

## THE “GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR”: WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED?

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### **CHAS. W. FREEMAN, JR.: president, Middle East Policy Council**

Yesterday was, of course, the seventh anniversary of the maiming of America in the 9/11 attacks of 2001. In some respects, we seem to have suffered a national nervous breakdown as a result. Certainly, we have been transformed, as anyone who tries to navigate an airport will quickly discover. And in many respects, our relationships with the outside world have been transformed, as we have reorganized much of our foreign policy around the issue of the so-called global war on terror. And yet, there is no consensus and no clear answer to quite a variety of questions. What is terrorism? Who are the terrorists of concern to us? Are there terrorists who are not of concern to us? Why are these people terrorists? How did they become terrorists? What is the right package of measures to deal with these terrorists? And seven years into it, what, if anything, have we learned about what works and what doesn't?

The public remains quite confused. Many people, including apparently candidates for high office, seem to believe that Saddam Hussein and the Iraqis are guilty of the 9/11 atrocities. Very large groups believe that the global war on terror is largely a failure. But there have been successes in it, if not as many as we would like. What are these successes and what do they tell us? I think it is remarkable that we don't know the answers to these questions clearly after seven years. We are in the midst of an election campaign in which there is no intelligent debate on any of these questions. But we anticipate an inauguration of a new president next January 20. And whoever that is will have an opportunity to pause and reflect on these issues and to press the reset button before charging into the future.

So today's session is, in a sense, in anticipation of such a moment of national reflection and the refashioning of policies that may be more effective.

**DOUGLAS MACGREGOR: lead partner, Potomac League, LLC**

I am going to try and stay at the strategic level and trip the light fantastic, if you will, as opposed to going down into the weeds. And perhaps I will also offer you a somewhat different interpretation of what I think we have managed to achieve strategically since 2001 from the one you are accustomed to hearing. I would argue that, first of all, our experience since 2001 demonstrates that the use of American military power — even against exceptionally weak adversaries, adversaries that have no effective armies, no air defenses, no navies, no air forces, no significant military technology — can be extremely costly and damaging. I don't think that comes up very much. And we hear a lot about the war on terror. We talk about the use of our armed forces and the damage that is being done to our armed forces. Nobody ever bothers to bring up the fact that these are probably the weakest enemies we have faced since we fought the Mexicans in the early part of the nineteenth century.

So what are the results of all of this? I would argue that in both Iraq and Afghanistan, American military action has produced very serious and negative consequences for American national-security interests. First, we have facilitated the expansion of Iranian regional strategic influence and power, not simply in Iraq, but across the Middle East. Second, Turkey is deeply alienated from the United States and increasingly from the West, with interesting strategic implications. I would also argue that Turkey, with the most powerful military establishment in the entire region — the one state that can actually project military power over its borders where it wants to — is actually moving quite close right now to Russia. If you watched carefully during the Georgian-Russian crisis, the Turks were extremely quiet, though they are NATO members and allied with the United States.

I would also argue that Pakistan's always-fragile cohesion has been seriously weakened. Discussions now about plunging U.S. forces into Pakistan are certainly not going to help. But Pakistan is truly the source of serious regional crisis and instability, and it has gotten much, much worse since we began operations in Afghanistan. And I might also point out something that is rarely mentioned, though I don't know why. I don't see much evidence that Israel's security has been improved or enhanced by anything that we have undertaken. That certainly is the view of my friends in the Israeli Defense Force. I think we ought to keep that in mind.

What have we learned from these various data points? The Muslim world does not want the United States to be its savior. That is lesson number one. They certainly do not want to be forcibly westernized through U.S. military occupation. Flooding Muslim countries with thousands of U.S. and British troops, who in the view of most Muslim Arabs are simply Christian Europeans in U.S. or British uniform, is a very bad idea. It has cost us not simply thousands of lives and damage to our force, but hundreds of billions of dollars.

The American military occupation in Iraq in particular, and increasingly in Afghanistan, also did something else for the enemies of not simply the United States, but the West in the Middle East. It presented them with an opportunity they would have otherwise never had, which is to directly attack American military power, to damage American military

prestige, to exhaust American military and economic resources. And they have done a superb job, in my estimation.

Keep in mind that our enemies in the Middle East have essentially paid for this kind of damage at very little cost to themselves — pennies compared with the hundreds of billions it has cost us to defend ourselves and to try and suppress this violence. And now that we are spending \$12 billion a month to maintain a government in Baghdad — a Shiite-dominated government that is effectively tied to, if not outright allied with, Tehran — we are also paying hundreds of millions of dollars to our former adversaries, the Sunni Muslim Arab insurgents — whom we were recently killing — not to shoot at us.

For those of you who may be wondering about the so-called success of the troop surge, I would argue that it had, if anything, a marginal impact. The real impact, what has really changed the equation with the Sunni population that we have been waging war against for the last five years, is the cash. We have simply paid more money to them than al-Qaeda could afford. We bought their cooperation. They now see us as a useful co-belligerent in their internal struggle for power against their enemies in the Baghdad government and the Kurds.

So winning is not really a very useful construct right now in the region. I am not sure that winning — at least in terms of talking about establishing Western-style democracy and governance — ever made any sense to begin with. I think damage control or damage limitation is about the best that you can hope for under the circumstances. I certainly am not here to advocate fighting a new war to reverse the strategic outcome in Iraq. And I am also not here to advocate adding more U.S. or British troops or anybody else’s troops to Afghanistan. The government in Kabul — in contrast to the one in Baghdad, which is strongly backed by Tehran — is really only backed by us. It is seen widely as our puppet. It is hopelessly corrupt and ineffective. Quite frankly, it is not worthy of our military support. This is one of the reasons that there is so much opposition inside Afghanistan. So I would argue that the problem in Afghanistan is not the Taliban’s resurgence; the Taliban’s resurgence is symptomatic of problems in Kabul.

Finally, in theory, we talk about national policy goals, particularly as far as foreign policy is concerned, as shaping military strategy. I think the real lesson from all of this in a strategic military sense is that strategic goals don’t really shape our military strategy at all. Our military strategy is shaped by the capability we have. If you have certain capabilities — in our case, a huge surplus of military power that we have had since 1991 — you tend to use what you have.

Then you assume that your military establishment will ultimately muddle through and prevail. You graft onto this an ideology that encourages people to believe we are facing some sort of monolithic Islamo-fascist enemy, that there are Islamo-fascist Wehrmachts and Red Armies springing up all across the Middle East, ready to pounce. You end up in Baghdad asking, what next? because ideology is not strategy.

Until we can set aside ideology and begin to look at concrete interests, until we understand the interests of the people who live in the region and what they do and do not want, we are going to continue to struggle. We are not going to have a great deal of success against the real enemy that we said we wanted to defeat in 2001: Islamist

fundamentalism, as expressed by our friend Bin Laden and his cohorts.

**AMB. FREEMAN:** I take from that the view that military means per se are not necessarily an appropriate, and certainly not an adequate, answer to the problems we confront. That the classification of Iraq, to the extent it has been classified, as opposed to stabilized, is more a function of a splurge than a surge, that capabilities rather than strategy are driving our campaigns. To the man who has only a hammer, everything looks like a nail. Ideology, whatever its merits, does not equate to strategy. As Sun Tzu advised, to succeed in warfare, one must know one's enemy and know oneself.

**MARVIN WEINBAUM: scholar in residence, Middle East Institute**

Former Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns is quoted as saying, "It is South Asia where the struggle against global terrorism will be decided." Afghanistan and Pakistan, of course, are what he had in mind. There is, I think, general agreement, whatever your views are on Iraq, that the United States got distracted. If our enemy from the beginning in fighting global terrorism was al-Qaeda, we were fighting in the wrong place. And in Afghanistan our policy makers undoubtedly underestimated the nature of the threat and the complexity of the challenge and what would it take, in terms of resources, to prevail, whatever that means.

To succeed, we must recognize that Afghanistan and Pakistan constitute one theater. The threats from terrorism in either country have implications for the other. Despite this, the United States has failed to develop a comprehensive strategy for the two countries or, indeed, for the region. Without a broader strategic approach we have been unable to grasp the full implications of our actions. Too frequently, for example, we have allowed U.S. military requirements in Afghanistan to drive our regional policies, with the result of our compromising democratic forces in Pakistan and subordinating our interests in nuclear nonproliferation. In both countries, the United States has also often created a false choice between democracy and security by not recognizing that improved security is not just attained through military means, but may require gaining public support through a more just governing system and improvement in people's lives.

