Diplomacy, Alliances and War: Anglo-American Perspectives on History and Strategy in the September 11th Era

A Joint University of Texas-Austin and King's College London Conference

Panel 2: History and Strategy

Panelists:	Sir Nigel Sheinwald, Douglas Feith
Discussants:	Bruce Jentleson, Alexander Evans
Moderator:	Celeste Ward Gventer

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[Note to Reader: When possible, speakers are identified by first name. If not, then Respondent is used for panelists and discusssants, and Audience is used for attendees.]

[Begin File: Panel 2.mp3]

Moderator: Hello. Can I ask everyone to please take their seats so we can try to stay on schedule a little bit? Good morning, everyone. I'm Celeste Ward Gventer. I'm the National Security Fellow with the Clements Center. If I might, I'd just like to start out by saying how proud I am to be here with the Center. I first came to UT about three years ago and started talking with Frank Gavin and hanging around historians. I suddenly realized how important history was — when I thought back on my policy experience, how important history was. I said to Frank, "You know, I read this book *Thinking in Time*. It's really interesting, isn't it?" He said, "Well," but he mentioned that we're working on a project. Will came and worked with George Seay, and he's created just such an amazing organization.

I think looking around this crowd at the quality of the people, it's a real testament to what George and Will and Frank and our partners in the UK, Michael and John Bew have done. So congratulations to you guys. It's really lovely to be here and be with you. It also means a lot to me to be on this panel, because I get to talk about people that I've admired and who have had a huge influence on me in my life. I don't think that we could hear from any better set of people about what policymakers were really thinking, in terms of strategy and how history informed our thinking, than the two speakers we have here today.

I first met Mr. Feith was he was the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. He was going on a trip to Iraq, and I had been in Iraq. The note came down to my office in Policy that the Undersecretary needed an escort staffer to go with him, and I got the rose pinned on me, and all of my fellow action officers felt sorry for me. They said, "Oh, the Under Secretary? Oh, boy. He's a real hard-ass. Look out," but it turned out I had one of the most amazing and intellectually stimulating times ever of my life talking to him on the plane and just getting to know him. He really taught me new ways of thinking, and he taught me the importance of precision and using language in very precise ways. I also just enjoyed his company greatly, so it's a real thrill to be here with him.

As you know, Doug Feith was the Under Secretary for Policy from 2001 to 2005, and he's now a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. Before he went to DOD in the Bush Administration he already had a distinguished career as a practicing lawyer, and with the Reagan Administration in National Security. We'll go over his lengthy bio.

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Being here with Sir Nigel Sheinwald is also a great, great honor; surely one of the most distinguished and central figures of diplomacy and strategy in the UK in the current era. He was the Prime Minister's Foreign Policy and Defence Advisor and head of the Defence and Overseas Secretariat of the Cabinet Office from 2003 to 2007, and also for four years the UK Ambassador to the United States. Sir, I am especially happy to meet you today, because I will tell you I almost met you eight years ago. I came to your office with Philip Zelikow, all excited and ready to finally to get to meet you in person and was told that I was not allowed in the meeting.

[Multiple speakers]

Moderator: After we hear from our distinguished speakers we have two excellent scholar practitioners to comment here: Bruce Jentleson and Alexander Evans. Alexander Evans I think is in a great position to talk about this UK/U.S. connection. He's just told me he's married to an American, but his professional experience, as you'll see from his bio, reflects both great achievement working in U.S. circles as well as in UK circles. He is currently working with the United Nations Security Council on al-Qaeda and terrorism issues. Bruce Jentleson is Professor of Public Policy and Political Science at Duke. We all remember his distinguished leadership of the Sanford Institute of Public Policy, and he also served as a Senior Advisor to the State Department of Policy Planning Director. So with that I will turn the floor over to Doug Feith to begin. Thank you very much.

Douglas: Thank you to Celeste for that introduction. I want to thank and congratulate Will Inboden for putting this conference together. As you can all imagine, I've attended a few discussions over the years about Bush Administration national security policies, but I have to say I rarely have heard so serious, erudite, and illuminating a discussion as the one we just had, so it's a tough act to follow. My contribution this morning will be less in the nature of the kind of analysis that we just heard, and more in the nature of testimony. What I thought would be most useful would be basically telling you some stories about how we put together elements of the strategy after 9/11, and the kinds of things that we actually talked about.

I think a proper place to start is what I consider to be the seminal decision in the national security field of the Bush Administration, and that was after 9/11. Immediately after 9/11 there was, as you can imagine, throughout the government the question of, "What do we do?" Somebody in the earlier panel alluded to the great Lewis Carroll line in *Alice in Wonderland* about if you don't know where you're going, any path will get you there. That was part of a standard repertoire of Donald Rumsfeld. He said that all the time. It was a major point with him, because whenever there was a crisis, people would come and start saying — or just a problem in the world — they would start coming and talking about courses of action. He would always stop and say, "The first thing we have to do is figure out what's our national interest here. What's the purpose? What goal are we trying to achieve? Because until you tell me that, I can't handle all these proposals for courses of action."

So my main task in working with Rumsfeld right after 9/11 was trying to come up with this question of, "What is the purpose of the actions that we're going to take in response to the attack?" Now, this had basically already been pretty much decided, but it's important to understand what the debate was. There were two main schools of thought. One was the purpose of our response should be, "Find out who did it and hit them." Now, that was

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generally referred to as the law-enforcement approach, and that was more or less the approach that the U.S. government had taken for decades in response to terrorist attacks of various kinds in various places. There's clearly a logic to it, but there was another way to look at it.

Douglas: The other way to look at it was, "The purpose of our response to 9/11 should be do everything reasonable all around the world to prevent the next attack." Now, that is a world apart from the, "Find out who did it and hit them," approach. The president decided that the law-enforcement approach was simply inadequate, given the magnitude of the damage done in the attack and what that attack said about threats that we had. No U.S. president had ever before set a goal that ambitious in national security policy after a terrorist attack. The idea of saying our goal is to prevent the follow-on attack is extraordinarily ambitious. Why did he adopt that approach? Here's where you do get into various people's understanding of history within the administration.

When we talked about what would happen if there were follow-on attacks, something that we actually discussed was the changes in the nature of American society that would likely, if not inevitably, occur if there were a series of 9/11-type attacks. I mean, we saw what happened immediately after 9/11: we shut down air traffic over the United States; we closed ports. It's very important to remember also that very soon after 9/11 were those anthrax envelopes that got sent to different offices on Capitol Hill and elsewhere in Washington to journalists and others. The result of that was all of a sudden you weren't getting your mail. You certainly weren't getting packages. So you could see that there were major effects on the way we were living resulting from this one attack. If there were a series, how would it transform American society?

Now, one historical example that we had in mind — and I remember. I tell the story in my book. I happened to be in Moscow on 9/11. I was coming back with a number of colleagues that we collected in Germany on the way home, and one of them was Peter Rodman, who I'm sure many of you knew — a wonderful and extremely thoughtful guy. He was the Assistant Secretary who had responsibility for the Middle East and much of the rest of the world in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He and I had a three-star general. At the time I guess he was the J5, John Abizaid, who later became CENTCOM Commander. We were on this plane coming home with a few other colleagues, and one of the things we talked about was what would happen if there are more attacks. One of the things we discussed in particular was the experience with hijacking of airplanes in the late '60s and early '70s. We noted that the security measures that got put in place as a result of those hijackings remained in place to that day, even though the hijacking problem largely disappeared.

We said if there are a series of terrorist attacks of the 9/11 type, it is easy to imagine that we will put security measures in place that will cut back on privacy, cut back on civil liberties in all kinds of ways. Even if we get the terrorism problem to shrink, we will be left with the residue of all these civil-liberties unfriendly but necessary measures — at least necessary at the time. I mean, we were aware that there were debates among scholars about whether there really is what they call a "ratchet effect" on these things. But whether there's a ratchet effect or not, we certainly saw that in the airline hijacking case, the old days where you could show up at an airport ten minutes before a flight and jump on as if you were in a bus station were gone forever as a result of the hijacking problems in that earlier period.

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Douglas: So what we looked at was we said the stakes in responding to 9/11, the stakes in this war are nothing less than the free and open nature of American society. Those are pretty big stakes. We thought they justified the president's use of the term "war." War is often used as a kind of loose analogy, a metaphor in discussions about war on poverty, war on whatever, pornography. People declare wars, but what the president wanted to do in saying that we needed to do more than law enforcement after 9/11 was to say we needed a major national effort. If you ask the question, as we did, "Do the stakes justify that?" We believe they did for the reasons that I just explained.

We also understood — this was another important point in history — that if there were a series of attacks — when the American people in history have felt nervous about their security, they had shown a willingness over and over again to trade civil liberties for public safety. We actually talked about examples like Lincoln suspending habeas corpus in the Civil War; the Palmer Raids and other acts against seditious characters after World War I; the McCarthy period after World War II, when the communists took over Eastern Europe, and there was a general sense — after the First World War you had the Bolshevik Revolution and the concern about Bolsheviks and anarchists. After World War II you had the concern about communism spreading. When Americans feel nervous, even though Americans — as cultures go around the world, Americans are extremely jealous of their civil liberties. But even a people as jealous of their civil liberties as Americans, when they get nervous, they make this tradeoff.

Our view was that tradeoff is a reality. We weren't judging whether it's a good or a bad thing so much as recognizing it is a reality. Then we said if it gets made, it may be necessary to make that tradeoff, but it is certainly undesirable. So if you want to preserve our constitutional system, you've got to be really energetic about preventing follow-on attacks. That was the way we looked at it. I remember in particular, in this plane ride home with Peter Rodman and others, we literally talked about all of those historical examples that I just gave and discussed that as the stakes in the war.

Okay, now on the strategy for fighting the war. Let me try to do this quickly. The first big strategic problem we had was Secretary Rumsfeld went out to the Combatant Commanders and said, "You'll notice that the World Trade Center was just knocked down, and the Pentagon was just attacked. What do you propose we do?" And he got back memos from all of the Combatant Commanders, and they all more or less said the same thing. They said, "We've got airplanes. We've got tanks. We've got ships. If you point us toward a target, we can kill it," and that's basically the response he got from every Combatant Commander, and he blew a gasket. He was normally a very temperate guy, but he wrote an intemperate memo. I mean, it was really outstanding as a piece of anchor.

