administration already has in its back pocket. And I think one has to be very careful to figure how much real leverage you have in this. I think that the issue is a fundamentally important one, and you're dead right about it, but I think that we have to somehow find a way that's more than just a resolution that says no more money, because there

is an awful lot of money sloshing around.

The amount of corruption that has come out of the Iraq War is another thing we haven't really discussed here, but I believe it's fair to say that, in comparison to Vietnam, as bad as that was in many ways, when I was in the government during the Vietnam War, we knew that Americans were honest. We knew that when you gave a sack of grain to an American official to deliver to a village, it got there. Today, I am told by people who profess to know more than I do about it, that there is a tremendous amount of corruption, and that corruption could go all the way through our system and it could be something that we pay for, for a generation ahead.

Some way, we've got to find, we've got to return to an accountability of our citizenry to our government and our government to our citizens.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Thank you. Nadler, Kucinich, Jackson Lee.

CONGRESSMAN NADLER: Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and let me say it's an honor to be

here with this distinguished panel. The second presidential campaign I participated in was Senator McGovern's campaign a few years ago.

Let me say that I agree with Congressman Conyers. We are going to be considering, apparently next week, first the Senate, then in the House, non-binding resolutions against the escalation. My own opinion is that this president is determined that no matter what happens, we will not lose Iraq on his watch and he's going to keep the war going until his successor takes office so the inevitable can happen on his successor's watch, and that if we want to lose a lot more troops to death and dismemberment, and a lot more money, that's a fine way to go about it, but that it's our responsibility not to permit that.

We were also told that there is probably 9 or 10 months' worth of funding sloshing around, as you put it.

So, let me ask--the question is, why shouldn't we, and I think we should, but why shouldn't we have a bill or an amendment to the supplemental

budget that says no funds appropriated, not just in this supplemental, but no funds appropriated heretofore or now can be spent except for force protection and for withdrawing the troops on a timetable, as set forth herein, and for diplomacy and for economic reconstruction. In other words, you say that-- (Applause)

In other words, the political thing against cutting off the funds is you're abandoning the troops, they won't have the armor, et cetera. So, you say, here's the funds, but you limit the use: only for force protection, not for aggressive patrolling, search-and-destroy missions, et cetera. Force protection while you're getting out. You got to get out on the following timetable, and you can also spend it on diplomacy and reconstruction.

SENATOR McGOVERN: I'd endorse that all the way.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Thank you. General Odom?

GENERAL ODOM: I would not oppose it. I would not oppose it.

CONGRESSMAN WOOLSEY: Uh-huh. Well--

GENERAL ODOM: I'd love to see what happens if you do it. (Laughter)

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Thank you.

CONGRESSMAN NADLER: Thank you.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Kucinich, Corrine Brown, Keith Ellison. In that order.

CONGRESSMAN KUCINICH: In the last few weeks, we have seen the debate about Iraq intensify in this Congress. The testimony today continues to raise serious questions about whether or not this president and this vice president have kept their oaths of office to defend the Constitution of the United States. There are serious questions of governance being raised here. There are serious constitutional questions that only a Congress which steps up to its responsibility as a co-equal branch of government and puts an end to this war will resolve. (Applause)

Now, Senator McGovern, if the President of the United States were to use money from that supplemental which, at this point, unfortunately,

some of our Democratic leaders seem ready to approve, and if you were to use that money to prosecute a war against Iran, what do you think should be the constitutional implications of such presidential action?

SENATOR McGOVERN: Well, it would seem to be an impeachable offense. (Applause)

CONGRESSMAN KUCINICH: I want--I want to--

SENATOR McGOVERN: Let me just say, I wasn't one of those out in front calling for the impeachment of President Nixon, and my own preference would be if he could come back to life, it would be a big improvement over the present situation. (Laughter and applause) But I doubt that there's an atmosphere in this country for impeachment. I haven't suggested that anywhere, and I don't think that's the course we ought to be thinking about now.

I think the course that the Congressman described here, about closing off all the loopholes in the expenditure, any more funds, the supplemental or any other funds for the continuance

of the escalation of this war in Iraq, that we ought to take that route. Let's try that first, and then there'd be plenty of time to talk about impeachment. Impeachment also could drag on, month after month.

CONGRESSMAN KUCINICH: Yeah, I would tend to agree with you, and I'd also say that only the Congress stepping up to its constitutional responsibility is going to rescue this president from himself.

SENATOR MCGOVERN: Hmm-mm. Well, the constitutional responsibility--that would be the power of the purse that Congress has not yet used, and it has to think seriously about that.

Congressman, this little book that I, for some reason or other, I keep promoting (Laughter) here today, I think has a civilized, rational way of getting every American out of Iraq in a systematic way in the next 6 months. And if we could achieve that, it would be an enormous gain for our people, for our troops, and for the people of Iraq.

CONGRESSMAN KUCINICH: Thank you, Senator

McGovern, and I'm also going to give you a copy of my plan, which I think we have a lot of things in common. Thank you.

SENATOR McGOVERN: Yeah.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: I apologize. The order is Sheila Jackson Lee, Corrine Brown, Keith Ellison.

CONGRESSWOMAN JACKSON LEE: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and I thank both the Out of Iraq Caucus and the Progressive Caucus. And, gentlemen, you are patriots, each and every one of you.