We should understand that the challenges from terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan are broader than those posed by al-Qaeda. All elements share common objectives: to overthrow the pro-American governments in those countries and to remove the presence of U.S. and international forces. They seek to impose a rigid, doctrinaire brand of Islam and form a terrorist network with domestic, regional and, increasingly, global ambitions.

First of all, there is the Afghan Taliban, the original core group that formed in 1994 under the leadership of Mullah Omar. Much of that top command structure remains, located in Pakistan's Baluchistan Province, though a new generation of young Afghans recruited in Pakistan and Afghanistan has emerged as the foot soldiers in the current insurgency against the Kabul government. They are probably a movement of no more than 5,000 fighters. But inside Afghanistan, the Taliban finds ready allies. It is able to build its fighting force — believed as high as 20,000 — by drawing on a large number of people, notably ethnic Pashtuns in the country's south and east operating largely indepen-

dent of Mullah Omar’s leadership. What the Karzai government and the international community are fighting in Afghanistan is a spectrum of forces with various grievances against Kabul, as well as locally based power brokers and their militias, drug traffickers and simple criminal elements.

In addition to the Afghan Taliban, there are two other groups, formerly part of the mujahideen that fought against the Soviets and now are aligned against the Kabul government and ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] international forces under NATO command in Afghanistan. Under the new leadership of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and the Haqqani family — both groups with sanctuaries in Pakistan — they are perhaps the best-equipped and motivated forces in the insurgency. Very likely, Hekmatyar was behind the bombing at the Indian embassy that took place in August 2008.

In this network of extremists and terrorists, al-Qaeda is not so much a fighting force as a force multiplier. Numbering in the region no more than a few hundred Arabs from various countries, they provide training, technical expertise, some planning, motivation and ideological rigor and also, to some degree, financing. Some observers lump all foreigners in the Pakistan-Afghanistan tribal areas, including Chechens and Uzbek militants, as al-Qaeda.

Many have noted the increased sophistication of terrorists operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Much of the credit goes to al-Qaeda. It’s unmistakable that many of the means used have been imported from Iraq: notably the improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and use of suicide bombers. There have also been major changes in the tribal areas of Pakistan. The tribal belt has been transformed from a semi-autonomous region under the control of traditional leaders into an area held by radicalized mullahs. Previously a marginal figure in the society, the present-day local religious leader is a militant who has succeeded in replacing much of the former tribal leadership; more than 200 of them have been killed, and many more have fled. The mullahs command a force of mainly unemployed, uneducated young men who engage in the kind of violence previously unknown in tribal society.

Those radicalized young men who engage in suicide bombing have elsewhere, when studied, not usually come from the bottom ranks of the economic ladder but experience what is often called relative deprivation. That is, they have an education, but are frustrated in realizing their ambitions. In the tribal areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan, however, it is more often the case that underdevelopment and poverty explain the recruitment of suicide bombers and militants in general. And this region is indeed poor. Sixty percent of the population live below the poverty line. Seventeen percent are literate, and probably no more than 3 percent of women are literate. Of Pakistan’s development budget between 2002 and 2007, its tribal areas were allocated roughly 1 percent of the funds.

In Afghanistan, whose rural tribal regions are even more disadvantaged, many are motivated to join the Taliban as fighters simply because they are paid, usually paid more than the policemen and the soldiers who are fighting them. Additionally, these Afghans are attracted by the Taliban’s contention that they are fighting against outsiders, against occupation, and that Islam is under attack. They are made to feel that their honor and that of their family is at stake. In a tribal society, honor ranks as the most important value.

Although it is not ordinarily considered Islamic to kill innocents, violence is justified as the only option against those who accept the occupiers.

It is especially important to note that the Taliban insurgency has a different time horizon. Initially the Taliban were just intent upon staying in the game. They really did not expect to be able to have very many successes for some time. The idea was to wear down the NATO-led forces in the strong belief that international troops and international donors would under the pressures of an insurgency eventually tire of Afghanistan. In both Afghanistan and Pakistan, strategic calculations are made on the assumption that the United States, in particular, is unreliable, and its allies are weakly committed to the region. Over the last three years, during which we have seen the increased attacks by the Taliban, they have made considerable gains. The ambivalence they have created among the Afghan people is not because the society yearns for their return but is a function of the government and international community as having lost the faith of a public that had earlier welcomed the new government and international presence. We failed to deliver a post-Taliban peace dividend that provided good governance and basic justice along with security. As in Pakistan, there is the sense that the war on terrorism is not their war. The United States has succeeded in reinforcing the idea that it is a war against Islam by conflating it with military efforts in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East.

I will conclude by stating that, however difficult the military challenge in Afghanistan and the political challenges presented in Pakistan, the threats the United States faces are too great for us to turn our backs on the region, lest it become a playground for international terrorists. If either Afghanistan or a nuclear-armed Pakistan succumbs to radical forces, the other will be destabilized as well.

**AMB. FREEMAN:** Could it be the case that all terrorism, like all politics, is local and arises from factors that are peculiar to its place of origin but are kind of like occupation? One could look at the example of Israel in the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza or Lebanon or the Soviets in Afghanistan, followed by us in Afghanistan or in Iraq, and at least hypothesize that there may be something to that.

Second, is religion just a rationale rather than a cause of the difficulties we face? If so, our analysis needs to be redone. The Taliban were the innkeepers who ran the revolutionary flophouse from which al-Qaeda staged its attack on the United States. No Afghan did anything to the United States, so how is it that they have somehow become the enemy as opposed to an appropriate target for punishment, which we accomplished by throwing them from power? Why is it that we are now engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the Taliban?

Third, you and Colonel Macgregor mentioned that even if all terrorism is caused by local factors, it has transnational characteristics. A technique for developing an improvised explosive device rather quickly can be communicated to Afghanistan and even conceivably to Gaza. So what begins as a local phenomenon gets linked, just as we seem to link all these different areas ourselves and thereby appear to many Muslims as conducting a crusade against Islam rather than a series of struggles against violent anti-Americans.

Finally, if all these things have any validity, wouldn't it be conceivable to think analytically about al-Qaeda, for example, as representing a kind of parasite on foreign intervention, the struggle between great powers that arose, after all, in the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the American-, Saudi-, Chinese-, Egyptian- and Pakistani-managed counterattack on that Soviet struggle? We've seen al-Qaeda arise from nowhere in Iraq. It didn't exist in Iraq before we essentially created it. So wouldn't it be fair to say that this phenomenon is, in a sense, a parasite that depends on underlying violence of a different kind? These are hypotheses to be tested.

**ABDULLAH ANSARY: senior fellow, Homeland Security Policy Institute, George Washington University**

Obviously, we have learned that countering terrorism requires coordinated multilateral efforts that go well beyond operations to capture or kill terrorist leaders. It has become a “war of ideas.” Terrorists have crafted and disseminated a compelling narrative that resonates with audiences around the world, expanding and energizing their ranks. Their “center of gravity,” their source of strength, are these ideas and their ability to spread them.

Al-Qaeda propagates a message that combines dubious religious justifications with tales of an imaginary “clash of civilizations.” Muslims around the world are told by an impressive media infrastructure run by terrorists that it is their individual religious duty to take up arms against the West. Military force alone will never beat this narrative; in some cases, it simply makes the problem worse. As long as this narrative can be effectively propagated, it will draw in new converts to the terrorists' radical ideology. Going on the offensive against terrorists requires attacking their center of gravity, their narrative.

Policies that make use of all instruments, not just military, are therefore in high demand, and best practices and lessons learned must be identified and adopted. Governments are searching for ways to fight extremism and radicalization in innovative ways. To generate a sense of context, Saudi Arabia is one of the few countries where the fight against terrorism and extremism has yielded real success. It cannot be explained only by the effectiveness of its security measures, but also by its softer approach in tackling radical ideologies. After September 11, Saudi Arabia embarked on a very aggressive counterterrorism campaign: arresting and questioning thousands of suspects, dismantling al-Qaeda cells and killing or capturing their leaders, and seizing large quantities of arms and money. However, the Saudi government realized that focusing on the elimination of terrorists, rather than their radical ideology in general, was misguided and counterproductive. The Saudi government re-crafted its strategy to take on the radical ideologies that foster violent extremism. The primary strategy is to confront thoughts with thoughts, and to confront the appeal of extremist *takfir* ideology by presenting the true interpretation of sharia principles and promoting the true values of the Islamic faith and the importance of tolerance.

