

**THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE
FOR NEAR EAST POLICY**

WEINBERG FOUNDERS CONFERENCE 2006

**STRATEGIES FOR THE MULTIFRONT WAR
AGAINST RADICAL ISLAMISTS**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2006

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

WELCOME:

**HOWARD BERKOWITZ, PRESIDENT,
THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE**

BUILDING SECURITY IN THE BROADER MIDDLE EAST:

**PHILIP ZELIKOW
COUNSELOR TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT**

MODERATOR:

**ROBERT SATLOFF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE**

*Transcript by:
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.*

HOWARD BERKOWITZ: Ladies and gentleman, we meet this evening in the wake of a Middle Eastern earthquake, the summer war between Israel and Hizballah. We meet five years after a global earthquake, the attacks on September 11. After we meet at a time when civilized nations of the world are still grappling with the right formula to prevent an earthquake of potentially cataclysmic proportions: the acquisition by the ayatollahs of Iran of nuclear weapons.

To say we are meeting this weekend at a time of great consequence it is to say a real understatement. This is important and this is what we're going to be chatting about for the next couple of days. Over the weekend, our goal is to look at various theaters of operation in the global war now underway, the war declared by radical Islamists against the West. This war takes different forms in different places, in Kabul, in Baghdad, in Beirut and Gaza, in London, Madrid, Bali, Jerusalem, and in New York. Sometimes the adversary fights in the name of Sunni extremism and sometimes in the name of Shiite extremism. And sometimes these two extremists bury the hatchet between them and fight against the infidel. Who's the infidel? Jews, Americans, the West in general.

Our goal this weekend is to understand the different fronts in this war and to devise better and more effective strategies for winning in each of them. This is no easy task; that is why I am so delighted that we are opening our conference with our keynote speaker, Philip Zelikow.

There is no official at the senior levels of the U.S. government who better exemplifies the connection between the understanding of the threat of radical Islam and radical Islamists and devising the sound strategies to confront that threat, especially in the Middle East. A highly accomplished scholar, thinker and public intellectual, Phil Zelikow was tapped by the September 11 Commission to serve as its executive director. In that capacity he was the person responsible for making the commission function and for producing a report that would merit the nation's trust and confidence.

By all accounts he rose to the occasion masterfully. The commission stands. It stands as the gold standard by which all such independent bodies will be compared. Its hearings gave America the opportunity to learn about the intricacies of its government and see decision-making process of the government up close, warts and all.

In its final report, a runaway best seller, gave Americans both insight into what happened and why it happened as well as a practical plan to guard against it happening again. With that remarkable achievement behind him, our speaker tonight was then asked by the now secretary of state with whom he had worked in years passed to join her as a counselor, a position of trust and confidence, a position that gives special access and special responsibility, a position where ideas truly matter.

This time it was not just to help shape recommendations, but to define and execute policy at a moment of extraordinary challenge. With America challenged on so many fronts, with the continuing dangers of radical Islamists so clear and present it is good to know that there are people on the seventh floor of the State Department who understand the fundamental nature of this threat and what needs to be done to secure America, Americans, and American interests.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce tonight's speaker, Philip Zelikow.

Philip? (Applause.)

PHILIP ZELIKOW: Thank you very much, Howard, and I'm grateful for you and for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy for giving me the opportunity to talk to all of you here tonight. A lot of you here have helped nurture and sustain the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. I have no particular stake in the Institute one way or the other. I've never worked for the Institute. I've simply profited from it for a very long time. And so for those of you who've nurtured and sustained the Institute, you need to know that the Institute is providing better information than any other nongovernmental institution on the most important issues now confronting the United States of America. That's a good thing. (Applause.)

One way of telling whether you've built an institution and not just a set of individuals is whether or not, as the individuals come and go, the institution's reputation remains as a place where such people will be found. And again by that measure the institute has become a successful institution. So you built something larger than yourselves, larger even than some of the stars who work with the institute, people like Dennis Ross or Rob Satloff, whose names are watchwords for expertise on this region. And that's an important tribute to the work all of you have done.

You've asked me tonight to take on the small topic of discussing "Building Security in the Broader Middle East," a region that currently seems to be aflame from end to end. So I'm reminded of the Talmudic proverb of the student who wants to learn the Talmud. He says, "Rabbi, teach me the Talmud while standing on one foot." And then the rabbi of course answered him gracefully, saying, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, all the rest is commentary."

Discussing the task of building security in the broader Middle East in just a few minutes is a formidable task. I'll try to do it by covering ten points because I know it's the end of a long day, you've just had dinner, you're fresh and alert and really, really ready for a good wonkish talk. I picked ten points because, as all of you know, ten is a number that has mystic power when you discuss the Middle East—commandments, tribes—so ten points.

First, the underlying sources of insecurity.

My colleagues and I all look at a few things over and over when we think of the underlying sources of insecurity in the region. We look at the generational challenge that modernity poses for the Arab and Muslim world. What after all do we mean by modernity? By modernity we mean abstract institutions, a civic culture and a civic society that owes allegiance to abstract concepts. We mean a society that is dominated by the constancy of change confronting Arab and Muslim societies built on deep reservoirs and pillars of tradition where loyalty is owed to family, clan, tribe and where change is threatening. And we see as the Arab and Muslim world confronts modernity, many issues of political development, economic development, and indeed human development. The September 11 Commission report in chapter two tried to succinctly summarize some of them. They're familiar to many of you.

Another underlying source of insecurity one has to reckon with in this region is the centrality of Islam; not in a critical sense, but simply as a dominant cultural fact of life for the region. So here it's important, for example, to notice the lingering significance of the Iranian revolution of 1979 and what followed not just for Iran itself, but because it created a dynamic in which devout religious zealots across the Middle East competed for primacy with competitive demonstrations of zealotry and outreach in their own versions of evangelism.

