

The Surge – Collective Memory Project

Interviewee: James Jeffrey

Senior Advisor to the Secretary and Coordinator for Iraq, August 2005-August 2006
U.S. Charge d'affairs to Iraq, March-June 2005
Deputy Chief of Mission in Baghdad, June 2004-March 2005

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Date of Interview

August 17, 2015

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[BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION]

JEFFREY: You want me to look at the camera?

SAYLE: Oh, yeah, we can speak to each other.

JEFFREY: OK. That's fine. All right. All right.

SAYLE: It's a bit more casual. It's August 17, 2015. This is Timothy Sayle from the
Southern Methodist University Center for Presidential History, and I'm joined by -
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MILLER: I'm Paul Miller, from the University of Texas at Austin, the Clements Center for
National Security.

SAYLE: And we're joined by Ambassador James Jeffrey. Mr. Jeffrey, could you introduce
yourself and explain your positions and roles in government in the lead up to the
search?

JEFFREY: Sure. I'm James Jeffrey. I'm a retired foreign service officer, currently with the
Washington Institute for Near East Policy. My background in Iraq goes back quite
far. From 1982 to '84 I was assigned to the consulate in Adana, Turkey, where my
main focus was on the Kurds, on the PKK [Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê], and on
oil out of Iraq. Then from [00:01:00] 1994 to early 1996, I was in the Near Eastern
Bureau in the regional theaters, and I did a lot of work on Iraq. That was followed
by six years as deputy chief of mission, first in Kuwait and then in Turkey, where
one of the -- in Kuwait the overwhelming priority was Iraq and Operation No-Fly
Zone, Southern Watch, and in Turkey it was one of the major preoccupations with
Operation Northern Watch. Then from 2004 to early 2005, I was the deputy chief
of mission in Iraq, under John Negroponte. For three months in 2005 I was the
chargé until Zal Khalilzad came. Then I was, for a year, the special representative

for Iraq for Secretary Rice. Then for a year [00:02:00], from 2007 to 2008, I was the number two in the Near Eastern Bureau and dealt with Iraq -- not as intensively, but still on an everyday basis -- and at times I was brought in with my successor as S.I., which was David Satterfield, on issues, including the Surge. From 2007 to 2008, I was the deputy national security advisor. Iraq was not in my portfolio, because we had brought in General Doug Lute at that time, but I followed Iraq very closely and followed everything around it, and from time to time, including in the base negotiations, I was directly involved. And then from 2008 until 2010 I was ambassador in Turkey. Again, Iraq was an important issue. And from 2010 to 2012, for approximately 21 months, I was ambassador in Baghdad. So that's my Iraq background.

SAYLE: It's quite extensive. An incredible relationship [00:03:00] with the region and the country. I wanted to ask you a general question to set the stage for today. Just basically when does the history of the Surge start for you, in your perspective?

JEFFREY: The history of the Surge started for me in the fall of 2005, right after I had come back. At that time, despite what seemed to be positive signs -- and I'll speak about this often, come back to this -- in two of the three areas of great importance for success in Iraq. One was the American public and the political system here, the other one was the basic political-economic-social system in Iraq, and the third one was the military situation. All three of those were doing OK, [00:04:00] but I saw signs, as did others, that in particular in the military side, the security situation

was not getting better; it was getting worse. And we culled this from the details of General Casey's reporting. While the above-the-line summaries were all positive, because that's how the U.S. military's culture is, and that's also how the expectations were when you have 130,000 troops and many tens of billions of dollars invested in something, and you don't have total disaster staring you into the face, you tend to be optimistic. But in looking at the metrics and looking at the detailed analysis of what Casey was trying to accomplish, against the goals, it was clear in September of 2005 that he wasn't meeting the goals of his own military operation. My view, and I think Phil Zelikow shared it to a [00:05:00] very large degree, was that this was because we were not pursuing an insurgency. I had a fair amount of experience in that in Vietnam. I thought we were still in the Westmoreland rather than the Abrams phase. We were not protecting the population, we were going after the very elusive bad guys, and that was even more difficult in Iraq than it was in Vietnam. And, as a result, the support for the government, its ability to deliver services to jumpstart any kind of civilian activities was being eroded by the insurgents, who of course were targeting that with a vengeance, and we weren't doing enough to stop that.

I could see an erosion of our position slowly, and thus I, along with Zelikow, advocated very strongly with Secretary Rice to speak out. This was very difficult. It's covered in the books by Bob Woodward [00:06:00] and now the *New York Times* [Michael]Gordon, but their accounts are accurate, and Rice saw the

problem, and that led to her using the clear, hold, build term in congressional testimony, and then getting the President to use it in a speech. So 2005, the fall of 2005.

SAYLE: What were the indications you were seeing in those reports from General Casey and so on that caused you alarm? Was it levels of sectarian violence, incidents of violence? What were the issues there?

JEFFREY: It was incidents of violence and very detailed -- the military metrics aren't getting to the core of the insurgency. Casey had a model that in essence was a reasonable model, where you had to split the insurgency into the redeemables and the irredeemables. The irredeemables were [00:07:00] basically the Al Qaeda people and later, to some degree, I would put the Iranian-backed militias, the Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, and Kata'ib Hezbollah in that category. The more redeemable ones were the basic Sunni insurgents, the 1920 Brigades, the Baathists, and Muqtada al-Sadr as Jaish al Mahdi. So the idea was that you would find political, economic, and reconciliation tools, along with some military, to deal with one segment of it. The other segment of it you would just have to fight and destroy and drive away. The problem was that we weren't really seeing much measurable success in terms of attacks, in terms of senior leadership grabbed, and in terms of flipping [00:08:00] groups. Muqtada was relatively quiet after the battles in Najaf in 2004, but he was still a force, but we were beginning to get EFPs [explosively formed penetrator] from the Iranian-backed militias, which were inflicting

significant casualties, so that was a problem and a new problem, because it meant we had groups other than Muqtada al-Şadr in the Shia area. And we really weren't making that much of a dent in Al Qaeda. And so thus, I think I was able to cull that information and present it to the secretary as a real problem, and she and Zelikow agreed.

SAYLE: Excellent. I'd like to spend a significant amount of our time today on your position in Washington. But I wanted to ask you, before you left the embassy, were you involved or was the embassy involved in rethinking, reconsidering strategy anyway? Were you involved in any Red Cell --

JEFFREY: Oh, of course. Bob -- what's his name? [00:09:00] Negroponte brought him out -- Bob, I can't think of his last name -- to run this cell. Negroponte and Casey were very much in agreement with it. When Negroponte came out, I made the pitch to him that this was not going well, that security even around the Green Zone, let alone the rest of Baghdad, let alone the rest of the country, was terrible, and that we had a huge role, trying to turn this thing around, that it was heading South. And Negroponte very quickly agreed. I mean, he had a lot of experience, four years in Vietnam. So he set up the Red Cell with the full acquiescence of Casey, and the conclusion was that we needed -- that we had a real insurgency. We just couldn't use that word, because of Don Rumsfeld and perhaps others in Washington, but Rumsfeld comes to mind, as the person who's most often fingered. I'd never heard Rumsfeld say, We're not going to use the word

'insurgency,' but I have heard him plenty of times argue against what you and I [00:10:00] would think would be a typical protect-the-population counterinsurgency strategy. So I'm sure that he was opposed to it. The result of that was Casey set up a COIN [counterinsurgency] academy for all incoming battalion commanders, and we took, of the \$21 or \$22 billion that Negroponte had in congressional authorization for assistance, we moved between three and four billion almost immediately to Petraeus, who at the time was in charge of the MNSTC-I [Multi-National Security Transition Command], which was building up the Iraqi army and police forces. We moved the money to him or to other programs, such as CERP [Commander's Emergency Response Team], that would directly help our counterinsurgency effort. So there was a major effort done through this Red team to try to shift it, but there were limits to what we could do at the time.

SAYLE: And CERP would be the Commander's Emergency Response --

JEFFREY: Right. [00:11:00] Program.

SAYLE: -- Program. Excellent. OK. Very good. One last question on this period. There's been a lot of work done and written on the Anbar Awakening later, sort of the ultimate redeemables in a sense. Was there any sense, in the embassy, before you left, that that was a possibility? Did you have a sense of that?

JEFFREY: Yeah, there was, and I'm getting ahead of myself, because to understand one of the reasons why I changed my position from late 2005 to 2006 was -- the Anbar

Awakening actually began with a vengeance in early 2006. It was snuffed out by Washington and by the big military. But the special forces, the CIA, the Marines, and as far as I could see to some degree the embassy, Khalilzad, and certainly us in the State Department, were all in support of it, but DoD was absolutely opposed to arming [00:12:00] and equipping these people as an auxiliary force. In my experience in both on the ground and also academically, through my readings and such, is that in almost all conflicts with insurgents, you tend to do the most good with irregular forces, either local militias who were fighting for their own terrain and people and know the terrain and know the people, or very elite scrappy shock forces. Regular conventional forces don't do well, and we've certainly seen a good reinforcement of that in the last year, both in several years in Syria and now in the last year in Iraq. So this was a great idea, but it didn't even start in 2006. The Marines were talking to the tribes both in Anbar Province, and from time to time in Jordan. This made Baghdad [00:13:00], the government, nervous, it made us at the embassy somewhat nervous, too, because there was still, and has always been, this terrible split between Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs, and Kurds. The Kurds and the Shia, although they make up 80 percent of the country, had and have still a tremendous inferiority complex against the Sunnis, who they fear are going to come back and restore the Saddam era. So therefore any of our boogying with those people, given the fact that in the Middle East, writ large, our main allies were the Sunni Arab states, the Gulf states, Jordan, Egypt, and so forth, and the Turks,

who also were close to some of the Sunni Arab tribes. And so there was always a fear, given that the rest of the region was absolutely opposed to our project and opposed to a Kurdish Shia-dominated democratic Iraq, that maybe we were changing or we were having second thoughts about this project, and maybe we wanted to return it to [00:14:00] the Sunni Arab ownership. So that was the problem in 2005 and even back as early as 2004 with moving forward. But also the insurgents among the Sunnis hadn't been defeated either by us or by the Shia at that time, and therefore the ability of the middlemen that we were talking to to actually deliver, at least part of the insurgency, the 1920 Brigades and some of the Baathists, was very limited. So in 2004-2005 there wasn't much juice behind us. In 2006 there was a lot of juice.