In order to combat radical ideology, the kingdom adopted a series of “soft” counterterrorism measures aimed at undermining extremists' views and disrupting the activities of those who promote violent extremism. In addition to the security strategy, an

advocacy-and-advisory strategy was implemented through programs such as the counseling program and the tranquility campaign. The advisory strategy is defined by two approaches: a preventive approach designed to limit the spread of radical ideology by draining the sources of extremism, and a treatment approach designed to encourage those who sympathize with terrorists and their radical ideology to recant through frank dialogue, bridgebuilding and confrontation.

The Saudi government has been implementing an intense religious-reeducation and counseling program called Al-Munasahah for security prisoners who sympathize with or provide support to extremists. The goal of the program is to encourage security prisoners to renounce their radical ideology by providing them with psychological and sociological counseling and by engaging them in comprehensive and intensive religious dialogue. A Psychological and Social Subcommittee evaluates the prisoner's psychological, social and financial status in order to determine what kind of support he and his family may need. After the assessments, counselors from the Religious Subcommittee engage the prisoners in conversations about their views on several concepts, such as the takfir doctrine, jihad in Iraq, suicide operations and martyrs, the excommunication of governments and societies (and its gravity), the right approach in dealing with contemporary Islamic issues, repentance and return to the truth, and the sanctity of human blood in Islam. The program is helping prisoners correct their flawed understanding of sharia; responding to their doubts; reminding them of the advantage of repentance and the recanting errors; helping them realize the importance of unity among the community and the danger of dissent; and helping them understand the importance of preserving the country's values, consulting people of knowledge, and realizing the role youth are expected to play in their nation, and raising the level of dialogue and the acceptance of others' opinions.

Release is granted to those who respond effectively to the program, realize their previous errors, denounce their radical ideology, are no longer considered security threats, and are proven to have the religious, spiritual and ethical means to protect themselves from backsliding. In recent years, program experts and prisoners' families have noted the positive influence of the program as evidenced by prisoners' changing behaviors: their recognition of their mistakes and violations of Islamic principles. Half of the 3,200 prisoners who have gone through the program have left prison. Those who have reverted to militancy are very few, less than 1 percent.

Another program is the Tranquility Campaign. The Internet has expanded the reach of terrorist groups; Internet chat rooms and forums are now used for radicalization and recruitment by groups like al-Qaeda. For these reasons, the Saudi government has endorsed an independent project called the Al-Sakinah (tranquility) Campaign, composed of religious and academic scholars, psychiatrists and sociologists with Internet skills. The volunteers visit extremists' websites, chat rooms and forums to engage in online dialogue focused on controversial questions about sharia in order to correct the participants' understanding and cause them to question their extremist beliefs. The campaign consists of several specialized sections: scientific, psycho-social, monitoring, publishing, design and public relations. The first step initiated by the campaign was to visit extremist websites that were spreading takfir ideology, in order to identify the active ones. The campaign

then conducted an extensive study of each site to determine the main characteristics, ideas, principles and strategies used in mobilization and recruitment. The campaign volunteers then visited these targeted sites and raised particular issues in order to draw people whom they sensed held extremist views into side dialogues. The main aspect of the dialogue focused on controversial questions about the sharia position and cause them to question the extremist beliefs that they held so deeply.

In January 2008, the Tranquility Campaign announced that it was able to convince some 877 to reject their radical ideology. These include a number of high-ranking al-Qaeda members in Saudi Arabia. The Tranquility Campaign’s female volunteers have conducted dialogues with more than 200 women who hold extremist ideology and succeeded in persuading 150 of them to renounce their extremist convictions.

Al-Qaeda has issued several statements over the Internet cautioning their followers not to engage in dialogues with members of the Tranquility Campaign, an indication that the campaign is having a positive impact on the members of this group. In addition, the Tranquility Campaign established a global Arabic-English website aimed at fighting extremist and deviant ideology, explaining the sharia position on controversial questions, and spreading the correct views regarding Islam. The campaign is preparing to publish concise and accurate responses to controversial questions raised by extremists during a long series of dialogues.

These efforts are assisted by other initiatives. For example, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs established a confidential counseling hotline that receives hundreds of calls from families who discuss suspicious behaviors and share their concerns about their loved ones who are affected by religious extremism. Other hotlines are used to engage in a direct dialogue and consultation throughout the day with those who hold deviant ideology.

In addition, Saudi Arabia’s religious establishment is a critical asset in the war against radical ideology. Senior religious and legal figures have issued public condemnations of terrorism in both moral and religious terms and prohibited Saudi youth from traveling abroad to engage in jihad. The Council of Senior Ulama has launched an official website for fatwas. The site will act as a guide for Muslims and against the fatwas issued by terrorist groups. The move is also an attempt to ensure that fatwas issued by authorized scholars are given prominence and to avoid confusion and fatwa chaos from unqualified Muslim scholars.

Moreover, Saudi Public TV broadcast a five-part series titled “Jihad Experiences, the Deceit,” which featured terrorists’ confessions and repentant terrorists’ testimonies of how al-Qaeda organizes, trains and recruits. The series also featured Muslim scholars rebutting al-Qaeda’s propaganda from an Islamic perspective and interviews with well-known Saudi scholars who recanted their earlier fatwas supporting terrorist attacks and urging terrorist suspects to surrender.

In February 2005, the kingdom carried out a national public-awareness campaign entitled “The National Solidarity Campaign against Terrorism,” conducted over several weeks as part of a strategy to combat extremism and present the true values of the Islamic faith and the importance of tolerance and moderation. The campaign started on the occasion of the International Conference for Combating Terrorism in the Kingdom. It

featured posters and electronic signs at the entrances to public places and streets bearing anti-terrorism slogans to illustrate the human costs of terrorism. Similar messages have been broadcast on television, radio and at sporting events. Schools and mosques, and even the screens of automated teller machines, were saturated with the same messages. Several ministries and government bodies participated in this campaign by organizing symposiums, exhibitions, lectures, workshops, art exhibitions and poetry competitions, as well as by distributing millions of publications, brochures, pamphlets, magazines, tapes, CDs and photographs to combat extremism and promote centrism and moderation.

Furthermore, in 2007, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs launched the Al-Tahseen (shielding) Campaign against terrorism. While previous efforts focused on dealing with a problem after it occurred, the current campaign aims at safeguarding youth against radical ideology and deviant thoughts by taking advantage of every source available. Also, in an effort to educate imams and monitor mosques, the ministry is sponsoring a multi-year enlightenment program to promote religious and cultural tolerance and to counter the spread of extremist ideology. The Ministry of Education is conducting an audit of school textbooks and curricula to ensure that textbooks and teachers do not espouse intolerance and extremist views. The ministry is also providing special training programs to promote religious tolerance for male and female Islamic-studies teachers. In addition to the previous soft approaches, the kingdom has taken several legal measures to tackle the spread of radical ideology, especially over the Internet.

In an effort to combat extremism and promote moral principles such as respect for others, tolerance, moderation, freedom of expression, public interest and consolidating national unity, the kingdom established the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue in April 2003. Roughly every six months since 2003, Saudi Arabia has held a “National Dialogue” conference with all sectors of society to discuss major issues such as extremism and moderation and to build and enhance a culture of dialogue.

To reduce the use of the Internet as a base for radicalization, training and recruiting, the Saudi government in April 2007 approved the Law to Fight Cyber-Crime. Under the new law, it is a punishable offence (up to 10 years in prison and/or a fine of up to \$1.3 million) to create a website for a terrorist organization, facilitate communication with the leaders of such organizations, promote an organization’s radical views or propagate information on how to make explosives. Last week, the Saudi authorities arrested five people accused of encouraging youths to fight in conflict zones and spreading propaganda and radical ideology on the Internet.