So it created a dynamic in places like Saudi Arabia, for example, of competition for ideological dominance that had some important and, in some ways, quite negative and serious results. We saw the rise of political Islam, its decline in the 1990s, and perhaps now we're seeing its resurgence again. We're seeing the growth of violent Islamic extremism which President Bush has referred to using a more commonplace and less academic phrase: Islamic radicalism.

Another underlying source is simply the fragile polities—the people who form the ruling elites of these states—and their fragility with weak states, themselves weak in their sheer administrative capacity to do even simple things that we take for granted in modern states like collect taxes, even the most basic sorts of efforts to monitor their borders, and so on. So, underlying sources of insecurity.

A second point: there are enduring regional flashpoints.

These are familiar to you. There is of course the enduring flashpoint of the Arab-Israeli conflict on which I think I need add no more. There is also an enduring flashpoint of Iran confronting the Arab world coming back to the fore again. And, of course, the flashpoints within particular countries. Lebanon, for instance, is one notable example recently in the news; there is Iraq and other cases we could point to.

My third point: terrorism as a corrosive agent.

I choose those words because I don't want to present terrorism alone as the force that overthrows governments and replaces what rules them. I find it useful to think of terrorism instead as working the way a powerful acid would work on the bonds that hold

the society together, corroding them and weakening them, thus enabling other forces to tear them apart more easily.

The terrorist threat itself is a multifaceted threat; at least three facets are worth noting, each distinct though they overlap.

First there's al-Qaeda: its affiliates, its adherents. What's notable about it—the ideology is familiar, the president has given a speech recounting at some length the kind of ideas al-Qaeda espouses—is to step back and notice that these ideas are basically fantasist and the organization and its operation has been significantly broken by our efforts since 9/11 and now is largely atomized, though still quite dangerous for that. It is reminiscent in some respects, speaking as a one-time historian, to the threat that anarchism seemed to pose to the civilized world 100 years ago. All sorts of cells around the world, which were believed to be affiliated with each other, somehow seemed to be working together. They were animated by a common ideology without formal structure but drew common inspiration from ideologues like Prince Kropotkin in London.

This is an organization that venerated the “propaganda of the deed,” as they called it, practically worshipped the new technology of dynamite as a great equalizer, and was responsible for the murder of half a dozen heads of government around the world, including an American president.

But in addition to that facet of terrorism, you have Shiite extremists—Shia extremism often with Iranian support. And it's worth noting that both the Shiite extremists and their Iranian sponsors often forge opportunistic connections to Sunni terrorism as well. Those who argued that Iran would never work with Sunni terrorists will find a number of examples where Iran will forge alliances of convenience to serve its purposes.

A third facet is local insurgencies that overlap with transnational terror networks in various ways. You have, for example, the special case of Iraq, an insurgency that really deserves a chapter of study all its own and that is predominantly Iraqi. Even al-Qaeda in Iraq is overwhelmingly Iraqi in its makeup. There are foreigners in middle management, maybe one in top management. They use a number of foreigners as ammunition in effect, expending them as they arrive. But it's a predominantly Iraqi organization, yet clearly with ties to transnational terror as well. And then there's the Taliban. There are organizations in Southeast Asia or in Africa.

But when you step back from this terrorist phenomenon, one thing that's worth some perspective—you can't pass without comment, even though we know it semiconsciously—is to observe the historically unprecedented nihilism and barbarity of these terrorists. There is simply no precedent for it. I remarked on the anarchists earlier. An anarchist of 1906 would regard the terrorist activities perpetrated by these groups—the beheadings on television so on—these are people who would plant dynamite in a public street and they would be appalled by the things that these groups are willing to do and countenance. Today's groups both create and play to what I'm afraid I can only call a desensitized and debased public sensibility—a public so callous that it does not

recoil anymore at the shocks that are being inflicted on them and the appalling contrast to civilization that these groups present.

These groups play, and really reflect, inchoate hatreds, insecurities, and alienation. They have a nominal ideology but one which in many ways is utopian and can't be taken seriously in the real world. In many cases their meaning, I believe, is defined more existentially—and in some cases the clues to their existence can better be found in the works of Albert Camus than through reading their ideological tracts.

Insight into these organizations comes by looking past their political veneer to the study of cults or racketeering organizations.

They have assets. They exploit our globalized society. They exploit the vulnerabilities of the complex systems, a term I use here metaphorically as well as literally, as well as the potential that they might acquire weapons of mass destruction.

The fourth point: old bargains have disappeared.

Old bargains have disappeared, and with them the often illusory sense of security they provided. What do I mean by that? I mean old bargains like enforced secularism as we saw in countries like Turkey and Egypt. “We can keep the lid on these religious groups.” That kind of apparent deal that seemed to provide security and stability is disappearing. What was happening as they kept the lid on those groups is that they drove political activity into the mosques; and they Islamicized it; and then it emerged in forms that we can all witness today.

You had the bargains of state-controlled religious practice, as we see in Saudi Arabia—where the state cuts its deal with the religious establishment in ways that I think even many in the Saudi government would quietly regard as problematical, as they cope with its consequences. You had the bargain of the oppression of the Shia, and the assumption that that arrangement could endure stably and indefinitely. You had the bargain, indeed, with the terrorists themselves, sometimes called freedom fighters not so long ago—even Yasser Arafat, the freedom fighter. Or you had the more sordid bargains: don't attack us here, attack somewhere else, leave us alone here. They cut their deals, and they found that those deals now have come back to haunt them.

So those old bargains have disappeared, and as those old bargains disappear, we are indeed seeing transformational change across the Middle East, which then brings me to my fifth point: how to build security in an environment of such understandable and in some ways inevitable turmoil.

Point Five: Practical Idealism

The secretary of state has spoken of the ideal of practical idealism. There are a number of other phrases people have tossed out—progressive realism, etc. The point is that it is possible to avoid the simple dichotomy between being a realist or being an

idealist—which, by the way, I believe is a false description of American history and American political ideas. It is a false description and a false way of pigeonholing people today. It is possible to have both ideals and be realistic and practical in how you implement them. The challenge is whether we can execute such a vision. But in a policy of practical idealism you accept the inevitability of change and then work to help others shape its course.

