

**CENTER FOR
STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CSIS)**

DECISION 2008

**PRESS CONFERENCE WITH
GOVERNOR MIKE HUCKABEE**

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:
DR. STEPHEN FLANAGAN,
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CSIS**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2007

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

DR. STEPHEN FLANAGAN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Stephen Flanagan, senior vice president of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. And on behalf of our president and CEO John Hamre, I want to welcome you all, and our speaker today, Governor Michael Huckabee, former governor of Arkansas, of course, and I want to say a few words of introduction to him. It's a little hard to figure out where to start because he's worn so many hats in his career. He started out, as many of you know, as a pastor, then turned to politics.

But he's also an author and a personal fitness guru and, of course, a well-known rocker. (Laughter.) On January 28th, he formally announced his candidacy for president after serving 11-and-a-half years as governor of Arkansas, where he was, of course, only the third Republican governor in that state since Reconstruction, and one of the youngest governors at the time he took office in 1996. And during that time, many of you will recall, he served as the highly regarded chairman of the National Governors Association.

But let me take you a little bit back further in his career. Michael Dale Huckabee was born in August 1955 in a town called Hope, Arkansas. And he began – his political career was somewhat prefigured even as early as 1972 when he was elected governor of the Arkansas Boys' State. But he went on – and you'll see why – his training was more in the field of religion at the beginning of his career. He graduated in only two-and-a-half years, magna cum laude, from Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas, and then attended and did a seminary training at the Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary.

So it was religion, and not politics, that really dominated the first part of his career. He served as a pastor of a number of Baptist congregations in Pine Bluff and Arkadelphia and Texarkana, and he became the youngest president of the Baptist state convention, and also served as president of a religious-oriented television station.

As he turned to politics in 1993, he won a special election, becoming only the third Republican to serve as a lieutenant governor of Arkansas since Reconstruction, succeeding Jim Guy Tucker, who of course succeeded another governor from Hope who left for Washington about that time. He was then elected to a full four-year term as lieutenant governor in 1994.

During his time as lieutenant governor, as governor and lieutenant governor, Governor Huckabee championed tax cuts. He was also a leader in education reform, including a number of initiatives on school accountability, on expansion of charter schools, and the establishment of new approaches to workforce education. He also supported a number of improvements in health insurance for children and small business owners in the state of Arkansas.

But of course, Governor Huckabee's efforts to improve his own health have received a lot of attention, national attention. When he was diagnosed in 2003 with Type 2 diabetes, he lost 110 pounds. And since that time, he has completed a number of marathons, and as you can see, is looking quite fit here today, having just raced in from last night's Republican debate. But I don't think he ran here, but he was walking on the street outside when I saw him coming up.

But this commitment to fitness, of course, has been translated into public policy as well as his personal commitment. He started the Healthy Arkansas initiative, which was an effort to encourage Arkansans to stop smoking, exercise more, and eat healthier; and he even tried to encourage restaurants to promote more healthy eating habits. And as the chairman of the National Governors Association, he also took that commitment and that approach to a healthy-America initiative that received a lot of attention and effort during his time as chairman of the National Governors Association.

Author: He's also the author of, or co-author of five books, most recently the book that discusses many of his approaches to some of the key national issues, "From Hope to Higher Ground: Twelve Stops to Restoring America's Greatness."

And last, but not least is, as I said, he is a well-known and quite a mean bass player in his rock 'n' roll band Capital Offense, which has opened for such artists as Willie Nelson and The Charlie Daniels Band, and has also played at two presidential inauguration balls. So again, whether that's another harbinger of things to come, we'll see.

But the former governor and his wife, Janet, live in Little Rock. They have three grown children. And this morning, we're delighted to have the governor address us on the question of his strategy in combating global terrorism. Governor Huckabee, the floor is yours.

(Applause.)

GOVERNOR MIKE HUCKABEE: Well, thank you very much, Stephen. First of all, when he indicated that I was well-known rocker, frankly, if I was a better-known rocker, I would be doing that instead of running for president. But since that hasn't turned out quite like that, I decided I'd just go for something different.

Also, in the introduction, several comments about my being a Baptist: I'm sure it is a point of curiosity for many people, as it has been throughout my political life. There are those who say, now, let me get this straight; you are an ordained Baptist minister. I would always, of course, answer in the affirmative. And then they would ask, well, now, are you one of those narrow-minded Baptists who think only Baptists are going to heaven? To which I enjoy replying, now actually I'm more narrow than that, I don't think all the Baptists are going to make it. (Laughter.)

I want to say thanks, again, for being here this morning. It's great to see this many people. I'm kind of surprised, I thought you might've expected someone else, or maybe you were thinking the band was going to play, I'm not sure.

Well, let me begin by saying that to say that American foreign policy needs a change in tone or attitude, or an opening up and reaching out, is obviously saying that O.J. Simpson might've had a bad month. This administration's bunker mentality has been counterproductive, both at home and abroad. They've done a poor job of communicating and consulting with other countries, just as they have, frankly, with the American people.

There's a sense in which our situation with prestige in the world in a great deal like many of us experienced as a child, growing up in a neighborhood where there was one kid, one kid who was just exceptional at everything he did. He made A's, and never anything else; he could run faster; he could jump higher; he could throw the ball further; he never struck out. You know the kid; I hope you weren't that kid. Chances are you weren't; you wouldn't be at a meeting like this. But you know what I'm talking about – the kind of kid who was just good at everything.

Now, remember when that kid was braggadocios about it, and every time he did something exceptional he'd just rub your face in it? Now, when that was the case, what was your attitude toward that other kid in the neighborhood? What did you think about him? You were hoping that, just once, he'd strike out; maybe that he would miss the catch that would save the day, or that he would miss the easy slam dunk, or that he would just get a C on a spelling test. You'd just hope that, at least once, he would experience what you experience on a regular basis.

Now, imagine in that same neighborhood the kid coming up with those same exceptional qualities and skills, but this time, instead of rubbing your face in it, he encouraged you to be your best. And when you got up to bat, he'd say, hey, if you choke up on the bat you can swing better and get a better hit; or he'd say hey, I'll come over to your house and I'll work with you, and help you with your spelling test. Now, when his attitude, not his skills, but his attitude was different, your attitude toward him was different was significantly different as well. And instead of wishing for him to have some blundering calamity, you looked up to him and you wanted to be like him.