He wrote a memo in which he said — this was the numbers at the time. He said, "The American people are paying about a third of a trillion dollars a year for the defense budget, and we just had these losses. We just had this attack, and you're telling me you can't do anything," because the intelligence community was telling us they don't know where the targets are. They didn't know where the terrorist operatives were, so there we were. Now, that was initially a major strategic challenge. So this basically got resolved — and we can talk about it more in detail if you want to explore it in the discussion, but one approach to dealing with this problem was we needed to develop military operations that will produce intelligence. That was a really big new way of thinking.

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Douglas: That's point one, and the second was if we understand the enemy in this war — and there was a good discussion of that in the previous panel, but this is a very big challenge. Who's the enemy in this war? How do you even think of that? That deserves a lot of thought, and as I believe Phil Zelikow said earlier, I don't think we've completely got the handle on that as a government or as a coalition to this day. If you ask people, well, first of all you'll get people that would say we're not in a war, and we don't have an enemy. But for the people who at least think that we are in a war and we do have an enemy, you would get different answers if you asked, "Who's the enemy?" This was a gigantic challenge. I mean, it's not that people didn't think about it. It's not that people are stupid. It's a really hard problem, and in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 it was a gigantic challenge, which I think is part of the reason the president coined the term "war on terrorism." It was basically a placeholder, because we couldn't name the enemy.

But there was a concept, and this also had a historical background. There was a woman named Claire Sterling who wrote a book called *The Terror Network* back in the, I guess, late '70s or early '80s about international terrorism. It was highly controversial at the time, but her thesis was that many terrorist groups all around the world were in fact a network. This was something that was hotly debated, mainly by the CIA, and Robert Gates had some pretty interesting discussions of that in his memoires. We thought of the enemy after 9/11 as a network, and it was a network of terrorist organizations and their state supporters. I mean, we later said state and non-state supporters, but initially the main thought was you have terrorist groups, and you have their state sponsors, and they're a network.

This helped us answer this strategic question of what do you do when you don't know where the terrorist operatives are. What we said was if we conceive of the enemy as a network, even though we don't know where the terrorist operatives are — and you have the manhunt problem. Our military really didn't like the idea of manhunts. They had the experience in Panama, chasing Noriega. I mean, a standard line from our military at the time was, "We don't do manhunts." Well, that's not true anymore, but that was the standard kind of military response at the time. What we said was, "Okay, if we don't know where the individuals are, we at least do know that they're networked, and they are networked to some elements that are visible, and the visible parts are the states. So if we can develop a strategy that will affect the behavior of state sponsors of terrorism and basically send the message that they are in a bad business," because the way we looked at things, there wasn't a whole lot of downside for state sponsors of terrorism up to that point. They didn't pay a major price for being state sponsors.

We said, "If we can impose a major price on state sponsors of terrorism, they may be able to pull the reigns in on the groups with whom they're connected. They know where those groups are, even if we don't." So we need the visible parts of the network to have effects on the nonvisible parts of the network. That was kind of the indirect strategic approach that was taken, and I think it was very intelligent. I think to some extent it worked. Now, of course this focused us on state sponsors, and one of the things that when General Pete Pace came in as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs on October 1st, 2001, he and I worked together a lot. One of the first things he and I did after his arrival was we actually did a chart on all the various state sponsors of terrorism and a whole range of ways of influencing their behavior, from diplomatic day marches through economic sanctions through military strikes to regime change.

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Douglas: We tried to come up with a full spectrum. One of the things we looked at were historical examples where state sponsors had changed their behavior. We wrote a memo. If I recall, I think I quoted this memo in my book — at least I alluded to it. We wrote a memo where we said, for example, two important state sponsors of terrorism have in fact changed their policies as a result of pressure: Syria and Libya. We said if history is a guide — which it may or may not be, but if history is a guide, we may be able to influence their policies on terrorism and pursuit of WMD without having to strike them. The example we had in mind in the case of Syria was when the Turks finally got fed up that the PKK leader Ocalan was being harbored in Damascus, they mobilized on the Syrian border, and the Hafez al-Assad regime expelled Ocalan, who then got caught, and he's now in a prison in Turkey. That was one interesting example.

In the case of Libya we had the case of after the Berlin disco bombing — I think it was April of 1986 — the United States did a bombing operation in Libya, and it clearly changed Libyan actions. I mean, it didn't completely take them out of the terrorism business, because you had Lockerbie sometime thereafter, but it definitely affected their policy, and we were under the impression that the right kind of pressure could intimidate Gaddafi. So that was just an example of how we tried to look at history to come up with approaches. Some countries you weren't going to be able to use suasion with, but other countries you might.

The next main strategic point that I'll highlight is anybody who goes back and looks at statements made by, in particular, Vice President Cheney and Rumsfeld after 9/11 will hear they used the word "nexus" a lot, and they said the main thing we're worried about after 9/11 is the nexus of state sponsors, terrorist groups, and WMD. Now, why did they say that? This is also a bit of a historical discussion. 9/11 caused us to rethink all the major national security issues that we faced, partly because it exposed vulnerabilities that I don't think anybody in the United States fully appreciated we had. Feeling vulnerable, you look at national security problems afresh, and you see them differently.

If you looked at terrorism over recent decades, what you saw was terrorism as the way we thought of it was generally a phenomenon of self-limited violence by the terrorists. The basic model was terrorist groups would commit these small spectacular outrages, in the hope of drawing the attention of the world, converting that attention into sympathy for the cause, and then political support. The model was Yasser Arafat. You kill a handful of people at ticket counters in airports in Rome and Vienna; you shoot up some Israeli school busses; you shoot up an Israeli nursery on a kibbutz; and you do that long enough, and you get invited to address the UN General Assembly. That was basically the model of successful terrorism.

If that's your model, WMD is not a great weapon, so most people — not all; there were a few prescient articles talking about terrorism and WMD, but in general the view of terrorism was the terrorists are not terribly interested in WMD, because if your ultimate goal was to turn the attention into sympathy and political support, you could lose it forever if you used WMD. It's not the best weapon. It was a scholar of terrorism who made an important famous remark that, "Terrorists want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead," and there was a lot of empirical evidence for that proposition at the time that the scholar made that remark.

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Douglas: But 9/11 struck us as beginning a new era in terrorism. The people who did 9/11 wanted a lot of people dead, and they were not looking just to convert attention into sympathy; they were looking to destroy. They were aiming at mass destruction, so that focused our attention on the danger of terrorists getting weapons of mass destruction in way that by and large national security officials didn't think before 9/11.

Lastly I'll just say a word about this challenge of defining the enemy. On the question of was it proper to think of our actions as a war, one of the ways I look at it is — and this was the way we looked at it at the time. Whether we are at war with them — 9/11 was not the beginning of the war between the people who attacked us and us. 9/11 was the time when we learned that we were at war. Obviously whoever was planning that attack was thinking that they're at war with us, even though we were not conscious of that by and large. One of the great challenges, and this is a challenge strategically and legally, was we said — this was the way we coined it and referred to it frequently — was, "How do you fight a war against an enemy that is present in numerous countries all around the world, with whom you are not at war?"

So when people talk about models of warfare and Geneva Conventions and the like, they create certain categories, certain concepts, and certain models for thinking that don't suit the current purposes. Our view that we were at war with people, as I said, all over the world in sovereign countries with whom we were not at war, and in many cases these sovereign countries were friends of ours, and in some cases allies. Most of the 9/11 people came out of Germany. They were Saudis, but they were doing their planning work in Germany. This was a gigantic strategic challenge, and the president was sensitive on this issue of being accused of launching a war against Islam. Right from the beginning he understood, and he didn't need to be advised about this. He obviously figured this out right away. It was at the fore in his mind. We do not want to describe the enemy in a way that is going to allow our enemy to say that the president has confirmed what they are saying, which is that the United States is at war with Islam. That's why he repudiated that idea. He went to the mosque in Washington soon after the attack.

But everybody in the government understood that the term "war on terrorism" was a bit of a misnomer. The point that various scholars made, as if we were stupid, was, "Oh, don't they realize that terrorism is just a tactic? You can't be at war with a tactic, and this is stupid. It's like saying that World War II was a war on blitzkrieg. We understood that. The problem was that it was hard to come up with a way to formulate a description of the enemy, especially if you thought of the enemy as Islamist extremists. How do you talk about that without people hearing, when you say Islamists, Muslim?

The more people think about it, you could start making distinctions between Islamism as a totalitarian ideological and political ideology, versus Islam as a religion. You could say, "Oh, I've got nothing against the religion, but I'm fighting the totalitarian political ideology," but in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 we were quite confident that distinction would've been missed by a whole lot of people, and we would've been playing into the hands of our enemies by even using the term Islamist instead of Islamic. Now, over time the government came to understand more and more that the nature of the enemy was a network that was ideological in nature.

I'll stop at this point, just because there's a lot more to say, but we're out of time. The Bush Administration, despite the recognition that the essential part of the war on terrorism

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should be — had to be — dealing with the countering ideological support for terrorism. Even though there was already mention of that on the part of a number of top officials, we never did it. We never organized a serious effort to counter ideological support for terrorism. There was the freedom agenda, democracy promotion, some international aid issues, and all the rest of it, which is fine, but I don't think that was close to being a comprehensive strategy for countering the ideology that motivates people to do the kinds of things that were done on 9/11. It was a big hole in the administration's strategy. It remains a hole in American policy to this day, although I think the reasons that the Obama Administration doesn't have any kind of effort in this area are different from the reasons that the Bush Administration didn't deal with it, but at any rate the hole remains, and I think it remains a gigantic strategic problem.

Anyway, with that I will end, but I am sure there are many other issues. I have various comments to make about Iraq, and we can get them into the discussion, but I just decided to focus at least at this point on the immediate post-9/11 considerations. Thank you.