For the Bush administration, there are some important landmarks. In the Arab-Israeli conflict, President Bush's statements in 2002 and 2004 moved toward a new vision of the future of relations between Israel and the Palestinians. There is the liberation of Iraq and the resulting empowerment of the Shia there in 2003 and beyond. There is the president's second inaugural address at the beginning of 2005. There were the moves that pushed Syria out of Lebanon, at last. That allowed Lebanon to attain a truly national government that began to represent more of the Lebanese people than before. And other changes in other parts of the Middle East that are still underway.

But it is absolutely true, as many have observed, that trying to shape such change has posed a tremendous challenge to our imagination, to the imagination of our policymakers—to my colleagues and to myself—and has posed a tremendous challenge to our institutions. Our institutions weren't built for this world, weren't built for these challenges and are struggling to adapt to them and to find the capacities to help others cope.

Beyond that, there is also the challenge to Arab and Muslim leaders because, after all, they must end up providing the leadership that will shape the future of their societies. The United States can be their partner, their friend, their source of support. But ultimately the shape of the political cultures, the shape of the economies, the shape of their societies will be determined by Arabs and Muslims themselves. And of course there is a challenge to the rest of the world to notice and take interest and get off the sidelines and to try to take part in a constructive way, too.

Some countries in the world have stepped up to that challenge and I think they're confronting the same strains on their own imagination and their own institutions that we, too, confront.

With that general point in mind, let me turn to my sixth point as I go through a few of the particular areas of our policy efforts to try to confront this problem more directly.

Point Six: Shaping the environment—the conduct of the global war on terror

The sixth point is a little bit different. It has to do with shaping the environment in the way we conduct the global war on terror. I don't think you can really separate the way we conduct the war on terror from American policy in the Middle East. I don't think you can separate what we do—say, with Guantanamo or with detainees—from American

policy and fortunes in the Middle East. The Secretary of State does not think so and neither does the President of the United States.

That's why—in addition to adopting a whole series of new strategies for combating terrorism, that talk about the way institutions are changing, the new attention to the role of Islamic radicalism, the willingness to confront those ideas directly, and the efforts we're giving to public diplomacy—President Bush has announced a comprehensive new approach to the issues of detainees. This topic has been a source of attack on America and its ideals throughout the world.

I think in the debate in recent days, dominated in the newspapers by arguments over the details of the pending legislation, the larger picture is obscured. It is a comprehensive new policy—a paradigm shift in our approach to these detainee issues. Let me just tick off some of the ingredients so you can realize the comprehensive nature of these changes. I'll list just nine.

1. The decision that we need a sustainable policy for the long haul built on partnership: domestically with the Congress; internationally with allies and partners.
2. A new and public Army field manual and DOD directive providing baseline policies for the detention and treatment of captured terrorists.
3. An entirely new approach to military commissions already underway before the Supreme Court's decision and now informed by it as well.
4. Employing those military commissions for major war criminals, not Osama's driver. These commissions will finally bring the 9/11 conspirators to justice and, I hope, usher in a process where America will be reminded what the struggle is all about.
5. The decision announced in the East Room of the White House that America does intend to close Guantanamo. Indeed, the description of that glide path will prepare the way for that closure in the repatriation of prisoners to their home countries and trials of war criminals. It is necessarily a difficult process working on problems involving 33 different countries, many of whom don't want their people back.
6. The decision to disclose and explain a particular CIA interrogation program and the vigorous defense of the need to preserve a small program of this kind.
7. The decision to transition such a program so that today, aside from the existing facilities in the United States criminal justice system and the law of war facilities we have in Iraq and Afghanistan, there are currently no detainees held by the United States who are not at Guantanamo. All of them are filed with the International Committee of the Red Cross. All of them with

access to the International Committee of the Red Cross. No one being held in secret prisons as we go through a transition period—(audio break)—and will be worked on in consultation with Congress so we can sustain an important intelligence collection program for the future.

8. Putting the program on a durable legal framework that reiterates our commitment against torture, but also accepts, as a minimum standard, that America will adhere to common Article III of the Geneva Convention. By the way, I notice there has been some controversy in the papers over whether we're reinterpreting it or not. I think I can strongly defend the position that we are not narrowing the scope of common Article III. We're trying to clarify the interpretation of vague provisions, but in a way that will narrow the way it would be interpreted anyway under our laws and, I think, in international law as well. We do need to clarify the application of common Article III under American law because there are issues of felony liability associated with violating it.
9. An offer to foreign governments telling them that we've listened to their concerns and challenging them to work with us on what the president called "a common foundation to protect our nations and our freedoms."

Point Seven: Iran

My seventh point is with Iran. Iran is simply a central issue in thinking about a comprehensive strategy for the region. This comprehensive strategy is premised on understanding the significance of Iranian revolutionary ambitions, seeing them as a central threat not only to Israel, but also to the Arab world. Iran wants to challenge the status quo, vie for primacy in a number of respects, and tear things down.

Right now, there are a lot of people writing that Iran's feeling confident. "They're feeling good. Things are working out their way." As a historian it's sometimes useful to have perspectives—there's always a moment where the enemy looks ten feet tall, then a few months later maybe nine and a half feet. Iran has some weaknesses. It is not fundamentally a strong, prosperous, unified country. It is a weak base from which to challenge the region and it's useful to keep those weaknesses in mind.

There are questions for Iran's leaders, questions that they must answer. I'd summarize the questions very simply. We see you can tear things down, what is it that you want to build? Or, more fundamentally, what do you want your country to become? You believe that you're the heirs of a great civilization and that's a fair statement. What should the country that has that inheritance become? Should it become gradually a kind of pariah state feared and reviled by its neighbors, increasingly isolated by the rest of the world, its economic prospects, its cultural influence, its prestige shrinking accordingly? Or is there another more positive future that Iran should try to reach?