We cannot defeat terrorism by force alone. It is important to realize the need for measures to maximize the effort to combat radical ideology. A key task will be to identify those instruments already working successfully and coordinate their activities in a comprehensive strategy. The key to success in this war of ideas is to deliver the right message using authentic sources. Therefore, greater civic engagement of Muslim scholars and communities will further any state effort in this regard. Finally, it is important to realize that we will have great difficulty curbing the ideological appeal of al-Qaeda and other extremists without finding a just solution to the region’s major conflicts.

**AMB. FREEMAN:** Contrast the sophistication, if you will, of the approach that Dr. Ansary has just described with the approach that we have, which basically consists of sending in troops. I think all three speakers have in different ways made the point that this issue cannot be dealt with by the military alone. Indeed, perhaps, the military should not be in the lead at all. The notion of a war in cyberspace nicely illustrates that. The notion that the center of gravity of those we are concerned to defeat is their ideas is also very instructive. What we heard was a strategy that includes refutation of deviant notions. This is the one element that we tend to focus on when we speak of the success of Prince Mohammed bin Abdul Aziz al Saud, who heads the Saudi counterterrorism campaign in the Ministry of Interior. We commend him for implementing our agenda, law enforcement and intelligence collection and ignore the broader context, which has brought the success over which he has presided. So I think, in some senses, the conclusion is that in this context, Islam is the answer and that the United States, to succeed, must ally with, not attack, Islam and its centrist adherents.

**ROBERT PAPE: professor of political science, University of Chicago**

Over the last few months, our team has collected probably the largest collection of martyr videos in the world. And we have not just collected them; we have translated them, we have subtitled them. They will be soon available on the Web and so forth. They include a number of al-Qaeda attackers, including the 7/7 bombers and the 9/11 hijackers. Since there is a big question about what is actually driving al-Qaeda, I want to tell you what I think and what the data says.

Suicide terrorism has been raging around the world, but there is great confusion about why. Since many of the attacks, including 9/11, have been perpetrated by Muslim suicide terrorists, many have presumed that Islamic fundamentalism must be the obvious central cause. This presumption has fueled the belief that future 9/11s can be avoided only by wholesale transformation of Muslim societies, which was a core reason for broad public support for our invasion of Iraq. However, this presumed connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism is misleading and is encouraging domestic and foreign policies likely to worsen our situation.

Over the last few years, I have compiled the first complete database of every suicide terrorist attack around the world since 1980. This database wasn't, until we put it together, available to any government. It is true that the Israelis had databases of who was attacking them. But neither our government nor the British government nor any other government had begun to track suicide terrorism until after 9/11. As a result, they were very interested in getting the data. And DITRA, which many of you will recognize as the Defense Department, has been one of the major funders of this effort. It was actually funded twice under Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon. I also want to thank the Carnegie Corporation in New York, Argonne National Laboratory and the University of Chicago. This generous funding has made it possible for me to become the director of the Chicago Project on Suicide Terrorism, which collects information about suicide terrorist attacks all around the world, not just in English, but in the key native languages associated with the phenomenon.

This survey examines all the available open-source information from the suicide terrorist groups themselves. We use computerized databases, Lexis and FBIS [Foreign Broadcast Information Service]. We also go to hard copies when we can. I want to emphasize that this is not simply a list of lists, but represents a rather large amount of new information about suicide terrorism.

It may come as a bit of a surprise, but suicide terrorist groups are often quite proud of their activities in their local communities. I have here a glossy yearbook-like album from the Tamil Tigers — a suicide terrorist group from Sri Lanka. It is published in Jaffna and is dedicated to the Black Tigers, their suicide attackers. This is not glorification of body parts. These are the pictures, names, ages, birthplaces and other socioeconomic data about the actual suicide attackers.

It is very helpful, if you are trying to find out who is doing it and why, to be able to penetrate the language barrier and to sometimes even go to the local communities to get this sort of information. They are, of course, not publishing this in Jaffna and then sending a copy to Langley. We have many of these for Islamic groups, as well.

I am going to talk about the data in two parts. First is the first 24 years, 1980 to the end of 2003. Think of it as the pre-Iraq period. Then I am going to tell you what the world of suicide terrorism looks like after Iraq, in the four-and-a-half years between 2004 and the summer of 2008.

The data show that in the first 24 years, suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism are not as closely associated as many people think. Overall, during the period from 1980 to the end of 2003, there were 315 completed suicide terrorist attacks around the world. The leader during this period was not an Islamic group at all, but the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka — a Marxist, secular, Hindu group. The Tamil Tigers have carried out more suicide attacks than Hamas or Islamic jihad. That is true to this day. Further, at least 30 percent of all Muslim suicide attacks were carried out by purely secular groups such as the PKK in Turkey, a Kurdish, Marxist, anti-religious group. Overall, at least 50 percent of all suicide attacks during this period were not associated with Islamic fundamentalism.

What nearly all suicide terrorist attacks have in common is not religion, but a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel a democratic state to withdraw combat forces that terrorists either consider to be their homeland or prize greatly. From Lebanon to Israel to Sri Lanka to Kashmir to Chechnya, every suicide-terrorist campaign since 1980 has been waged by groups whose main goal has been to establish or maintain self-determination for territory the terrorists prize. Religion is rarely the root cause, although it is often used as a tool to mobilize for the cause and to support the broader strategic objective.

Three general patterns in the data support my conclusion. The first concerns timing. Suicide terrorism rarely occurs as an isolated, random or scattered phenomenon, as it would if it were merely the product of religious fanaticism or any other ideology independent of circumstances. Instead, the attacks tend to occur in clusters. Specifically, 301 of the 315 attacks occurred in coherent, organized clusters that look very much like campaigns. Only 5 percent were random or isolated events. I am not claiming that the patterns I am describing today account for every suicide attack that has occurred since 1980. I am claiming that they account for 95 percent of all the suicide terrorism around

the world that we have experienced in the last three decades.

Suicide-terrorist campaigns are directed at gaining control of territory that the terrorists prize. This has been the central objective of every suicide-terrorist campaign. Hezbollah is the famous suicide terrorist group in Lebanon. In June 1982, Hezbollah did not exist. In June 1982, Israel invaded southern Lebanon with 78,000 combat soldiers, 3,000 tanks and armored vehicles. One month later, Hezbollah was born.

Hezbollah then began to do suicide attacks against the foreign forces that were there: the Israelis, then the Americans and the French. I am sure many Americans will remember the famous Beirut bombings. The key point is that after the Americans left, after the French left, and even after the Israelis left, Hezbollah did not continue their attacks. There has not been a single Hezbollah suicide attack since 2000, when Israel left southern Lebanon — not even in the summer of 2006, during that dustup between Israel and Hezbollah. This is not a pattern that “Islamic fundamentalism” can explain. After all, nobody thinks that Hezbollah is not an Islamic fundamentalist group anymore. The bottom line is that the timing, the goals, and the societies targeted by suicide terrorism suggest that it is a coherent strategy designed to cause democratic states to abandon control of territory, the terrorists’ prize.

Al-Qaeda fits this pattern. Since al-Qaeda’s suicide attacks began in the mid-1990s, its core strategic logic has been to compel American and Western combat forces to leave the Arabian Peninsula. This logic has been pursued with increasing vigor since 9/11, during which time al-Qaeda has carried out more than 17 suicide and other terrorist attacks, killing well over 700 people. This is more attacks and more victims than in all the years before 9/11 combined.

Although many of us might have hoped that al-Qaeda would be dead, thrown off kilter by the measure that counts — the ability to carry out attacks — al-Qaeda is stronger today than before 9/11. There are multiple causes, but the driving force behind the threat is the presence of American and Western combat forces on the Arabian Peninsula and not merely Islamic fundamentalism or any other ideology independent of circumstances.

Perhaps the most important thing is to learn who becomes an al-Qaeda suicide attacker. Where do they come from? This research is the first to collect a complete set of the 71 individuals who actually killed themselves to carry out attacks for Bin Laden from 1995 to 2004. The largest number, 34, come from Saudi Arabia, and the overwhelming majority from the Arabian Peninsula, where the United States first began to station combat forces in 1990. It is important to underscore that 1990 was a watershed year in our military deployment to the Arabian Peninsula. Before 1990, we had a few hundred advisers with sidearms there, mostly Marines standing guard in front of some embassies, but no tanks, fighter aircraft or armored units going all the way back to World War II. The year 1990 marked a fundamental shift in our deployment, and al-Qaeda attacks started shortly thereafter.