Moderator: Excellent. Thank you.

Sir Nigel: Well, thank you very much, and thank you, Celeste, for your introduction earlier on. Since I'm the first "Anglo" Anglo, I think, at the podium, I ought to echo what others have said about the thanks to [unintelligible 0:36:24] organizing this excellent group. I too am going to try and move away a bit from the historical analysis and speak mainly about perceptions on the part of political leaders and policymakers at the time, within the framework of [unintelligible 0:36:43] and strategy. I'm going to start — and we touched on it of course in the first panel — with something just on the attitudes towards doctrines of intervention post-9/11.

I think that Doctor Lynch may have mentioned this, but I would certainly say that for British politicians of that period the immediate recollection was the 1990s. There are a few things that are worth just being clear about [unintelligible 0:37:13]. First, some guilt about Rwanda. I mean, that was a big thing in British politics and international politics going into the 21st century. Second, the actual success of military interventions that took place in the 1990s, often not a great debate, but the record of the first Gulf War, after Bosnia, after Kosovo, after Sierra Leone was that for all their difficulties the military interventions could be and were successful. Third, that we had lived through a decade where we had a relatively high degree of freedom of operation internationally because of the decreased power of Russia, because of the increased power of the United States, and so on.

Lastly, I think, because for an incoming British government at the end of the 1990s, Prime Minister Blair was in any case attracted to a more muscular, more confident-sounding style of foreign policymaking. So this would be in contradistinction to the concept of managed decline in British foreign policy over the generation before, the reassertion of influence in Europe, and so on. Remember that in June 2001 Tony Blair had just won his second landslide victory, so he was in a very powerful position domestically and well-known around the world. All that had come together in the Chicago speech, which I think someone mentioned earlier, in 1999. It set out this doctrine of intervention, a doctrine in the international community.

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Sir Nigel: So for Tony Blair, he said that he came to the challenge after 9/11 — these are his words — with what was already a highly developed instinct for the bold approach and for being prepared to intervene, rather than let be. So that I think is an accurate statement of where he was in September of 2001. Secondly, just about the elements in play after 9/11, Blair talks about it in two ways. First of all, bringing together and crystalizing things which had been going through his mind but were not yet clear before that. He said he'd been wrestling with issues about extremism, terrorism, weapons of mass destructions, issues about which he'd been reading a great deal as prime minister in the years before. But 9/11 he said made sense of developments he'd seen growing in the world in the past few years. At the same time, linked to that was this concept of something fundamentally new in international security and international relations: terror without limit, the scale of the challenge — Doug talked about this as well — a battle for and about the ideas and values that would shape the 21st century, a battle that has to be fought until it's won. Those are all his words.

Tony Blair, unlike some other members of our government and certainly many others in the UK, was comfortable with and personally used the phrase "global war on terror." I think the reason why there were really right from the start a number of skeptics about the use of that term in the UK was precisely because of our own history of trying to deal with terrorism ourselves in Northern Ireland, but also international terrorism in the 20 or 30 years before, which had made us feel that that phrase could be counterproductive and that our societies had a resilience, which meant that we should be more confident about our ability to deal with these threats, and it should deviate from normal civil and political norms, only [inaudible 0:41:20] therefore overreact, even to a terrible and shocking attack such as the one we saw on 9/11.

We discussed before the break the issue of preemption or prevention, whatever you want to call that. I'm sure that was a factor in British policy as well as policy over here. The point was this nexus, which Doug mentioned, between WMD, rogue states, and terrorist groups. It certainly was a factor for Tony Blair and his political colleagues. He said in March 2004 in a speech that was deliberately designed to try and set out a lengthy rationale for the Iraq war, "Do we want to take the risk? My judgment then and now is that the risk of this new global terrorism and its interaction with states, organizations, or individuals proliferating WMD is one I'm simply not prepared to run. This is not the time to err on the side of caution, not a time to weigh the risks to an infinite balance, not a time for the cynicisms of the world to be wise in favor of being wrong."

So even a year after the Iraq invasion that was, I think, a move that affected a lot of people in policymaking positions in the UK. The balance had tipped because of the optimism maybe, which the successful interventions in the 1990s had caused, and the immediate aftermath of 9/11 with the concept of prevention or preemption. The balance had tipped more towards action. Thirdly I'll say something about the way in which the policy on counterterrorism and Iraq, central as they were to British and European policy after 9/11, were by no means the whole story. There were many points of difference between Britain and America during that period. Blair's government did not focus only on [unintelligible 0:43:30] and Iraq, and indeed he realized that in order to win the battle of minds, to win over very divided and fragmented international opinion after the Iraq invasion, you needed a broader canvas. You needed a bigger agenda, so this formed part of a more activist internationalist world view.

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Sir Nigel: Again, in that same speech in 2004 he said that Britain's role is to try to find a way through this, to construct a consensus behind a broad agenda of justice and security and means of enforcing it. It means tackling poverty in Africa, justice in Palestine, as well as being utterly resolute in opposition to terrorism as a way of achieving political goals. It means an entirely different, more just, and more modern view of self-interest.

So that is why throughout the period of Tony Blair's premiership after 9/11 you saw this very ambitious international interlinked agenda being developed with huge difficulty. I'd say that the prime elements were: number one, as he mentioned there, the Middle East peace process, a subject on which he repeatedly pressed President Bush to do more. There were occasional initiatives from the Bush Administration, but generally this was something which the UK government gave greater prominence to from the start. Secondly the agenda we developed for our G8 presence in 2005, the one that took place in Gleneagles and which as it turned out coincided with the attacks on London on July 7, 2005.

The two subjects which Blair chose for that were development in Africa and climate change. On the first, as we've heard before, President Bush was receptive. He'd already talked about development being a greater priority for him, and that came through very clearly in the second part of the Bush Administration. But on climate change we got little change from the Bush Administration, even after the opposition in the very early years of the aughties. That was in a way quite a challenging agenda for a British prime minister to put forward for the G8, but he did it deliberately, because he felt that that broad agenda was needed to assuage and unite international opinion after Iraq.

There were other issues too, like the emphasis on getting an end to the [inaudible 0:46:08], pushing for trade liberalization, which would help with a number of the particularly poorest countries in the world. We in the UK were clear that this effort on the security side needed to involve nation-building and democracy. Blair said Afghanistan had to be not just a war to punish, but to liberate, which meant democracy and rebuilding the country. But we were throughout acutely conscious of the difficulty of selling democracy internationally, and particularly in the Middle East at a time after views of America and views of Britain had changed for the worst because of Iraq. So doing this in the immediate aftermath of conflict and of some failure in Iraq and Afghanistan was exceptionally difficult.

Tony Blair talked constantly throughout this period to President Bush about this concept of concerted action across the range of international issues in the context of the challenge of globalization. That's the way he saw it, but as I've said, President Bush's instincts, which were anti protectionist and anti-nativist were in a broad sense favorable, but I think you would have to conclude that the U.S. administration's agenda was ultimately narrower in terms of what they put their emphasis into. Just to mention in passing, of course there was a lot of UK caution over the concept of the Axis of Evil speech and the concept that involved in 2002. I think it's right. Doug may remember this differently, but I think it's right that the UK became more concerned earlier in 2003 after the invasion about the trend of events and deterioration security and the reasons for those in Iraq, than the United States. We were quicker to spot those political problems, though no less capable than our American allies of actually dealing with them, but we had some ideas.

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Sir Nigel: The reputational damage which the United States suffered from Guantanamo, from torture, from Abu Ghraib, affected your ally in equal measure. It got to us as well. Over Libya after their decision to renounce WMD at the end of 2003, I think the UK moved more quickly to try to pull Gaddafi and his regime into the international mainstream, but as we now know, that effort was not successful. But how much more difficult it would've been in 2011 to have dealt with a Libya which still had nuclear and chemical weapons? So I still think that was a big success for Bush and for Blair and for their intelligence services.

Fourth, some points about alliances and institutions. Doug was focused maybe noticeably on the American scene. I want to say a few words about the UK, U.S., and wider international angles of this. Blair said right away, as many other Western leaders did, that the intention was to stand shoulder-to-shoulder — that was his phrase, and used many times since — with the United States in the aftermath of 9/11, and it produced a period in UK/U.S. relations of, I think, unprecedented intensity of contact, regularity of contact, great informality of contact as well, of course this being at the most senior levels. There was a breadth of dialog throughout the two systems, going all the way through from civilian officials through to the constant contacts of intelligence and defense channels. I suspect that was, just in terms of the bulk informality of all that, quite unusual, quite unprecedented in UK/U.S. relations. Now, you could say that Margaret Thatcher and President Reagan were more ideological soul-mates in the sense that they shared a domestic and international agenda very completely, and that wasn't the case plainly with George Bush and Tony Blair.

Nevertheless, the fact that events had thrown them together at this time on this agenda, and that their administrations certainly in terms of some regularity of course had this incredibly close connectivity. I think it's remarkable. It isn't the case today. I don't think it was the case in the 1990s either, but of course that closeness produces dilemmas, particularly for the junior partner in the relationship. That became, as you all know, a source of great domestic sensitivity and difficulty in the UK, which our present company to some degree consciously reacted to. The senior/junior partner bit of the relationship, David Cameron has reacted to that by being quite open about the UK being the junior partner in the relationship. I think that was also a conscious stepping back.

Blair was very much used, I think in a nice way, by the administration as capable of taking the alliance's message out to the wider world. That was his role in the autumn of 2001 and beyond. His fluency, the fact that he had a huge number of international connections ready on the back, as I said, of his very significant political victory in the summer. That made that a very useful addition to the UK and U.S. armory at the time, when the president was focused more on the U.S. scene and on adumbrating the policy that we just heard about.

But Blair and his attitude to the world of course also wanted to bring in the international institutions and to get as much international support as possible. That was something that sometimes the U.S. administration seemed less interested in or adverse to doing. We were in the UK acutely conscious of the damage with Iraq had done to the UN, some damaged caused by the UN themselves, of course, in the way that they maybe unnecessarily walked away from Iraq after [unintelligible 0:52:45], and lots of grievances on our side as well. But to bring in the international institutions as much he could, to bring the EU in, which had been divided over the invasion, as much as he could was part of the task of trying to rebuild some sense of the international community being able to act effectively after Iraq.

