

# Center for American Progress



**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

**“ASSESSING U.S. POLICY IN IRAQ  
AND THE MIDDLE EAST”**

**WELCOME BY:**

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EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR POLICY,  
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**INCLUDING FEATURED REMARKS BY:  
CONGRESSWOMAN ELLEN TAUSCHER (D-CA)**

**AND**

**LUNCHEON KEYNOTE ADDRESS:  
CONGRESSMAN LEE HAMILTON (D-IN)**

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**PANEL I: EXAMINING IRAQ'S IMPACT ON THE MIDDLE EAST  
AND REGIONAL DIPLOMACY**

**MODERATOR:  
BRIAN KATULIS, SENIOR FELLOW,  
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**PANEL II: U.S. MILITARY STRATEGY**

**MODERATOR:  
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**SPEAKERS:**

**KEN ADELMAN, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED  
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(Partial transcript follows.)

MR. JOHN PODESTA: Congressman Hamilton is here and we'll get started in just one minute, so if you please stay in your seats. Again, I want to thank this morning's panelists and I want to thank Congresswoman Tauscher. We really appreciate her ideas and leadership in trying to change the current course of policy in Iraq.

It's now my great pleasure to introduce our luncheon keynote speaker, the Honorable Lee H. Hamilton. Congressman Hamilton is a preeminent voice on national security and defense issues and we're honored to have him back here at CAP. I should note at the beginning that about half of our national security team was trained under – (laughs) – Congressman, Chairman, Vice Chairman Hamilton's leadership and you trained them well, Mr. Hamilton.

Congressman Hamilton served for 34 years as the United States congressman from Indiana. During his tenure, he served as the chairman and ranking member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, now the Committee on International Relations, and chaired the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East from the early 1970s until 1993. Mr. Hamilton also served as the chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the Select Committee to Investigate Covert Arms Transactions with Iran, the so-called Iran-Contra Committee.

Mr. Hamilton remains an active voice on matters of international relations and U.S. foreign policy. He served as a commissioner on the influential United States Commission on National Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, better known as the Hart-Rudman Commission. He was also co-chair with Former Senator Howard Baker of the first Baker-Hamilton Commission which investigated security issues at Los Alamos. In December of 2002 he was appointed vice chair of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, better known as the 9/11 Commission. He is currently a board member of the 9/11 Public Discourse Project – the legacy organization of the 9/11 Commission – and he's currently a member of the president's Homeland Security Advisory Council.

On March 15<sup>th</sup> of last year, just a year ago – almost a year ago yesterday, I guess – a couple of days ago, Congress announced the formation of the Iraq Study Group organized by the United States Institute for Peace. Mr. Hamilton was named co-chair along with former Secretary of State James Baker of the Iraq Study Group. I think we thought when he retired that he was going to be in residence at the Smithsonian tower and have to take it a little easy, but I think every time our country has called, he has answered that call.

Lee Hamilton is a national treasure. His distinguished service in government has been honored by numerous awards for his public service and promotion of human rights.

I want to get you up here, so I'm not going to through them all, but his accomplishments are many and I want to get him up here so that he can make his opening remarks and then he's agreed to take questions from the audience.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

REP. LEE HAMILTON (D-IN) [Former Congressman]: Well, good afternoon to all of you. John, thank you very much for that gracious introduction. I've been looking over the schedule you've had here this morning and I'm not sure that I'm going to be able to add that much to it because you've had a very talented group of people already speak to you.

Let me begin, then, right away with a few observations about Iraq. I suppose all of us would agree that there are no really satisfactory answers in Iraq and anything that is proposed, you can find plenty of things wrong with it. Four years after this war began, it is obvious to all of us that where we go from here is an exceedingly difficult task and indeed may be virtually impossible to fix it. The question in Iraq that has always been kind of uppermost in my mind has been whether the means that we employ can achieve the ends that we proclaim. If the consequences of failure are as dire as has been stated over and over and over again – the president's word is "incalculable" – then the gap between the stakes and the effort is striking.

The resources, the commitment, the competence that we have brought to match the urgency of averting incalculable catastrophe really do not match at all. I think that victory in Iraq will not come in any normal sense of the word. I do not think that Iraq will become a model of constitutional democracy. It is likely to remain violent and even chaotic for a number of years. But we do not want to see a partitioned state. We do not want to see an al Qaeda with a sanctuary. We do not want to see a country that is in thrall to Iran. We do not want Iraq to be hostile to our interests.