Since we have the complete set of al-Qaeda suicide attackers during this period, we can go further to assess the effect of American military policies. With only one exception, al-Qaeda suicide terrorists from 1995 to 2004 were all nationals of various Sunni-majority countries. Hence, we can compare the rate at which a Sunni country — a country with

and without American combat forces — produces an al-Qaeda suicide terrorist. Once we control for population size, American combat forces increase the rate 10 times.

I am not saying that Americans should blame themselves for the deaths of our civilians on 9/11. Suicide terrorism is murder, and there is nothing our combat forces did in the 1990s that would justify the murder of our civilians. But that should not cause us to overlook what recruits suicide attackers for Osama better than anything else: the presence of American and Western combat forces on the Arabian Peninsula. Moreover, I am not trying to tell you all al-Qaeda suicide attackers come from Sunni countries where we station forces. Two-thirds do; one-third do not. But if we look at the transnational al-Qaeda suicide attackers, they, too, are powerfully motivated by the presence of American and Western combat forces in Muslim countries.

Rather than have me tell you about it, I would like to show you a video of six al-Qaeda suicide attackers. These are martyr videos that al-Qaeda has released since their attacks. Two of them are from the 7/7 bombers, the London bombers. They will be in English. Four of them are of the 9/11 hijackers. Those we have had to translate in subtitles.

This is how our ethical stances are dictated. Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world — directly responsible just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters. Until we feel security, you will be our targets. Until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people, we will not stop this fight. We are at war, and I am a soldier.

What you have witnessed now is only the beginning of a series of attacks, which, inshallah, will intensify and continue until you pull all your troops out of Afghanistan and Iraq, until you stop all financial and military support to the U.S. and Israel, and until you release all Muslim prisoners from Belmarsh and your other concentration camps. And know that if you fail to comply with this, then know that this war will never stop and that we are ready to give our lives 100 times over for the cause of Islam. You will never experience peace until our children in Palestine, our mothers and sisters in Kashmir, our brothers in Afghanistan and Iraq feel peace.

Here is the recruitment video of al-Qaeda's most effective spokesman in English. He is an American, Adam Yahiyeh Gadahn:

It is crucial for Muslims to keep in mind that the Americans, the British and the other members of the coalition of terror have intentionally targeted Muslim civilians and civilian targets both before, as well as after, September 11, in both the first and second Iraq wars, as well as in the forays into Somalia and the Sudan and Afghanistan, just to give you a few examples. And they have done this with the backing of their populations and electorates. I mean, even if there have been some feeble protests scattered here and there in the West, chiefly against the latest war in Iraq, all the same, the governments that have started these wars have been reelected by a majority of the popular vote. And their aggression against Afghanistan, which for Westerners and their mercenary sympathizers is the least controversial of Bush and Blair's terrorist wars. They have targeted civilians

for assassination and kidnapping. They kidnapped any non-Afghans they found and shipped them off to Guantanamo or worse. Many were handed over to the American- and British-backed despotic regimes of the Islamic world to be brutally interrogated. And with the blessing and support of that notorious Afghan killer Hamad Karzai, they have murdered thousands of Afghan civilians as they slept in their beds, traveled on the roads, attended weddings and prayed at the mosques. I know they have killed and maimed civilians in the strikes because I have seen it with my own eyes. My brothers have seen it. I have carried the victims in my arms — women, children, toddlers, babies in their mothers’ wombs. You name it, they have probably bombed it. I could go on and on. And that is just Afghanistan. We haven’t talked about American and British atrocities in the two Iraq wars. Let’s take a look at the latest to be revealed. In Mahmudiyah, five American soldiers gang rape an Iraqi woman, and then to hide the evidence, murder her and three members of her family and burn her body. And then, when our muhajadeen take revenge on the unit which committed this outrage and capture and execute two of its members, they are called terrorists. And Muslims are supposed to disown them or face the consequences. I am not saying that we should go and slaughter their women and children one by one like they did ours at Hadiitha and Ishaqi and Mahmudiyah and God knows where else.... I can’t imagine that any compassionate person [seeing] pictures of what the crusaders did to those children [would] not want to go on a shooting spree at the Marines’ housing facilities at Camp Pendleton. But what I am saying is that when we bomb their cities and civilians like they bomb ours, or destroy their infrastructure and means of transportation like they destroy ours, or kidnap their non-combatants like they kidnapped ours, no sane Muslims should shed tears for them. And [the Americans] should blame no one but themselves because they are the ones who started this dirty war and they are the ones that will end it by ending their aggression against Islam and Muslims, by pulling out of our region, and by keeping their hands out of our affairs. And until and unless they do that, neither Forest Gate-style police raids, nor Belmarsh or Guantanamo prison cells, nor the mosques and imams advisory council will be able to prevent the Muslims from exacting revenge on behalf of their persecuted brothers and sisters.

Notice Gadahn does not mention 72 virgins. He is focusing on what he thinks is their best recruitment appeal: the plight of a kindred population under a foreign military occupation. It is terribly important, if we are going to respond to this threat, that we see what is actually driving the enemy and who the enemy actually is. Otherwise, we could pursue policies that are irrelevant or simply make the problem worse.

We have recently completed an update of the database through the end of June of this year. This is as current as we can possibly make it. There are some striking patterns in what has happened to suicide terrorism in the last five years. First of all, it comes as no surprise that the largest set of attacks are happening in Iraq. You might be surprised to see how many have already happened in Afghanistan. The big pattern is that, even if we don’t count all that happened in Pakistan, 89 percent of all the suicide terrorism around the world in the last five years is now anti-American suicide terrorism. For the first 24 years, it was maybe 5 percent. If we counted Pakistan in, it would even be higher, around 95 percent.

We now have 1,500 suicide attacks in our database. These are all double-confirmed

and corroborated. For this pattern to be wrong, we would have to have missed not just five suicide attacks around the world, not just 50. There would have to be hundreds of suicide attacks around the world that are not happening in Iraq and Afghanistan. That is probably unlikely. This is a very strong confirmation for the strategic logic of suicide terrorism.

Suicide terrorism in Iraq is a prime example of this strategic logic. Before our invasion in March 2003, Iraq had never experienced a suicide attack in its history. As you all know, it has been raging since then. What you might not know is that there has been a great decline in civil violence in Iraq in the last year. The suicide attacks, however, are only down about 40 percent. We still had a minimum of 95 suicide attacks in Iraq in the first six months of 2008.

This means that suicide terrorism is raging on even as all the civil violence is declining. Why is that? It is because the causes of the suicide terrorism and the civil war, although they overlap a bit, are not the same thing. Most of the public runs all this together. The civil war is a three-sided war. And, yes, we precipitated that, as well. Kurds are killing Shia and Sunnis; Sunnis are killing the other two.

The suicide terrorism in Iraq is all Sunni. We don't have a single Shia suicide attacker in Iraq. Shia are 60 percent of the public, and there are plenty of Islamic fundamentalist Shia in Iraq. Yes, we don't have a single Shia suicide attacker in Iraq. It is all Sunni, and it is being directed and driven by America's military presence or the presence of America's allies, those we try to make our puppets.

We actually can tell what the effects of the surge are in terms of domestic opinion inside of Iraq pretty cleanly. They don't love us anymore. The surge has not made anybody in Iraq love us, especially the Sunnis. They still hate us, want us out. It is true, there has been some decline among the Sunnis in the killing Americans; still, 62 percent of all Sunnis would like to kill Americans.

The real change that has occurred is not so much that they love our military forces, but that they now support the local Iraqi police and army, which is basically a way to think about what has happened with the Awakening Council. As we have basically taken 100,000 Sunni terrorists and made them part of the security apparatus to defend the Sunnis, the Sunnis have more confidence in it. I don't say a lot, still only 43 percent. But that is the real shift that has occurred. We bought off the terrorists; we made concessions to the terrorists. We appeased the terrorists, and it worked.