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Sir Nigel: It was something which the Bush Administration did support to some degree, with a concept of effective multilateralism, which George Bush did talk about at the end of his first term, but it was obviously something that the British government felt more passionately about, and I think that came through to international opinion as well.

So in conclusion, just to say history and strategy — I think the 1990s, there's a lot of material there, which was the immediate historical backdrop for this generation of leaders, and one of the earlier panelists said that. For any British or American senior politician there are other references as well: Pearl Harbor for America. Appeasement and debate around appeasement comes back constantly in any big international debate in the United Kingdom. Suez and the perception of British decline and trying to get away from that in the late '90s and in the 9/11 period, that was a big factor for British politicians as well. Elements of continuity, the agenda I set out has a lot of continuity in terms of British policy, a fair degree of pragmatism, a fair degree of continuing British faith in multilateralism, belief in multilateralism for all the factoring of the post-9/11 period. But I do think you go back to this, try and remember what we were all doing at the time, it felt as if the world was being made anew. For all those continuities, it felt like a fundamentally different situation. It felt like that in national politics; it felt like it in international politics, and I think that came through in the policies and the personalities of our leaders at the time. Thank you very much.

Moderator: Thank you very much Sir Nigel. Okay, I'd like to turn now to Alexander Evans, please.

Alexander: Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here, particularly to respond to Sir Nigel and Doug Feith, two very closely involved practitioners who were so key to policies and events post-9/11. I'd like to thank Clements Center for hosting this conference. I think events like this are really valuable, and not just for diplomatic historians and practitioners, but for cultivating thinking about what the next generation of advisors and historians should be thinking about as well. Although rare, the value of this is immense.

I'd like to begin with a brief disclaimer. What you're about to hear are my personal and eccentric views rather than anything that reflects any corporate view of the UN Security Council, for whom I currently work, or the British, for whom I used to work, or even the Americans, for whom I once worked. What's interesting about both of the presentations we've heard is the degree to which political leadership shaped the response to 9/11, and that individual characters and experiences actually shaped the policymaking process much more than some, particularly in the social science literature on international relations, would have us believe. Rather than reprise the accounts that we've already heard, I want to briefly touch on three things that draw from the presentations.

The first is how did strategic national security policymaking in the U.S. or the UK government actually work over the last 12 to 13 years? Evidently principals make decisions, perhaps influenced by close advisors, although there's a risk that an advisor is a little bit like a management consultant. They're always happy to claim responsibility for successful policies but rarely at the scene of the crime in the event of policy failure. Sometimes there is also an under-emphasis on the importance of principals and on decision making by principals, as distinct from the importance of those who advise them.

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Alexander: But I want to take it a step further and ask how both countries tried to actually made foreign policy strategy during this period. In the case of the UK there were key speeches by Tony Blair, along with several foreign policy white papers designed in part to establish a collective cabinet view of UK strategic goals. I worked on one of those in 2006. It's interesting to me that Sir Nigel's presentation mentioned the Chicago speech as being an important factor in terms of shaping Tony Blair's view of the world, but did not mention one of the strategic policy documents issued by the Blair government. So one question is, "To what extent are the formal expressions of national strategy by governments documents that truly guide policymaking by governments later on?" In the case of post 9/11 U.S. Administrations there was the initial emphatic framework of preemption by the Bush Administration, along with the later national security strategy that led to the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) in the Obama Administration.

As an aside, I had the privilege of working for Richard Holbrooke in the last year of his life. One of the interesting things about Holbrooke, who was a great believer in and an avid reader of history, a man interested in strategy and thoughtful about thinking in time, was he was also a great skeptic about the QDDR. He was a big skeptic about the value of documents that are full of glittering generalities but not necessarily guides to action decisions. So is strategic policy really then, as it seems both Sir Nigel and Doug Feith suggest, generated by decisions taken by leaders, blending both principles and pragmatism? Or is there an appetite for some form of "big think" or grand strategy?

Let me offer three quotes. These draw from work I did researching and interviewing a range of people while on sabbatical at Yale in 2012 and at while Kissinger Chair at the Library of Congress in 2011. The first is from Jim Dobbins, talking about his experience of Afghanistan policy in 2001 and 2002. He says, and I quote, "U.S. policy during my period was very shortsighted, but not because of an ability to look forward, but an inability to look backward." Sir Hilary Synnott, who has sadly passed away, was former British High Commissioner to Pakistan and had worked also in Basra in the immediate aftermath of the Iraq intervention. He later wrote: "There's been an over-preoccupation with the short term, often no longer than the present, at the expense of longer-term strategic thinking." Finally a former assistant secretary of state in the George W. Bush Administration I won't name told me, "The problem is not having the big ideas; it's making policy on a day-to-day basis to carry out those ideas."

Ironically none of this is a new problem. One of my favorite documents seized from the archives is a letter from Ernest May — and it's been a great pleasure to hear Ernest May's name crop up a number of times this morning — written in December 1968 to Henry Kissinger. May at the time was a professor at Harvard, and he writes a memo that could be teasingly regarded as an elegant job application. He explained to Kissinger that one of the key problems of working in the NSC is the lack of an ability to think strategically and be informed by a sense of history, and he then makes a clear-headed recommendation about how Kissinger can remedy the situation, which would be to hire a range of colleagues from Harvard to come and staff that capability up for them in the NSC structure.

So I think some of these problems of thinking in time and having long-headed policymaking are not new. They're not post-9/11 dilemmas but perennial problems of policymaking.

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Alexander: If thinking in time is so difficult in Washington and London, it doesn't mean that nobody is trying to do it. But who is doing it and how is it done? The second theme I want to pick up on is that assuming there is some market for strategic thinking amongst principals, how does the hard wiring work? This is directly relevant to a business-school or policy-school audience, rather like the framework that is being explored here. Both the U.S. and the UK are full-spectrum powers with global interests, notwithstanding their differences of scale. Yet it seems that both have struggled with institutionalizing a capability around strategy. At one level the U.S. NSC or the UK Cabinet Office, the U.K. NSC, ought to be at the heart of it, because national strategy has to combine both domestic and international policy. It has to combine foreign and security policy with other international policy interests that aren't limited to a foreign ministry or a defense ministry alone. But many of the efforts to try and solve this haven't necessarily been that successful. I went off last year and interviewed as many of the people who have tackled this in the U.S. system since the second Clinton Administration. A range of positions were created in the NSC to do strategic long-range planning. The incumbents of those posts have included Zal Khalilzad, Bob Blackwell, Derek Chollet, and various others….

Moderator: Will Inboden.

Alexander: Will Inboden and indeed others present in this room. But what's striking about their experience is almost all of them experienced a drift to the operational in these roles, and it's an irresistible pull, because forecasters, policy planners, and grand strategists don't get to spend much time in a room with a principal. As the joke goes, horizon scanners often scan the horizon in the great hope that they might spend more than half an hour meeting with principals. So direct access to principals and involvement in policymaking I think derives much more from being in the kind of roles that both Doug Feith and Nigel Sheinwald have been in, where you are a close advisor, but you're also actually engaged in shaping and delivering the effect of the policy machine.

                So how deep did the "big think" go in both the U.S. and the UK? Does it ultimately depend on senior officials who can think forwards as well as backwards? Does it rely on people with imagination and the capacity for long-range thinking, like a Doug Feith in the Bush Administration or a Kurt Campbell in the Obama Administration? (Campbell established a pol-planning unit in the State Department East Asian and Pacific Bureau to try and do some of this longer-range thinking.) And who actually does it? As one former Department of Defense official put it to me, and I quote, "There's a joke that the State Department can't plan, whereas the joint staff would produce a thousand-page plan that nobody could use. The office of the Secretary of Defense deals with longer-range issues because of a DNA of long-term planning around humans. The State Department would come up with esoteric conceptual reporting." So actually who do you staff this kind of thinking about the future or thinking about the past and thinking about policy to, particularly given relatively few officials have a full-spectrum understanding of a high-level, full-range national interests and national capabilities?

                So the core question around this theme is, "How did the U.S. and the UK actually institutionalize strategic planning? Was it successful? Does it actually matter?" This "does it matter" question is an important one. This is the essential question to people I've interviewed on this who worked in NSC, State or British diplomatic service roles. The same applies to archival research. The Churchill College Archive in Britain has an archive of former diplomats talking about their careers, and I've gone through each and every one

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of those relating to UK policy planning roles. Is it important? Many argue that strategy work in government is inevitably ephemeral. It's more about tone than content, speeches rather than the execution of foreign policy. It's the action judgments, as Phil Zelikow described them earlier, that force pace in policy.

Alexander: So is the formal role of history and strategy documents important, or is it really about people, as from some of the accounts we've heard? Here let's reach back to the '60s, where Tom Hughes, the Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research in 1965, came up with a delicious summary of all interagency policy discussions. I think this comes close to a universal truth. He said there are four types of men — and at that stage it was primarily men — who take part in policy discussions. There are: one, competent men with views; two, incompetent men with views; three, competent men without views; and four, incompetent men without views. His argument is that strategic policymaking is anchored around the group dynamics of a set of individuals, principals, or indeed advisors who exhibit one of those four characteristics in any given discussion. And principals and advisers may not always consistently apply one – depending on the context of the discussion.

My third point is a gentle challenge. The quality of the U.S. and UK engagement in the last 10 to 15 years speaks for itself, and both Sir Nigel and Doug have spoken about that. But access, which the British have always enjoyed to the U.S. system, in particular since World War 2, is not a synonym for influence. So one remaining question is to what extent did the proximity of the relationship truly change the nature of policy discussion allowing the junior partner to have strategic policy influence on the senior partner in this intimate U.K.-U.S. relationship?