So what we should strive for, it seems to me, is a stable region and a stable Iraq, and our overriding goal must be to find a responsible way to extricate American forces from Iraq, doing the best we can to contain the suffering of the people and emerge with the best achievable results for the protection of American interests in the region.

Now, we've got a lot of resources that we're putting into Iraq. With the right policies, the right implementation, and maybe a little luck, we can come out of this with some stability. On the Iraq Study Group, we tried very hard to find the right balance – the balance among American interests, among political realities in both Iraq and Washington, and a right balance with our ideals and, of course, our power.

You cannot help but be struck by the uncertainties that dominate in this Iraq equation. One, obviously makes everybody very uneasy and that is the performance of the Maliki government or principally whether it can achieve national reconciliation.

Secondly, the uncertainty of the performance of our own government whose record in Iraq has been marked by several years of astounding incompetency, and another uncertainty – our ability to build a political center supported in the region by so-called moderate Arab nations.

We never anticipated in the Study Group that things would get better immediately if our recommendations were implemented or for that matter anybody else's. We did think that what we said offered the best course of action to meet achievable goals in the United States. I'll not go into our recommendations because I'm assuming all have all read very carefully that report, which is right up there for a couple of weeks with *Harry Potter* on the bestseller list.

Now, the president has acknowledged the first chapter of the report. If the Study Group made any contribution, it was, I guess, in our assessment of the situation. If you look, for example, at the White House statements prior to the report, they were just unrelentingly optimistic. After the report, their tone changed dramatically and they basically agreed that the situation was dire and getting worse. So we had the surge of the 21,000 or maybe almost 30,000 troops to stabilize Baghdad. The president is pressuring the Malaki government to meet the benchmarks – I'll have more to say about that in a moment – and he is balancing a more confrontational stance with Iran and Syria with a beginning, at least, of engagement.

I think that the surge as a military approach needs a good bit of elaboration. What we really need in this area is not just a surge of the military, but you need a surge of the diplomacy and a surge of the economic reconstruction and a surge of the political efforts at national reconciliation. And what has been lacking and I think is still lacking is an integrated approach to dealing with the problems.

In order to succeed in Iraq, you're going to have to do a lot of things very well and do them very quickly. And there is a real question, frankly, on my mind whether the two principal governments involved can achieve that kind of effort.

One of the things that has not been generally noted, I think, in the press is the whole question of sequencing. On the Iraq Study Group we took the view that you cannot separate the security and the political progress. The root causes had to be addressed – principally national reconciliation – and you had to use all of the tools – effective tools – of American power.

The president's words here are interesting and the words of the national security advisor. I quote now from the national security advisor, although the president has said something very similarly. Ultimately he said: "A strategy for success must present a realistic plan for bringing security to the people of Baghdad. This is a precondition to other goals." Enormously significant word because their approach is the opposite of the Iraq Study Group: secure Baghdad first, and then move to other elements of your policy. We did not agree with that position. We said that you cannot separate the security and

the political, and it is not clear to me that the military can achieve this security that everybody seeks without concurrent actions by our government in a lot of other areas.

The second point I want to make here with regard to present policy relates to the training mission. The president used an interesting word. He said that training Iraqi forces is essential. Our word was different. We said that the training mission was and must be primary. I worry that the surge will delay this important shift in emphasis. And as you delay the training of the Iraqi forces, you of course delay the removal of American combat brigades from Iraq and you extend the period within which we can incur casualties. That distinction is hugely important. My own view is that eventually the administration will have to come back to our position: the primary mission of our forces will have to be training. I don't see how you get out of there, frankly, otherwise. You're going to have to train the Iraqi forces.

Now to be blunt about it, we haven't done a good job of it. We've been working at it for four years. Three of those years we accomplished almost nothing. In the last year, I think we have improved somewhat, but we are still not putting the best and the brightest of our military forces into this difficult task of training. I don't know what it takes to train an American combat infantryman. Somebody told me the other day, who I think ought to know, that it takes at least a year – maybe a little more. What we're trying to do is to train Iraqi soldiers in about an eight-week period with the tremendous handicap of the language problem. You can just imagine how difficult it is to train an Iraqi soldier to assemble and disassemble a rifle using two different languages. They understand no English; we speak no Arabic, or relatively little.