Who are the Iraqi suicide attackers? They come mainly from two groups: Iraqi Sunnis and Saudis. The next largest is from Syria. And the overwhelming majority are from either Iraq or the immediately adjacent border countries, some of which have been on our hit list to go after next. This is not a picture of a global jihad sloshing around the world. Only 55 or 60 million of the 1.4 billion Muslims in the world live on the Arabian Peninsula.

Notice what is missing here. None are from Indonesia, Pakistan or Bangladesh. India is not represented here. This is regional opposition to America's and the West's military presence on the Arabian Peninsula.

I am going to say a few words about Afghanistan because, as one of the speakers has

said, there is a question about why suicide terrorism has suddenly spiked there. Afghanistan actually is a pretty good fit for the strategic logic. Before our invasion, there was no suicide terrorism in Afghanistan at all, going all the way back in its history, even with Osama living there for all those years. Then it starts to take off toward the latter part of 2005 and shoots upward in 2006, 2007 and 2008. What happened in 2005 or especially ‘06 and ‘07?

Some of it has to do with the escalation of force levels. In the first few years, we only had 15,000 total forces, American and NATO together. Over time, we have ratcheted that up to 43,000 and that is where we are today. But the crucial thing is not simply building up forces but their deployment around the country. Until October 2003, the United Nations did not give us permission to go outside of Kabul. For the first two years of the occupation, we were basically occupying Kabul. Then we developed a plan to start occupying and controlling the other parts of the country. Starting in late ‘05 and into early ‘06, we started to go to the south and then to the east. These are the Pashtun areas, the Taliban areas. We have diverted our occupation and now are sitting on top of the heartland of the Pashtuns. This is having a noticeable effect in the rise of suicide terrorism. It is also having an effect on Pakistan, as the Pashtun areas bleed across the border pretty significantly.

We have 43,000 troops in Afghanistan. Right now McCain and Obama are talking about increasing those force levels. Bush is talking about putting maybe 8,000 more troops there. The highest number, I think, comes from Obama, who wants about 20,000 more troops there. This is only a token increase. We now are in the worst of both worlds in Afghanistan. We have put in a force that is large enough to trigger a significant amount of anti-American suicide terrorism, but not large enough to actually get Bin Laden or to conquer the western part of Pakistan.

The bottom line is that this is unfortunately still not a very happy talk. The war on terrorism is heading south, and a key reason is that we have been waging the war on terrorism according to a faulty premise: that suicide terrorism is mainly a product of Islamic fundamentalism. If that were true, it would make sense to conquer Muslim countries and wring the Islamic fundamentalism out of them. But there are strong indicators that this is not the case and that suicide terrorism is mainly a response to foreign military occupation. This is something that we need to appreciate if we are going to pursue policies that make us safer.

## Q&A

**Q:** There’s been a Western presence in the Muslim world for hundreds of years under the colonial regimes, but I don’t recall a lot of suicide attacks during that period. What changed? And how does suicide bombing compare percentage-wise or damage-wise with non-suicide attacks like IEDs, the attacks in Spain on the subways, and so forth?

**DR. PAPE:** If you look at all terrorism from the mid-1970s through 9/11/2001, suicide terrorism kills, on a per-attack basis, about 12 times as many as an ordinary terrorist attack. The tiny number of suicide attacks during that period, about 3 percent of all the terrorist attacks, account for 48 percent of all the deaths due to terrorism. The relation-

ship between suicide terrorism and all terrorism is a lot like the relationship between lung cancer and cancer. Lung cancer accounts for a small fraction of all the possible cancers that people get throughout their lives, but it is by far the deadliest form; and it has a specific set of risk factors. I'm not trying to tell you that other forms of terrorism don't kill anybody, but suicide terrorism is the most deadly form. Without it, 3,000 people would not have died on 9/11. By the way, that 48 percent did not include the 9/11 numbers. They would push it up to 73 percent.

On the other point, what changed? As best we can tell, the 1980s had a profound effect. Hezbollah began to do suicide attacks in the fall of 1982. They were just experimenting. They don't appear to be, in the first year, deeply committed to it. The fourth suicide attack happened in October 1983 against the Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 Marines and causing Ronald Reagan, no pacifist, to pull out all American combat forces. That move by Reagan had a powerful effect on the future course of suicide terrorism. Remember, these are groups that have no armies, no air force, very few means at their disposal to compel and coerce their opponents, and they achieved a major success. If you look back over the course of al-Qaeda's campaign just in the last few years, the Madrid bombing was directly related to pulling Spanish forces out of Iraq. The more the Brits have come to understand what caused the 7/7 bombings and the future threat to them, the greater their determination to pull out. In fact, a big reason why our allies are abandoning us is that they're starting to see the martyr videos.

Something did change: suicide terrorism turned out to be a pretty potent weapon for otherwise incredibly feeble actors.

**Q:** If Sunni insurgents are actually being bought out, is Western occupation the real cause for resentment? Second, both political parties are agreed on withdrawal from Iraq, which, according to your argument, is obviously reassuring, but both political parties are dead-set on ferreting out Osama from Afghanistan, come what may. That sounds ominous.

**DR. PAPE:** I've shown you one of the causes of suicide terrorism, foreign military occupation. It's virtually a necessary condition, but there are additional enabling conditions. In my book I also analyze the social and individual logic of suicide terrorism to try to give you more information about the additional risk factors. One of the key factors for the social logic is mass support among the local community. If these suicide attackers are essentially walk-in volunteers operating freely in a local community, this requires a fair degree of local support. Otherwise they get turned in. It is possible for us to try to undermine that local community support by buying off some of the actors, and what we've done in Iraq is arm the terrorists. So, in order to buy them off, we're giving them money that they're using to arm themselves. The local community is driven by their own security concerns. If what we do to end suicide terrorism is give the terrorists weapons, that can actually have some effect. I'm not so sure we want to go around giving Osama weapons. You can see, as soon as I explain what's happened in this way, that arming the Sunnis in Iraq is a dangerous game the Bush administration has engaged in. It creates a lot of problems down the road, but it is possible to try to undermine the social support by arming the terrorists.

In terms of leaving Iraq, the key point is, what does it mean to really leave? If we take the most extreme plan, which is Obama’s plan, he’s still planning on leaving several heavy divisions back as a hedge, not just offshore, as I would suggest. This is a normal Washington way to proceed. No one in Washington really knows what the future is going to look like, so hedging strategies are business as usual. But you should know that leaving two divisions behind as a hedge is certainly enough force to retake Baghdad if we needed to conquer and occupy the territory. In order to truly start to undermine the energy of suicide terrorism, I’m afraid much more is going to be necessary.

**COL. MACGREGOR:** To go back to the gentleman who asked about the colonial period, why did we not see suicide bombings earlier? I know a little more about the British than the rest, so I’m going to stick with the British example. Five years after the British left India, a series of questionnaires was sent out to almost 100,000 people in the subcontinent. The questioners were surprised to discover that about 40 percent of the people answering questions about what had happened since the British left, were unaware that the British had ever ruled India. The British made lots of mistakes, no question about it, but they got very smart. India was administered by Indians. You would have one British colonial officer, who was usually a double-first from Oxford, highly educated, who lived for a decade in an area, spoke all of the languages, knew all of the leading families and personalities. There was a regiment that was kept a great distance away from the population in a little insular world. I know because I’m Scottish, and half my family served in those units. They were kept completely remote from the population because the 5,000 British troops might be required to come in and shoot some people who got out of line. But, generally speaking, that didn’t happen. The local police, the local military establishment, which was Indian, did the job. This was essentially Gandhi’s biggest challenge. It wasn’t so much the British, who had long since lost their resolve to stay in the country; it was the fact that there was this huge Indian administration keeping the British Raj in power. That had to be undone and disassembled.

So, if you stay out of sight and wear an indigenous face, in most of the world you can be successful. If you look at the success that Iran has had in Iraq, the Iranian influence wears an indigenous face. Our influence wears a uniform and carries a rifle. Iran is successful; we are not.