My final pitch is for the continuing value to policymakers and advisors of historically grounded strategic thinking.   Let me give two examples in the contemporary counterterrorism debate. One is the public diplomacy debate of how to properly communicate in countering global violent extremism, where long-range thinking is essential. The other reflects a vital, current problem. I flew here yesterday from the Middle East, talking to relevant officials about the problem of foreign fighters joining al-Nusra in Syria. There are roughly as of now some 4,000 known foreign fighters fighting with al-Qaeda affiliates in Syria. To give some sense of scale, in the case of one particular European country this is roughly ten times the number of foreign fighters that went out to Afghanistan and Pakistan in the decade after 9/11. Here the short-term challenge of responding to the Syria crisis – which has gripped the international community – also needs to factor in the current and longer-term challenge of counter-terrorism.

To conclude, the challenge of and the need for long-range strategy in government remains essential. This is why history – and not just recent history – matters so much. Thank you.

Moderator: Excellent. Alexander, thank you very much. Bruce Jentleson, please.

Bruce: So let me start repetitiously but sincerely thanking Will and UT Austin and King's College colleagues for the invitation but also for the project. I think it's a very valuable project. Let me try to make my comments in four components. First I just want to talk generally to the overarching theme of the whole conference of history and strategy. Second and third I'll talk about the two presentations we've heard. Then fourth, it hasn't come up yet, but one of the questions posted on the agenda concerns traditional conceptions of realism and

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idealism, and whether and how these play in to policy decisions, which also gets me into grand scholarly debates about the "isms".

Bruce: So in terms of history and strategy I guess I should start by saying that I'm one of those political scientists who actually values history over math, which would be sacrilege in many other rooms, absolutely. When I did my PhD, I actually had Walt LaFeber of Cornell on my committee, a wonderful person, those of you that knew Walt both as a writer and a teacher. In fact, both Steve Hadley and Sandy Berger talk about how having LaFeber when they were undergraduates at Cornell really shaped their careers. People know LeFeber's views are well left of center, but I've had these conversations with Steve as well Sandy about what a wonderful teacher he was. In my own right I've really tried to use history a lot as well.

I was actually here, as many colleagues were, in February for a related conference, representing the Bridging the Gap project that I codirect with my colleagues Jim Goldgeier, who is the Dean at the American University School of International Service, and Steve Weber, who is a Professor at UC Berkeley. This is a project we developed over a number of years with core funding from Carnegie Corporation of New York to try, in Alex George's terms, to bridge the gap between the academic and the policy worlds. We run some programs both for graduate students and faculty. Not so much that they're interested in going into the policy world necessarily, but do want to relate their scholarly work better to the policy process. We do everything from media training to meeting with policy journal editors to panels on the inter-agency process and a variety of things. The conference here at UT Austin included a number of programs like ours from around the country. Some of them are political science. Some of them are in history and other disciplines. I think it's fair to say that we have no illusion of revolutionizing the discipline, but a little insurgency might not be such a bad thing.

I think the question of should history be used as at least a significant element of strategy, we've obviously answered that yes, and in this room it's kind of like preaching to the choir. What I want to do is talk a little bit about two aspects of that, which one might call in very loosely termed methodology "analytically and evaluatively." The analytic question is "Was history used by policymakers?" Kori made a comment earlier today that sort of got me thinking about this, and I think there are three components of that question we want to ask. One, "Was it used actually?" There I think in some respects the actual documents give us a sense of that to a great extent. Second and distinct is, "Was it used reflectively?" as may come through with memoirs, but this is not necessarily the same thing as whether history actually was used in the moment.

Third is imputed by scholars, "We study it. We see it there." While that's important it may not be the same as how the policymaker operated or sees it. These are not mutually exclusive, but each has different implications for our understanding about what the relationship has been. Evaluatively it's not just whether it's used, but how it's used, and this does really go back to Ernie May's original book as well as the Neustadt and May book. Here I think I'm going to offer at least two criteria for evaluating. One builds a little bit on what Phil Bobbitt had said this morning about legal precedents.

Bruce: It is akin to what as scholars we talk about and teach as comparative case analysis. We can all reach for cases, but if we sit down with our graduate students and they say they want to do a comparative case, you say, "Well, what is this a case of? What is the relationship

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between them?" If we want to evaluate how decision-makers and policymakers use history, there is some sense of how well did they do in their comparative case, their legal precedent in saying, "Well, the lessons I draw from post 9/11 or Kosovo or something else," so I think that's very important if we're trying to evaluate that.

Second is, "Is history being used to test or to prove?" To prove in some respects means I've got my ideas here, and I need some good historical analogies to reinforce them, whether it's to go public, make an argument in a principals' meeting, or whatever. But to test is to say, "I have some ideas about what I think is going on here. Let me test it against history and let me actually entertain different comparative cases, different legal precedents." I think if we're trying to evaluate history's use, I'd venture to say that it's probably been used more effectively if it's being used to test rather than prove.

I think this is important from any number of respects: one for good policy, and the other is to be careful what we wish for, because if history is used poorly in policy, people come back and say, "Actually, you guys are part of the problem, not part of the solution in terms of this relationship between history and strategy."

So those are some of the things I think just about the general goals that we have in this relationship. I think what I got out of Sir Nigel's comments — and I'm just going to make a couple of brief points on each — and reading the talking points you distributed to us is he stressed the way that Blair had, if you will — and I'll use the term very loosely — his kind of working grand strategy pre-9/11. A lot of this did come through in the Chicago speech and the doctrine of the international community. I think what you see there is a sense of recent history, if you will, of the end of the Cold War as a context, this whole notion of globalization and its interconnectedness, and the trends post-Cold-War to intrastate conflicts: Kosovo, Bosnia, Rwanda. Not that they didn't exist before, but in some ways the Cold War was kind of the internalization of the external competition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

What we were beginning to see here was the externalization of internal conflicts of the rest of the world, or what I've sort of called sometimes the Vegas dilemma, going back to this commercial that was made. "If it happens in Vegas, it stays in Vegas," right? Well, if it happens inside states, it does not stay inside states, and I think that was part of the framework, and then 9/11 came on. I think I get the sense, and I got the sense at the time, that there was an effort to integrate all three or four of these senses of historical transition in terms of what was the conception of power, what were the lessons.

What we were beginning to see here was the externalization of internal conflicts of the rest of the world, or what I've sort of called sometimes the Vegas dilemma, going back to the television commercial "If it happens in Vegas, it stays in Vegas," right? Well, if it happens inside states, it does not stay inside states, and I think that was part of the framework, and then 9/11 came on. I get the sense, and I got the sense at the time, that there was an effort to integrate all three or four of these senses of historical transition in terms of what was the conception of power, what were the lessons.

I think Kosovo, as we talked about this morning, a lot of discussion in this morning's session on this notion of strategy and law and norms. There was this commission that looked at Kosovo afterwards that called it illegal but legitimate, which was a really interesting sense that it might've violated international law, but it was consistent with

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international norms constituting a category that was not as common like what Alex was saying, as illegal and illegitimate, and legitimate and legal. So the whole R2P world, which I've been working a lot on when I've been in government and on various commissions as well as in my own work, engages very much the same kinds of questions that we were posing this morning about technology and terrorism. So I just want to reinforce this notion of law, strategy, norms, and the need to really figure out a way of adapting these to the nature of the international arena. It's not just a question of terrorism technology. It's very much a question of a whole bunch of other conflicts out there: Syria, Libya, Kosovo, et cetera.

Bruce: As to 9/11 and Iraq — I think we've been a little bit conflating them. There's a debate about whether history was well-used in relation to 9/11. Even if one answers yes to that, it does not necessarily follow that you believe that history was used well as we went from 9/11 to Iraq. I think again that the question of whether Iraq was consistent with or contradictory to the other elements in Blair's strategy — I think we know the lines of argument there, but I think it's its own question there. I think that generally this flawed notion of 9/11 and Iraq going together, comes through in Doug's comments. I would argue at least that this notion of, "History begins today with 9/11," was a fundamental flaw at this broad grand-strategy level. It was one thing to add to the framework coming out of the end of the Cold War, the interconnectedness of globalization, intrastate conflict; and to prioritize the threat of terrorism, another to largely negate those trends, this whole notion that history begins today. Part of the flaws in the overall strategy was that it operated only or primarily — only is not accurate — primarily on this notion of a post-9/11 world. Indeed, the challenge has been, including for the Obama Administration and going forward, the dynamics between all three or four historical transitions that we're living in. That at least is a distinction I see between the UK approach and the U.S. approach at the time. Which relates to this question of how well history was applied. For me at least there are a few examples, I think, in which history was misapplied in the U.S. response, in part to 9/11 and also in relation to Iraq. One of them is a point that Doug made about the whole — and this is partly what he said, but the way it is in the talking points is that history showed that public unease about security produces pressure for government action that encroaches on civil liberties. I think that what history actually shows is that government inflation of a threat and using it as an all-purpose rationale is what leads to the encroachment on civil liberties, and that's really what McCarthyism fundamentally was about, the internment of Japanese Americans.

We had freedom fries during Iraq, but we also had back during World War I the renaming of sauerkraut as "liberty cabbage." So I think there's a very different implication there depending upon how you look at the lessons of this. In some respects the equating of dissent with disloyalty, which did pervade much of the American debate, was reinforcing some dangerous trends about this balance between national security and civil liberty. The other couple of examples I would say at least raise questionable applications of history. One is the Munich analogy. This is probably the most misused analogy in post-World War II American foreign policy. It was all over the place in Vietnam. It was one of the reasons why Hans Morgenthau, the eminent realist, was an early opponent of the Vietnam War. He basically said Berlin matters; Saigon does not. It's obviously being used today in some misleading ways on Syria, and I say that as someone who actually has been supportive of more action than we've taken.

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Bruce: It has been invoked repeatedly during the whole 9/11 and Iraq era since. The extent to which it was believed by policymakers I don't really know, but irrespective I think its political impact really distorts the debate from a sense of what are the interests at stake, what's the appropriate-ness of the strategy. I think it's a very dangerous misused analogy, and people just reach for it. It came up in August in Syria. "Well, this is Munich." Well, there's some real serious issues about chemical weapons in Syria and a whole war, including its possible spread to the region, but it's not Munich.