I know that's an oversimplification, but I do believe that it explains, somewhat, of the situation that we face as a nation, in that our prestige in the world has been marred not so much because we're a superpower. We are; we shouldn't apologize for it, nor should we weaken ourselves in any capacity. But the matter in which we handle our power is critical. And the more that we can do not to weaken ourselves, but to strengthen our neighbors, and to give them encouragement, rather than simply to show them our muscle, is an important part of rebuilding America's national prestige.

A more successful foreign policy begins at home, with better communication to the American people about Islamic terror. Six years after 9/11, it's still difficult for us,

with our religious tolerance, to be able to grasp how these people think. We live in a world of separation of church and state. After we attend different churches on Sunday, or maybe no church at all, or synagogue, Americans will share their meals or their movies. What we don't do is slaughter each other. We've thrived on diversity, whether it's religious, ethnic, racial, to become the world's only superpower. We don't merely tolerate diversity; we actually embrace and we celebrate it.

To Islamic extremists the concept of a melting pot is an alien as the concept of a theocracy is to us. And it takes an enormous leap of imagination to understand what these people are about, what they really want to do, in killing every last one of us, and destroying civilization as we know it.

Now I would contend, respectfully, that the administration has never done an adequate job of explaining the theology and the ideology behind Islamic terror, never done an adequate job of convincing us of their ruthless fanaticism. The first rule of war is know your enemy, and most Americans don't. To grasp the magnitude of the threat, I think we have to understand what makes Islamicists, terrorists, and their suicide bombs tick. And the administration has not explained it that well.

For example, very few Americans are familiar with the writings of Sayyid Qutb, the Egyptian radical who was executed in 1966, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood, whose call to active jihad influenced bin Laden as well as the rise of al Qaeda. Qutb is to bin Laden as Karl Marx is to Lenin. Qutb raged against the decadence and the sin that he saw around him, and he sought to restore what he considered the pure Islam of the seventh century. Besides opposing non-Muslims, and besides opposing Shiites, he was a Sunni who opposed Sunni governments because he believed they required their citizens to worship them like gods and, therefore, were guilty of a polytheism that was forbidden by Islam. To him, the only answer was a return to a theocratic caliphate without national borders, and he saw nothing decadent or sinful in even murder to achieve that end.

Americans, who go to extreme ends to save lives, can't comprehend human beings who delight in taking other lives; it just doesn't compute. In our culture, the death of a child is about the worst trial that a person can possibly endure, while parents of suicide bombers feel a sense of joy, not grief.

We believe that every single human being has intrinsic value and intrinsic worth. And frankly, it is one of the cornerstones of our culture and civilization, and it's the very reason that we so value an individual human life that we collectively, as a nation, would care deeply about what happens to six coal miners in Huntington, Utah, or three hikers in Mount Hood, Oregon. We are, in fact, a culture of life. It's the cornerstone of our society, illuminated by the conflict with the Islamic jihadists and the contrast with what could best be described as a culture of death.

And it's also difficult for us, with our culture of assimilation, to understand that life for European Muslims is different from life for American Muslims. Muslims in Britain, or the Netherlands or Germany, are second-class citizens because those countries

have more homogenous populations that don't as readily integrate the insiders. Instead of melting pots, Europe has separate pots boiling over with alienation and despair. And in some countries, like France, it's more a lack of economic integration while in others, like Britain, it's more a lack of cultural integration. But whatever the reason, Europe is a much more fertile breeding ground for terror than even is the United States.

Unintentionally, some of our closest allies are producing some of our clearest threats. Because of our special relationship with Britain, and all of our similarities with them, most Americans don't realize that it's very different to be a Muslim citizen of Britain than a Muslim citizen of the United States. Therefore, we have sometimes real difficulty in accepting that doctors in Britain could be terrorists, and drive car bombs into an airport terminal.

And we have to understand that while educated Muslims in Europe may not be materially deprived, many of them feel socially and emotionally deprived by a lack of acceptance. Earlier this month, we saw the arrest of German citizens plotting a terror attack against American targets there. And also this month, we saw Danish citizens arrested for plotting an eminent bombing. Both of those plots had direct links to al Qaeda.

Besides the threat of small groups of educated people launching isolated attacks, we face the danger of mass movements of the dispossessed and discontented rising up in the Islamic world and overthrowing their governments, movements like those that led to the current government in Iran, when the shah was overthrown, and the Palestinians' election of Hamas, and then their takeover of Gaza.

To create havoc in the world, one needs educated people to provide the intellectual underpinnings, but poor and desperate people to provide the manpower. Before the Russian revolution the rural peasants, who formed the overwhelming bulk of the population, weren't sitting around reading Karl Marx; they were illiterate. It took a small number of intellectuals to provide the theory, and then rally the oppressed peasants behind them. The ruling class is the spark, but the underclass is the fuel; and a strong middle class is the best firewall.

Our best challenge in the Arab and Muslim worlds is a lack of a viable, moderate alternative. On the one hand, we have existing repressive governments that stay in power by force and suppression of basic human rights; many of which we support, either with our oil money, like the Saudis, or with our foreign aid, like the Egyptians, who are our second-largest recipient. On the other hand we have radical Islamists, who are willing to fight dictators with terror tactics that moderates are too humane to use. And this is how Iran went from the brutal shah to the brutal ayatollahs, despite all of the Iranians who wanted a moderate government; who wanted it then, and probably would still want it now.

We can't export democracy as if it were Coca-Cola or KFC, but we can nurture moderate forces in all over these countries where al Qaeda seeks to replace modern evil

with medieval evil. This moderation may not look like, and it may not function exactly like our system; it may be more like a benevolent oligarchy; it may be more tribal than individualistic. But both for us and the people of those countries, it'll be far better than the dictatorships than they now have or the theocracy that they would have under the radical Islamists.

And we see this potential in the way that Sunni tribal leaders in Iraq, who have been working with al Qaeda, have now turned against them and are now working with us. They couldn't stand living under al Qaeda's fundamentalism and brutality. The people of Afghanistan turned against the Taliban for the same reason. To know these extremists is to not love them.

My goal in the Muslim world would be to correctly calibrate a course between maintaining stability and promoting democracy. It's self-defeating to try and accomplish too much, too soon – you'd just have elections where extremists end up winning – but it's equally self-defeating to do nothing. First, we have to destroy the terrorists who already exist. Then, we have to attack the underlying conditions that breed terror by helping to improve health and a basic quality of life; creating schools that offer an alternative to the extremist madrassas that turn impressionable children into killers, then create jobs and opportunity and hope; to encourage a free press, fair courts, and other institutions that promote democracy.