The goal of American diplomacy is, in effect, to pose those questions and oblige Iranian leaders to answer them and make hard choices. To make the Iranian leaders look at those hard choices, you have to present them with diplomacy that has serious costs associated with their present policies. That's a lot of what's being debated right now. What's being tested is whether we have a viable diplomatic strategy that can present Iran's leaders with the questions that we and our allies agree Iran must and should answer.

Meanwhile, we must work together to stand up to Iran in the region with our Arab friends, stand up to Iran in Iraq—standing for the cause of Iraqi nationalism not Iraqi dependence—stand up to Iran in the United Nations and in Europe and East Asia. Notice President Bush's message which was in David Ignatius' column this morning. We take the diplomatic road very seriously. We want diplomacy to work.

One of the concerns I have about my friends, some of them on the conservative side, who argue that we don't have the resolve to face up now to the binary, uncomfortable choice we should face between war and peace is that they've already shoved the diplomacy aside. They're anxious to get to the real issue, the interesting issue, the glamorous issue. Then it's a self-fulfilling prophecy; we assume the diplomacy won't work. Let's talk now about the war and peace problem. How about we try to make the diplomacy work because Iranian leaders do need to face that choice. That's the message the president was conveying.

Point Eight: Lebanon

My eighth point is about Lebanon. The conventional wisdom (CW) here of course, is Hizballah and Iran won, Israel and America lost. I would just urge all of you to stop, reflect, and look again. This situation is changing. Events now are on a line where, if they continue along this line, it could be very different a few months from now than the standard conventional wisdom was in the first seventy-two hours after resolution 1701 was passed.

After all, the fundamental goal of American policy was to be sure that the status quo ante that produced the last war will change so that the likelihood of it producing another war is less. How are we doing on that? Look at the strategic priority. How are we doing on reducing the danger of Israel being attacked from Lebanon? That's the enemy's perspective. The enemy's perspective is to use Lebanon as a proxy battlefield from which you can launch another front of assault against "occupied Palestine."

Thousands of international troops, with unprecedented rules of engagement, are streaming into southern Lebanon. That is more than the CW predicted would come in. The force is more robust than the CW predicted. And they are standing there as a buffer to help protect Israel from renewed attack. The Lebanese armed forces has deployed to that part of Lebanon for the first time in a generation to work with the international force.

It's not perfect yet. The Syria-Lebanon borders aren't secured the way they should be. There are flaws and issues we'll need to confront, but the status quo that produced the war is already changing. The Lebanese national government comes out stronger in many ways than it was before as a national government.

Hizballah faces new dilemmas, new choices. When Nasrallah says he wouldn't have started the war if he'd known what would happen, that's not a crow of victory. They will face new constraints, new choices.

And Syria, which was out of Lebanon last year, is still out of Lebanon. Contrary to the advice that some of my friends here in Washington were offering, we did not invite Syria to once again become the central power broker in Lebanon, using Lebanon of course as a vehicle to negotiate Golan.

So Syria is a loser. My hope is, of course, that they won't act out in certain ways because of that fact. So Lebanon's prospects could turn out to be better than people think if we can realize the potential of the moves that are already underway.

Point Nine: Iraq

My ninth point: I want to comment just for a minute on Iraq. Here our major strategies are relatively easy to summarize, but a little harder to execute. Three basic pillars: security as a foundation, Baghdad first; pressing hard for a national reconciliation process so that the Iraqi leaders will show their people and us that will work out a way to live together and share power. And third, reinforcement and leverage through an international compact that brings a lot of the outside stakeholders on Iraq together. The Compact will say to Iraq: if you reach national reconciliation and you transform your political economy addressing some of the things that are needed to turn your country around, the whole world is going to be behind you and we'll help invest in your future.

There is so much gloom about Iraq right now that any commentary I would make about the problems there would only reinforce and recapitulate things you've already.

But we have some assets on our side. The terrorists are not popular in Iraq. They scare people but they are not popular. They do not represent a nationalist movement that has gripped the imagination of the people of Iraq. The Iraqi government is better—much better—than it was. It is more capable of carrying through the kind of strategy I just outlined than its predecessors. Also, the U.S. government is experienced.

The Shia and Sunni militias that cause a lot of the violence actually do not wish to overthrow the Iraqi government. They have a more limited agenda, often about self-help and autonomy. But that helps you sense that there is the basis here for some kind of political understanding. And there is a widespread belief among Iraqis that they want a thing called Iraq to succeed because all of their plan B's are less certain and less secure than the plan A of a successful Iraq.

But the challenges there are immense. We and the Iraqi government have to fight overwhelming, enervating fear. We have to fight the impatience of Iraq's friends. We have to fight a deep mistrust that exists within Iraq among its communities, often well founded by bitter experience each of the communities have had with each other.

Fundamentally we see a challenge of collective action. It is a classic challenge of collective action. You can see how in certain ways if they would all come together they would all be more secure. They would all be more prosperous. Yet to come together requires such an intricate set of concessions and bargains that it is hard for any one side to propose and stand for it. It's a classic political problem that Iraq's leaders must step up to resolve with the strong and continuing help of friends like the United States.

Point Ten: Israel and its Neighbors

My tenth point, and my last one, is to conclude by discussing Israel and its neighbors. The significance of the Arab-Israeli dispute across these problems is, I think, obvious to all of you. What I would want to emphasize is if you see the threats in a way something like the way I've just described them, think then about what is the coalition you need to amass in order to combat those threats. Who are the key members of that coalition? You can imagine the United States, key European allies, the state of Israel and the Arab moderates—Arabs who seek a peaceful future. You could call it the coalition of the builders, not just a coalition of the willing. The coalition of the builders as opposed to the coalition of the destroyers.

What would bind that coalition and help keep them together is a sense that the Arab-Israeli issues are being addressed, that they see a common determination to sustain an active policy that tries to deal with the problems of Israel and the Palestinians. We don't want this issue doesn't have the real corrosive effects that it has, or the symbolic corrosive effects that it causes in undermining some of the friends we need friends to confront some of the serious dangers we must face together.