The other two I'll just briefly mention is there's a very — I can't pronounce it — a concept from Thucydides about the concept of power, "The strong do what they have the power to do; the weak accept what they have to accept," which I think in some respects guided the United States in the sense that we had the superior power. But the fallacy in that as applied in a number of instances, not just in this one, is the possession of power is not necessarily the same as its conversion to influence. I think that everybody likes to invoke Thucydides. I've done it. It makes me sound more realist or strategic, but I think that was a flawed history.

And then the last one comes back to the comparative case approach. So many of the comparisons of Iraq to post-World War II Germany and Japan really left aside the question of preconditions and conducive factors. You've got to ask what the relevance between the cases is. It reminds me of a concept from Kennan. In some of his writings he said you need to distinguish between flaws in the concept and the execution of policy. Did we get the concept right but the execution wrong, or did we get the concept?

The last thing in terms of realism and idealism, and this is a caveat just to my historian friends. I mean, as someone who was schooled in the "isms," not just these, but liberal internationalism and constructivism and all the others, and has read way too many PhD dissertations of chapter 1, where they sort of check off all the boxes, even if it's not relevant. Please don't go there. Please don't go there. I think frameworks are necessary. I think Alex's points were about how difficult using history is, both the importance of the long term and the integration across different areas that's really part of strategic thinking.

I went back to John Herz's 1951 book *Political Realism and Political Idealism*. He's a forgotten realist from those schools. He tried to coin something he called realist liberalism, which he defines as, quote, "Avoiding the pitfalls of both political idealism and political realism that would serve as the basis for political action with attainable goals," and he's right there at the height of the early Cold War. If we look at a political discussion today, neoconservatives claim that they're balancing power and principles and are criticized by certain realists, saying that they don't balance power correctly. Liberal interventionalists think that they're balancing power and principles. You know, we have politically John McCain and Rand Paul, and we have democrats saying Obama is not enough realist and too much realist, so I think we want to figure out a way to have frameworks.

I really do believe we can't go half-cocked either as policymakers or as scholars, and I do think there's room for strategic planning in government. I think it's extremely difficult to do, but in some ways the problems we talk about make the point about its importance. But I think it's going to be sort of more eclectic, if you will, analytically than trying to say this is one school or the other. I think that really leads us into a binary conception that doesn't really help us either understand policy or make it.

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Moderator: Excellent. Thank you very much. Well, thank you for all of those excellent presentations. I realize that both Alexander and Bruce have laid down several provocative questions for our presenters, but lest I be accused of flagrant neglect in my role as moderator, what I'd like to do is bring in the audience, and then maybe you can address some of these questions in the process of answering questions from the audience. So, anybody? All right, then. Okay, Jeremi.

Jeremi: I had a question actually for —

Male: And speak your name again.

Jeremi: Oh, sorry. I'm Jeremi [inaudible 1:26:03]. I had a couple of questions, but the main one I wanted to ask was really to both of the original presenters, Sir Nigel and Douglas Feith. What I'd like to hear a little more about are the sources of the historical analogies. What do you do in these times of crisis when time is such — this is another one of his main points — when time is the most precious commodity you have? At what level do you consult historical sources? Where do you go to get your historical analogies? Do you just pull them off the shelf and go to Munich, as Bruce says? What do you do? I'd like to hear more reflection on that.

Douglas: I'm not sure that it was Kissinger who said this, but I was told that he made the observation that people in government in fairly high levels, who are going at 78 RPM all the time, are consuming intellectual capital rather than building it up during their government service. Especially when there's a major crisis like 9/11, there's not a whole lot of time to go hit the books and start looking for historical analyses. People like myself, who think a lot about history, read a lot about history, and believe that history is an extremely important way to understand the world, the way we operate is when we're putting our offices together, and we're hiring assistant secretaries and deputy assistant secretaries and the people we want to work with, we purposefully go for erudite people, and we know that these are people that when an event occurs, if we sit down and brainstorm with them in the few minutes that one has for that kind of big think, when we're brainstorming with our staff, we're getting the benefit of an enormous amount of reading and thinking that they did before they got into the government.

If you're in a situation where things are happening at high speed, and you have to turn to your staff and say, "I'd like you to do a term paper on this or that," chances are your options will be foreclosed before you get to read, absorb, and debate some kind of new academic work. So basically I think the short answer is you try to bring people who understand something about history. Now, I'll make one general comment. My experience with people in the government is occasionally you have really smart well-educated people who know a lot and care a lot about history. But then there are the other people who have simply lived a lot of history, and much of what they know and the examples that they use come out of their own careers. I don't think that's preferred, but sometimes people who have been in the government for decades or in and out of the government for decades, even though they may not be as intellectually rigorous, and they may not be as broad-gauged as some of the more academic people that you bring in, they nevertheless have an enormous amount of valuable history.

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You just have to realize that they don't know much about the world before they started in the government. It's interesting. I mean, sometimes it's very valuable just to get the two types of people together for their insights.

Sir Nigel: Thank you. Just a few observations. I think one thing to say about politicians, [unintelligible 1:30:24] may want to comment on this. My experience is that politicians, even the busiest ones, like reading history. Sometimes the annoyance of people like me, who want to get through the dossier of the day or get a decision on this or [unintelligible 1:30:40] tomorrow, you'll find that overnight they've carried on reading the biography of this person or that person that they're rather immersed in. I think that even in this incredibly hectic decade and the bit that we've been through, the politicians that I've been working with have a reading list and read a lot, certainly in the case of President Bush and I think a lot of other people as well. Certainly a lot of other politicians in the British system to be able to multitask and to do that, number one.

Can I just make maybe a few other comments on what Alex and Bruce were saying? I think the way this is done in times of crisis is going to depend from administration to administration. It's plainly not after 9/11 or even six months after 9/11, when things are still pretty busy but maybe not quite as disastrous — I think it's very difficult to imagine that people are going to read five or six books in quick order in order to inform a discussion, but that's where bureaucracies come in. Bureaucracies can synthesize. They can produce summaries. They can draw things out. I think the American system is really better at this, because there are more of you in your bureaucracy than there are in ours. But certainly say the time of the Arab Spring, nearly three years ago now. Both systems did quite a lot to try to produce some examples of recent revolutions and ways in which the West in particular was able to interact with them and ideally help them. So there were some potted, at least, histories of comparable situations which people bring to there.

I think what you need to try and build into your decision-making, maybe away from the point of maximum crisis, is the ability for people at the senior-official level but also cabinet-level people to have different types of discussions. They're going to have the operational discussions about what's going on in Iraq that week, or Libya, how you handle the campaign. But you want to try and intersperse with more reflective and longer-term cross-disciplinary — to Bruce's point — discussions. I think you can do that if the system is reasonably well arranged. In the British system the tradition of a prime minister or a cabinet member having what's called a weekend box, literally a box full of material, usually the longer-term more reflective stuff goes into that. So you intrude into someone's private life by assuming that they will give time to a calmer reflection on some of the bigger issues. You deliberately don't trouble them with that during the week.

Just in response to Alex a little bit, I was trying to express it personally not because I think it's just to do with the personality of these. Of course it's not that. Both our systems produce a lot of — nowadays Britain also produces national security strategies, strategic defense reviews, and all those things. They're not always the most vivid read. I was trying to do it more contemporaneously in terms of the way the leaders spoke. The leaders spoke not just for themselves but for the systems and for the governments they were leading at the time. I think they use history, rather to Bruce's point, not — ideally it is both to test and to prove. Internally they should use it to test theses and form their judgments about policymaking as it is going on, but I think it is inevitable — probably desirable, but certainly inevitable afterwards that in justifying policy and explaining it and trying to get

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public and international consent for what they're doing, they're going to use historical analogy as a key tool in presenting their proposals and their approach. I think it's inevitable. It's both; it's not either/or.

Moderated: Phil Bobbitt?

Phillip: I just want to come in on this use of history point. I think this chimes in with both of what these men are saying. It's not really the history; it's more of the sense of human relations and the sense of the interaction between societies, of which the historical example may be even inaccurate, but a vivid example. I'll give you one case. At the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy is widely reported to have remarked to people on his staff that he didn't want to do what he thought the Europeans had done before World War I, slithering over the brink. He may have even quoted [unintelligible 1:35:39], "How did it all happen?" Because he'd been reading Barbara Tuchman's marvelous book *The Guns of August*. Now, when I did my own work on this period, I came to the conclusion that Barbara Tuchman got it completely and totally wrong. As a representation of how the war really started, it'd be hard to get worse than Barbara Tuchman's thesis. Having said that, I can see how it is really quite useful, and it was actually not a bad description of some of the threats that he faced. The last point: I've been doing a lot of reading of Machiavelli, and Machiavelli often uses historical examples, and he's often criticized for this, because his history is not very good, but it's not really supposed to be. Some of his historical examples are from Theseus and are mythological characters. Of course it's not history. He's trying to capture something, something of which, as Doug Feith was talking about, the people who have lived through a lot of conflict, something that he had himself lived through about human beings.

Douglas: That valuable intervention by Phil Bobbitt reminds me of that wonderful line in the beginning of *1066 and All That*, that history is not what happened; it's what you can remember. I think that's part of the phenomenon that you're describing. I think that one thing that I'd like to say is, with all this discussion about strategy, Alexander Evans made a valuable point if I understood him correctly in warning against assuming that what's going on in the national security field is either strategy-making or the implementation of strategy. Sometimes it is, and sometimes it isn't. The point that I would like to urge on all of you, especially the historians among you, is to note that strategy is a frame of mind. Some people have it; some people don't. Strategy is conceptual. Some people are conceptual; some people are not. I think the taxonomy that was referred to about the competent with views, incompetent with views, without views, I think that's what that's getting at.

