

## Special Report:

# Super Tuesday and the Middle East

Mar 1, 2004



### Brief Analysis

**O**n the eve of the "super Tuesday" Democratic primaries, voters are scrutinizing the positions of the two leading candidates, Senators John Edwards and John Kerry. The following quotes outline their views on Middle East policy:

#### Iraq

Edwards: "This policy in Iraq is a failure. What [the Bush administration is] failing to do, unfortunately, is to take the American face off this operation. We're still completely in charge of what's going on there. We have no chance of success until we make several fundamental changes. If I were president today, I would go to the United Nations and give [it] authority to run the Iraqi civilian authority. The second thing is to change the composition of our security force so that it's no longer just an American security force, but instead a NATO-led operation. And third, I would cancel all these no-bid contracts that Halliburton has, that's allowed them to get billions of dollars in taxpayer money." -- Democratic presidential debate, Des Moines, Iowa, November 24, 2003

Kerry: "A powerful case can be made that the international community has a common interest in assuring that Iraq does not become a permanent quagmire or a rogue state reborn. . . . Our best option for success is to go back to the United Nations and leave no doubt with the world that we are prepared to put [that institution] in charge of the reconstruction and governance-building processes. . . . I believe the prospects for success on the ground will be far greater if Ambassador Bremer and the Coalition Provisional Authority are replaced by a UN Special Representative for Iraq -- mindful also of the U.S. security role in the context of the current resolution." -- "Making America Secure Again," Council on Foreign Relations, New York, December 3, 2003

#### Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Edwards: "I know from having served for years on the Senate Intelligence Committee that there [is] clear, overwhelming evidence of Arafat's connection to terrorism. . . . I think a two-state solution is ultimately the answer. But the question is whether we're going to stay engaged, whether American leadership will stay engaged over a long period of time to solve very deep-seated, deep-rooted problems, which means having somebody there -- either the secretary of state or an envoy from the secretary of state -- on a regular basis. It means, second, finding a way to create some level of trust. For example, going to the leadership of the Palestinians and saying, 'Arrest these two or three leaders of Hamas who, we both know, are involved in terrorism,' and saying to the Israelis, 'In exchange, we expect you to allow freer passage in the West Bank.' And to find ways to empower those within the Palestinian Authority who actually want peace and want to reform." -- Des Moines Register Democratic presidential debate, January 4, 2004

Kerry: "And I know how disheartened Palestinians are by the Israeli government's decision to build [a] barrier off of the Green Line -- cutting deep into Palestinian areas. We don't need another barrier to peace." -- Remarks at the Arab-American Institute, October 17, 2003

"President Bush pays lip service to the idea that Mideast peace is critical to the effort to combat terrorism, but his administration has lurched from episodic involvement to recurrent disengagement, jeopardizing -- in my judgment, and in the judgment of many -- the security of Israel, encouraging Palestinian extremists, and undermining our own long-term national interests and the efforts of the war on terror in the long run. . . . It's astonishing to me that we are not picking up somewhere near where we left off at Taba, where most of the difficult issues were resolved in many ways." -- "Making America Secure Again," Council on Foreign Relations, New York, December 3, 2003

"[I call it] a fence necessary to the security of Israel until they have a partner to be able to negotiate." -- Democratic presidential debate, New York, February 29, 2004

#### The War on Terrorism

Edwards: "As your president, I will bolster our effort to defeat terror. I will work with the world to transform the underlying conditions of tyranny that nourish the strength of our enemies and crush the hopes of friends, and I will take real action to keep the world's most dangerous weapons from falling into the wrong hands." -- "Strategy of Prevention, Not Preemption," Des Moines, Iowa, December 15, 2003

"The question is, what are we going to do offensively about the terrorist cells that everyone on this stage knows exist all over America today, tonight, right now? . . . [I]n my judgment, [that] means taking that responsibility away from the FBI . . . because we know that they're structurally incapable of doing it because of what we've seen happen in the past, the failures that existed before September 11. They're a law enforcement agency. They're not in the business of fighting terrorism." -- Democratic presidential debate, Durham, New Hampshire, December 9, 2003

Kerry: "The war on terror is far less of a military operation and far more of an intelligence gathering, law enforcement operation, and in order to fight an effective war on terror we need unprecedented cooperation with other countries, the very thing this administration is the worst at as they push other nations away from us." -- Brown and Black Democratic presidential debate, Des Moines, Iowa, January 11, 2004

"We must cut off the flow of terrorist funds. In the case of Saudi Arabia, the Bush administration has adopted a kid-glove approach to the supply and laundering of terrorist money. If I am president, we will impose tough financial sanctions against nations or banks that engage in money laundering or fail to act against it." -- "Fighting a Comprehensive War on Terrorism," UCLA, February 27, 2004

#### Democratization and Reform

Edwards: "You can't promote freedom without the support of free countries around the world. You can't promote freedom if you're not respected by the dissidents and democrats who are struggling to be free. Right now democrats in the Arab world simply do not see the U.S. as a credible champion of their cause." -- "Strategy of Prevention, Not Preemption," Des Moines, Iowa, December 15, 2003

"Edwards will establish a new 'Organization for Security and Cooperation in the Middle East' bringing together the world's leading democracies together with countries in the region moving toward democratic reform. The new organization could assist with civil society and political party development, monitor elections, and manage crises. In the 1970s, the 'Helsinki Process' played a similar role in advancing freedom in Eastern Europe." -- "Edwards Announces New 'Strategy for Freedom,'" campaign press release, January 13, 2004.

Kerry: We must support human rights groups, independent media, and labor unions dedicated to building a democratic culture from the grass roots up. Democracy won't come overnight, but America should speed that day by sustaining the forces of democracy against repressive regimes and by rewarding governments which take genuine steps toward change." -- "Fighting a Comprehensive War on Terrorism," UCLA, February 27, 2004

"Over the long term, to prevail in the war on terror, we must build new bridges to the Islamic world. In recent years,

our capacity to communicate and to persuade has constricted. And this kind of public diplomacy cannot be an afterthought; it has to be at the core of our efforts." -- "Making America Secure Again," Council on Foreign Relations, New York, December 3, 2003

## Conclusion

Both candidates show remarkably similar approaches to the Middle East. While Kerry has a more detailed plan for waging the war on terror, Edwards focuses most of his terrorism-related remarks on improving homeland security. Edwards has laid out a far-reaching plan for reform in the Arab world, but he has not devoted an entire speech to that subject. The candidates have nearly identical approaches to Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Both emphasize their differences with the Bush administration on their general approach to foreign policy. In fact, their proposed initiatives complement each other -- when viewed together, they constitute a more comprehensive foreign policy plan than either individual campaign has released on its own.

This Special Report was prepared by Ben Fishman.

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