**DR. WEINBAUM:** When the United States moved forces into Afghanistan at a low level in 2001 and 2002, we were welcomed. There was extraordinary acceptance from the international community. The country had been through 25 years of warfare. The Afghan people overwhelmingly resented the fact that we did not bring our forces across the entire country and provide security. It was for that reason regional warlords were able to step into the vacuum. Since that time, there is no question that we have lost the confidence of many Afghans. We’re most reminded of that today because of the fact that civilians are getting killed. The Afghans are not xenophobic; they welcome international support. The collateral damage, so called, of the last year or two is a function of the fact that we have taken the fight to the Taliban more aggressively, and this has cost us. Having too few troops, we are not able to support our troops except through the use of indiscriminate air power, particularly when it is an unplanned operation. If we’re going to

continue there and want to reduce collateral damage, we probably are going to have to put more troops on the ground. At the same time, we can't expect to win just militarily.

There's a lot that's compelling about Robert's figures, and they apply to suicide bombers. But there's a lot more going on. My own view is that this is a tactic. I lived there in 2005, and we saw it changing. We said before that that Afghans, and Pakistanis for that matter, don't engage in suicide bombing; their values don't permit it. This suicide tactic, which we have every reason to believe was imported from Iraq, was unknown in Pakistan, but now there is an explosion of suicide bombers. There's no occupation there now. There are other reasons why this is happening, if we're looking at a simple relationship here between the number of forces on the ground and terrorism.

Let me just conclude by saying that we're still welcome in Afghanistan by and large. They are yearning to see the Taliban come back. We have failed to change the lives of the Afghan people, and we ought to be held responsible for that. We put too much emphasis on finding Bin Laden and clearing out the frontier area, and we lost the confidence and the faith of the Afghan people. But I think that, if we're going to deal with terrorism in the future, we have to recognize the importance of a presence in that part of the world. We cannot walk away from it the way we did in the past.

**AMB. FREEMAN:** Let me take another tack from a different perspective because I think what you've said raises a set of issues that have been remarkably undebated in this country: what is it that we are trying to accomplish in Afghanistan? We went in with two apparently rather limited objectives, which were welcomed globally and understood and supported. First, to apprehend or kill those who had inspired and planned 9/11 — the terrorists with global reach, to use President Bush's very apt phrase — and, second, to punish those who had aided and abetted them in Afghanistan and given them shelter, namely the Taliban government, so that no one else would ever offer that kind of safe haven and support in the future. These were rather limited objectives, and they were essentially accomplished, to the extent that they could be accomplished, within a rather short period of time. Those two objectives have very little to do with why we are now in Afghanistan. This gets me to your statement that we have "done very little to change the lives of the Afghan people," and that sense of disappointment on their part is at the root of our current difficulties. My question is, was our purpose initially to change the lives of the Afghan people? If it wasn't, when did that become our purpose? I go back to the question, do we have limited purposes in Afghanistan, or do we have broad purposes of national development? Whatever the answer is, shouldn't we be discussing this before we proceed?

**Q:** From September 2003 to September 2006, I served in the Turkish embassy in Baghdad, outside the Green Zone, so I have some firsthand experience of suicide attacks. We were targets of a suicide-bomber attack, and we lost more than 150 Turkish civilians in Iraq. In November 2003 in Istanbul, there were four suicide bombings that killed more than 50 innocents. I think this proves that there is no direct connection between those suicide attacks and the Turkish position, as we do not have any military presence in Iraq.

**COL. MACGREGOR:** Turkey, Iran and the other states in the region have much more

compelling strategic interests in Iraq than we do. From the very beginning of our intervention in Afghanistan and our subsequent intervention in Iraq, we have tended to ignore or treat the interests of the surrounding countries with a mix of contempt and lack of interest, and that has been a very serious mistake. The people who live in Iraq will shape the destiny of that country, but so will the people who live around it. They are going to have an infinitely greater impact than we. This is why I favor withdrawal at a sooner rather than a later date. Our presence in the country is ultimately not helpful in the long run, and we seem to be uncomfortable with the possibility that the people who live in and around Iraq are actually going to have real influence. We don't seem to want that. We think we can micromanage what happens in these countries. We cannot. We don't understand them. We are the foreigners, and we need to recognize that and leave.

**DR. PAPE:** I think we have to remember that we're dealing with a non-state actor, and to see as much cohesion as we're seeing is really quite stunning. We have over 800 suicide attacks in Iraq. Turkey has long been a close ally of the United States. In fact, the Incirlik Air Base is still operating. It was key to enabling lots of logistics for the occupation. And I'm afraid that non-state actors who are really worried about America's presence want to not just attack America but America's allies. This creates a problem for some states in the region.

**DR. WEINBAUM:** I think we have more of an obligation there than simply finding Bin Laden. What we did in 1989 was to wash our hands of the region. Afghanistan has effectively been a non-state since 1978 because of the conflict there. I think we had an obligation to the people of Afghanistan in their recovery, and that continues to be the case. And they have very much welcomed efforts in that regard. We've got to do more than simply take care of our interests and walk away.

**AMB. FREEMAN:** I think that's a very valid viewpoint, and in 1989 I completely agreed with the view that we had a responsibility to carry forward in Afghanistan. But I note that that was not the justification for our military intervention, and it does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the military mission should be devoted to that. Whether your viewpoint should be the basis of policy or not is something that we ought to discuss, and we haven't. The United States has slid into this with no discussion, and no one at a senior decision-making level, not even the decider, can tell you what it is that would constitute success in Afghanistan. There is no consensus on this.

**Q:** Is the Department of Defense running our foreign policy? Are the U.S. military our diplomats? How can we keep diplomacy in the hands of the diplomats?

**AMB. FREEMAN:** We spend \$35 billion on the civilian conduct of foreign affairs and \$700 billion on the military conduct of foreign affairs, so you can draw your own conclusion from that ratio.

**COL. MACGREGOR:** We have a very serious dilemma right now. For many political figures, regardless of whether they're Democrats or Republicans, it's easy to default to the military. Officers will walk into the room, you'll tell them what you want them to do, they'll draw up a plan, they'll present you with a bill, they'll organize the force, and they'll go do it, whether or not it makes sense to do it, whether or not it's the right instrument.

And none of your senior officers, unfortunately, will stand up and point out to anyone that this is a very dumb idea. First of all, they won't do it because they all want to be promoted. That's essentially it. No one stood up [in the Wehrmacht] halfway across Ukraine in 1941 and said, you know, I think we've gone far enough. This is the problem. We have forfeited the debate about strategy in uniform. People at senior levels have said, that's not my responsibility. That is wrong; it is their responsibility. It's not a question of rejecting or refusing; it is simply making it abundantly clear that it may not be the right instrument and explaining why. If they don't like it, they can fire you, but no one wants to leave. Everybody wants to be promoted.

**Q:** Professor Pape, I wonder if ever, at any point, any U.S. government officer has ever invited you to bring them up to date on suicide bombers?

**DR. PAPE:** Yes, mostly the intelligence agencies. Because this has been funded by the Department of Defense, in part, I've given over the last year and a half probably 30 detailed briefings to our intelligence agencies — NSA, CIA, DIA and so forth. Even though they have disagreed with a large part of the Bush administration, there are a lot of people in the bureaucracy who have heard quite a bit about this. As for the higher political levels, principals on the NSC, no. I'd certainly be up for briefing them, but at this point they would know what I was going to say.

I think the U.S. government realizes we're in the worst of both worlds. Osama has a sanctuary; and we have some forces in Afghanistan, which is destabilizing the country. What you've seen over the summer is a debate, and I think Cheney's side has lost. Cheney has understood that it might be a bad thing if he pushes too hard to invade Pakistan unilaterally. You might think he should be pushing for that, but actually he's been more restrained, and I think he's losing. They are on the horns of a dilemma. We have too little force there to actually stop the insurgencies, but enough force to actually help it to grow and to destabilize both Afghanistan and Pakistan. I think that what we should be doing is demilitarizing this. If you look at the force-to-space ratios, we're talking about a quarter million American troops going there. We're not talking about a few more thousand. I don't see there being a military solution in the offing; therefore, I think that what we have to do is solve this with political concessions and economic transfers to local actors in the tribal regions, the kinds of things Pakistan's government is doing.

**AMB. FREEMAN:** So you're arguing essentially, with Dr. Weinbaum, that there needs to be attention to economic and welfare issues and a demilitarized approach.