We have to help other governments mount an active counterinsurgency wherever the terrorists are to be found. But we also have to help them improve their infrastructure to make future terrorists unwelcome. Our strategic interest as the world's most powerful country coincide with our moral obligations as the world's richest country. If we don't do the right thing to make life better in the Islamic world, the terrorists will step in, and they'll do the wrong thing. We need to support moderates with no favor of Sunnis or Shiites.

As for the underlying dispute between them, that's been going on for 1400 years, we simply don't have a dog in that fight. Our enemy is neither Shi'a or Sunni; it's Islamic extremism in all of its guises. The Saudis want us to support extremist Sunni groups to counter growing Iranian power. The Saudis assure us that they can control these groups, and keep them from turning against us; and we all know how well that turned out with al Qaeda.

We have way too much to lose if the Middle East becomes chaos. We've already made the Saudis rich; the wealth of their oil is seed money for terrorism. They and Pakistan have much to lose if we lose. They will ultimately accommodate whoever they think has the stamina to win. Now, in the past we've been constrained because our dependence upon imported oil has forced us to support repressive regimes, to conduct our foreign policy with one hand tied behind our back with an oil-soaked rope. It's time; it's past time to untie that hand, and reach out to the moderates with both hands. Oil hasn't just shaped our foreign policy; it's deformed it.

When I make foreign policy, I'd like to treat Saudi Arabia the same way I'd like to treat Sweden, and that requires us to be energy independent. These folks have had us over a barrel, literally, for way too long. Saudi Arabia funds madrassas all over the world that teach extremism. The first thing I'd like to do as president is to send Congress a comprehensive plan for energy independence, which we will achieve by the end of my second term.

Now, I know there are those who will say, that'll take 20 years. Well, I compare the lackadaisical pace of work similar to when you bring your car in for service, with the urgent, concentrated effort made when a NASCAR driver pulls up for a pit stop. We've got to view becoming energy independent like a pit stop, where every second counts. Not like dropping off the family station wagon for Gomer and Goober to work on when they can get around to it.

We need to explore, to conserve, and pursue all avenues of alternative energy, whether it's nuclear, wind, solar, hydrogen, clean coal, ethanol, and other biomass and biodiesel. Let's remind ourselves: Why did Iraq and Iran fight? Oil. Whoever controls oil not only controls the Middle East, but the world. And if all the Middle East were to unite behind Iran, then the price of oil will no longer be our problem. We won't have any.

By supporting Islamic moderates and moving toward energy independence, maybe that won't protect us completely from the terrorists who already exist; we'll still have to fight the war on terror hard, and we'll have to fight it smart, using all of our political, economic, diplomatic and intelligence weapons, as well as our military might. The terrorists have sympathizers all over the world; people more than happy to show up, shouting death to America while being filmed. But the actual number of those willing to sign up for suicide missions is relatively few; and they train and they plot in small, scattered groups.

It's an enemy that's conducive to being tracked down and eliminated using the CIA and Special Forces and special operations. We can accomplish a great deal. We can achieve tremendous bang for the buck with swift, surgical air strikes and commando raids by our elite units, as we've recently done with the Ethiopians in Somalia. These operations are impossible without first-rate intelligence.

When the Cold War ended, we cut back on our intelligence, just as we cut back on our armed forces, and both have come back to haunt us. As president, I'd like to beef up our human intelligence capacity, both the operatives who gather the information as well as the analysts who figure out what it means. I'd rather have more people in Langley so we can fewer in Baghdad. And once we gather that information, it needs to be immediately shared with those in other agencies to whom it's relevant. Anyone in my administration caught protecting his turf rather than protecting us from terror would be shown the door.

We have urgent concerns about Iran's military and financial support of Shiite militants in Iraq, the Taliban in Afghanistan, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas among the Palestinians; we have urgent concerns about Iran's development of nuclear weapons. But more is at stake than just Iran going nuclear. Faced with a nuclear Shiite-Persian Iran, the Sunni Arab regimes to the west will feel the need to match them.

The administration has quite properly said that it will not take the military option for Iran off the table. Neither would I. But if we don't put some other options on the table, eventually the military option becomes the only viable one. Right now, we're proceeding down only one track with Iran: armed confrontation. Nothing would make Osama bin Laden happier. He would welcome war between the United States and Iran, his two biggest enemies. I'd try to do anything that would avoid brightening bin Laden's day.

Al Qaeda and Iran seek control of the same territory. What Iran sees is its potential Shiite crescent is a large part of what would be al Qaeda's Sunni caliphate, from Spain to Indonesia; not just Iraq, but Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Gulf states, and Saudi Arabia. Both al Qaeda and Iran seek not just to dominate Israel, but to destroy her and to control the Palestinians. The Huckabee administration would not waver nor flinch in standing by our ally, Israel. The difference in America's mission is that al Qaeda must be destroyed as a movement, while Iran just has to be contained as a nation.

So how do we achieve that? Well, to contain Iran, it's essential that we actually win in Iraq. When we overthrew Saddam Hussein, we functioned as a bulwark against Iran. We upset the balance of power in the region. We need to stabilize and strengthen Iraq, not just for their security, but for the security of the entire region and, frankly, for our own security. We can't allow Iran to push the power of its theocracy westward into and then beyond Iraq.

Another way to contain Iran is through diplomacy, while never taking the military option off the table. We have to be as diplomatically aggressive as we have been militarily aggressive since 9/11. We need to intensify our diplomatic efforts with Europe, Russia, China, South Korea, and India to put more economic pressures on Iran. If we end up taking military action, they will be responsible for failing to maximize the peaceful options and alternatives. So far, they've been far more interested in maintaining their trade relationships and making money.

We have all kinds of leverage, and our wide-ranging relationships with these countries, and given the severity of the threat from Iran, we need to demonstrate, unequivocally, how important it is for them to stand with us. With a change in France from Chirac to Sarkozy, we now have an ally willing to join us in taking on Iran, and we need to take advantage fully of this opportunity to explore fresh initiatives. I agree with President Sarkozy's statement at the U.N. earlier that week that says we can only resolve this crisis by combining firmness with dialogue.