That's kind of a broad overview of the points I wanted to make to help understand the administration's approach to building security in the broader Middle East. It's an extraordinary challenge. It's the kind of challenge that America and its friends have lived through before in times that sometimes seem very dark. But it's important to understand the breadth of the challenge we face and to try to work together sometimes across party lines, across some of our pettier divisions in dealing with them and forging a brighter future.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

MR. ROBERT SATLOFF: Philip, thank you very much. That was an extraordinary presentation. I think we now know why you were so successful and efficient at managing the September 11 Commission. That was a tour d'horizon and a tour de force all at the same and there will be a quiz early tomorrow morning on point 8.6. (Laughter.)

MR. ZELIKOW: We will make copies of the outline that I used for my remarks available so that you can have a cheat sheet for the quiz.

MR. BERKOWITZ: I might add, for each of you who pass this quiz there will be a diploma. (Laughter.)

MR. SATLOFF: Philip, I'd like to begin a question and answer session by asking you about the connections between seven, eight and ten, namely, Iran, Lebanon and the Arab-Israeli dispute. For the first time in recent memory, the stakeholders in all these issues have broadened, so that now it's not just that party and the United States, but now Europeans are a key actor in each one of these—in each of one of these issues, and I think your last point—if I heard you correctly—was how important it is for us to ensure that the corrosive impact or the perceived corrosive impact of the lack of horizon on the Arab-Israeli conflict does not undermine what we hope other actors will be able to do to help us progress on Lebanon and on Iran.

So I'd like to ask you to expand on that a bit and tell us specifically, what is the administration's approach—not so much toward a national unity government that might emerge in Gaza between Hamas and Fatah—but how does this fit in—how does this development fit in our relationship with Europeans on whom we're counting for so much in Lebanon and on Iran? What is the relationship between their desires and our desires on these three issues, and how that plays in the U.S.-European relationship?

MR. ZELIKOW: Okay. For various reasons, I believe the Europeans and the Arab moderates are central allies in the coalition we need to forge against our most dangerous enemies. Now, if you start with that as a premise then what you always need to do when you share power is you share a common mission with friends. You have to think about what they want and what they need too.

For the Arab moderates and for the Europeans, some sense of progress and momentum on the Arab-Israeli dispute is just a sine qua non for their ability to cooperate actively with the United States on a lot of other things that we care about. We can rail against that belief; we can find it completely justifiable, but it's fact. That means an active policy on the Arab-Israeli dispute is an essential ingredient to forging a coalition that deals with the most dangerous problems.

I would take that even further. I would say that it is essential for the state of Israel because, in some ways, I do not believe that the Palestinian threat, per se, is the most dangerous threat to the future of the state of Israel. If Israel, for example, is especially

worried about Iran and sees it as an existential threat, then it's strongly in the interest of Israel to want the American-led coalition to work on an active policy that begins to normalize that situation. It's an essential glue that binds a lot of these problems together. And so ironically, even if your primary concern is not the Palestinian danger, you have to give it primary attention while you're looking at other problems as well.

In Lebanon, what we've seen is an important illustration that's still underway. It is a test of whether of the viability of different kinds of solutions to a security problem, and clearly some mix of unilateral military action and military deterrence combined with agile diplomacy is going to be part of that, which is one reason why I think it's so important that our efforts in Lebanon succeed and one reason why it would be a challenge for Iran and Hizballah and Syria to decide whether they want they want to be spoilers and, if so, be prepared to pay the cost they will be associated with being spoilers and make sure those costs are high. So then you see that if you want to—(audio break)—Israeli issues become very important.

One other brief point, since you alluded to the possible formation of a National Unity government. I want to reiterate that, from the United States point of view, a National Unity government cannot succeed if it doesn't meet the Quartet conditions. From the view of our policy, the quartet conditions are an essential prerequisite not only to obtaining the international assistance that the government will be seeking, but in fact, to obtain the kind of assistance from the state of Israel that will be indispensable for the viability of any Palestinian budget or economy.

MR. SATLOFF: Thank you. I'm now going to open up a question and answer session. If you could kindly put your hands up and I'll do my best to identify you, and then a microphone should head your way. And I'll start with a couple of questions. First, Dennis Ross and then Marvin Kalb on my left and then Bob Lieber in the back left. Microphone up front, please—and then Daniel, can you give it to Marvin?

MR. DENNIS ROSS: Philip, the connections you draw in answer to Rob's question I think are there. It's very understandable that there is a strategic agenda that brings the Europeans, Arab moderates and us and even the Israelis together in terms of wanting to contain Iran, and one of the most significant developments of Lebanon, at least in the first week was the Saudi criticism of Hizballah, which clearly demonstrated their concerns about not having this be a tool of the Iranians and the importance of continuing them.

But you're also quite right to say that they will want—especially Arab moderates—they will want some kind of cover on the issue of the Palestinians. Now, if one is going to launch some kind of an initiative, it comes down not to having stated broad principles or broad slogans; it comes down to this question: is there a readiness to actually assume responsibilities, not to talk about peace in the abstract, not to say, "Let's find a new formula that will solve this," but what will those who are prepared to be part of this coalition actually do? And now I say from some rich experience that the readiness to talk is one thing; the readiness to do is something else.

So have you found at this point—in any of the kinds of preliminary discussions that reflect this kind of a broad strategic orientation, do you find among some of our Arab friends a readiness to assume real responsibilities beyond just talking about what should be done?