SAYLE: We're going to move to your new position, late 2005, as senior advisor to the secretary, S/I. Could you describe that position, what its role is, in relationship to the secretary, and what you saw as your function in that role?

JEFFREY: Yeah. Essentially, just as Doug Lute became at one point [00:15:00] the deputy national security advisor for Iraq and assistant to the President, which is a title that normally goes to the senior deputy national security advisor, I became the secretary's fulltime assistant on Iraq and I reported directly to her. Now, in point of fact, Zelikow was my main contact, because she had given him, among his list of portfolios, as you do with what we call the Seventh Floor Principles, a set of portfolios, his special one was Iraq. She had a lot of trust in him from the 9/11

Commission and from her work with him in the early 1990s on Russia, and they wrote a book together on that, in fact, so there was a very close relationship there, and there was a good relationship between me and Zelikow. My job was to implement Iraq strategy and to essentially be the desk for Zal Khalilzad in the embassy. So the NEA [Near Eastern Affairs] deputy assistant secretary in charge of Iraq and the huge Office [00:16:00] of Iraq Affairs were essentially what the military would call OPCON [operational control] to me, in terms of their actions and such. I ran the various assistance programs and I dealt with the embassy on a daily basis and dealt with Khalilzad on a daily basis, essentially the kind of embassy management that you do in the Department of State. It's just that this was pulled out of the normal bureaucracy and put directly under Rice. And then my other job, which I shared with Zelikow, was to think big thoughts about Iraq.

SAYLE: And can you give us a flavor of those big thoughts in the fall of 2005? Zelikow, at this point, I believe, is describing the situation in Iraq as a civil war. Did you share his assumptions?

JEFFREY: I didn't describe it as a civil war, because you didn't have much Shia. The civil war came in, oh, the mid-spring of 2006, several months after the Samarra bombing. What you had [00:17:00] in 2005 was a fractured society, an insurgency or a rebellion of much of the Sunni Arab population against Baghdad and the US international presence, and an inadequate strategy to deal with it. So that was

how I saw the situation. That doesn't differ materially from how Phil saw it, I don't think.

SAYLE: How would that view, yours and Zelikow's, which was very similar, compare to that coming from the embassy at that point? Were you all on the same page? Were there different views?

JEFFREY: In looking back at this, one thing you get from this whole period, compared to I would say my period and Crocker's period and Negroponete's period in Iraq [00:18:00], is no real sense of where the embassy was on the big issues. The embassy was totally involved in projects. The first project, the summer of 2005, was get the constitution through, and Zal Khalilzad personally did a great job. The second project was to try to get the Arab world on board. I had started that with a trip through the region in the fall of 2005. Zal then decided that he wanted to take it over, given his contacts, which are certainly better than mine in the region, and so he put a lot of time effort into that. It wasn't successful, not because Zal wasn't the right guy, he was the right guy, it just was mission impossible. And then the third thing that he spent a lot of time on is the election and post-election drama. Now, I went through that three times in my experiences in Iraq, with Jerry Bremer [00:19:00] in May and June of 2004, then for four months in 2005 that would up with Ibrahim al-Jaafari, then again my first four months in 2010 with the Maliki regime, and of course I was observing it every day, and Zal was totally tied up in this. Now, in defense of Zal, again, Zal had these specific projects, and he also had

to run this huge embassy and the huge assistance program, and he was expected to do everything, because we really did have this dream world of turning this place into a Sweden. This is one of the mini goals that was dumped on the embassy and on me, as S/I, but Zal was the ultimate implementer. The other thing is Zal had to maintain the closest possible relationship with General Casey. That is an absolute sine quo non to survive as an ambassador in Iraq under those conditions. Casey understood [00:20:00] counterinsurgency. His father was the commander of the First Cavalry Division in Vietnam. Casey is a very, very astute guy. I mean, my daughter also went to Georgetown, but Casey is just a very unusual guy, and Casey knew basically what was going on. And I would say that he was driven by two things. First of all, there were real restraints on how much he could go into the counterinsurgency business, absent a green light from Rumsfeld and the people around him. Secondly, like much of the US military, there were probably second thoughts about how deeply we want to get engaged in two intractable conflicts in the Middle East, of all places. These are all guys who were marked -- Casey very much -- by Vietnam, and they had second thoughts. And if you're wondering, well, how does this play out? I'll give you an example, and I think this is [00:21:00] the most poignant one I have. The stupid A-10 versus F-35 example, OK? By putting the military this intensively into something where young men and women are dying, and you're holding them as they're dying or wounded. I mean, I've done it as an embassy guy. You're totally committed to this thing, and you can't move

away from it. Well, if this is a different kind of war, then what you're really going to have to fight, for America's survival and core interests, you're going to start getting worried, and I think any astute military officer, even the ones put in charge of Iraq, were a little bit concerned about that, and certainly the ones who weren't out there – William “Fox” Fallon, and I can get to him later -- and others were very concerned that we were over involved in it. Condi, it was one of the reasons why she was less than enthused about the Surge, felt that we were diplomatically overextended there, but certainly militarily we were, too. So we now have a military establishment that rebels about getting rid of A-10s, [00:22:00] whereas they have no role, unless we're going to go back and do another Afghanistan, which we sure as hell aren't going to do. But it doesn't matter. This is so hardwired into their system now that it can really hurt the military's ability to do the key jobs they have, because of this. So I'll leave it at that. So Casey was under great restraint. Thus Zal was under great restraint. Because remember the core problem was the military was getting this wrong. And you've asked me questions about the civilian side, and I can go into that, if I have the time, in great detail. But the point is, that isn't the long pole in the tent. The long pole in the tent, even for the civilian stuff, was security and certainly to defeat the insurgency. At the end of the day you got to defeat the insurgency, and we weren't doing that. So for Zal to have a different policy, he would have had to take on the military. I'll have to -- I'd like to go off the record. Is that possible?

SAYLE: Yes.

JEFFREY: OK. OK.

[interruption]

SAYLE: This is Tim Sayle again. In late 2005 [00:23:00], there's work done in the State Department, memos, ideas, talking about a new strategy for Iraq, or at least that's what the journalistic accounts told. Can you explain that process for us?

JEFFREY: Sure. Based upon our assumption that the military side of things wasn't doing well and that there was no way that either the Iraqi political system/economic and such, or our nonmilitary aid, assistance, development, and such, was going to compensate for that military lack of success, and in fact our own efforts and the efforts of the Iraqis were being undercut by the lack of security, because the military was not delivering security, we realized that we had a fundamental problem. But then bureaucratically, we in the State Department had a fundamental problem with our fundamental problem, because this was, from our point of view, primarily a military problem. Now the first [00:24:00] difficulty is that's "out of Condi's lane," [uses air quotes] and she heard this from several people, including military officers as well as Rumsfeld, in very direct and dramatic ways. Secondly, it was very easy, because there were lots of good examples, for the military, beginning with Rumsfeld, and he would do it all the time, to blame the State Department for everything. This is an insurgency, it is a social-political extraordinary thing that we were trying to do in Iraq, and at the end of the day

most of it was nonmilitary, the vision of George Bush, to basically jumpstart a 1989 process, and I'll come back to this again and again, because it's very important to understand the whole Surge thing. That was Bush's ultimate mission. Read his 2005 inaugural address. There it is spelled out in the most detail. That was his goal. And Iraq, it wasn't -- it's unfair [00:25:00] to him to say it was a kind of petri dish to see if it would work. He thought it would work. He was all in to make this thing work. So this was a huge social-political thing that went way beyond the military, and it wasn't working out very well, so therefore Rumsfeld, to the extent that the State Department didn't do -- and I gave a speech once at the State Department in 2012, after I left government, where I chewed out my own organization by saying we didn't do this, and we didn't do it also under Powell and Armitage, who should have known better. We didn't get up and say, "What the blank are you talking about? We don't do irreconcilable problems such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Gaza, Cypress, Kashmir. We don't even do this over decades. The best we can do is freeze these conflicts, and you want us to end them in a couple of years, while meanwhile developing a country politically [00:26:00] and economically, when maybe one out of five of our efforts in the last 50 years, over decades, have actually been substantially successful? We can't deliver. We're not your exit strategy, man." We never said that. Instead we took that \$20 billion, and we started putting teams out there and getting contractors and all that, because we had a can-do attitude, and we had a can-do President, and nobody wanted to say

no. And so she had that burden on her. She had a double burden. One is there were certainly beliefs in the Defense Department, and I hope you're talking to people in the Rumsfeld Defense Department, that the State Department not only wasn't delivering, but it's failure to deliver was the real problem. Because there's a whole chicken and egg thing in an insurgency. If everybody loved each other and the government was not corrupt, inefficient, and all of that, people probably wouldn't have been shooting at it. Actually, they would have, because they thought we were occupiers, so there was a whole different dynamic. But it was impossible for the Bush Administration at the highest levels [00:27:00] to understand that we were perceived as occupiers; they just couldn't do that. So therefore if there was underlying insurgency and violence and quasi-civil war, as Zelikow would put it, it had to be because there were failures in the political-economic-social order. Well, who's in charge of that? Not Don Rumsfeld, Condoleezza Rice. So that was her first problem. Her second problem was who was she to tell the military how to do things. In clear, hold, build, two-thirds of that -- well, 60 percent -- is military. Clear is essentially all military, hold is mainly military, and build is only slightly military.

SAYLE: Were you involved in the preparation of that testimony, and can you describe that?

JEFFREY: Not really. Zelikow and I were talking all of the time. As I said, there were others in the department, certainly people from Defense were aware of this, were

pushing against us, and so there was a lot of back and forth at the [00:28:00] daily bureaucratic level, but Condi was very involved in this herself. She understood the problem, she believed she had to do this. She did do it, and then she went to the President, and he persuaded him to use it in his speech, too.

SAYLE: And do you recall the reaction to her testimony? Can you describe it?