The "with views" is what I would say or what I would understand is a reference to people who are conceptual. Maybe not everybody who is conceptual is strategic, but to be strategic you have to at least have some conceptual capability, some sense of history, and some sense that in the present things that don't appear to be connected may be. I mean, one of the aspects of strategic thinking is recognizing that what you're doing in one area may actually influence some other area that's not apparently connected. I think that is like the horizontal dimension of strategy: that everything is connected to everything else, perhaps. Then there's the temporal dimension, that what you're doing now may have influence later, and you should be thinking — as Rumsfeld liked to say, you've got to look around corners, the idea that you have to be thinking several steps out.

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Douglas: Now, the thing is there are people who by their nature are strategic thinkers. It's just very interesting. You talk to people about these problems, and they will immediately hit strategic themes and shape their views according to strategic notions. There are other people who are just thoroughly nonstrategic, and there are many of them who'd deny — the people who are nonstrategic tend to deny that there is such a thing as strategy. One of the fascinating things, if you go back — you cited Rich Armitage, saying basically there's no such thing as strategy. That's a view that many people in the State Department over history have asserted. If you look at Dean Rusk's memoirs, he has this wonderful little story in there about how when he became Secretary of State, he was talking to Kennedy, and he said, "There are people here who think that you could have a strategy for East Asia," I think is the example that he gave. He said, "Well, there's no such thing as East Asia, and you can't have a strategy. All you can have are policies with respect to each of these countries," and he said that Kennedy agreed with him, so they set aside this whole nonsense about strategy. Okay, that's a view. I happen to think that there is such a thing as strategy, but it's interesting and worth noting that there are people who will actually argue that there's no such thing as strategy. Now, where I think the warnings that Alexander Evans gave are good is that while I would argue that there is such a thing as strategy and strategic thinking, that doesn't mean that every time you see a government operating it's operating strategically.

So one can easily over-organize in one's view of history events to make them look like they are following some grand strategy when they're not. When you look at personalities, I think it's very important to view personalities and see which ones think strategically and which don't. I'll just end with an observation about the Bush Administration. The other thing that I think is important to point out is that strategic thinking is not the same thing as intelligence. There are highly intelligent people who are not strategic thinkers, and not everybody who is inclined to look at things conceptually and strategically is all that intelligent. They're separate phenomenon. In the George W. Bush Administration one of the things that I found was President Bush liked to look at everything strategically. He had a very strong strategic sense. What is at the appropriate level for the president? What is grand? What is long term? What is global? He really had a strategic perspective.

Part of the reason that in the years that I was in the administration, the first four years — four-and-a-half years — part of the reason that I think Cheney and Rumsfeld were so much more influential than Colin Powell was with the president was in meeting after meeting when an event would occur, Powell would come to the meeting and say, "I have a meeting with the EU reps," or, "I have a meeting with the Perm Five people or the Security Council people tomorrow, and I need to figure out what I say about this event that was the topic of the meeting." He'd be focused on the next day's talking points. He was very practical. He was like a crisis manager — highly intelligent but totally nonstrategic in the way he spoke to the president. Rumsfeld would always come into the meeting saying, "Before we discuss what we're going to do or what the talking points are going to be, can we get agreement on what our national interests are?" That's exactly what the president wanted to hear, and he talked to the president at the level at which the president wanted to be talked to, and so did Cheney. It also helped that the two of them, Cheney and Rumsfeld, tend to agree with each other. But anyway, it was just an interesting thing that one of the reasons they were more influential was they addressed questions the way the president wanted them addressed. Now, if you have a president that has a different perspective, he would probably be much more open to a different kind of advisor.

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Moderator: I have to hear from Bruce, and then Will, and Sir David.

Bruce: A very quick comment. A lot of these comments are along the lines of Eisenhower's famous statement, "It's not so much the plans but the planning." It is a mindset, and I think that some of it is — and it's not the grand. I mean, what is grand strategy? It's been defined by many colleagues as matching ends and needs. Well, that's not very useful at the intellectual level and in policy. You know, questions like if you're thinking about imposing economic sanctions against a country, the answer to that middle-level strategic question is what do we know about the five or six key factors which affect the efficacy of economic sanctions? That to me is more strategy than just looking at it on a case-by-case basis. The last point I think is just as hard as it is in government, and the time pressures and everything else, successful corporations in the globalized world are ones that have a vice president of strategic planning. That person's job is not to be a futurist and a think-tank, but is to think horizontally and vertically and to bring that to bear. Other than in movies like Margin Call, they may not have the same time pressures, but they have a whole bunch of variables to bring into play. The notion that it is hard to do is distinct from the importance of doing it in government.

Moderator: Will Inboden.

Will: Will Inboden. Doug and Nigel, one subtext of both of your comments that I was picking up was the question of public opinion, particularly in the immediate years after 9/11, and it seems like there's a number of domains to it. One, there was the current domain, "What do the American or British people expect?" But there was also, Doug, especially what you were saying, trying to anticipate where is public opinion going to go in the future. How do we craft policies that will help direct it in a positive sense, as opposed to policies where public opinion goes south, and we become much more constrained. I'm just curious how much for the Blair government and the Bush Administration in the first term, before I was very involved, was public opinion seen as a constraint or as a resource, when you've got tremendous public support behind you for these ambitious strategies. Then my own reflection in the second term of the Bush Administration, by then those of us on the inside realized we'd lost public opinion in the current sense. He was not going to crack 40 percent approval ratings.

    Popular impressions were imbedded, but this does not mean the public opinion completely left. Rather, at least in Bush's case, he talked a lot about history but in terms of how he'd be remembered in history. In a way that's also a concern of public opinion. It's a concern of the public opinion decades from now looking back on how does history remember you. Likewise it seemed to me that in Blair's last two or three years in power he almost seemed liberate in the sense that he knew he wasn't going to stand again. He knew he'd had a big run. Perhaps was he also less susceptible to the constraints of domestic public opinion and more just thinking about how he would be regarded in history? I would just welcome your reflections on the role of public opinion.

Douglas: Public opinion, if anybody at the beginning of the Bush Administration didn't appreciate how important it is, they certainly should've appreciated by the end, because boy, did the administration suffer, did U.S. policy suffer, and the country suffered from what I think were really serious failures on the part of the administration in explaining itself, explaining what it was doing and why in Iraq obviously, but numerous contexts. Two of the main observations that I would make about public opinion from I learned in my time

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at the Pentagon are as follows. One is there was an interesting contrast between the way argumentation was handled in the Reagan Administration where I served and the George W. Bush Administration. When we had this major debate — and this was an important thing in the U.S./UK relationship — the major debate about deploying Pershings and cruise missiles in Europe, and the nuclear freeze movement in the beginning of the '80s and all the rest of it. The people who were arguing against us were organized so that however people thought of themselves, whether they were lawyers or women or blacks or however people grouped themselves, there was a message for that group in favor of the nuclear freeze. So there were environmentalists for the nuclear freeze, and there were civil rights people for the nuclear freeze, and there were women's groups for the nuclear freeze, and the like. The way that got countered was administration of people went out at all levels from the president all the way down to office directors, going out and speaking to public audiences and giving them different messages and different angles on these things. It was ultimately quite a successful public affairs debate.

The way the George W. Bush Administration tended to handle these highly controversial things that it was doing — Iraq first and then detainees and other big issues. There was an emphasis on disciplining the message. Now, what that meant was the spokesmen for the administration were basically four or five or six people, top-level people. In the Reagan Administration I remember when I was a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, and I was urged to go out and speak. In the Bush Administration not even the Under Secretaries were urged to go out and speak, let alone assistant secretaries or deputy assistant secretaries. There was the danger that you might say something that deviated from the fixed message. The fixed message was a very high-level message of generalities, which to most thinking people was not that persuasive, because it didn't go deeply enough for thinking people. In some ways it was a reasonably good message for the public, but not a great message for the elites. We wound up in the Bush years losing the elites almost 100 percent. The idea that you could send people out at lower levels and really have an organized effort to appeal to people in every way that people think of themselves and provide multiple messages didn't happen.

I had my own experience where I would draft a speech, and I would come up with a new argument that was completely in line with the administration's policy. You didn't have to, but if as you were encouraged to, you sent your speech over to the White House to have them look at it before you gave it — I mean, that's on the rare occasion that you had the luxury of actually finishing the speech before you went to deliver it. But if you did that, the interesting thing is the standard feedback was, "Don't make up new arguments. Quote the president." I think it was just a really bad way to do public affairs. The second thing is — and this was an error that I think came from good motivation, but it was still an error. President Bush prided himself on the nonpolitical nature of his national security policy, so he never — almost never — had political advisors or public affairs people attend any of our NSC meetings. What happened was we would have sometimes really serious and generally quite respectable intellectually rigorous debates about a certain policy. Decisions got made, and when the president then was presented with a draft speech to explain that position, the speech came from a speechwriting team that was not in the room when the debates were made.

Now, the speechwriters were extremely talented, but they weren't in the room, so basically what they were doing was making up their own view of what was behind the policy. This sometimes created some really serious differences between what was

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explained publicly and what was the actual rationale for action, and that created problems. I'll just close with something that I said in my book. There was a line about Wagner's music that was made famous by Mark Twain. He said, "Wagner's music was better than it sounded," and I would argue that in many cases George W. Bush's national security policy was better than it sounded. I mean, it was actually more well thought through than people gave it credit for, because the public explanation tended to be at this very high level of generality and was not enormously compelling.

Sir Nigel: I'll try and be very brief on this one. I think that if you look back, the British government's problems with public opinion over Iraq started earlier and were more serious. [Unintelligible 1:53:51] absolutely right when he said earlier that at the point of decision in March of 2003 there was a small majority at that stage in favor of intervention, but more or less at every other moment leading up to it, and certainly once things got more difficult from the summer of 2003 onwards, there were very large majorities in the UK against our role in Iraq. It's been different in Afghanistan, a difference of numbers, and that was the backdrop right from the start.