MR. ZELIKOW: I think the premise of the question is dead right and I think the answer to that question is yes, but it has not been fully tested. Fundamentally, what has to happen is for the Arab countries to think the crisis is about as serious as we think it is. They may disagree with us about what the causes are. They may blame us. They may blame all kinds of other forces for the crisis. But they have to recognize that they are in an acute crisis. In other words, they have to be afraid. They have to be worried about the future; I think they are. I think they know how acute the crisis is when Saudi Arabia takes a stand as risky as the stand was that they took at the outset of the Lebanese war from the point of view of their politics.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, they immediately put a half a billion dollars in a Lebanese bank account. That's beginning to say something for them, but in a way that's an installment on the kinds of commitments that will really be needed because the way I would appeal to them is not to say, Saudi Arabia or Jordan or Kuwait or the United Arab Emirates or Egypt,—you should follow America's lead and do what America asks you to do. Instead, I think, the argument for them is: How can we, working together, help you see that you are facing an unprecedented challenge, perhaps in which you have an opportunity to save the Arab nation, in which to come to the rescue of fledgling states in the Arab world struggling for survival, that are looking to you for leadership and sustenance, and in which you will need America as a vital partner for your success, but in which you clearly have a burden within your own world at this moment, flush with petrodollars. You may have a special ability to step up to that challenge.

Step back and look at this for a moment. We read the stories in the paper about Iran flooding southern Lebanon with money. If this issue gets fought over who can provide the most political legitimacy; who can have the comparative advantage in economic levers; I don't think Iran should win that. And I think the Arab world can help and I think they know it. So it's a matter of their internalizing the challenge, which I think they've done, and then trying to figure how do we actually act on that. And action has sometimes been difficult in the past, but we're clearly entering a period of history that will summon forth, I think, the qualities of Arab leadership. The weeks and months ahead will determine whether or not we'll find it. I hope we will, though not for our sake, but also for theirs because of a problem that they recognize, not just one that we recognize.

MR. SATLOFF: Thank you. Yes, Marvin?

MR. MARVIN KALB: Phil, your ten-point talk had all of the qualities of a good Kennedy School ten-point presentation. Thank you. (Laughter.) I can't quite resist asking this question. You cited the David Ignatius column today in the Washington Post and you cited it in a very positive way. If your eyes had cast a little further down on that page, you

would have come upon the article done by Charles Krauthammer in which he started by pointing out that in three very crucial ways, American military action against Iran would produce extraordinarily negative consequences, but he concluded his column by saying that such action is probably necessary and he said that it will come before the U.S. government within a year.

I'm wondering if you see action or a decision or a way in which the U.S. will ultimately address this question coming before the world community and the Washington establishment within a year.

MR. ZELIKOW: Marvin, I'll try from another element of my Kennedy School background, which is when I used to go to executive programs on how to handle the media—(laughter)—and you and your colleagues warned us not to answer hypothetical questions, especially about war and peace. (Laughter.)

MR. KALB: It won't fly.

MR. ZELIKOW: But one lesson that I learned, perhaps a little bit as a historian, is that history is a fluid thing. I really don't know what the world will be like three months from now, six months from now and certainly not a year from now. People ask me the question, well, what do you think the Iranian leaders will do if you actually get the UN resolution that you're seeking with the kind of sanction efforts? People have their different assumptions about it. You know, what I think the honest answer is? The honest answer is we don't know what they will do. And why don't we know what they will do? It's not because our intelligence is weak. I'm not saying that we have great intelligence—(laughter)—about what they think. That's because I don't think *they* know what they will do. So how can we know it?

Why do I think they don't know what they will do? Because they haven't had to face that choice yet. So for them, the easy way out right now is to—while we can agree—whatever our differences would be if we were really forced to the choice—we can agree for now on this particular line of action, which stalls and procrastinates and puts it off and tries to avoid the choice.

I mean, you read the paper that they sent, which has now been published, on August 22, and if that doesn't look like a tortured interagency product, I don't know what does. (Laughter.) They've put off having to make the hard decisions. So the goal of diplomacy now is to force them to make a decision. And I think even they don't know what they will do. It's way too premature to speculate about what America will do after they've made it.

MR. SATLOFF: Bob Lieber in the back left.

MR. BOB LIEBER: Bob Lieber, Georgetown University, not the Kennedy School. (Laughter.) My question is also about Iran, but it's not a hypothetical. Your talk was coherent and compelling, but the problem right now with Iran seems to be that while

there's a good forceful logic in American policy, it in the end has to operate through the UN Security Council if sanctions or threat of sanctions are to have a real effect. At this point, however, there is very little reason to be optimistic about whether the Russians and Chinese for their own reasons will do what they ought to do, and there are even questions about whether the key Europeans—though the EU-3 played an important role previously, will stay in line or may look for some face-saving alternative, which really doesn't address the core problem.

So my question is how do you get something done on a diplomatic front given these real problems right now?

MR. ZELIKOW: With the great skill and charm of the Secretary of State—(laughter)—backed by the President of the United States. But it's going to be hard because we're asking some of these countries to make choices that they don't want to make either. But I remember not too long ago in, let's say May, if you'd taken a poll among Washington insiders and asked them, how many of you believe that Russia and China will vote for a UN resolution that threatens Iran with Chapter 7 sanctions as a resolution adopted under Chapter 7. How many of you think that that resolution will pass with their votes? And I think a lot of the insider community, the votes would have been no, "won't happen." But it did. It did because of a lot of hard work and also, frankly, because people kept watching Iranian behavior, and the Russians and Chinese cannot afford to be philosophical about Iranian behavior.

The Russians, as I think anyone will find who spends time talking to them about this, especially in different parts of the Russian government, will find a lot of ambivalence about Iran. They're really worried about Iran and they're really worried about us to some degree, but I think that they're seeing that the United States is genuinely committed to multilateral diplomacy and I think that's going to help. And when push comes to shove, the Russians have cast some of the critical votes on the key resolutions that we've needed, and they've signed up to an agreement with us, which they still say they're prepared to own up to if Iran doesn't do what the agreement specifies Iran must do.