JEFFREY: Yes. Yes. It was very, very -- General Casey was personally unhappy. He called her, because Casey is that kind of guy, and he felt that he was blindsided on -- why is the Secretary of State suggesting military strategy? Again, Casey knew, Casey was all about, to the extent he could, clear, hold, and build. What he didn't need was the secretary of state raising it. It put him in a very awkward position. I still justify her doing it, because there was no other way to get attention, and to get Bush. The problem is after he did that, there still wasn't the follow through, and I could give examples of this, that the bureaucracy was not able to overcome the resistance of DoD to actually do a true clear, hold, and build, and I can give three [00:29:00] examples of it.

SAYLE: Please do.

JEFFREY: OK. The first one was, and some of this is covered, again, in Woodward's book and Gordon's book. Fascinating. The President was adamant that we do more for electricity and oil, because he could see that those are critical elements. The problem was the insurgents were blowing up the lines. They were blowing up the pipelines, they were blowing up some of the generator stations, the pumping

stations, they were making it difficult to work in the oilfields, at least up in Kirkuk, and we didn't have any oil coming out of the North, and we could have pumped 400,000 barrels a day from those pipelines. So the issue was: who's going to protect the pipelines? We wanted the U.S. military to take that on. Rumsfeld persuaded the President that it shouldn't be the job of the US military [00:30:00], but in the way he did this was very clever, but it's a good example of what the resistance was. He kept on arguing MNF-I, Multinational Force Iraq, under the command of General Casey, shouldn't have that mission. Iraqis should find the capabilities to do it. The President, when he heard that, thought, Yeah, do I really want to send -- I mean, I think this is how the President was thinking, but I'm pretty sure it was how he was thinking, -- Do I want to send American boys and girls out to protect oil? Blood for oil? Eh, this isn't politically good. Rumsfeld's got a point. What he didn't recognize, and what we couldn't really bring to him, because it was very hard to get through Don Rumsfeld, because Cheney had his back, and that was that when Rumsfeld would say MNF-I, the President and most everybody around the table would think US troops. Rumsfeld was also thinking the entire Iraqi army, because they were OPCON to MNF-I, for field [00:31:00] operations. That was his exit strategy. He certainly didn't see the State Department -- he would bitch at us, but he didn't see us as the exit strategy. He thought the exit strategy was: build up an effective army and get us out of there. Well, if they're off guarding pipelines, which is a very labor-intensive and -- it's not

very good at preparing effective troops, it's a tremendous drain on resources, and he just didn't want to see the Iraqi army do it, so therefore the idea was that the tribes would do it. That the Iraqis would form petroleum police units and such. These were all non-solutions that we slapped around and spent innumerable time, both in Washington and in Baghdad, trying to do, and the result was no oil flow, and the electricity still sucked. So that's example number one. Example number two was the 2006 Sunni tribal uprising that was nipped in the bud. In fact, there's a CNN report. What happened was [00:32:00] it got so much juice behind it that big DoD decided they couldn't just ignore it completely, so they came up with the idea, OK, all of these tribal levies, let's recruit them into the Iraqi army. So there was a scene in CNN, that CNN filmed in 2006, it was a riot. Not an insurgency or gun battle, it was just a riot, when 1,000 guys who had come in, in order to do essentially -- thinking that they were going to do what they and their brothers and cousins did a year later and were told "You're going to be assigned to the Iraqi army where you'll be transferred all over the country with Iraqi units," and these guys just went crazy and started throwing things, and it was all filmed by CNN. That was the end of that effort. So that was another discouraging thing for me. Let me see. I think those were the two best examples. But it was just many, many others, some of which are too sensitive to mention. But it was just very clear that we weren't willing to take risks [00:33:00] into a true clear, hold, and build strategy which would have required, essentially, Petraeus's strategy. And you had people

like -- oh, that was the third thing. The efforts of Chiarelli in Baghdad and McMaster's in Tal Afar, they not only weren't getting embraced across the board, but they kind of fell off the end of the earth. There was no effort to pick up on them, and thus I sensed a real desire, make these guys go away. And with McMaster they actually -- I mean, if it wasn't for Petraeus, he'd still be a colonel.

SAYLE: I want to focus and continue on the rethinking the strategy in the State Department, but I want to take a chronological jag here to ask about the setup of the Iraq Study Group. Did the State Department play any role in setting it up?

JEFFREY: A huge role. It was Condi who went to the President, who said -- and remember, this is six months after the President adopted her clear, hold, and build strategy, but the bureaucracy wasn't able to [00:34:00] carry out on it, so she's discouraged again. And she is very, very loyal to this guy, as she should be, and she's very concerned that Iraq is going to drag him down. That's what Kerry ran against, and Bush beat him down, but that was a very close election, and she knew that there was going to be -- she could see, to some degree, the writing on the wall, and, boy, did ever that come home to roost in 2006, and she was very concerned. So in early 2006, she wanted to firewall him for the elections, for his legacy, and for everything else she and he were doing around the world, which was far more than Iraq. So she felt that this would give him cover for whatever came out of this thing, and it would show that he was willing to reach out. There was a lot of resistance from the White House. Again, Meghan or others can talk about that. I

don't know who to finger on the resistance, but there was a lot of resistance, but she managed to -- just like with clear, hold, and build, she carried the day with the President. But even when you got the President on board [00:35:00], as she did with clear, hold, and build, and as she did with this thing, you don't necessarily have brought everybody else along. So there was a lot of unhappiness about that. But, yeah, I would say that she was decisive, I would use that word, in that thing, having the support of the administration. Without the support of the administration, I think a lot of people like Robb and Gates and others would have been reluctant to participate in it.

SAYLE: Excellent. At the end of December, there's the elections in Iraq. There's a lot of hope in some quarters of government that if only the government could be elected and organized, it could sort of drain some of the momentum from the insurgency. Do you remember your take on the election? It had awkward results.

JEFFREY: Yeah. We wanted to see more Sunnis participate, and that was my measurement of how successful we were. We got more than the year [00:36:00] before, but it still wasn't very good. And so the biggest problem we had, once again, was an inadequate Sunni presence, combined with the fact that we seemed to be stuck with Jaafari. Well, we were stuck with a typical hung Parliament, if you will, literally, in terms of selecting new leaders, or the old leaders. By this time we had lost faith in Jaafari. Soon after those elections you had the Samarra incident, and while things didn't blow up immediately thereafter, Jaafari's totally feckless

reaction to it indicated that this was not the guy who was going to lead Iraq out of the wilderness. Whether there was a guy who would lead Iraq out of the wilderness or not, I don't know, but we had hopes that maybe we'd find one.

SAYLE: What were the other plausible reactions to the bombing? Was the State Department advising the Iraqis or suggesting a different way of handling the fallout from the bombing?

JEFFREY: Well, again, the State Department wasn't advising Iraqis. Zal Khalilzad [00:37:00] was advising. But everything he was doing -- well, not everything, but the basic lines of operation, if you will, that he was advising them on was cleared with and consistent with the Washington views, and that was you got to bring in the Sunnis, you've got to stop this from descending into a civil war, you've got to show that you're willing to go after the Jaish al-Mahdi, that you're not the Shia leader, you're the Iraqi leader, etc., etc., this sort of stuff, I did it, Negroponte did it, Zal did it, Bremer did it, we constantly were doing it. It would have minimal effect at the margins, and we all know what happened a few months after Samarra.

SAYLE: Now in June, 2006, I think it's the very first week of June, 2006, Phil Zelikow and you signed a memorandum for the Secretary. I believe that memorandum was worked on in the month before. It was titled "Possible Political Military Strategy for Summer 2006." [00:38:00] It described a range of counterinsurgency options. Can you describe the genesis of that paper?

JEFFREY: Yeah. Once again, this was after things started going south. We had finally, after a long struggle, got a new government, Maliki. So we were hoping to have a new way forward, because you always get hopes when you get a new leader, and you figure, well, maybe this one finally -- maybe this will be the girlfriend or the boyfriend who will finally be Mr. or Miss Right, OK? I mean, I hate to put her on such terms, but I think that the viewers will understand what I'm talking about, because you're so emotional. It's that important to you. And you have the same hopes with every new shiny thing that comes along, so the new shiny thing was Maliki. But also we were aware that things were -- now we were in something approaching a civil war, or at least threatening a civil war, for the first time, in my mind. And so I would [00:39:00] say that Phil and I -- I can't speak for Phil, you'll need to talk to him. I was more skeptical. By this point, I had become skeptical. So I think my contributions to this study -- and of course the President was going to do this summit, this glitzy summit up in Camp David, and then he flew out to Baghdad, and he brought some of the US secretaries with him. And, I mean, this was kind of a silly effort. I'll never forget, the White House was actually trying to figure out -- they were trying to link up our secretary of the interior with the Iraqi minister of interior, and, I mean, hello. Our guy talks about reforestation, and the Iraqi guy is basically the police minister. I mean, we had all of these ideas, and this was, of course, Rumsfeld and to some degree the President saying, Yeah, we got to get the civilian side, the civilian side, that's the solution. And I looked at all this

skeptical. So my contribution to this thing [00:40:00] was, again, because this gets to my views on the Surge, and to some degree [inaudible name] and I had influence, Condoleeza's. There were three centers of gravity in this thing. The fight against the insurgents, which requires a counterinsurgency. Positive momentum. It could be slow, because my experience around the world, both on the ground and reading and talking to people, since 1945, is at best it's slow. Germany and Japan are not good examples. South Korea, Taiwan, Guatemala, maybe Colombia - those are examples. And the third center of gravity was the American people. On all three fronts, things were even gloomier in June of 2006 than they were in the fall, when we came up with clear, hold, and build. I felt that [00:41:00] the chances of the Iraqis, who couldn't even see that they were descending into civil war, functioning and pulling themselves out, was less than before. The war was becoming ever less popular in the United States, and the Iraq Study Group was the manifestation of it. So that center of gravity wasn't doing well. And then the first and most important of them, the security situation was deteriorating right in front of us, and we had this awful -- I think we were starting to do the, what do you call it, together, the Baghdad plan.

SAYLE: Oh, yes, Operation Together Forward.