To show how seriously we take the Iranian threat here at home, we need to encourage the burgeoning movement of our states and private entities like the Teamsters, to divest their pension funds of Iranian-related assets. We need to put more of our own money where our mouth is. Normally we speak to Iran only indirectly, through the Swiss embassy in Tehran. Our recent direct negotiations about Iraq have been very narrowly focused, not very productive because we really weren't exploring the full range of issues. We have valuable incentives to offer Iran in exchange for helping us to stabilize Iraq, not supporting the Taliban, Hamas, and Hezbollah, and abandoning their nuclear ambitions: trade and economic assistance, full diplomatic relations, and security guarantees.

And while there can be no rational dealings with al Qaeda, Iran is a nation-state looking for regional power. It plays the normal power politics that we do understand, and can skillfully and rightfully pursue. And we have substantial issues to negotiate with them. Time is of the essence, and the situation continues to deteriorate as well as become more complex. The recent Israeli strike against Syria is said to have involved nuclear material from North Korea, and if that's the case, then we know that Iran is somehow involved because Syria is an Iranian proxy in the Arab world.

The wisdom of Sun-Tzu, from nearly 2,500 years ago, is relevant today: Keep your friends close; keep your enemies closer. We haven't had diplomatic relationships with Iran in almost 30 years, most of my entire adult life, and a lot of good it's done. Putting this in human terms, all of us know that when we stop talking to a parent, or a sibling, or even a friend, it's impossible to resolve the differences to move that relationship forward. Well, the same is true for countries. Our experience in Iraq should prove a valuable lesson for Iran.

We've since learned that when we overthrew Saddam, we invaded an imaginary country because our information was so incredibly out of date. We relied on exiles who had long since fled the country, who exaggerated the condition of Iraq's infrastructure, the strength of its middle class, and the secular nature of its society. If we had had diplomatic relations with Iraq, and an ambassador in Baghdad, we obviously would've had better information. Before we put boots on the ground in the future, we better have a few wingtips there first.

Many Iranians are well-disposed toward us. We need to remember that on 9/11, while there was dancing in the street in other parts of the Muslim world, there were candlelight vigils and mourning in Tehran. When we first invaded Afghanistan, Iran helped us, especially in dealings with their allies, the northern alliance. They wanted to join us in fighting al Qaeda, hoping this would lead to better U.S.-Iranian relationships. The CIA and the State Department supported the partnership, but some in the White House and the Pentagon did not. And when President Bush included Iran in the axis of evil, everything went downhill pretty fast.

As the only presidential candidate with a theology degree, along with several years of political experience, I know that theology is black and white. Politics is not. My enemy today on one issue may be my friend tomorrow on another. Bottom line is this:

Iran is a regional threat to the balance of power in the Middle and Near East. Al Qaeda is an existential threat to the United States. I know that we cannot live with al Qaeda, but there is a chance we can live with a domesticated Iran. There is no way that Iran will acquire nuclear weapons on my watch. But before I look parents in the eye to explain why I would be putting their son's or daughter's life at risk in military action against Iran, I would first want to know that we had faced face-to-face, and done everything possible to avoid that conflict.

Now, while our failure to engage Iran seems to be leading to our potentially attacking them, our failure to engage al Qaeda and Pakistan seems to be leading to their attacking us again. When we let bin Laden escape at Tora Bora in December of 2001, he fled Afghanistan into Pakistan, and we played Brer Fox to his Brer Rabbit. We threw him into the perfect briar patch, protected directly by Islamic extremists, tribal leaders who revere him, and don't consider their land to be part of Pakistan, protected indirectly by the Pakistani government, who believes that it is.

On September the 12th of 2001, you remember that President Musharraf agreed to sever his relationships with the Taliban, and let us fight al Qaeda inside Pakistan. Distracted by Iraq, we've allowed Musharraf to go back on his word, while warning us not to violate Pakistan's sovereignty with our forces. But he promises that he'll go after al Qaeda for us, then claims that he can't because he doesn't control the territory where al Qaeda has its safe haven.

Well, what is exactly our policy toward Pakistan? Just like Musharraf since 9/11, the Bush administration has played both ends in the middle, assuring the American people that it's doing everything it can do protect them, while tiptoeing around our supposed ally, afraid of upsetting the apple cart even though the cart contains poisoned apples, destined for export to the United States.

This muddle of a policy became apparent in July, when a national intelligence estimate confirmed what we already knew: That al Qaeda has successfully regrouped, and enjoys a safe haven from which to plot and train for attacks against us in the federally administered tribal areas of Pakistan, the remote, lawless region along its border with Afghanistan. Several intelligence officials have testified to this on July 11th. Asked why we weren't doing more against al Qaeda and Pakistan, the Deputy Director of National Intelligence, Tom Fingar, declared it's not that we lack the ability to go into that space, but we have chosen not to do so without the permission of the Pakistani government.

Speaking off the record, other officials confirmed that permission was denied. When a congressman asked the CIA's Director for Intelligence John Kringen why the CIA wasn't coordinating with tribal leaders to get bin Laden, he replied that those leaders, quote, "are the very people who are protecting him," end quote. Then Frances Townsend, who heads the homeland security council at the White House, struck a more aggressive and encouraging note. When asked about military action against al Qaeda and Pakistan, she said that if we had actionable targets anywhere in the world, we would pursue those targets.

The president's been clear: Job number one is to protect the American people. And no options are off the table. But when Pakistan took offense, the Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher dodged and weaved, backing off Townsend's statement by saying that we respect Pakistan's sovereignty, which seemed to take unilateral military action off the table. His boss, Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, repeated that message just a couple of weeks ago.

Also contradicting Townsend's assurance that we will go after actionable targets was the news leak in early July about a classified, aborted raid into Pakistan by Navy SEALs, Army rangers, and the CIA in early 2005 that had targeted bin Laden's top deputy. Despite pleas by Porter Goss, head of the CIA, Donald Rumsfeld called off the raid at the last minute when Navy SEALs were already in C-130s with their parachutes strapped on. He acted, not because he questioned the intelligence, but because he felt that the size of the mission had grown to a point where we could not do it without Musharraf's permission. A dozen former and current military and intelligence officials leaked the story because they were furious that we gave up this opportunity, which they considered our most promising since Tora Bora.

The leaked report raised some very tantalizing questions. Why did Rumsfeld call it off, and not President Bush? Did the president even know about it? Did Rumsfeld ask for Musharraf's permission, or did he just assume that he wouldn't get it? One thing that I can assure you: When I'm president, I will make the final call on such actions, not my secretary of Defense, nor any other official.