That didn't happen in the United States. Despite the problems of occupation and the deteriorating political and security situation in Iraq, it was a slower burn. It's a delayed reaction. President Bush was not much affected by the situation in Iraq during the 2004 election. It was 2006 where the reaction against Iraq really hit in political terms in America, but I think the impact of public opinion on the Blair Administration was not that it was so negative that people were inclined to change course, because that was one of the lessons that Tony Blair had learned in his period of government, which was to be less enslaved to the opinion polls and to the focus groups and everything else. It wasn't that. It was that more time needed to be spent in trying to persuade people, and this, Alex, is what politicians do. Politicians have a number of tools at their disposal, and ultimately strategy is fine, but you've got to persuade people. You've got to get out there and win support, win votes in Parliament and try to pull people around.

I think Blair believed that he would be able, through presenting the argument continuously — which is what you've got to do today; it can't be done every year or so elegantly — he would be able gradually to win people around. But the sheer scale of the deterioration in Iraq and what was going on there made that virtually impossible. I think the problem — there are a ton of problem for politicians. I think the first is that the people expect them to be able to lay out a broad strategy but also to know quite a lot of the detail. I think that the history of President Bush was he became his desk officer. He realized that he couldn't have endless discussions with his cabinet secretaries about strategy when actually you should've been talking about the detail in Iraq at those moments. It was wrong of the cabinet members to have gone in and not talked about actually what was going on, and it lulled the administration in 2003 and maybe a bit longer into a sense of greater confidence in the future of Iraq, and I think the facts warranted. If there was an asymmetry then, it was the burrowing down of our prime minister into the detail of it all — maybe excessively, which more people do — against this sense of the U.S. not watching the day-to-day deterioration.

I think politicians at the top level have to do both. They have to command the strategy but also do the detail. The last point is that of course handing public opinion in this digital world is something that the current generation of politicians have not managed. They've been overmatched by the problems of handling social media. I don't know whether that's

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	ever going to be manageable. It's possible that the next generation might do it better, but I think that it's much more difficult today than it was in the 2002/2003 era, as we're seeing and I'm sure we'll discuss when we get into talking about intelligence and Snowden and all the rest.
Moderator:	Excellent. Well, what I'd like to do is take the last couple of questions, let you all answer them and make some final remarks, because regrettably lunch calls. So, Sir David and also the lady up here next, please. Do you have a question? Okay, quickly.
Sir David:	Just a comment to throw in. I'm reminded in this discussion of that popular book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, and in a crisis it's thinking fast. That means you fall back on your comfort zone, concepts that you're familiar with. I was very struck by how Doug explained how the concepts they fell back on were about state sponsorship of terrorism, because those are familiar concepts in statecraft. The same is true in the UK. We didn't really and found uncomfortable to deal with the whole idea of religiously justified violent ideologies. At the beginning of the 20th century it was alien thinking about that. We might've done better going back to the early 15th century and 16th century Anabaptists who seized Antwerp with the cry, "It must be destroyed. The chosen can be saved." That kind of apocalyptic of grand terrorism was something that took us a long time to talk about. Anyway, an observation.
Moderator:	Thank you.
Paula:	Just continuing on that, I'm Paula [inaudible 1:59:10] at UT, and that is to ask that whether in hindsight of the last 12 years, what we'd do to think differently about these sort of [inaudible 1:59:18] we might've employed then. Phil mentioned earlier this morning that there was a deep distrust of thinking about quagmires. In my experience that's exactly what it boils down into in a number of ways, but the question was why did it seem like the thing to argue against then, and did that in way make it possible for it to happen later. [Inaudible 1:59:44] has the same set of problems and is famous for wringing his hands about the fact that a [inaudible 1:59:50] was not going to be [inaudible 1:59:52] even after in some ways [inaudible 1:59:54]. You could ask the question, Doug, about state-sponsored terrorism. If that's the analogy and then you go looking for one, you can sometimes make a mistake as to who it is. Because by that analogy [inaudible 2:00:07] at the time of 2001 capturing live terrorists, rather than sponsoring terrorists, and trying to get rid of Osama bin Laden for several years unsuccessfully. But the sponsor of terrorism was sitting next door, and we embraced them as an ally and then let the [unintelligible 2:00:28] continue to sponsor terrorism even after the [inaudible 2:00:31]. I mean, I'm just curious as to how these look 12 years later [inaudible 2:00:40].
Moderator:	Thank you, and just one last —
Ben:	Sure. My question is for Mr. Feith. You said in your speech that —
Moderator:	Please identify yourself. Identify yourself, please.
Ben:	Yes. My name is Ben McNally. I'm a sophomore at UT. I major in International Relations and Global Studies with a concentration in International Security. My question is for Mr. Feith. You said in your speech that the U.S. military said that they didn't do manhunts, and in the '90s there were two notable manhunts that were very successful, the first of which

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was Delta Force capturing and killing Pablo Escobar in Colombia; the second of which was a joint capture of Radislav Krstic, a Bosnian war criminal. He was captured by a joint force of Navy Seals and operators from the British Special Boat Service. How is Washington so oblivious to our ability to manhunt, when we've had multiple successes within ten years of 9/11?

Moderator: Great, thank you. So final comments, gentlemen, and if you all have anything you'd like to add —

Douglas: On the manhunts, the Special Operations Forces, who were a much smaller phenomenon before 9/11 than they were after, they were the people who were in the manhunt business, but the military in general thought of itself as — well, just basically was uncomfortable with the idea that that would be a military mission. I mean, I remember — it's very vivid for me, because one of the very first interagency meetings I went to in August of 2001 had to do with bin Laden, and it had to do with some sightings from drones. They had brand-new technology where you could do strikes from drones. They'd put Hellfire missiles on drones. It was brand new. It had never been used, and there was a debate. Do you remember this? There was a debate about, "Should we hit this guy who looks like bin Laden in Afghanistan?" I just remembered in the course of that debate the top military leadership was extremely uncomfortable with the idea that we'd be targeting an individual and getting the military into the manhunt business, and they said it over and over and over again.

Ultimately the decision was made to give the responsibility to the CIA. I remember at least the senior military people went, "Phew, let the CIA do that." So I understand that yes, there are cases, but they were on the periphery from the point of view of the military as an institution. Now, on the issue of quagmires, I guess I would — I mean, it's interesting that Phil Zelikow said that there was this resistance to quagmires. From my perspective what I remember about the quagmire discussion is it was astonishing, and it struck as really ignorant that *The New York Times* ran a story about quagmires in Afghanistan when the war was not three weeks old. I mean, what struck us about the word "quagmire" was not that one should not worry about a quagmire, but talk about premature quagmire-itis. The idea that we went to war without a war plan, because there was no war plan for Afghanistan on the books. We went to war on October 7th, I believe, and less than three weeks later *The New York Times* was saying we're in a quagmire. That just struck us as — let's put it this way: ahistorical.

So I think the main allergy to the word "quagmire" had to do with a misapplication of the term, not the idea that one should not worry about it. In fact, Rumsfeld worried about it a lot, and a lot of his emphasis on light footprint and taking the approach that we took in Afghanistan and in Iraq was based on concerns about, in particular, British and Russian history in Afghanistan that warned us that extremely heavy footprints could get you into a situation where you're not only in a quagmire, but the very size of your presence is working against you. There was a very high consciousness in the case of Afghanistan that the Soviets went in there with like 300,000-plus troops, and the size of their footprint created a lot of resistance to them. We did not want to repeat that error. In Iraq the plan for political transition that we developed at the Pentagon and that the president had approved before the war started, which did not anticipate a protracted U.S. occupation of Iraq, was specifically based on the idea that if we wind up being seen as an occupying power for a substantial period of time, we're going to have an intifada.

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The Israel analogy was at the fore of people's minds, and we did not want to be the occupying power with an intifada. It happens to be the other parts of the U.S. government had a different view and thought that we needed to run Iraq for a substantial period of time in order to build up an internal Iraqi political class. That was a debate. Initially the Pentagon view prevailed in Washington, but later the other view prevailed in Baghdad, and we wound up with a protracted occupation from which I think a lot of harm resulted. Then lastly on the issue of state sponsors, your point is very well taken. I mean, state sponsor is shorthand. What we were really talking about was the relationships between states and terrorist groups. As I said, we were driven to the focus on states not simply because it was part of the mental baggage that people had, although that clearly is a factor, but we were driven to it by this dearth of intelligence about the whereabouts of specific terrorists. So I think it was actually quite creative and proper to come up with an indirect way of reaching the people whose location we don't know. By going after the states that — and when I say "go after," I don't mean invading them. You talk about policies of pressure on these various states to get them to try to pull in the reins on the groups that they were dealing with.

Moderator: Sir Nigel, I'll give you the last word.

Sir Nigel: I don't have a lot to add to that really. I think that there was certainly, being in Britain, no bar on thinking about or worrying about quagmires, because of course we were very conscious of that. I think the problem in Iraq was that once we were in, it was because of the — despite what Doug says — lack of planning. It was very, very difficult to avoid getting drawn into it for longer. Of course that was the effect also of what a lot of the Iraqis themselves wanted. We were subject to the direction of Grand Ayatollah Al-Sistani, who wanted a very, very lengthy and protracted process. In the end he ran the table in Iraq during that period of 2003 and 2004 and is still very influential. So it's not as though we could just control the length of time ourselves.

                In the debate over what to do immediately there was always this conflict between speed and legitimacy, which we never really satisfactorily resolved. So I think the problem is once you're in, it is very, very difficult — this is one of the lessons — then to be the masters of your destiny and ensure that you get out on date X or date Y. Afghanistan had a fundamentally different trajectory, where we were arguably quite comfortably placed, you could say, in the middle of the last decade and then made a conscious decision to ramp up the campaign precisely in order to leave a better legacy and a more secure system in place. That was there maybe a significant underestimation of what we were [inaudible 2:09:27] came in.

Moderator: Thank you. I know we can talk about this for the rest of the day. Unfortunately we're out of time. Please join me in thanking this fascinating —

[Multiple speakers]

Male: If we could, the group was dispatched to the lunch room, where we have plenty of food but also a great lecture from Lord Reid. Rachael, can you direct — ?

Rachael: Sure. If you cross the courtyard into the hotel lobby and then go downstairs, you'll enter the Carillon Restaurant. Then you need to go upstairs, and our room is upstairs.

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