JEFFREY: Together Forward. But it was clear that this was more of the same. I didn't think it was going to go anywhere. I had seen the failure to actually reach out to the Sunni tribes, just before. And my feeling was also -- and here I was wrong, this

is important -- that to the extent we could get any success, Bush would swing back to his I've got to make this a Sweden, because that's what's going to solve the Middle East and make it [00:42:00] the next great success story after Eastern Europe. And I was afraid that he still had this *idée fixe*, so that any success -- because I felt that this was totally unrealistic and our efforts to try to do this would undercut a kind of sorry half-assed success, that was the best we could get, I was afraid that even if we could get ourselves back on the road to sorry half success, it would then simply encourage the President and some of the people around him to think that they really could turn this place into Sweden, and that would lead them to do things that would be counterproductive. So I was in a pretty grim mood at this point, and I think that's reflected in the memo.

SAYLE: At this point in time, did you think it was possible for the United States to deploy more troops to Iraq? Did that cross your mind? Was it --

JEFFREY: Yes, in fact, I was in favor of that. One of the things I liked most about the [00:43:00] Iraq Study Group was that it had a surge component to it that everybody forgets about. That's mainly Chuck Robb and Gates, but it was in there. I felt we needed more troops, and here is my reason why. I didn't think -- I knew this was never going to turn out to be Sweden, so I knew that the real geostrategic, the global goal, I won't even call it a strategic goal, the global goal that the President had for Iraq was never going to happen, and I think I'm right there. Secondly, even a strategic role of a relatively -- as Obama put it -- a more or less

stable Iraq that isn't being torn apart, that is sort of a friend of ours, I thought that that was extremely doubtful. But, what I did not want to see, from my experiences in Vietnam, was a defeated American military. I did not want to see us withdraw defeated out of there. I wanted to see, if possible, if there would be a way to at least beat [00:44:00] these guys down enough so that we could withdraw with honor, at least. That was my particular -- but it was a very uncomfortable position, because it's hard to justify keeping troops, perhaps more troops, which means more casualties, and we've lost a lot of people in the Surge, for realpolitik, and that's how I was arguing it.

Those people who were more invested in the Surge than I was really did think that they were going to score a strategic victory, and that this would have been worthy of our troops. I cannot emphasize too much in the minds of the US military and people who felt beholden to the US military, which is much of the civilian Iraq-oriented population, the need to have a result that justifies and is worthy of the sacrifices of our troops. We told those young men and women that they were going in there to make democracy possible and to protect the Iraqis and to solve their problems [00:45:00] and everything, and these people were out there risking their lives because they believed us. And therefore, to simply do an almost Nixonian thing of, well, we're going to have to stay on because we can't -- America isn't about losing wars, and we get too many enemies or potential enemies -- and, boy, that's all that chicken has come home to roost now, in 2015 -- out there, we

can't afford to lose a war. That was my argument. But that's a realpolitik argument. I could get away with it because I had been one of the troops sent out there to actually risk my life in '72. So I have a lot of respect for that argument, but I know it doesn't sell well in America, so I was kind of cautious on that one. That's why we kind of jumped around. We gave a series of options, none of which were particularly cheery to Condi.

SAYLE: Excellent. Now was that memo, just set the stage for the June summit at Camp David?

JEFFREY: Yeah. I think so, because I don't know the timing that well, even though you were kind enough to send me the tick-tock, but I think it was all part of a piece. The problem with [00:46:00] trying to look at this, and you guys are professionals like this, you try to make history into a discrete set of meetings, speeches, announcements, troop deployments, elections, and other things, and it looks like heartbeats, boom, broom. OK. To somebody who's doing this every day, either in Washington or in Baghdad, it's all a blur, and for everything that I would be able to tell you in the two hours or in 20 hours, there were 100 other things we were doing that seemed to be the most important thing in the world on why Condi's water figures were challenged and why she was insulted by Senator Levin on that, and how I had to come up by two o'clock with better water figures. This is the kind of thing that you were doing all the time. So it's kind of hard to separate. And there Zelikow would be a bit better, because he dealt only with, other than a few forays,

because everybody does this, into the tactical operational, how much oil is being pumped from that well [00:47:00] and that kind of thing. I mean, he was not averse to that. [hammering noise increases] But --

MILLER: Do you want me to go and try to find out --

CRAWFORD (a/v operator): If you would.

JEFFREY: But he was amazingly focused on the kind of heartbeats in the electrocardiogram of our Iraq policy. I was focused with everything, both doing that as his battle buddy, wingman, and trying to keep a huge bureaucracy fed and gainfully employed in trying to support the embassy and the thousand things they were doing. So it all kind of runs together.

SAYLE: Right. Well, that's a very important point. But my next question is about sort of one of these heartbeats or maybe a heart that did not beat, and that's that Camp David summit in June 2006. Some analysts have described this as a missed opportunity, or perhaps if all of the different departments had been able to sit down and hash out -- or at least identify a need to rethink Iraq strategy, this might have [00:48:00] been the day to do it. Did you see the summit as that at all?

JEFFREY: No. No, I thought the summit -- no, I hated the summit, and I hated the idiot trip to Baghdad thereafter, because it was all about, as far as I was -- my take on this whole goddamn thing? It was sucking up to Don Rumsfeld, [wags finger] The civilians aren't doing enough! That's why we're not succeeding in Iraq. So we brought in all of these agencies who don't know shit from Shinola when it comes

to Iraq, with some exceptions. Justice was doing a lot through the ICITAP program, because State was providing the funding, through foreign assistance funds. And other bits and pieces of bureaucracy were doing fine. Of course, the foreign affairs agencies, AID, State, and the CIA, were in there fully. But this was all about trying to -- it was not, unless I missed something, and I wasn't there -- I saw no sign that that had anything to do with our military strategy.

Miller: OK. No, I didn't think so.

JEFFREY: And that's the thing that we needed, so therefore I just dismissed the whole thing as a waste of time [00:49:00], and I tried my very best to duck out of anything involving this thing, because they knew it was all going to come down. I was the coordinator of the whole civilian stuff, me and Meghan, and so I knew that we were just going to get a thousand new goofy taskings, and that's exactly what came out of this. OK?

SAYLE: And the trip, the President's trip, took you by surprise? Was that right? At the middle of that meeting he --

JEFFREY: Well, sure, yeah. It took everybody by surprise.

SAYLE: He took everybody by surprise?

JEFFREY: Yeah.

SAYLE: So moving into the summer, where you've mentioned Operation Together

Forward, there's one and two that are unsuccessful. One of the commanders said

so. What did you make of that period? Maliki is seated, these unsuccessful operations? What does Iraq look like in the summer of 2006?

JEFFREY: Even worse than when we did our memo in June. By this time, as I said, the centers of gravity, all three were flashing big red. The American public, it was clear that this was becoming a huge issue. The Iraq Study Group did not -- it actually served to focus [00:50:00] alternative strategies, and that's, of course, what they came up with, by and large, other than the surge, an alternative strategy of essentially genteel withdrawal. And so that wasn't working. The situation in Iraq, nonmilitary, was awful. Maliki was not getting on top of things, and we all saw what Hadley wrote and then was leaked into the press in the fall after he went out there. This was not a surprise to us. We could all see this. And the military situation, I mean, this was a major effort. Everybody was focused on this Together Forward thing. This was going to be the flagship of how we would do things, and it failed. Tens of thousands of US troops and tens of thousands of Iraqis, and we didn't accomplish anything. And Ramadi was doing very badly also, and we were very worried about Ramadi. We were not quite as bad as the Obama Administration has done with Ramadi, but still bad. [00:51:00]

SAYLE: I guess it's August, you leave S/I. Around that time, August, September, some informal reviews began in different elements of government.

JEFFREY: Right.

SAYLE: The NSC begins an informal review. A little bit later --

JEFFREY: The colonels.

SAYLE: The Council of Colonels is --

JEFFREY: And Keane and the Kagans and others, so you got three separate things, and then we were doing our own thinking in the State Department as well.

SAYLE: OK, so I wanted to ask you about that. There is the formal review that begins after the midterms, but I want to focus on that September-October period, where everything was informal. Can you tell us about what's happening in the State Department?

JEFFREY: Not in a lot of detail, because I wasn't the day-in-day-out manager, and I had to be careful, because one of my best friends would replace me in Baghdad, and then had replaced me as S/I. There were bureaucratic reasons that I won't go into, because they're not important on why I went to NEA, which had been his job [00:52:00] a year before, and why he went to S/I. Just leave it that Condi, David, and I thought it was the best way to avoid internal problems in the State Department that do not reflect poorly on any of the three of us, but do on others.

MILLER: Fair enough

JEFFREY: OK. So that's how we set things up. So I wasn't being relieved or fired, it was my idea to move to NEA, because we were all surprised that Zal got rid of Satterfield. We thought that was a mistake. But that's a whole other story. So I wasn't as much involved, except that before the various big decisions, Condi would bring me in as well, because she trusted me and they trusted me, and we had

worked together as a team. Remember, there was the three of us on a daily basis. [00:53:00] For various reasons, Zal felt -- on administrative things he would deal with me all the time, but in terms of chain of command, he worked for the Secretary and the President. So the Phil-Zal relationship was always going to be complicated, and those kind of relationships tend to be complicated anyway, so it was Satterfield, Phil, and I who were basically, even before, when Satterfield was out in Baghdad, who were kind of the brain trust for Condi on Iraq. And that's the other thing. If you're wondering, well, where was the State Department study, like the colonels and all that? It was just two and a half people. I was the half, and they were the other two, and that's all it takes. You didn't want to bring in a lot of people. The military had to, because every sort of decision they had, had tremendous budgetary, troop, global deployment, political, local, and other, families, and other implications that they had to bring [00:54:00] everybody in to study it up, down, and sideways. We didn't have to, because, again, this was about grand strategy and the military. It didn't involve -- I mean, it did involve, at one point, surging the civilian presence, but we could do that, up to certain limits, and there were real limits to that. But that was a minor part of it, and we knew we could do that, that if we needed to double the number of Americans in country, we could pretty well figure that out. Some of that had come out of this circus at Camp David, and then going out there, more civilians, and so we were all committed to that, and we knew how to turn that faucet on, and we didn't need all kinds of

people from human resources and the budget office and all of that, because it was just such a small part of our operation, we knew how to manipulate it. So it wasn't that, boy, all Condi did was just Zelikow part time, Satterfield [00:55:00], and Jeffrey part time. That doesn't sound very robust compared to what the NSC -- but it didn't have to be robust, because we all knew what we were talking about.

SAYLE: Did you then have sort of informal connections or were you talking to the NSC people or the council of colonels? Was there visibility or connection at all?