So this training mission is an exceedingly difficult one, but I think absolutely important. I think the word primary is exactly right and every time I pick up the paper and read about the military efforts at surging, I keep looking in the paper for some information about training, but I don't see it. And though the administration would probably argue that American forces can do both – train as well as surge to gain security – it is quite obvious where the emphasis is at the present time.

Now, I want to stay within my time. The other difference that I want to mention, and I mentioned this earlier briefly, related to benchmarks. The president has put forward a very good set of benchmarks. The supplemental – I understand Ellen talked about that a moment ago – has all of the benchmarks in it. They're very well stated in the supplemental.

The real question is not the benchmarks. Everybody agrees on what the benchmarks are. The real question is accountability and our view was that only sustained pressure – a strategy, if you would, of sustained pressure and conditionality has a chance of working here. Maliki has said over and over and over again good words with regard to meeting the benchmarks. The problem is performance. Even today, that performance is very sadly lacking. The president said that the Iraqi government, if the benchmarks are not met, will lose the support of the American people. What he did not say, was that it

would lose the support of the American government, and to be blunt about it, that's what's important here.

So the key question is: what happens if the Iraqis do not meet the benchmarks? Six months ago – nine months ago now, we gave them benchmarks. We said they must complete those benchmarks by the end of 2006. The end of 2006 passed and nothing happened. So again and again we have set these benchmarks, told them to perform, they have not performed and there have been no consequences.

What we said was that there has to be something more than a blank check. We extend aid all around the world on condition, and we think we ought to do it with the Iraqi government now. We were constantly looking for levers we could pull to put pressure on the Maliki government to perform and aid was certainly one of them.

On reconstruction, we made a recommendation that the president appoint a senior adviser to oversee the reconstruction effort. It's rather amazing to me that we accept almost without – as far as I know without any debate that one person should be in charge of the military action in Iraq, but on the nonmilitary side we have a dozen captains and nobody seems to think much about it. So we came along in the Iraq Study Report and said, look, one person has to be in charge, speak with authority, make the judgments about priorities – hugely important in our view because, as you probably know, in Baghdad today you've got the Department of State, you've got AID, you've got the Department of Justice, you've got the Department of Agriculture, you've got the department of this, that, and the other over there. And we have done – botched really the job of integrating the non-military aspects of our job.

So what did the president do? The president said he would appoint a senior coordinator, but only for the Department of State. Now, that doesn't solve the problem. You have to have a coordinator over all of the nonmilitary actions of the government, not just the Department of State. It's a modest step forward to try to get the act of the State Department together, but it does not begin to meet the requirements that are necessary.

So after four years of effort to rebuild Iraq, the task is overwhelmingly unfinished at this point in time. And our reconstruction teams are understaffed, underfunded and underqualified. I met just last week with a young man who's serving on one of these reconstruction teams in Southern Iraq. I asked him, what do we need to do? He said, just get Baghdad out of my hair. Let us go ahead and run the program. We get mush when we contact Baghdad where the Americans are in the Green Zone. And of course, as you know, we've had a great deal of difficulty staffing these reconstruction teams.

Final point – not quite final, but almost the final point I'll make. I'm never quite sure when I get to final point in a speech. It varies a little bit, but one of the final points anyway is the whole question of diplomacy. Here the president has made some modest steps forward that are mildly encouraging. I was very pleased to see the Baghdad meeting the other day where we sat at the same table with Iran and with Syria; very

pleased that the secretary of state is giving much higher priority now to the question of the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian problems.

We cannot have military operations succeed in Iraq without a diplomatic framework, and we simply have not had that. So participation in this regional conference is a positive step. It does begin to provide a framework. It has to be sustained. It has to be sustained at a higher level than took place last week. It will take a lot of very careful, skillful diplomacy to pull it off. The lines of communication have to be open and the agenda has to be expanded. But my hope is that the United States is gradually shifting toward a more balanced approach – military, political, economic and diplomatic – and that's what will be required.

I've got an unusual habit. Every morning I read the newspaper like you do, and the habit is to read the casualty list. I don't know any of the names. I don't know the towns they come from. I know their ages: 20 and 21, 24, 25 and I think over and over again about the young men and young women who are serving, as we all recognize, in an extraordinary way. Many of them I see in nonmilitary capacities as well. It's a very tough duty over there, and I think so much of the obligation that you and I and the country owns to these people and how we have fundamentally had a failure of political leadership in this country.