Even in the case of the Chinese—the Chinese recognize—and we pointed out to them—that actually if they stepped back and this issue just kind of goes along, it's not as if letting this issue alone buys them a stable Persian Gulf with all the stability of energy supplies that they hoped for. Because if this issue goes along a certain way, there are a number of scenarios in which the Persian Gulf region and energy supplies become highly unstable and that's not in their national interest either. So the Chinese government has repeatedly emphasized to the government of Iran its fervent wishes that they will do what the international community has asked them to do.

So we are dealing with countries that are facing a lot of ambivalence and discomfort about the choices that lie before them. And we have friends that are working with us, in part because our diplomacy over the last year and a half has helped them

owned up to the responsibilities they share with us in conducting this diplomacy. I think they'll face those choices when they must and it's our job to help them do it.

MR. SATLOFF: I'll move to this side of the room. Mort Zuckerman here in the center, directly in front of me.

MR. MORT ZUCKERMAN: We've all read of the increasing role of the Arab media, particularly Al-Jazeera and the cable networks. To what extent do you find that that constrains particularly the governments—the Sunni governments: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Egypt—in terms of what we would like them to do? I mean, how do you deal with that issue?

MR. ZELIKOW: Sorry, could you say that again, Mort?

MR. ZUCKERMAN: I was asking about the Arab media, particularly Al-Jazeera, when they present the news in a particular way it begins to affect the attitudes of the government. To what extent do you find it does constraint them and how would you assess that in terms of what you want them to do knowing that some of the things you want them to do will be very, very volatile in terms of their politics?

MR. ZELIKOW: Yes, all the Arab governments notice what's on Al-Jazeera, and especially outside of Qatar they all have pronounced views about it, which they can explain much better than I can. Of course it creates serious problems for them because Al-Jazeera basically presents a portrait of the world in which the world is attacking Islam and that's a portrait that creates a lot of discomfort for Arab governments that actually want to work with the rest of the international community. There are other sources of news and information available to Arab publics and the United States is doing what it can to provide additional sources of information for them too, but it's a big problem. It's a big problem that Arab societies are in a state of human development in which Arab publics overwhelmingly rely on satellite television for their news and overwhelmingly rely on newspapers that reflect a kind of a political and civic culture and standards of journalistic integrity that we find very difficult to understand and certainly very difficult, at times, to accept.

And that in turn creates enormous constraints and complicating factors for the very Arab governments whom we want to work with in solving these problems, but in a way, those problems are so endemic and long term that we just have to forge ahead with the policies we need in the short term to combat these problems despite those—those dangerous and difficult undercurrents, but we do have to be aware of them.

MR. SATLOFF: Trudy Rubin, just to my right here, from the Philadelphia Inquirer.

MS. TRUDY RUBIN: Would the U.S. be willing to entertain the concept of a grand bargain with Iran that included security guarantees and possibly recognition if Iran in turn committed to changing its behavior on the issues that concern us?

MR. ZELIKOW: I think the Secretary of State made a statement when she announced our diplomatic approach at the end of May that really conveyed a very clear message to the government of Iran, that if they will verifiably suspend their nuclear program, they can return to the negotiations and everything is on the table. We have a lot of things we want to discuss with them as you alluded to in your question—their behavior on a lot of subjects, not just the nuclear enrichment. They, in turn, may want to put a lot of things on the table on their side. They're free to put anything on the table that they want to put on the table, as can we. Once they meet the necessary precondition to have meaningful negotiations, which is we don't want to conduct the negotiations with kind of a ticking bomb on the table next to us, so to speak—speaking metaphorically. (Laughter.)

So I really don't want to forecast what the particular shape of the deal is that we might propose and they might find inviting. But what I think your question hints at is if the Iranians were willing to come to the table with the kind of conditions, I think the international community, not just the United States, the United Nations, indeed, has sensibly asked for, can all these issues get on the table, can they get discussed, can you have that kind of diplomacy? And I think the Secretary made it very clear that that kind of negotiation was possible, that all those kinds of issues could be discussed if they can be discussed under circumstance where we're not being intimidated by an ongoing effort to build nuclear weapons.

MR. SATLOFF: In the front on my left.

MR. MICHAEL STEIN: You've talked about the importance of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian issue, but are we really talking about the Israeli-Arab issue, the Palestinians being the result of the overall Arab issue, not the cause of it—the Israeli-Arab conflict, because most Arabs believe that every inch of Middle East soil must be Islamic and that there is no room, not even one-tenth of one percent of their geography, for a Jewish state. How do you confront that, which I describe as the underlying disease rather than just a symptom of that disease, which most people talk about when they discuss the Palestinian issue?

MR. ZELIKOW: In a lot of respects, all the different societies and warring points of view in the Middle East have to try to reconcile their dreams with reality and with some fundamental respect that other people have to live too and have to live in the region and figure out how to live together. Here, though, is where I thought moves like the moves that Arab leaders announced in Beirut in 2002 are ingredients in a peaceful outcome for the Middle East because there's a fundamental premise there that there can be two states living side by side and that the state of Israel can exist as part of a peaceful Middle East. So clearly some Arab governments and some Arab leaders are prepared to accept that.

Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority, has made that point perfectly clear. A lot of Arab leaders are prepared to accept the continued existence of the state of Israel. And so now what we're about is defining the contours of the respective

states, defining the circumstances under which they can live together and feel secure, but those are premises upon which diplomacy can be conducted.

MR. SATLOFF: Okay, just two more questions and then I'll take a final stab and then I'm going to have to close for this evening. Geoff Kemp and David Makovsky on the far left there.

MR. GEOFFREY KEMP: I was delighted that you didn't want to deal with future policy—but as a historian, could you define for us a little more clearly what you mean by a moderate Arab state? As I understand it, the two Arab countries that made peace with Israel—Egypt and Jordan—are not exactly democratic, and the president and the secretary of State keep talking about sixty years of failed American diplomacy, which includes President Bush's father and many others, and you yourself talk about the need to deal with moderate Arab states given the dilemmas we face right now with Iran and Iraq. So could you be a little more clear about we're talking about because I don't think it's clear to all of us.