JEFFREY: No. No. There was no visibility in the other efforts. I knew the other -- I knew the NSC effort was ongoing, because I would have a lot of contact with J. D. Crouch and with Meghan, not so much directly on Iraq, but Iraq would always come up, and Meghan and J. D. were very good in asking me as well. I mean, everybody was desperate to serve the President and to serve the people in Iraq, so therefore there was, between the State Department and the NSC, there was a collegial kind of effort. If you could get information, fine. But the fact that they were looking at this was sort of generally known, because that's what the NSC does.

SAYLE: Did you have a sense of what Meghan O'Sullivan or the other NSC officials preferred goal wise, at that point? Did you think they had a position they were pushing [00:56:00] in September?

JEFFREY: I didn't, but in going back, once I worked over there, I could see that Bill Luti and Peter Feaver played a big role in pushing for essentially clear, hold, build. And

also I knew that because I had been involved peripherally on the Petraeus effort out at Fort Reilly -- not Fort Reilly -- Fort Leavenworth.

SAYLE: Leavenworth, right, yes. I want to connect this to your position then at NEA and how you were looking at regional politics in that period, and where Iraq fit in US policy in the region. You can bring in Iran or Syria. How do these pieces connect?

JEFFREY: They almost didn't. This is a very good question, and I'll see if I can summarize this, and I can do this as well as anybody I think, although Zal would be useful, too. In the [00:57:00] US government, Iraq and Afghanistan were dealt with *sui generis*, as *deus ex machinas*, with very little reliance on the rest of the region. Actually, with Afghanistan there was more, because of the huge role of Pakistan. But with Iraq, even though Syria and Iran were both up to their ears in trying to undercut our presence by supporting insurgent groups, there wasn't very much we could do against them. As you know, the Iraq Study Group recommended talking to them. For various reasons, the Bush Administration didn't want to talk to them, although eventually Crocker was authorized to talk to them, and there were some talks, which was a smart thing. But the basic problem, it had both bureaucratic and regional -- the Arab world and Turkey [00:58:00] were horrified at what we did, because they thought that we were opening the door to Iranian influence in the region, and they may have been right, by going in there. We had just done something that was unique. We had taken down a government -- not just a government, a state system, and we had installed ourselves, justified -- and people

don't remember this, but it's true -- by a UN Security Council, Chapter VII resolution, in June, late May or June, of 2004, which essentially handed Iraq over to us. That's why we were able to keep troops there. That's why we had the status of forces. We got it because the UN Security Council gave it to us. So something like that was unique in the Middle East, and they didn't like it. They didn't like it for the ethnocentric reasons of Shia and Kurds, they didn't like it for the Iran reason, and they didn't like it for the potential further involvement, because these countries were all allied with us [00:59:00] at the head of state and elite level, but their populations, we were the Great Satan, just like the Iranians called us. OK? They think exactly the same way about us. Look at the polls in any Arab country. And so this was trouble. Therefore they tried to stay away from it. A few countries, Egypt and Jordan, because Jordan had to, were somewhat more supportive of the new Iraqi state, but led by the Saudis, the Gulfies were extremely off put, and Kuwait eventually came around, because they had specific interests, and they were under a lot of pressure to relieve some of the 5-percent payments from Iraqi oil -- was it 5 percent, I forget -- and a few other things that were really important, and the Kuwaitis actually in the end were OK. But, by and large, we had tremendous problems with the region. I don't make this quite a center of gravity, because [01:00:00] I felt that with the right policies, and I was proven right with the surge, we could deal with the military threat that the Syrians and the Iranians were cooking up, and that nothing we could do would make the Arabs

move the dial enough from their surly resistance and ignorance to something so positive as to make a difference on the ground. So therefore, you needed to have a task force doing it, or it needed to be one of the 27 lines of operation that we had, and it needed to be on chart number 15, but it wasn't going to make any difference. The three, again, centers of gravity were the military campaign, social-economic-political reconciliation effort among and by the Iraqis, and the American public. Only on the margins did those things, the diplomatic situation [01:01:00] affect, and it's the same thing. We didn't get much bounce out of the presence of at one point 30,000 international forces. They did almost nothing on the ground, with a few minor exceptions, and they didn't help us politically at home very much either.

SAYLE: Moving then to something that affected a few of those centers of gravity, in early November there are two major events. There's the midterm elections and Secretary Rumsfeld resigns from the office of the Secretary of Defense.

JEFFREY: Was fired.

SAYLE: Can you give each of those two issues, how they affected sort of the atmosphere for policy review or a new policy going forward, and how you viewed them at the time?

JEFFREY: Yeah. Yeah. I think at that time, it was right around that time that Zelikow, Satterfield, and I met, and then the State Department had some fire emergency, and we met at the Alfred Einstein statue down by the National Science Foundation -- is that right, yeah -- right down the street from the State Department on 22nd

Street. I think it was raining, and we kind of worked out [01:02:00] our final position. Here's where I came down, but you'd have to ask Zelikow. Again, I had been since the summer very discouraged, but I did feel that we should try some kind of limited surge to avoid a military defeat. I mean, I was basically channeling my whole Vietnam experience. But as far as I was concerned -- because you had the other thing. That was right about the time that the Hadley memo leaked.

SAYLE: Yes, right.

JEFFREY: So therefore my centers of gravity, all three, were really awful, and I thought that the American public had definitively turned its back on Iraq, so that that center of gravity was gone. I felt that the Iraqi center of gravity was going. I felt that a military surge could reverse the military situation sufficient to possibly buy us time for some kind [01:03:00] of less-than-defeat exit, but that in the long run it wasn't just that George Bush's dream of an Iraq success was out the window. I had never thought that that was really possible. But that our hope, which we had all been involved in, that you would get the Iraq that you actually had in 2010 to 2012 - - I'm only accidentally picking the time that I was ambassador in charge of the place, OK -- that Iraq that was kind of holding together in a constitutional, democratic fashion, with a low level of violence, that that was slipping away, too. That was a mistake of mine, and I have to say, I didn't calculate the effects of the surge, but also the effects of George Bush's political system. The other two, I think, were Satterfield and Phil, and the Secretary were even more worried about

Iraq and worried about the legacy and worried about this thing really pulling our whole diplomatic [01:04:00], global diplomatic and security system down with it, and therefore the Secretary -- well, you can get this from Phil -- was not enthusiastic about the Surge. I, in the end, went along with Phil and Satterfield so that we'd have a unified agreement with her. And in looking at that and trying to figure out where I was wrong, what I miscalculated was George Bush -- first of all, in the long run, I think in two of the three I was right. In 2008, the American people voted for the guy who ran on I want everybody out of Iraq, Iraq was a huge mistake, and the Iraqi political system never was able to fortify itself against what sooner or later was almost inevitable -- maybe not inevitable, but sooner or later was a real possibility, which is shit happening in the neighborhood, in this case Syria, and Iraq was [01:05:00] not strong enough, unlike Jordan, see, to resist being sucked into the horror of ISIS, and that has led to the situation now. So therefore you would have to say that second center of gravity, the Iraqi political-economic-internal relationship system was very, very weak, despite the surge. We were never able to leverage the surge, as Crocker explained it, and he was honest when he gave his testimony. Go back and look at that. It's very, very good. When Petraeus got all the good lines and Crocker was, well, it's very difficult, and we're not making the same progress on the civilian and economic political side as we were. So based upon that, I was afraid that in the end it wasn't going to work. Where I was wrong was, first of all, the Iraqis did do a bit better than I thought, up

into and they would still be doing better if it wasn't for Syria. And the fact is, the country is still holding together. Abadi just took some pretty [01:06:00] bold steps that we would associate with a country maturing into a quasi-constitutional democratic system, so it's somehow holding together. They're pumping, on a good day, almost four million barrels of oil. So I sort of underestimated the ability of the Iraqis to somehow muddle through. The second thing that's the most important thing I'll leave with you today I think is George Bush called this right. I was wrong to think that if he started getting success again, he would default back to -- because he believed in it so, so deeply -- this idea that this would spark a democratic revolution in the Middle East and cure the Middle East, which needed curing. We all knew it needed curing, we just didn't think this was going to do it, most of us, but he I felt believed it. So therefore I thought that he would wind up doing things that would be counterproductive. Instead, he did two things. First of all, he showed the presidential leadership, if you wanted something really, really a lot and you're [01:07:00] willing to throw everything into it, I don't care how much opposition you have, if you're not Nixon and being run out of town on a rail, you can probably drive it through in the short run. But the long run, and this is the one thing that I think that you might not hear from anybody else, is he saved the Surge by accepting the withdrawal of US troops. That was the other thing. And he did that not because he was giving up on his dream of a democratic Iraq, but because he believed in a democratic Iraq, and if he thought that if you can calm

the security situation and give the Iraqis a chance, he somehow sensed that they didn't want us there. And I had heard him once back in 2005 talk about how he didn't want a long-term bases, and I remember looking around the room, and everybody was looking at him like: Doesn't he get it? This is another Bush thing. Gosh, what have we done since 1945, from Iceland to Guam? [01:08:00] Wherever our troops land or seize, we don't go away. That's why we're all around the world, and we're going to be in Iraq. And Bush listed every single base we had in the Middle East, from Incirlik to Oman, and said, "Why do I need more?" and nobody could answer him, and nobody wanted to, because they figured, oh, he'll just forget about that, but he didn't. He understood somehow that the Surge had to be linked with a withdrawal. Now, if you talk to him, he might deny that, but the point is, he took on his entire Pentagon, and it was Gates's Pentagon, not Rumsfeld's, that's harder to take on, not Peter Pace's JCS, but Mullen's -- to ensure -- he was the guy who made the decisions on that stupid title of what we call the SOFA, but it's actually ignominious retreat of American occupiers from -- I'm making it a little worse than it is, but it was an awful title, and it drove everybody - - they hated that [01:09:00] in the Pentagon. They had lost 4,500 people, and then they get a document like that, a deadline for all troops out, all of us out of the cities even before that 2011 deadline, immunities that actually opened the door to a possibility, under very unusual circumstances, an Iraqi court could try American soldiers. He took all of those decisions himself, because he knew that he had to do

that to get an agreement that would keep our troops on for a long enough period of time to give the Iraqis the chance to go on their own, from 2008 to 2011. That's the other half of the surge, and that's what I miscalculated, because I thought he would do the opposite. I thought that we would be back to let's do Stockholm, let's get another proconsul in there, let's really rock and roll. Let's really double down now. Instead, he realized, Phew, OK, somehow a miracle has happened with Petraeus and Crocker, and he gives them all the credit, as he should, but he needs a lot of it himself, because [01:10:00] it would have never happened if he hadn't been so determined. Then he was just as determined in taking a path forward that meant that we wouldn't have been back with the Iraqis trying to drive us out six months later.