Now, you can blame whoever you want to blame. If you have Republican tendencies, you can blame the Democrats; if you have Democratic tendencies, you can blame the Republicans; if you have tendencies like I do that favor the Congress, you can blame the executive; if you are executive oriented, you can blame the Congress. But it doesn't really matter, does it? The fact of the matter is we've had a failure of political leadership and that failure is continuing as of right now.

One of the things I did when I was in Baghdad was I couldn't sleep at night and my apartment was over the flight path that the helicopters came in all night. I was so restless one night that I decided to go out and look at those helicopters and they were landing just a couple of blocks away at the hospital, and of course they were bringing in the wounded. So I went over there and it just happened that I ran into a young captain, a doctor, who was the son of a friend of mine in Indiana. I said, "What's your job?" He said, "Well, this is where we give the wounded soldiers really the first medical treatment." And he said, "My job is to keep these folks alive until we can get them up to surgery." And he explained to me that the armor – 35 pounds of it – covers your upper body very well, but what it does not cover, of course, is the lower extremities. And so the injuries and the casualties have been horrible. And anyone who's been to Walter Reed or to Bethesda knows exactly what I'm talking about. I have that visit on my mind as well, as I think about these matters.

The challenges before the president and the Congress are really daunting. So far as I can see, the president has rejected a bipartisan approach and indeed seems to be exacerbating the confrontational approach with the Congress. The Congress has some tough choices here. Somebody the other day criticized in my presence the Congress for

taking up the nonbinding resolutions, the cut-off of funds, and revisiting the original resolution. I said, look, the American people have soured on this war. The Congress is a representative body. If the Congress did not take this issue up, they would not be fulfilling their responsibility as a representative body.

I think the focus in the days ahead should be to try to end this war responsibly and gradually through a handover, as I've suggested, to the Iraqi forces – a phased withdrawal, stepped-up training, targeting al Qaeda, securing the Iraqi borders, making our aid conditional, and of course proceeding with robust diplomacy.

How does it all end? Well, I don't know how it ends. Everyone in this town has staked out a position of some kind of it, but I don't believe we're going to move forward in our policy until we all get out of our own trenches. The president remains the president for the next year and whatever it is – three-quarters. The Democrats remain the majority in all likelihood for that same period of time. We are where we are and the question is, how do we go forward with a greater unity of effort than we have thus far been able to achieve?

I do not think the intervention will succeed if America is divided against itself and no course of action can succeed – really succeed – without a broad bipartisan consensus. We've got thousands of young people in harm's way. We have billions and billions of dollars invested in Iraq. We do have key interests in the region. We're all reminded the war has gone longer than World War II. It has gone longer than the Civil War. And somehow, the political leadership of this country has to come together and find a way to meet this singular challenge and bring the war to a responsible conclusion.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. PODESTA: Thank you, Congressman. That was wonderful and moving. I'm going to take questions from the audience. If again, you can state your name and affiliation. But I guess I'd like to ask a first question, Congressman, which is that particularly the way you painted the picture towards the end, this is a project of the United States and the Iraqi government. And I wonder how you assess and how the Study Commission, but also how you personally assess the regional parties now and what their interests are in providing stability, because I think that is a pressure point with the administration they've finally begun to (listen to?) – (off mike).

And then more broadly, how you see – you're an expert and traveled the world as well. How do you see the Europeans' attitude at this point? Do they still think they have a stake in the outcome or they're basically staying in the background?

REP. HAMILTON: Well, let's see, we've got all afternoon here? (Laughter.) We'll tackle this thing.

We've been greatly disappointed with the passivity of the surrounding nations. Some are doing some things: Jordan's training some people, Cairo is training some people, but it doesn't amount to all that much. But really, they're all kind of hanging back and in some cases they're doing things we don't like that we don't think are helpful and they're not doing a lot of things we'd like them to do.

Now, Iraq has to solve its own problems. I think everybody would agree with that, but we saw these international conferences and the bilateral contacts as well as a means of trying to help Iraq achieve stability. They can't really do it for the Iraqis, but the Iraqis are going to need all of the help that they can get.