**DR. WEINBAUM:** Nobody is going to doubt that, of course. Pakistan's governments have never invested in the development of the tribal areas or sought to bring them into the mainstream of the country's politics or judicial system. That said, to defeat the Pakistani Taliban will require a certain amount of force that's available along with political and developmental solutions. But you cannot negotiate from weakness. Right now these militants feel they are on a roll, and therefore they have broken every single agreement with Pakistan's army and the Islamabad government. It does not help that the country at present lacks strong civilian leadership.

**Q:** There was a *Foreign Affairs* article about this, saying that the surge in Iraq was partly successful because we were able to reintegrate the Baathists and all the other factions in society. With what we know now, can some sort of surge achieve a similar resolution in Afghanistan?

**DR. WEINBAUM:** If you want to use a saturation approach, you’d probably have to put 150,000 troops in. We’re not really talking about that. It’s a very different situation. You can’t use an Anbar approach, which was based on the self-interests of tribal sheiks willing to work with the American forces. At best you may be able to wean away those marginally linked to the core Taliban command structure. This is going to be a long-term process in which we need to remain committed with smarter policies and patience.

**Q:** There is a needs theory of terrorism: people would prefer to get their needs met by decent means, but when those are blocked and there’s humiliation, despair and helplessness, they resort to more violent means. They start out with petitions and demonstrations to end the occupation. We say we don’t want to reward terrorism but what we really have to do to end it is what we refuse to do. There are two different views of enemies. One is, this is who they are; they’re bad, inherently evil, and they can’t change. The other is that people are driven to extremes by certain situations. A lot of well-meaning people and politicians are gripped by beliefs that are completely false. People believe that we need a president who’s tough. But the tougher we are, the more we aid the recruitment to terrorism. People are more dangerous when they’re afraid, but we hear politicians and pundits saying, it’s okay if they hate us as long as they fear us. We need a lot of education on this. How come you’re not on all the talk shows?

**DR. PAPE:** When my book first came out in 2005, I actually was on quite a few talk shows. I’ve given hundreds of talks in the last few years. Real awakening takes place when people actually see the data, so three minutes on O’Reilly, even though O’Reilly was very respectful because he knew I had a lot of data, is only a little bit helpful. What’s really helpful is to take the time to actually show you the actual information so that you can see that it’s not just my interpretation. That’s the sort of thing I’ve been able to do with the intelligence agencies. I’ve also had a few chances to come to Congress. I come to Capitol Hill every chance I can. On Monday, I’m going to speak to the Air Force Association’s national convention. There will be 800 senior Air Force officers there. They’re giving me 45 minutes to make the whole presentation. Hearing it for two minutes is not as important as actually seeing some of the information.

**AMB. FREEMAN:** I think it is very important that the intelligence community, which has had an interest in your work and is dedicated to reality-based analysis rather than delusion, benefit from your research and from discussions like this, but the intelligence community does not decide policy. It is the decision makers who need to be educated, and you cannot educate people who do not have open minds and who believe they already understand the situation to their complete satisfaction. So one of the points I’d take from your comment is that, in selecting a president this November, perhaps we should look at the question of how open to correction of erroneous ideas a person is, how much he is prepared to learn. It’s clear that what we are doing is not working, and we need to

reconsider and press the reset button.

**DR. WEINBAUM:** Occupation is a perceptual matter. We've had forces in South Korea and Germany and no issue there with terrorism. The point is that when we come to be viewed in Afghanistan as occupiers, we're in trouble and, unfortunately, that is the direction in which we have been moving. The Soviets never succeeded in gaining the confidence of the Afghan people because, from the beginning, they were viewed as occupiers. We were not, but that doesn't mean that our invitation is without conditions. Increasingly, our priorities have been military and failing to address their interests.

**Q:** It's pretty clear from the information presented here that the military-only approach is the naive and ineffective approach. The militarists on the campaign trail would have us believe that global terrorism is the greatest threat we have ever faced. How best can we thwart this notion that the military approach is the solution and instead put forth some credible, more effective evidence of other approaches?

**AMB. FREEMAN:** It is said that you can always count on the United States to do the right thing after we've exhausted all of the alternatives. We are rapidly doing just that, which leads one to hope that, after some reconsideration, we will find a more effective approach to this. I don't think it was an accident that you heard essentially the same thing from four speakers with very different backgrounds and very different perspectives: It's not just that the military are not the solution to the dilemmas we face, but that in some respects over-reliance on them is the problem. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach that rests on strategy rather than spin — and does not assume, for example, that by calling occupation "liberation" you can transform it into liberation — is probably more likely to succeed.

**Q:** We're having a debate in the intelligence community on what the central front is in the global war on terror. The president and General Petraeus have suggested it is Iraq. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Israel have all been suggested as candidates.

**DR. PAPE:** Many people think that Israel is behind the threat to America, that it's driving al-Qaeda, and I'm not saying that it's not important that there be a good deal between the Palestinians and Israel. I think there should be, for the Palestinians and for Israel. But if you look at the more than 30 al-Qaeda suicide attacks and other attacks that have occurred in the last 13 years, we haven't seen a single al-Qaeda attack or even an attempt against Israel. I'm actually a little surprised about that. It's important to realize that, when you're trying to mobilize folks from the Middle East and from the Arabian Peninsula, it's normal to criticize Israel. I'm afraid the median voter on the Arabian Peninsula does not like Israel, and so if the rhetoric is not somewhat anti-Israeli, it's going to seem weird to that particular group.

The problem with thinking about the central front is that what that means is, if we kill somebody here, will that end the problem? When you say to the American public, where's the central front, what they hear is, who should I kill? The problem is, killing Bin Laden is not going to solve the problem if you still have 100,000 or even 25,000 heavy combat troops on the Arabian Peninsula. If the combat troops go away from the Arabian

Peninsula, then it also starts to make sense to do heavy economic and political assistance — and probably still kill Bin Laden. I’m not trying to say that we can’t kill Bin Laden or we shouldn’t think about that as helping on the margins. But the debate about the central front on the war on terrorism is actually continuing to mislead us into thinking that, if only we had killed Bin Laden, 95 percent of the problem would go away. Five percent would go away.

**COL. MACGREGOR:** There is no existential military threat to the United States of America today. There has not been an existential threat to the United States since 1989. I suppose, if we continue to intervene around the world with the object of transforming the societies that we occupy into facsimiles of ourselves, that we can precipitate alliances against us and eventually bring on the global war that some people seem to want desperately. Islamist terrorism is not an existential threat to the United States and never has been. It won’t be. It’s a problem; it’s going to be with us for some period of time. We are not going to completely eradicate it. Its reasons for existence are not entirely a function of us. The societies in the Islamic world are going through a very difficult and turbulent period of change that is likely to last for the rest of the century. The question is, how do you handle these things? I think the military instrument is, for the most part, the wrong one. That does not mean that the United States should not establish a clear red line that says, “if you harbor terrorists, we will attack. We reserve the right to protect ourselves, and if we think you are harboring terrorists, we’ll come after you.”

But the David Petraeus argument has been for a long time, if we leave Iraq, Iraq will be transformed into an al-Qaeda terrorist state. I think the Turks, the Persians, and the Saudis will have a great deal to say about that. There’s a lot of evidence that, in our absence, al-Qaeda is going to have one hell of a time justifying its existence inside Iraq. But conventional wisdom has driven the use of military power where it was inappropriate to do so, and that needs to stop.

**AMB. FREEMAN:** This is a good note on which to end. I agree with Colonel Macgregor; there is no existential threat to the United States other than the one that our reactions to a minor threat pose to our own values and traditions. That is the existential threat we face. There is no Russian who has a key that can murder 70 million Americans 17 minutes after the key is turned. As a veteran of the Cold War, I find it incomprehensible that we have a leadership that so exaggerates the threat to our country and does the work of terrorists for them by spreading fear, which is the objective of terrorism.

Second, the central front is wherever we conduct an occupation that stimulates people to go after it. Whether we are liberating or occupying is, as Dr. Weinbaum said, a matter of perception, but it’s one to which we need to attend. The concept of “central” is essentially meaningless in the transnational context of struggle. I think the correct formulation is that employed by Dr. Ansary. The correct formulation is the center of gravity, which he said is the mind. It is the psychology, the attitudes, the values and the rage of a particular group of people. This war can be won only in the mind, not on the battlefield.