SAYLE: I think that's an excellent summation. Do you have any questions, Paul, that you wanted to --

MILLER: Well, yes.

SAYLE: OK.

MILLER: I assume when I was out of the room you asked question number nine about the June 2006 War Council meeting.

SAYLE: Yes.

JEFFREY: Yeah, and I spent a fair amount of time trashing the whole idea. I hated it because it was just more work, more useless work for me and 500 people that were working for me.

MILLER: I think there's a few more questions at the end, but let me backtrack. I think we may not have quite got 8B, the memo you wrote in June 2006 with Phil Zelikow.

SAYLE: We --

MILLER: Can you assess what affect it had on Secretary Rice's thinking?

JEFFREY: It encouraged her to look at something like [01:11:00] the Iraq Study Group Way Forward, and, as you know, I think it was -- who was it that dismissed her approach, when she finally did go to the White House, as basically disguised retreat? So I think that that -- but it also -- that's the other problem. We weren't writing these things in isolation. We were writing them in full knowledge of where she was on this issue, and where she was on this issue was based upon essentially daily, sometimes multiple daily conversations with us. It's very hard to sift out between a set of senior advisors and a leader on these kinds of things. There are times, and the Surge to some degree was an example of it, where the leader will go off in a different direction and leave all of the advisors behind. I've seen Bush do that repeatedly. In fact, I think he's phenomenally good at that. He's usually right when he does that, he was [01:12:00] right on the bases. But in this case, this was an evolving effort, so it isn't that we somehow had a change of views and we said up until the 3rd of June we're in this position, now on the 4th we're on that. This was just an evolving sense that something is very wrong, and you had that with Meghan and the team in the NSC, you had that with a lot of military officers. Everybody seemed to know things were not working except Baghdad I'm sure

knew it, but, as I said, the constraints I talked about limited their ability, because it's one thing for me, as S/I, or even Condi to say, "Houston, we got a problem." Once your embassy, embassies and generals in the field, once they say it, presidents can't ignore it, and I speak from experience from 2010 to 2012, as well as having been number twos and in closely with others. Those people [01:13:00] have more clout, particularly if their lives are being endangered, as they were, and as the President was well aware of, with all of us, than all of his advisors and everything else. So they had to be very careful, and as I said, Zal had to be careful, because he didn't want to get crosswise with Casey, Casey had to be very careful because of the constraints that Rumsfeld put him under. And Rumsfeld had free rein to do that, because he was being protected by the Vice President.

SAYLE: Sort of to follow up on that, for one moment, do you recall in November area, late 2006, if the ambassador from Iraq sent a cable requesting more troops for Iraq? Does that ring a bell for you at all at any point in the past?

JEFFREY: No. No. But that's late 2006?

SAYLE: In November 2006.

JEFFREY: Yeah, but by that time you'd already had -- I mean, by this time we were all -- it was obvious that we knew about the effort [01:14:00] in the NSC, and I think by November you already had the formal effort. We knew about the colonels, we knew about the Keane thing. And even the Iraq Study Group had had a variant of this with their surge, which was like two brigades or something.

SAYLE: In the November Study Group, David Satterfield presented a position variously described by people as stepping back or as focusing on the forward operating basis. It was a very pessimistic paper, as viewed by other members of that review. It seems to me like that represented the thinking within the Secretary's circle quite closely, but there are others who've suggested maybe that was a stalking horse for another argument or something. Can you just tell us about --

JEFFREY: No, I can't. I testified before them, but it was early on, I think when I was still S/I. Because I had a transition period. The State Department is never clean in doing things, so for a while I was both the P-DAS [01:15:00] and I was S/I, and then I'd go back and forth between the two offices, and it was during that period that I gave -- and I gave a pretty pessimistic one as well, but I'm sure I was favorable to a bigger troop presence, at least temporarily, if it would actually do a counterinsurgency.

SAYLE: One big issue in the fall of 2006 is that it seems the Joint Staff officers are telling people that there are no more troops for Iraq and that that might have shaped thinking. Did that contribute -- did the idea that there -- did you hear that from the Joint Staff, directly or indirectly, and did that change your sentiment of what was possible to achieve in Iraq?

JEFFREY: 1968, Tet, we needed more troops. The 82nd Airborne Division was the holding grounds for troops that had just come back from Vietnam. We had no choice. A brigade of that division was tapped [01:16:00] to deploy within days. Johnson flies

down. He gives a rousing speech, as he should, to men who had just come back from Vietnam. Vietnam was a lot more dangerous than Iraq was. We were now going to turn around and go back and fight again. And then they got in the planes, and Johnson went from plane to plane, holding the hands of these guys, praying with them, cheering them on. There's always more troops, OK. Take a look at how many brigades we had in the National Guard. People think, well, but they haven't gone through the training program. We stopped North Korean tanks in the Pusan perimeter where we almost lost four divisions. With training units out of Fort Knox, who were told that you've suddenly become a tank battalion, take your M-26 tanks and deploy right now. We had 1.3 million [01:17:00] active duty and reserve Army and Marines. If the President wants to send them into combat, he sends them into combat. We had 130,000 troops in Iraq at that time, and maybe 30,000 or 40,000 in Afghanistan, and we had 28,000 in Korea. What the fuck were the rest of them doing? I'm sorry. There's 1,000 thousand bureaucratic reasons that everybody says no, you've got to have a 15 month thing, and then they haven't gone through the TA-23 gas mask training, and a 1,000 other reasons. Those people had all had multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. They would have gone out there, and they would have done well. We could have sent 10 brigades. The only limitation was we didn't have brigades, then we could have formed them up. That never crossed my mind for a moment. I heard it all the time, but I immediately thought, I'm a student of military history. We formed

security battalions in Vietnam in '72, when we woke up and realized we were faced with the North Vietnamese Army [01:18:00] and the Viet Cong, and we had sent all the combat troops home. So what did we do? I was a lieutenant in one. I was a platoon leader captain in one of them. We just created them. This is what you do in an army, this is what you have armies for, that's what you have generals for. The President wants you to come up with five brigades, 40,000 troops, you come up with five brigades and 40,000 troops.

SAYLE: There's been an argument made in different circles, one that -- from the Joint Chiefs angle -- that if more troops were sent, then the United States would not be able to respond to a conflict elsewhere. Did you see that as sort of a boogeyman, or were there concerns that you had that, no, the United States needs to make forces available in cases of contingency with Iran, with North Korea, for example?

JEFFREY: The United States had at the time, roughly 52 active Army brigades, 8 active Army brigade-equivalent Marine regiments, and about 35 or 40 [01:19:00] National Guard or Marine Reserve brigade equivalents. Let's add that all up. That's 50, 58, let's say 35, 58, about 100. The maximum number of troops we've committed to any conflict, and only briefly, that 82nd Airborne experience I said in Vietnam was about 33 or 34. We had 31 in the Gulf War. We had 21 at the height in Iraq. We had 9 or 12, at the height, in Afghanistan. We had 21 or 22 at the height in the whole Korean War against the whole Chinese Army. Give me a break.

SAYLE: Just a final one on this general issue. We've heard the idea, I think some leaders in Washington were concerned that if it was publicly [01:20:00] leaked that strategy was being reviewed in Iraq, and this is I guess before the midterm, before the President's announcement of the formal review, that that would somehow undercut morale of troops in the field, that the strategy they were being asked to follow was being reviewed. You have diverse perspectives on this. You've been a soldier; you were involved in Iraq sufficiently. What do you make of that argument?

JEFFREY: I wouldn't give that a lot of credence. What you don't want and what I experienced, because I was literally one of the last soldiers to leave Vietnam, is to be the last person to get shot in a war. And particularly if it's a withdrawal with less than a victory, and we thought actually that we had won in '73, and so that wasn't an issue, but you still don't want to be the last person to die. [01:21:00] I don't think that was a big thing, but the problem is that's looking back. You always worry about troop morale. We had terrible problems with troop morale, and the key year was 1971 in Vietnam, where we had stopped offensive operations after going into Cambodia. It was obvious that we were on a rapid withdrawal. Some people, Al Gore, John Kerry, were getting four-month tours and then were being pulled out, and it wasn't just because they were named Kerry and Gore. I mean, lots of people were. I went over there in '72 figuring I'll be here just long enough to get my combat patch and say I was in Vietnam. Well, I was there 365

days. Big surprise for me. So there was a sense of the wheels are coming off in disillusion at the end of any war when it looks like you're going away, and so [01:22:00], yeah, that can have an effect on morale of troops. But the far greater effect on morale of troops was the constant rotations back and forth, and I think that, again, that's where the President did the right thing. He saw that we couldn't keep that presence for much longer and that it wasn't necessary, and that if you do the Surge you would then -- the interesting thing is, because while Obama made the mistake of announcing he would be withdrawing almost as soon as he did the Afghan surge, the first Surge brigade came out of Iraq right at the time the last Surge brigade went in I think. I forget which brigade it was that was up in Diyala. And he actually said this in his speech, that this was temporary, that he would be withdrawing these troops as soon as they get the situation back under control. So I don't think so. But you always worry about the morale of troops, particularly after, gosh, the better part [01:23:00] of a decade.

MILLER: You mentioned the Iraq Study Group a couple of times. Can you give us your thoughts on how that report was received in the region by the other governments in the Middle East?