MR. ZELIKOW: Sure. A working definition of Arab moderation that I think the administration would support is that Arab moderates are those Arab governments that believe outside their borders in peacefully constructing a future for their region instead of violently destroying the status quo. And second, states that within their borders are trying to chart a better future for their people that we think is struggling toward greater empowerment of their people. We have some significant disagreements with some of our friends about the way—about the kinds of choices they're making, the kinds of paths they're choosing. But it's not saying that we know what the right answer is for Egypt or we know what the right answer is for Saudi Arabia.

The President, in his Second Inaugural, was very clear that we're not going to dictate the kinds of polities these countries will have. They're going to have to make those choices for themselves. But we can stand for certain values and encourage them and offer ideas and ways and support to help make choices that we think are in the interest of their own people. I mean, these are fundamentally countries that have to decide. Are you interested in constructing a better future for your nation's children, or are there other things that are more important to you? And I think in the case of a lot of countries we work with, that I've described as Arab moderates that however critical we may be of some of their specific decision and policies, they are struggling toward creating a better future at home as well as peaceful construction abroad.

MR. SATLOFF: Philip, before David goes, if I could just come in and ask you a follow-up on this point because it was the question I was going to ask. We have, in this room, quite a few current and former Arab parliamentarians, Arab liberals, people committed to progressive politics in Arab societies. I would imagine speaking to them after dinner tonight, they will come up to me and say, "a brilliant speech, but he didn't mention democracy and he didn't mention freedom." Are those items that had been on the foreign policy agenda but don't make the ten points anymore?

MR. DAVID MAKOVSKY: Rob, the question that I was going to ask was actually following up on that. So if it's okay, Rob, I'd like to add a friendly amendment. It was very interesting that this summer, Israel was facing two actors that were actually elected—Hizballah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza, so would you look back and say, maybe we need to refine, recalibrate how we define democratization, and to say, maybe it shouldn't be ballot-driven as the first step, so liberal means don't lead to illiberal ends.

But I guess my question here is if you look back with these two people, both with Hizballah—by the way, Hizballah was before the Bush administration. I just want to make clear that they entered the political arena, but when Mahmoud Abbas came—I think it was October 28—to the White House and he wanted a green light that Hamas should run in these elections, it seemed that an exception was made for both Hizballah before—again before Bush's watch and this—to say, okay, here is the one place where you could have both bullets and ballots; a party could be a militia. And we've seen how both of these actors—Hizballah and Hamas—have leveraged both ways. They've leveraged their political standing in the parliament to help their militia and they've used their militia to help their political standing.

And I guess my question is, is there going to be a kind of a new iteration, a new refinement on this so that the democratization = I think many would say this is very important—but maybe the first step isn't the ballot, or if it is, we're going to be more careful than we were with Hamas in giving green lights to movements that are also militias because of how pernicious this role of the non-state actors become in the Middle East. Has there been a rethinking? I mean, there's always the fear of the pendulum effect. Okay, we're sick of democratization. We're not going to do anything. We're going to go back to the old Scowcroft ways. (Laughter.) Maybe there's a middle ground that says, we're going to focus on institutions, women, media, the judiciary culminating in an election. Just your thoughts.

MR. SATLOFF: No need to specifically comment on the old Scowcroft ways—(laughter)—of course.

MR. ZELIKOW: Yeah, as Dennis knows, but many of you do not, I worked for Brent Scowcroft and am very proud of having worked for Brent Scowcroft and do not think that Brent Scowcroft represented—stood for failed policies of the past.

But in my remarks, I tried to vigorously endorse as the basic foundation of our whole policy and approach what I term practical idealism, but others come up with better monikers if they can. I talked about the landmarks of that. So I referred, for example, to the president's statements in 2002 and 2004 in which especially looking at Yasser Arafat's vision of Palestine, he said a lot of democracy and freedom is needed in those territories. I especially called attention to the President's Second Inaugural Address, a speech that I personally greatly admire and that I think actually is an extremely well-crafted speech, word for word, in talking about our ideals. But also making it clear that we weren't going to be dictating systems of government to other people, but we would stand for certain constant things. I think that's entirely right; I think that's entirely valid.

The challenge that we face is that people think that we're trying to prescribe a democratic system of government to them. We're standing for certain values. What President Bush and his State of the Union message of January 2002 called, I think, very eloquently, "the non-negotiable demands of human dignity." I think we can stand consistently for those, but we have to then put the challenge on local leaders. You need to chart the future of your countries. Here are the values we stand for, and by the way, here are the values that we think you're going to have to reckon with if you want the future of your countries to be a healthy one.

I talked in my remarks about some of the old bargains that had disappeared. I think what a lot of those old bargains had in common was violent repression of minorities and so I don't think that I was prescribing that as a recipe for success in the future, and that's not the view of the administration. But on the other hand, I think it would be an overreaction to say, well, they're shouldn't hold some elections. They're electing people we don't like because of a lot of these political trends that we commented on in the past are now working themselves out when people get a chance to vote. So some say now we don't want to really support them holding elections anymore.

The United States doesn't force these people to hold elections, but we do encourage democracy and we do encourage popular expression and we leave it to local leaders to try to find ways of doing that. It is true that if people are allowed to properly express themselves sometimes they will express themselves in ways that we may find uncomfortable and we may dislike, we may even abhor, and that's going to be part of the process of political change that this region must go through. Secretary Rice spoke to that about very clearly in the address she gave in Cairo last year. This is part of a long-term process of political change. So what we can do is stand for certain values, stand for certain directions, encourage them privately and publicly in ways that we think will be constructive, but above all place the burden on local leaders to find the ways in which they think those values could be meaningful in their political cultures and effective with traditions and expectations that they think will give their children a better future than their parents had.

MR. SATLOFF: Philip, it is evident to everyone in this room why the Secretary of State asked you to be a counselor. Thank you so much for that extraordinarily thoughtful and insightful presentation. Thank you. (Applause.)

(END)