I think that most of the countries recognize that stability of the region is in their interest. Now, you can argue that, well, Iran is happy. They've won the war in a sense. They got rid of their arch nemesis, Saddam Hussein. They are emerging as the foreign nation with the greatest standing in Iraq. But having said all of that, I don't think it's in the interest of Iran to see chaos in the region. I don't think it's in their interest to have al Qaeda have a sanctuary over there. I don't think it's in their interest to have refugees flooding into Tehran.

Keep in mind that Iran is a very fragile country. Only 50 percent or a little less of its population is Persian. They have a very large numbers of Azeris and others and the cohesiveness of that country, which we kind of assume, is a major problem for the leaders. So they recognize the risks here. The alliance they've reached with Syria is kind of an unnatural alliance – Sunni-Syria, Shi'a-Iran – and I don't think either country is really comfortable with that arrangement although they obviously have some common interest. So you've got a very volatile region of the world and there are all kinds of crosscurrents with every country but most, I think, can agree that stability will serve most people's interests, and that includes the European Community.

Now, to be blunt about it, John, I think we're paying for our sins. The dominant impression about going into the war is that we went in unilaterally without international support and there isn't any question at all that a lot of nations are saying, "You started this, you work it out. It's your problem." And we're seeing that now everywhere we turn. They're waiting to see how things will develop. I think we can persuade them of stability.

Now, look, I don't know how these international conferences are going to come out. I don't think for a moment something quick is going to happen that's highly successful. There isn't any country in the world that we've had more trouble with in the last four decades than Iran. We've got a list of list of grievances a half of block long and there are serious grievances. You're not going to solve those quickly.

But I'll divert and tell a story. I participated in the early meetings of the United States Congress with the Soviet Union parliament and we began by reading formal speeches back to one another. And at the end of the formal speech, we'd have a toast with vodka and we all came out in favor of peace in the world and a great future for our

grandchildren. That was unanimous. And we did that for five years and we did it for 10 years and then something began to happen. We put away the speeches and we began to talk with one another. And that was really the beginning, if you would, of the thaw. The important thing is – really important thing is that not a single shot was fired and our grievances against the Soviet Union were just as long as the grievances we have against Iran, so patience is required. I don't see what you've got to lose in these conferences.

Q: Thank you. My name is Lee Diamond. I'm a Democratic Party activist, I guess. But I just want to ask – since you're mentioning Iran, what's the big deal about talking to Syria? It seems like Bashar Assad is, if anything, more inclined towards the West than his father and I guess he's dealing with a kind of ossified political establishment, but wouldn't it help the effort that you're talking about if we were to talk to Syria and try to wean them away from the Iranian sort of geopolitical alliance or whatever that is that they have going there.

REP. HAMILTON: Yes. I agree with that. We've basically followed a policy with both Iran and Syria of isolating the two countries, not engaging them. And I spoke, I guess, principally about Iran a moment ago, but the engagement principle applies the same way. Secretary Baker took a huge interest in this part of the report and of course he – I don't remember precisely, but I think he made 12 or 15 trips to Syria and he's a great believer that there is a possibility, as we said in the report, that we could tilt Syria away. We think there's a good chance of that. Syria has a lot of other interests that are not being addressed including the Golan, for example, and we think you've got to open up the agenda to discuss these things. So the answer is yes.

Q: My name is Kani Xulam. I'm with the American Kurdish Information Network. I say it not with relish, but with a heavy heart, and that is one of the hardest things for Americans to do is to place themselves in the shoes of others. And I'm referring to your (admissions?) in your Iraq Study Group about the Kurds in Kurdistan. My question is: if Americans, the contemporaries of Jefferson, couldn't and wouldn't sacrifice their freedom for the sake of King George III, why are we, the Kurds – some five million of us – are asked to sacrifice ours for the Arab majority for the sake of George Bush II and his Arab friends? We rejoiced in the breakup of the Soviet Union, a prison of nations; why are we so alarmed about the breakup of Iraq? Why should the Kurds uphold the legacy of Winston Churchill, the man who put the country together in the first place?

REP. HAMILTON: The Kurdish leaders with whom we spoke without exception favored a unified Iraq. They did not favor the breakup of Iraq. They did not favor an independent Kurdistan. There are a number of Kurdish leaders of course in the Iraqi government, including the president, Mr. Talabani.