JEFFREY: Not with any real detail, because I was out, and I had my second meeting with King Abdullah in August of -- let's see, when was that -- 2006, and I had met with him in the fall of 2005, and he was just as adamant that this whole thing was a crazy American experiment. First of all, they don't understand our system, and

they figured that this was all eye washing, and what's the Iraq Study Group, what's Congress. It's where George Bush is, and George Bush still seemed to be pretty determined to stay. They didn't like the overall policy, but what they did want to see was a determined American presence [01:24:00], not simply running away. That would add insult to injury. It's one thing to have your main security provider/911 do stupid things, like go into Iraq. It's even worse to have that entity do the stupid things and then just run away, tail between their legs, showing military incompetence. That's what they didn't want. But this kind of thing just basically falls below their radar with these guys. There had been a zillion studies and a zillion leaks and a zillion things. What caught their attention was Rumsfeld going and the elections, that's something that I'm sure -- I can't prove it, because by that time I wasn't following it, and they were all hunkered down. They knew they couldn't talk to us about Iraq. The only ones who could were the Israelis, because they were very concerned about Iran, they were very concerned about the American presence and all of that. They're the only people I had any rational conversation with on Iraq in the Middle East [01:25:00], and I went through the region with Nick Burns, the undersecretary, in January of 2007, after we had taken the decision for the surge. The Israelis wanted to hear everything about the surge, and so I gave a big briefing to the Israeli military, but nobody else really -- they said, "OK, you're going to stay on, that's good. You're going to deal with it, that's

good. That's what we expect you to do. You screwed it up, now you're making it a little bit better." Again, they were not a center of gravity in this whole thing.

SAYLE: You just mentioned the Secretary Rumsfeld leaving, and we've talked about this a little bit, especially in that Secretary Rumsfeld being in office seemed to have made some policy change conversations more difficult. After Robert Gates becomes secretary of defense, is there any noticeable change?

JEFFREY: Oh, absolutely. In fact, I was with Gates on his first trip to Iraq, either his first or his second. It was in January or February of 2007. [01:26:00] I really admire Bob Gates. We worked very closely together, particularly in my time in the National Security Council. And it would be presumptuous of me to say that Gates and I probably think pretty much alike on most things, but I will say that I think that Gates was never an enthusiastic believer in the Bush 2005 inaugural vision. I do think that Gates very strongly believed, as I did, that the one thing you don't do is lose wars, and that his job was to ensure we didn't lose this one, and be it the world record deployment of MRAPs, be it his support for the surge, be it his very quiet support for Petraeus, -- remember, now I'm going ahead of myself, because [01:27:00] you don't want me to talk after.

SAYLE: Oh, no, we're happy to --

JEFFREY: But an interesting thing, I was in the National Security Council for less than a month. OK, Bush knew me and kind of liked me from Iraq, but that was because I was kind of the kid on the video screen often, with Negroponte and Casey, but

suddenly I'm the deputy national security advisor, and then I become the national security advisor. Bush flies with Hadley and me to an Anbar meeting with everybody, Maliki and such, in September, and then we go on to the APEC conference. Hadley goes back, because you got the Petraeus, Crocker. Hadley didn't go back to prep them. They didn't need to be prepped. In fact, what Bush wanted was to ensure that they would not be prepped. He knew that on their own, those two would carry the day, and, boy, that's one of the historic moments in the US Congress, when they did carry the day. They were just absolutely phenomenal that day. I know them both very well, and I'm very proud of them. [01:28:00]

Hadley's job was to make sure there was no interference with them. Look at Petraeus's chain of command. You had Fox Fallon, and you had Peter Pace. But you had Gates. Gates was supportive of Petraeus, and Petraeus needed that kind of support, because Fallon didn't -- he was totally opposed to this, and Pace [speaker shrugs]. As far as I know. Now maybe -- but I do know that when the colonels came to the Joint Chiefs, their study got nowhere. The Joint Chiefs are independent. The Joint Chiefs, the chairman's job is to be the military advisor to the President. He's not the deputy secretary of defense, following the secretary of defense on this, and that's a different chain of command, different role. So if the Joint Chiefs turned that thing down, I have to assume, I mean, I have to give people [01:29:00] integrity. So how did I get onto this?

SAYLE: We were speaking about the change in sort of policies.

JEFFREY: Yeah, oh, with Gates. Gates was very supportive of doing the surge. He was a skeptic on the long-term chances for Iraq, but he knew that we wouldn't have had a game to play in the Middle East if we had been driven out of Iraq, and therefore he put every ounce of his effort into ensuring that this thing would work.

SAYLE: I have two more, so if you have any more, do you want to go --

MILLER: I'm done except I thought we might ask the very last question again as summary.

SAYLE: Great. OK. One quick one and then one might not be quick. First, you've mentioned Jack Keane and Frederick Kagan and the American Enterprise Institute's work, and that got a lot of ink in that account since. Do you remember at the time if that played a big role in your thinking?

JEFFREY: I don't know, because we [01:30:00] only got peripheries of it, because particularly Keane was working behind the scenes. He's a tremendous networker, as are the Kagans. So a lot of this was behind the scenes, and of course it was hard to differentiate between the three essentially insurgencies, the colonels, Meghan, Luti, Peter Feaver, and then eventually Crouch got tasked to do it formally, and this one from the outside, and I didn't quite -- but I knew that there was a major movement of force to challenge the Rumsfeld thing.

SAYLE: One thing, and you've touched on this in a number of important points, that your strategic thinking or your realpolitik analysis of Iraq was speaking a different language than sort of the inaugural address language in some of the goals that

were set out for Iraq. Was there a point or should there have been a point [01:31:00] where policy makers sat down and thought about America's strategic goals in Iraq? Did that happen? Whether reassessing them, checking them? Did anything like that happen?

JEFFREY: That's I think what drove much of -- but there you really have to interview Rice or perhaps go back and re-interview Zelikow, because he would know better than I, and I may be putting words in her mouth. She was a true believer in this thing. We used to routinely, we with experience, say, "Democracy? Come on. These guys aren't ready for democracy." And she would say, "When I was a little girl, that's what they said about us in Alabama," and she very much bought into this. As you know, she was supportive, along with Bush, to letting elections take place in Gaza and letting Hamas participate, and that turned out badly I think. But I think that after that -- she was a person, and I watched her over eight years, who was constantly learning. [01:32:00] I think the President was, too, but with her it was a much clearer set of things. She was liberated when she became secretary of state, because that's a very different job than being national security advisor. She was her own woman, she ran a huge bureaucracy, she was the most important member of the cabinet, and she maintained the President's position. So I think with her, she started weaning herself from the idea that this would ever be -- the analogy -- and there another guy you should interview, even though he wasn't around for the

Surge, but to get the background to this — and the flavor -- is Wolfowitz.

Wolfowitz and Cambone.

SAYLE: We did speak with Steve Cambone.

JEFFREY: OK. They really seemed to believe that this was going to be analogous to 1989 in Eastern Europe. [01:33:00] Well, I'm a European guy actually, and I had been a political advisor to Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, in 1989, and I knew all about what was going on in Eastern Europe, and I had served in Eastern Europe, and I knew the Middle East, where I'd also served a lot, ain't Eastern Europe. There was a tremendous belief that I was wrong, that people like me were wrong, that the Arabists, who were tuned out. And that's another thing. Oh, I should add. This is a kind of a footnote to the regional thing. The Near Eastern Bureau was so unhappy with the initial decision to go into Iraq, they were so concerned about what that would do to our overall reputation in the region, they had the burden of trying to justify Israel to our Arabic friends who make up most of the countries in the region, and thus most of their work, and now you have another burden to bear with Iraq. And so there was [01:34:00] not a lot of buy-in of the bureau to that. That's another reason why there was sort of a disconnect. I still think that the regional role was not a -- what am I using?

SAYLE: A center of gravity.

JEFFREY: A center of gravity. But still, the bureau could have done more, and I tried a bit in my one year there, but there was not a lot of enthusiasm for it. But anyway, in

terms of a real decision, I think that she had come to the conclusion -- that was one reason why she wanted the Iraq Study Group to give some cover -- that this was not going to lead to a new Middle East, but she also understood that we didn't want to lose and that the President was doubled down on this thing, and that you had to try to find some way. But she was trying to -- we were all feeling our way at that time, because you had this terrible thing that was not doing well, and it was very hard. By the summer of 2006 we had been doing this thing for three and a half years.

SAYLE: Well, [01:35:00] you've given us a brilliant exposition of your position in the times. I wanted to end with one general question. You've spoken about the President, but we always wrap up on this question, and that is, if you could look back on the President's decision making, what you thought were the key points in his decision making, from your perspective, and how we should look back at them as historians?

JEFFREY: The President is a visionary. He thought, and he was encouraged by some of his advisors, including her and Paul Wolfowitz, and also some of the people he turned to, Natan Sharansky, [01:36:00] Fouad Ajami, and Bernard Lewis. I finally banned I forget which one of them from seeing Bush for the 23rd time until he talked to somebody who represented the other 98 percent of the Middle East experts in the world who thought totally different. This was a [01:36:00] battle between me and

Elliot Abrams. And he knew that 9-11 reflected, and the UNDP¹ Report of 2002 reinforced this, coming from a totally different direction, that 9/11 reflected truly dysfunctional problems in the Middle East that went beyond what we thought we were dealing with since the late 1970s, and he was right, and I give you the Middle East today. It's just that he had a belief, because he is a believer in democracy and elections, and this is a guy who really, really believes in elections, and he took 2006 very, very seriously. That was a defeat for him. He knew it, and he knew he had to do something about it. And he's a believer in democracy and he's a believer in the humanity and that we're all alike under the skin. And at one level, he's right. The problem is there's enough caveats to that, and they all kicked in in Iraq, to undercut his policy. But I watched him [01:37:00], and that's why I get so angry. I'm going to be partisan now, in -- how did the President put it, Obama in his speech, at AU [American University] -- the thinking behind Iraq, I have to eradicate that, too. Let me tell you. I watched Bush in six other political and military crises. Afghanistan, the overall battle against Al Qaeda, nuclear North Korea, nuclear Iran, nuclear Syria, and the Russian invasion of Georgia. You tell me where he showed cowboy-ish military adventuresome in all of them. The only two that he used force in, Obama doubled down on. Afghanistan and Al Qaeda. The other four, he came up with diplomatic solutions. In the case of Syria, the Israelis, in the end, decided they didn't like it. In fact, it was too diplomatic, it was too multilateral, it was too Obamaesque, and they went in, with his