A dozen former and current military intelligence officials will leak the story because they were furious that we gave up this opportunity, which they considered our most promising since Tora Bora. The leak report raised some very tantalizing questions. Why did Rumsfeld call it off and not President Bush? Did the president even know about it? Did Rumsfeld ask for Musharraf's permission or did he just assume that he wouldn't get it?

Now, when this story broke, a former administration official said the special operations guys are tearing their hair out at the highest levels because they are looking at targets on a daily basis and they can't move against them. This missed opportunity in 2005 was especially detrimental because in September of 2006, Musharraf agreed to a ceasefire with the frontier tribal leaders that helped al Qaeda and the Taliban operate even more easily and freely.

The ceasefire was actually signed by leaders of the Taliban rather than the tribes. Musharraf agreed to leave the tribal leaders alone if they would keep the Taliban from making cross-border raids and would go after al Qaeda. Musharraf kept his end of the bargain, but the tribal leaders didn't. And despite that constant breach, the ceasefire stayed in effect until this July when Musharraf raided extremists who had taken over the Red Mosque in Islamabad, angering the tribal leaders. Lamenting that ceasefire in July,

Francis Townsend said: “It hasn’t worked for Pakistan. It hasn’t worked for the United States.”

We lost a whole year when they should have been going after terrorists. And we have no assurance, now that the ceasefire is broken down, that they will go after those targets of high value to us like bin Laden. More recently, Townsend said on September 9th, in response to Osama bin Laden’s latest tape to mark the 9/11 anniversary: “This is a man on the run from a cave who is virtually impotent other than these tapes.” She said this two days after CIA director Michael Hayden reached a very different conclusion. He said our analysts assess with high confidence that al Qaeda’s central leadership is planning high-impact plots against the American homeland.

Now, it can’t be denied that al Qaeda has made excellent use of its safe haven in Pakistan. When we went after them right after 9/11, they were a tumor that needed to be cut out. But by failing to do that, we have allowed al Qaeda to metastasize and get into the bloodstream of the entire Islamic world with its franchises of local terror groups who give their intelligence to headquarters in Pakistan and get assistance in return. Bin Laden and his deputies are charismatic, inspirational leaders and eliminating them would be an important psychological blow to the movement.

Al Qaeda of course has sent fighters to Iraq and made that country a revolving door of terror. Fighters pour into Iraq to train and conduct operations there, then they pour out to use their skills that they’ve obtained elsewhere. Some of them return home, but what is especially frightening is that the training they get in the urban environments of Iraq translates into unleashing terror in similar environments in Europe and the United States. Not only will they follow us home if we leave Iraq; they’ll know what to do when they get here.

Al Qaeda collaborated with Kashmiri terrorists in the multiple bombings of Mumbai, India in July 2006 that killed more than 200 people. It is similarly working in Lebanon, with Fatah al Islam in North Africa, with al Qaeda of the Islamic Islamic mughreb, as well as in Jordan. Now, while I disagree strongly with the democrats, who claim that we’re fighting on the wrong battlefield, I am convinced that our focus on Iraq at the expense of Pakistan or Iran is like dealing with the neighbor’s house, which is on fire, while ignoring the house on the other side of the street that’s filled with carbon monoxide.

Iraq may be the hot war, but Pakistan is where the cold, calculating planning is actually going on. Al Qaeda in Iraq is a branch office. Corporate headquarters is in Pakistan. If al Qaeda attacks us tomorrow, that Iraq will be postmarked Pakistan, not Iraq. Pakistan has become the new Afghanistan. Another attack will spark justified outrage that we let bin Laden and his people get away. Concerns about Pakistan’s delicate sensibilities will be drowned out by the wailing about American casualties. The American people will not understand why our supposed ally refused to help us and why our government put up with their intransigence.

I would prefer to skip the next attack and the exasperated fury that it will rightly generate and cut to the chase by going after al Qaeda's safe haven in Pakistan. We almost suffered that next attack, the plot that Britain foiled last year to blow up 10 airliners belonging to American, Continental, and United over the Atlantic which was hatched in Pakistan. We almost suffered the attack against American targets in Germany that was planned to coincide roughly with the 6th anniversary of 9/11 and also has been traced back to Pakistan.

We're in an absurd catch-22. The Pakistanis say they will pursue the terrorists because it's their territory. But then they say they can't do it because they don't control that territory. As commander in chief, our president must constantly balance risk and threats in calculating how to best protect the American people. We know that we're living on borrowed time against the next terror attack. That risk is far more likely and far graver than the risk that a quick and limited strike against al Qaeda would bring extremists to power in Pakistan.

Pakistan has never known true democracy because even during times of nominal civilian rule, the army and its affiliated intelligence service, the ISI, have been the most powerful institutions in the country. That's not about to change. Both civilian and military governments have consistently favored the rich. Economic growth has been strong under Musharraf, but the benefits have gone mainly to those who are already well-off, not to the poor. Social progress has lagged dramatically behind economic progress with per capita income in 2006 at a mere \$720 a year. Estimate of literacy there range between 30 and 50 percent. And while their military gets 25 percent of their budget, health, education, and social services get less than 3 percent.

Many of Musharraf's problems have nothing to do with the war on terror; they're purely internal and of his own making. His insistence of being both president and army chief of staff, by virtue of a constitutional amendment that expires at the end of this year, led him to suspend the chief justice of the Pakistan Supreme Court because he knew this justice would oppose his seeking re-election while taking the Army post. He was further weakened by the Supreme Court decision allowing former Prime Minister Sharif to return from exile followed by Musharraf's arresting Sharif supporters and deporting him to Saudi Arabia as soon as he arrived.

Now, the challenges to his running have just been rejected by the Supreme Court. And since announcing the election, he has had dozens of opposition leaders and activists arrested, which isn't exactly the best way to run free and fair elections. Yesterday, the Supreme Court ordered that they be released. The United States isn't terribly popular in Pakistan, but not because the people back religious extremists, but because they see our aid benefiting the increasingly unpopular military and not them. Instead of our making Musharraf unpopular, he makes us unpopular because we're so closely tied to him.