I don't know what happens in the future. It is quite possible that Iraq will eventually partition in some way, but I do not think that should come about by imposition from the United States. If we were to try to impose it, I think it would kind of assure it would not happen in a way. But right now, the focus of all of the leaders, at least

rhetorically, is a unified Iraq. And I think the Kurdish leaders understand that a separate, independent Kurdistan at this time would create huge problems with Turkey and other neighbors, including Iran, and that it just not the thing to do at this time. So we agreed that – in the Study Group that we should keep as a goal a unified Iraq.

MR. PODESTA: Take two more. Why don't we take more questions and then –

Q: My name is Jo Freeman. I'm a senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center. The speaker before you, Representative Tauscher, described the supplemental appropriation bill. I'd like to know what you think of that bill. And if it were to pass both Houses, what do you think the likely consequences would be? Would our administration try to find a way around it, as Representative Tauscher seemed to think might happen? And if not, what would the consequences be?

REP. HAMILTON: I think the supplemental draft that I have seen lays out the steps that the Iraqi government must take, and as I suggested in my remarks, the benchmarks that are put in there are not new. It does put in conditionality, which I spoke about, and it has a goal of a departure date by 2008. I think there are a lot of very good features to that bill and I hope it moves forward. I think there are also some things missing. One of the things missing is diplomacy – an emphasis on diplomacy that I spoke about. I would like to see that put in at some point. Another thing it is missing is making the primary mission of the troops training. I'd like to see that put in at some point. Another thing it is missing is unity of effort, which I think is very important.

So my view is that the supplemental should go forward, that it is not the end of the process; that you're going to see not just with the supplemental, but with the coming appropriations bill and probably some independent bills, a real kind of a messy process between the executive branch and the Congress in trying to strengthen our policy and get broader agreement. If we take the president at his word, he'll not accept that supplemental and then you're back to the drawing board as to what can be done.

So I see it as part of the process and I understand it's a difficult process, not a precise one, that you have to go through. That's what the founding fathers expected us to do is these tough kind of issues.

Now, a lot of Democrats will smash their head against the wall and curse at President Bush. That doesn't get us very far. We've got a very practical problem here: the president is the president. We've got a big policy challenge and you may not like his position – I don't like it, but I'm not entirely satisfied with the congressional position. We just got to move forward and do the best we can.

MR. PODESTA: Last question.

Q: Congressman, Jay Bonstingl from Columbia, Maryland. First of all, thank you for a lifetime of service to our country.

REP. HAMILTON: Thank you.

Q: The dark humor surrounding the war has suggested that we are making enemies faster than we can kill them. If this is indeed a war of choice, it would suggest that we have chosen our enemies as well – that they are enemies of choice. If you concur with that viewpoint, sir, what lessons are there to be learned that the next president of the United States might benefit from?

Thank you.

REP. HAMILTON: Well, I think you're right, of course, that we have a lot of adversaries in the world and we're not very highly thought of in many countries. You probably read the article this morning on Egypt. We've given them \$70 billion and we have an approval rating less than 10 percent in that country.

Well, I'll tell you a story – an analogy. Every American politician is confronted on a weekly, if not a daily, basis by someone who wants you to do something that is totally impossible for you to do; it's beyond your power. I do not know of any successful politician who says to that person, "I cannot help you." (Laughter.) In the words of another politician that John knows very well, "I feel your pain." (Laughter.)

Now, the analogy may be simplistic, but I don't think so: 1.3 billion Muslims London to Jakarta; and what worries me in the longer frame, the bigger frame, is the alienation of the Islamic world. You're not going to win the war on terror by eliminating al Qaeda leaders. I'm not against eliminating them, but you're not going to win the war on terror.

If you're going to win the war on terror, you've got to deal with this war of ideas and what we've got to say as a nation is the same thing the politician says to the constituent; that is, "I'm on your side. I want to try to help you. I can't solve your problem for you. I'm not smart enough. I'm not rich enough. You and your country have to work this out. But we want for you the same things we want for ourselves: we want you to be able to live a decent life, get a decent education, have good healthcare, marry the person of your choice, raise a family, do productive work. We can't give you those things, but we're on your side."

So, for example, we have a program that gives tens of millions of dollars to alternative education in Pakistan to the madrassa schools. Many of you are very familiar with Pakistan. You know good and well that a few million dollars is not going to change the country's educational system, but from my point of view it's exactly the right thing to do. We're trying to help you create an alternative education so your child doesn't have to go to this school to learn to hate you and me and America. We're on your side. And American foreign policy has to get to that place. Okay?

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

(END)