I want to build on Congressman Conyers' point and believe that the American people should take to the streets. This is a time now that we unify and organize and express the participatory government that says, "Out of Iraq now."

My question is, is this an appropriate time to visit the constitutional premise that a declaration of war should be done by the act of the Congress? I believe the resolution in the fall of 2002 was one that abused the process and gave too much power to this president (Applause) even though, of

course, he understands it's by law.

And, lastly, how can we--how can they represent themselves to be a conservative government when the entire military plan of survival that the President authored or spoke two days ago was under the direction of the Iraqi government? I was embarrassed when the President said, "This is what they told me they could do. This is what we're doing. We're doing Baghdad and nine districts." So, would you share with me how we can embarrass ourselves internationally that way and why it is a complete failure from my perspective? I thank the Chairs, and thank you, gentlemen.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: General?

GENERAL ODOM: If I understand your questions, it's why the President said that we would do this under Prime Minister Maliki?

CONGRESSWOMAN JACKSON-LEE: This was his plan, this nine-district plan, going door-to-door.

GENERAL ODOM: Well, I don't Prime Minister Maliki was enthusiastic to this plan.

CONGRESSWOMAN JACKSON-LEE: (Inaudible)

GENERAL ODOM: I mentioned earlier, in my opening remarks--

CONGRESSWOMAN JACKSON-LEE: (Inaudible)

GENERAL ODOM: --I think he's been sort of forced to do this. I don't think he wants any part of it. The reason he doesn't is that it would undercut some of the Shi'ite militia forces in Iraq, which he sees as his security. We're asking him to destroy his own base of support.

CONGRESSWOMAN JACKSON-LEE: Yes.

GENERAL ODOM: I think this is another example of colonialism by ventriloquy, a term I used earlier, where we pay him a couple billion dollars, and he says, okay, I'll say that. I doubt very seriously that he's going to do it. That's been our experience otherwise.

I do like the point that was just made about-- your point about declaration of war. It seems to me raising that issue as a warning about any action against Iran is very timely, very important to get into a discussion with the President about whether you're going to permit, in the Congress, any funds

to be used for that. In fact, I don't much about legislation, but if you could say no monies to be spent for that without coming back to you for a resolution for war would be a very prudent step to take.

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Thank you. Corrine Brown, Keith Ellison, Hilda Solis, and then I'll wrap it up.

CONGRESSWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Senator McGovern. It was very good seeing you here the other night at the preview shown of the film that will be shown on Martin Luther King's birthday, on the 15th, and I would encourage everybody to watch it, and you may want to mention something about the film.

In addition, having served on Veterans Affairs for 14 years, we are cutting veterans' programs and benefits at a time when more and more veterans are coming back. That is one way Congress can redirect funds.

In addition, when I listened to--and I did not vote for the war, by the way--but when I listened

to the President the other night, I got the impression that he was expanding the war, not just additional troops, but expanding where they're going and what they're doing without any discussion of the Congress.

And my question is that we've got our head in the lion's mouth and we're discussing how to get out of it, but as we discuss, as the American people discuss, the President is moving forward. What can we do? (Applause)

SENATOR MCGOVERN: Professor Polk and I are going to have to leave for an appearance before the National Press Club, but on this question of what Congress can do, I have long believed that we've got to get back to reasserting what the Constitution intended, that the war-making power resides in the Congress. The President can ask for a declaration of war, but it's up to the Congress to demand that request and then, on a roll-call vote, to decide whether we're going to war.

Can I just take a minute to give you the opinion on this question of perhaps our greatest

president, Abraham Lincoln. He said, in a letter to his law partner, William Herndon, written in 1848: "The provision of the Constitution giving the war-making power to Congress was dictated, as I understand it, by the following reasons: Kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in wars, pretending, generally if not always, that the good of the people was the object. This, our Constitutional Convention understood to be the most oppressive of all kingly oppressions, and they resolved to so frame the Constitution that no one man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us."

And, of course, Congresswoman, your comment about treating generously these young veterans who survive this war or their dependents should be at the top of our list as this war is brought to a conclusion, hopefully.

I'm an enormous beneficiary of the G.I. Bill of Rights, and I've always been grateful to the American people. They sent me all the way through to a Ph.D. at Northwestern University, and there's

no way I would be sitting here now as a former senator, longtime senator, and presidential nominee, had it not been for the G.I. Bill. I realize that's enough to convince some people that the G.I. Bill was a bad idea. (Laughter) But I'm grateful for it, and I hope we'll be at least as generous to these young people coming back from this mistaken war in Iraq.

I'm sorry. We have to go, but I guess duty--

CONGRESSWOMAN WOOLSEY: Well, what I'm going to say-- (Applause)

I have to apologize to members that haven't gotten to ask their questions.

I want to thank all three of you for being here. You have been so open. You are funny, Senator. You're wonderful. And you are so forward-thinking. We have learned a great deal.

And I want to thank my colleagues. You don't know this, but this is one of the largest forums ever in this Congress. So, thank you.

I want to thank the press for their interest.

And I want you to know that I'm working with

Barbara Lee and Maxine Waters, and we are putting together comprehensive legislation. And your plan, Senator and Professor Polk, will be front and center in that, and we will be introducing it next week.

(Applause)

(Whereupon, at 11:40 a.m., the forum concluded.)