Now, Musharraf claims that he agreed to our demands on September 12th 2001 under Richard Armitage's threat to "bomb Pakistan back to the Stone Age." Instead of making such a threat, I'd rather promise to help build them into the 21st century. If we

can help meet the needs of Pakistan's poor, they have less reason to support the religious parties. Since 9/11, we've given Pakistan about \$10 billion. About \$5.6 billion has been specifically to pay them back for counterterrorism along the Afghan border, going after al Qaeda and the Taliban. We've reversed – reimbursed Pakistan for counterterrorism operations that didn't even exist. It's the kind of no-show and no-work jobs that Tony Soprano would arrange. Of that \$10 billion, less than a billion dollars has been used for the projects that directly help the Pakistani people, things like food, schools, medical aid.

While having put all of these golden eggs in Musharraf's basket, we now see his power waning. He's done his best to sideline Bhutto and Sharif's mainstream parties. And because these parties are personality-driven, they've languished during the absences of their leaders. Whatever happens in the emerging power struggle among Musharraf, Bhutto, and Sharif, policy toward the United States is not likely to change. Sharif would sound more anti-American, Bhutto more pro-American, but both of their parties are secular and centrist. We won't have our al Qaeda problem magically solved for us; it's our problem and we have to face up to it.

I've supported and continue to support the surge in Iraq. Given that the surge reached full strength only in mid-June, the gains in security have been significant, but they remain fragile and tenuous. The National Intelligence Estimate released in late August, which represents the consensus of all of our intelligence agencies, made it clear that if we withdraw too early or too quickly, those hard-won gains will be lost and the cycle of violence will spiral upward.

When has an army ever turned the tide and then given up? War is about will. Whoever gives up loses. We can't afford to lose. How we handle this will determine the kind of world that our grandchildren will live in or, for that matter, die in. I've got confidence in General Petraeus and the plan that he's presented. He's earned our trust by the significant progress that he's made in a short time. Things were going downhill fast when the surge began, and he's reversed that spiral. I would certainly not withdraw any faster than he recommends.

I agree with the general that we can't schedule additional withdrawals before and beyond next summer because there's no way to predict what conditions on the ground will be prevalent at that time. By not projecting below or beyond the pre-surge levels, we send a strong signal to the Iraqis that we will be there for them and to our enemies that they can't just wait us out until the days on the calendar have clicked off.

General Petraeus' reasoning makes sense to me. It seems to be too soon to reduce our mission simply to counter terrorism and transition to the Iraqis without focus on population security as well. If we don't continue to maintain and expand population security with the significant number of forces that requires, we could lose all of the hard-won gains. The Democrats want us to do that, but I'm convinced that would be rushing to failure. I'd rather take a slower, but steadier path to victory.

The Sunnis rejecting al Qaeda to stand with us in places like Anbar and Diyala and places in parts of Baghdad have been a truly extraordinary shift, a blessing. Anbar is one of only Iraq's 18 provinces, but before the Anbar awakening, almost a third of American casualties occurred in Anbar. By April of this year, every tribal leader in the province was cooperating with us, a truly stunning reversal. The Sunnis have joined us at tremendous risk to themselves and they've placed enormous trust in us that we will protect them. If we abandon them, al Qaeda will kill them. We need to continue funneling aid directly to the tribes, rather than just to the national government for local projects and for salaries for those willing to fight on our side, bypassing the central government in Baghdad.

This model of the Sunni tribes turning against al Qaeda is being used to turn Shi'ite tribes against their militants. We've been banging our head against the wall dealing with ineffectual leaders in Baghdad. But with local leaders, we can actually poke our head into open doors and get some results. The goal is ending the violence. The paradigm we use to get there is less important. And contrary to the Democrat's gloom, we are seeing reconciliation, only its bottom-up rather than top-down. Bottom-up reconciliation can end the violence faster because it comes directly from the people.

We're also seeing some of the goals and the benchmarks being achieved in fact if not in law. As Ambassador Crocker told Congress, oil revenues are being distributed, de-Ba'athification is taking place, and the Shiite-dominated government is giving financial resources to the provinces, including to Sunni areas, even without passage of legislation called for in the benchmarks. These actual deeds among the people are more meaningful than mere words on paper would ever be.

We've seen our peace dividend, from the fall of the Soviet Union, turn into a war deficit with the rise of Islamic terror. We didn't send enough troops to Iraq initially. In fact, we can't continue the surge any longer than we now plan without extending deployments beyond 15 months. So the size of our military is dictating that we get down to pre-surge levels by mid-July. We just don't have enough troops in Afghanistan, nor does the rest of NATO, and we're losing some of the hard-won gains that we've had there.

Our current armed forces are simply not large enough and we've relied way too much on our National Guard and our reserve forces to supply the support structure for active-duty military forces. And frankly, we've about worn them out. This has not only put a strain on them, but on their families, their communities, and their employers. When our enemies know that we're spread thin, as we are now, they are more apt to test us by provoking a crisis. Having a sizeable standing army makes it less likely that we'll actually have to use it.

The administration plans to increase the Army and Marines by about 92,000 over five years, but we must accelerate that to more like two or three years. I know there's a challenge to increase enlistments without lowering standards and expand training facilities and personnel, but that's one of the reasons that it's time to increase, not

decrease, the military budget. We spend currently just around 3.9 percent of our GDP on defense. Under Ronald Reagan, we spent 6 percent in 1986. We need to return closer to that 6 percent figure if we're really serious about our options in the world.

If we're going to have a large invasion, I'd rather follow the Powell doctrine and use overwhelming force. The notion of an occupation with a light footprint that was our model for Iraq always struck me as a contradiction in terms. Liberating a country and occupying it are two different missions completely. Our invasion went well militarily, but the occupation destroyed Iraq politically, economically, and socially. In former Yugoslavia, we had 20 peacekeeping soldiers for every thousand civilians. For the occupation of Iraq, that would have worked out to a force of 450,000. Instead, we dismissed the general who recommended higher figures and kept with an arbitrary number of troops to go in.

Staying in Iraq will bring continued challenges, but if we leave, it brings chaos. To withdraw before it's internally stable and secure its borders would have serious strategic consequences for us and horrific humanitarian consequences for the Iraqis. Iraqis, neighbors on all sides, will face a refugee crisis and be drawn into the war: Iraq, to protect the Shi'ites; Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan to protect the Sunnis; and Turkey to protect its control over its own Kurd population.

Iraq is the crossroads where Arab meets Persian, and Kurd, Sunni meets Shi'ite. So if it's not a peaceful buffer, it can easily become a tinderbox. When we deposed Saddam, we emphasized Iraq's central location as a prime place to establish democracy and have it spread. That was the potential dramatic upside. Now, we face the potential dramatic downside that terrorists want to take advantage of – that Iraq's central location is the perfect place to create anarchy and to have it spread.