¹ United Nations Development Programme

understanding, and bombed them. But my point is, this is the guy who actually ran a superb foreign policy, with the problem [01:38:00] that he made a historic mistake in judging the situation in Iraq, and he wasn't helped by a lot of the advisors and people who let him listen to other people. Because, of course, Sharansky and Fouad Ajami and Bernard Lewis are all experts. The problem is they're experts with one point of view, and that's a tiny minority point of view among experts in the Middle East. He should have had access to more people, and that's a staff problem. It's a little bit his problem, but it's more a staff problem. He did a wonderful job with the TARP [Troubled Asset Relief Program] when the financial crisis came, which was everybody's fault, not just his, but he was the guy who had to deal with it. And his turnover of a country in crisis to Barack Obama reflects the greatest of credit, both on Obama and on George Bush. And [David] Rothkopf, the guy who's the head of *Foreign Policy* [01:39:00], has written on this. He's written a book on it, and it's absolutely on target on that. So I think that Bush was a very visionary and a very competent guy. I've seen him again and again go against his advisors. The problem was, on Iraq, it was an almost intractable problem. The whole assumptions that he brought into this thing were not correct, including the democratization of it. And the other thing is, and I'll get to this, because it's a question you asked in your paper, but you haven't asked me. This whole idea of the civilian side of it. He kept thinking, and that's the whole idea behind the Camp David thing, that there was some key to the civilian side of this

thing, and then again, with the chicken and egg argument, that if you get the civilian side right, that will dry up the insurgency. The civilians were saying, if you get the insurgency right, that will give the running room for political processes, economic development, and everything to take root, but if you don't deal with the security problem [01:40:00], you don't have a civilian strategy. So on those two things, he didn't get it right, but he wasn't helped by both the divisions in his administration, and the inability, until around the time of the surge, to pull it all together, then he and Hadley were running this thing, and they ran it brilliantly. They had great support from, by serendipity, Crocker -- well, not serendipity, because they had picked them to go out there -- Crocker and Petraeus to execute the Surge strategy, and they picked the very right people. And the result is an extraordinary accomplishment compared to -- I mean, if you think the Middle East is a mess today, think what kind of a mess it would have been if we had been pushed out of Iraq. The one question you didn't ask me, and it's an important one, I thought a lot about it, is the claim that the civilians were not doing their share in this thing. That's got both a strategic and a tactical side to it, and the complaints [01:41:00] came in on both sides. On the strategic side, again, I've talked around this and partially through this. It's the idea that there is some kind of magic build strategy, that if you can just mobilize the United States, our government and our NGOs and our expertise in industry -- there was a whole effort that the DoD, of course, just took over to get American business involved in this -- that we can

change this place. There was this hugely optimistic belief in what we could do to a very different society in a very short period of time to dry up the insurgency by reconciling irreconcilable forces and providing such competent governance, end to corruption, economic development, that people in droves would decide to put down their arms and join this thing. But there's no example anywhere where we've done this until you go back to Germany and Japan [01:42:00]. The differences with them are A, they had a real enemy, and it wasn't us, it was the Soviet Union. B, those were advanced societies. C, we kicked their ass in a really, really severe way, and all they wanted was to somehow survive, other than with the Morgenthau plan or whatever the hell alternative Morgenthau Asia version people were thinking of with the Japanese, and they were very thankful that we weren't applying it. And D, we had this executed by the US military that was on the ground in force. OK? My sister-in-law lives in a place called Bensheim [Germany]. Nobody's ever heard of Bensheim, but the guy who was running it was an Army sergeant in 1945 named Henry Kissinger, who could speak German better than almost anybody in Bensheim who knew the culture, and they were Henry Kissinger like people all over in every -- Bensheim is just a little tiny place. There were thousands of little tiny places with American sergeants and captains [01:43:00] running them, and if there was any problems, the cavalry literally would be on the road in a second, and everybody in Germany knew that. There was no -- other than those two examples, we've never done this anywhere. So a strategy of

clear, hold, and build that sees in the short run an American-jumpstarted transformation as not -- I'm not talking about just moving it the way Colombia, which is one of the better examples, has been moved over 30 years. They're still right now, they're back fighting a bit with the FARC and negotiating with them, it's not over. Or take a look at Northern Ireland. These are about the two best examples I can cite, and I can cite 50 examples where at best it's frozen, at worst it becomes frozen, but like South Ossetia, it almost drags the whole world into war. That's our experience. And what we didn't communicate, and this is one of the failings of us, not the President, we didn't communicate. "Mr. President, we can't do build. [01:44:00] In the time, into the volume, you need to have an impact significantly on the insurgency and on the divisions of that society." Nobody ever said that to him. So that's the strategic. Now -- and because nobody said that, but because we were getting the money, the \$22 billion and throwing it around and pumping in AID teams and getting everybody involved and mobilizing US business leaders -- Newt Gingrich at one time came up with the Newt Gingrich plan and all that, and we had all kinds of meetings and such, and there was so much input activity, typical of government, that nobody could see that this wasn't producing very much and it couldn't produce very much, and therefore that was a false pillar of our policy at the strategic level. And as I said, part of it is the Foreign Service and USAID who were the people who were in the best position to know. Now, bear in mind, they had been beaten down, because they were kind of sending

similar signals to this in late 2002 [01:45:00] and early 2003. Thus the more senior people weren't allowed out, and the famous Rumsfeld thing that led to Meghan becoming famous is OK, let the girl go. Whereas what's his name now, he's now – [Tom]Warrick wasn't allowed, because he was seen as the main State Department naysayer. So the State Department had learned not to beat this drum, but still, we should have, and it should have been done by Powell and Armitage. But they were good soldiers. Once they had made their protests and such and once the President said "try your best," and I watched them, I dealt with Armitage almost every day when I was out there, they did their best. But we hadn't done enough to tell them, because it was so hard to tell them, and they were getting this money for us. And when so much was involved in this thing, and so much enthusiasm, I don't think we can do this, Bubba, I don't think this is going to work. So that's the strategic level. At the tactical level [01:46:00], it's the whole issue of A, the military, and it's a guy who's been in it and a guy who was very much of this culture when I was in it, anything that isn't as organized, as by-the-numbers, that doesn't look like the US military, isn't as efficient, isn't as clear, we kind of look down on them when you're in the military, and it was a little bit of that. So civilians always look goofy, particularly when civilians have to go into the field in a combat zone, wearing helmets that are always sitting badly, and they forget to put their blast-proof glasses on, and they've got the wrong -- they've got funny colored blue armored vests and kind of dream camouflage covers. I mean, we would always look

unprofessional compared to the military. And even though these people were out there risking their lives just as much as the military, and we lost a lot of people, and they were doing a very, very good job, and they helped the military at the immediate [01:47:00] level deal with civilian problems, be they economic, be they political, tribal, whatever. So it wasn't that it was wasted effort. They were an assist to the military at the immediate and tactical level, but it didn't have a strategic -- we couldn't generate that, and that was, as I said, that was in the nature of the thing. But where we got in trouble was because we couldn't -- I mean, the military really thought that we'd have reserve PRTs, that we'd pick up the phone and we'd call them, we'd say, "OK, find the Arkansas PRT. They're deploying," and out they'd fly in a State Department-leased DC-10. We don't have this stuff. The civilian side, even the State Department and the CIA -- the CIA a bit more, because it's a paramilitary organization, it's a national security agency, and the State Department is not, and that has all kinds of implications, beginning with personnel, policies, the unions, and other things. There's only so much you can do to deploy people there when this is not your day job, and even more so for Treasury and Justice and all of the other [01:48:00] branches of government. They didn't have budgets, they didn't have committees that were supportive. The President can't give them orders to fly people out. And they'll say, "Well, the State Department better give me the money to fly us out." And then you'd go to the State Department, and the State Department says, "We don't have money to fly

out Department of Justice people,” and you’d go around in circles like this all the time. There is no civilian tactical response, and if we want that, we have a model for it. It’s called the British Colonial Service. And the diplomatic implications of setting something up like that for our global interests -- this is the kind of thing Condi was now waking up to -- that’s unfair, but she was ever more aware of -- was the diplomatic cost of focusing our whole mindset on one little problem in the greater scheme of things. So one of the solutions that the military was looking at - - it’s like the A-10. It would have been the civilian equivalent of it. We need to reorgan-- and you’d hear this all the time. You’re going to hear this in your study repeatedly. We need to reorganize the whole civilian side of government so that they can do that. My answer [01:49:00] is no. They have day jobs. That’s why the American people put them out there, all of these agencies of government, so why don’t we just not do these things, not do things where we need A-10s to strafe guys who want to return to the sixth century, and rejigger the entire US bureaucracy so that it can deploy rapidly into PRT teams and seamlessly fall in behind the military? Because one alternative is simply expand the civil affairs agencies of the military. Anyway. So I got that off my chest, OK.

SAYLE: Well, excellent. Well, thank you very much for your time today. That was excellent. Thanks.

JEFFREY: OK. That was fun. And thank you for giving me the right preparation, because you’d never have gotten anything like this if I hadn’t gone back, reviewed things,

and studied it. Yeah, you made me feel that this was a professional operation, so it's not just the two hours, believe me. This is a drop in the bucket compared to the amount of time I've put into this thing.

SAYLE: Oh, I really -- we could tell, from your answers, and we often have people who haven't had a chance to read the questions or anything, so thank you so much for taking the time to [01:50:00] prepare.

JEFFREY: Yeah. And if you have any other questions or clarifications, we can do it by email, by telephone, however you want to do this. I really think this is important, and it's not just the current political debate. This is really important, because this is an extraordinary example of presidential leadership, and it's an extraordinary example of the military coming through. You've got some real heroes there. Gates. Condi, even if she was wrong on the Surge, she wasn't wrong about the long-term impact of the Surge, that it would be very limited. What we didn't see, and maybe she didn't even see it, was that Bush somehow would get it and reinforce the Surge with the withdrawal, and as I said, that's the one thing that I think I can claim to be a unique insight for you.

SAYLE: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

JEFFREY: And none of us saw that. I didn't think he was going to do that. So this is -- I'm very high on George Bush, even though I didn't like the initial decision, I didn't like the [01:51:00] make it Sweden and reform the Middle East. But every president gets to make a mistake. That one will haunt him forever, because of the nature of

the mistake. But unlike many others, he fixed the mistake, and that's the story of the Surge.

SAYLE: Well, thanks for adding to your -- [01:51:19]

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