Cancer treatment can certainly be rough, but the alternative is death. That's how it is in Iraq. Difficult as it is to stay, the consequences of leaving would be disastrous for the Iraqis, for the region, and for us. Now, those who say we don't owe the Iraqis anymore are ignoring what we owe our own children and our own grandchildren. We have to take a stand against al Qaeda in Iraq as well as Iranian expansion there, and we've got to take it now.

Ambassador Crocker told Congress the process will not be quick, it will not be uneven, punctuated by setbacks as well as achievements, and it will require substantial U.S. resolve and commitment. Well, does that sound familiar? It reminds me like our revolution, the Civil War, World War I, and World War II. In every case, we paid a high price, but we won those, and we will win this one for tolerant and peace-loving people all over the world.

Our history has always been one of perseverance from the snows of Valley Forge to the flames of 9/11. Our way of life, our economic and moral strength, our civilization, is at stake. I'm determined to look this evil in the eye, to confront it, to defeat it, and to emerge stronger than ever. All of us, I think, would like to be known as peace lovers, but

I would remind you, from the words of Jesus, that it's not "blessed are the peace lovers," it's "blessed are the peace makers." And that's what we should commit to being. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

DR. FLANAGAN: Thank you very much, Governor, for that very comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the terrorism problem. Governor Huckabee has kindly agreed to take some questions. We have microphones available. If we could ask you to please identify yourself, I'll try to recognize you and the governor. And just, people who do have cell phones and pagers, if you could turn them off. And just one final clarification for the working print (?) – the entire proceedings, the governor's remarks, will be available on our website and, of course, on the Huckabee website later today. But all of these remarks are on the record. Yes ma'am. There is a microphone here.

Q: Thank you so much for your remarks and for coming today.

GOV HUCKABEE: Thanks.

Q: I'm Laura Wilson with the Center for U.S. Global Engagement. And I was very encouraged to hear how much you want to talk about engagement. And there was one figure that you cited in your speech today about the amount we spend on defense, which is about 3.9 percent of our GDP. But you spoke quite a bit in your speech about the need to address terrorism and its root causes, particularly in recruitment by addressing some of the health and education situations in these countries.

Well, we spend about .25 percent of our budget on development and foreign assistance kinds of interventions. I wonder whether your administration would look to increasing that, would look to elevating how these tools are used in our foreign policy toolkit. Thank you.

GOV. HUCKABEE: I certainly look at it. And frankly, I think it needs to be evaluated, but it also needs to be measured with extraordinary accountability. One of the failures in the past is a lot of the money that was intended to go to improving the lives of the poor, whether it was through food or giving them drinking water, vaccines for disease, even mosquito nets, ended up not getting to the people, but being held by corrupt governments and pilfered by the military of the government themselves.

So whatever we do, I would want to make sure that there was actually strategic value in what moneys were expended. That has not been the case always in the past. I'm not saying it never happened that we got money to the right place, but it's almost like when you feel better because you give money to the guy holding the cup at the intersection, and then you find out he made more money than you did last year, you know, or that he used it to buy booze and that it never really got to give him food.

So the point being that if we're going to expend American taxpayer money, we don't do it just because we feel better about it; we do it because it has strategic value to

the citizens of the United States and their security. And to achieve that, we need to have a very clear chain of information as to where the money's going, how it gets used, and accountability when it gets used.

I'm getting all the front row people. See, you guys should have sat in the front row. (Laughter.)

Q: We were waiting. Governor Huckabee, my name is Sarah Petrin and I work with the Better World Campaign, which supports the work of the United Nations. And I wanted to thank you for all of your brilliant analogies in your speech, particularly your opening one about the smartest kid on the block. And one analogy that we use at the Better World Campaign is that when it comes to intelligence and counterterrorism, that in the international system, that the United States is only as strong as the weakest link out there in the world. And you talked a lot about cooperation with our European allies as perhaps not being enough. And I would wonder how your administration might strengthen our intelligence capabilities by working through multilateral institutions to reach out to other parts of the world.

GOV. HUCKABEE: Sarah, I would never want to give up our sovereignty in terms of abiding by certain laws, principles. I mean, I want to be very clear. The American president only to administer law under the Constitution, the laws passed by Congress, but that does not preclude us from having extraordinary depth of cooperation with every and any country in the world from whom we can gain some benefit. And sometimes, as I said in my speech, we try to, in some cases, I think, make politics as pure as theology. And it isn't. And I think that's the mistake a lot of politicians make; they want it to be so pure, so black, so white, so absolute that they end up saying never under no conditions. It's a dangerous thing in politics.

Politics is not always as pretty and clean and neat as that, and so sometimes the people with whom we could share information that would have vital interest to the United States may not be our pals and buddies on a host of issues. But maybe on one particular item, it could save American lives. And that's when I think that we should always put forth the spirit of cooperation, if not necessarily negotiation. Do we always go and hug and make nice with dictators and despots and evil people? Of course not, but if they have something on their table that we need and we can do it without compromising our integrity and compromising the safety of our citizens – we should always put the protection of American citizens above our own pride and just being bull-headed and saying we're not going to have any conversations with those people.

I'll take all of them from the front row if that's where they come from. You guys actually stayed awake the whole time and that was good, so I want to thank you for that. (Laughter.)

Q: Jan Smith, and I've been involved with the Eleanor Roosevelt dialogue. And my question here –

GOV. HUCKABEE: Now, the Eleanor Roosevelt dialogue was not Hillary talking to her recently, was not – (laughter.)

Q: No, you're at CSIS.

GOV. HUCKABEE: You remember that story? Okay, never mind. This is Washington. Of course you're – go ahead, I'm sorry.

Q: The Jones Commission highlighted the concerns that military, our Military, they're being too upon to do police functions and that they're not trained for police functions. What can we do to make sure that our military people aren't put at increasing risk? And what are your concerns about the Blackwater situation?

GOV. HUCKABEE: The concerns about Blackwater, to begin there, is that we have empowered contractors with an extraordinary level of latitude. I saw it first-hand when I was in Iraq a year and a half ago. And a lot of the people that were going around with us – I thought they were military. And it turned out they were private contractors. And there were a couple of moments, and I'm not going to give the details because I might disclose something about one of my governor colleagues that I probably would be embarrassing to tell. One of these days, I'll tell it, when he's not running for reelection maybe. (Laughter.)

But the level of authority that they seem to have, to me, was staggering. And to be not authorized as agents of a government or truly deputized authorities, it was a little bit disconcerting, quite frankly, to see it first-hand. I understand the need of sort of having this separate force and that you can get a lot of people hired, but it gives me pause, quite frankly, especially in light of the incidents that happened recently.

To the other part of your question, the military can't be a permanent global peace force, a police operation; they are, in fact, a military. And what concerns me most, from the perspective of having been a governor, with nearly all, almost 90 percent of our National Guard troops having been deployed to Iraq at some time – in some cases two or three times now – is that we are stretching the citizen soldiers way beyond what they ever volunteered to do. And while they're not complaining about it, and they're truly not, that is not necessarily the case of their families, their employers, or their communities. And it just can't go on indefinitely where we stretch them.

When I was in college, my freshman year I had a professor who gave me a wonderful piece of advice, and I think it would probably hold true in this situation. His advice was, he said: Boys, don't use all of your water on too small a fire. And his point was if you use up all of your water for one fire, the next fire you have, you don't have any water for it. My great worry is that if we've used up all of our water on one fire, what happens when we have another fire? Where do we get the water to put it out? And so we have to be careful. We need a military that's large enough, that has, in essence, enough water. I worry right now that we've used up a lot of our water in Iraq and if we were to face a sudden, significant military situation, God help us.

Q: Do you support a draft?

GOV. HUCKABEE: Not at this time. I think the volunteer army – the question is, do I support a draft – the volunteer army has worked far more effectively in making sure that we have an extraordinary spirit de corps among the military themselves, a greater level of professionalism, a higher level of training, and commitment. And I would hope that we would never have to come to the place where we would draft.

However, having said that, while I'm not drafting people necessarily for a military function, I think one of the fundamental mistakes we made after 9/11 was that, essentially, the instructions the American people got to fight global terror was: go back and live normally. There's no such thing as living normally ever again in this world. That we were not called upon to have some ownership of the fight against terror – and I think it's a real fight – I think was – perhaps history will reveal was the single greatest mistake that we made because what should have happened was what happened after every international crisis that America was involved in; everyone has got to pull together.

And I can remember, it didn't take us long to go from Democrats and Republicans holding arms and singing God Bless America on the Capitol steps and every house sporting a flag out front – within a few months, there was the same kind of partisan bickering and complete isolation that we've seen happen in this town: total polarization, total paralysis, and the result has been just incredibly detrimental. If we're going to really fight this war, let's make it as something that we all have to have some skin in the game. It doesn't mean that we all join the military or get drafted in it, but there ought to be a greater sense of shared sacrifice and participation.

Q: (Inaudible.)

GOV. HUCKABEE: No, we're going on to the next question. (Laughter.)

DR. FLANAGAN: Yeah, let's take one question in the back there for equal opportunity here.

GOV. HUCKABEE: Okay.

Q: Hi, I'm Mindy Rizer from the United Nations Association of the national capital area. I'd like you to elaborate a little bit more on what you talked about encouraging moderates in regimes that we may have alliances with. We can think of a number of some of those regimes in the Middle East. There have been a number of efforts behind the scenes, in front of the scenes, to encourage greater openness. In many cases, that hasn't happened. It's rather a challenge because these regimes are important to some other aspects of U.S. policy. I'd like to here specifically how you deal with this Gordian knot, which has been extremely vexing to people in the State Department and in track-two diplomacy.

GOV. HUCKABEE: Part of it is the increase of literacy, health care, the things that give people empowerment, who don't have it now, with a sense of that they have a future that is not based on just simply cowering in fear from dictators that hold them under their incredible thumb. There are, for example, many people in Iran, I'm convinced, who don't hate America. There are many people in countries where maybe we have hostilities with their government leaders, but it is not necessarily translated throughout the entire population.

And the more that we can do to foster relationships directly with those people, and not necessarily feel that we close off relationships with people because we closed off relationships with their dictators, is important. And that would include – I think a case in point. What we're seeing in Iraq, where we've had more of a relationship with local leaders, as opposed to trying to make sure that everything happened through the government of Baghdad, that's where we've had success. We've had great failure in trying to deal with the centralized government of Baghdad.

We've had greater success when we went into Anbar, dealt directly with the tribal leaders, dealt directly with the localities. And that's, frankly, a far more effective model. And frankly, it's not unlike what we have in the United States. Our Congress is pretty much – has just become incapable of getting things done. But if you want to see real reform, it's going to happen in local communities at the state and local level where governors and mayors are having to make things happen and they don't have the luxury of being ideologues. They have to be pragmatists; they have to meet needs.

Q: I was thinking perhaps a country like Egypt which has some serious, serious problems in terms of openness – (inaudible) – how would you deal with them?

GOV. HUCKABEE: In still the same way. And I've been to Egypt and there's – the tragedy of Egypt is you have certain levels of wealth, but you have unbelievable amounts, as you know, of just abject poverty that's side by side. And there's such a struggle for there to be the middle class. The middle class is always the great buffer between total eruption of anarchy. And I think that's one of the things we have to always try to help, which only happens with education and adequate human services. It can't happen when there's this incredible gap between the haves and have-muches and the have-nots and have-nothings. And we've gone from the haves and the have-nots to the extreme of the haves and the have-nots. Not only in other countries, and quite frankly, we face some of that in our own country with extraordinary poverty and extraordinary wealth and a shrinking middle. That scares me of this country as much as it does in others across the world.

DR. FLANAGAN: I think we have time, maybe, for just one more question, sir.

GOV. HUCKABEE: I hope it's an easy one since it's the last one. (Chuckles.)

Q: I was wondering about your comments about energy independence from the Middle East. France, as you know, has 85 percent of their energy program on nuclear. Would the Huckabee administration seek to imitate a program like that?

GOV. HUCKABEE: Absolutely. The nuclear power source for electricity is one of the most efficient. It's also one of the most environmentally friendly. We have a nuclear plant in my state. It produces far more energy at a greatly reduced cost than does coal, fire, even, you know, hydroelectric, and other forms where the market is so, really I guess, maybe marked by the fluctuations of the commodities that fuel it. But I don't think that's the only thing we do. I mean, frankly, nuclear is a great source for electric power, but so is hydrogen and hydrogen cells, so is wind.

I was in Iowa recently and saw wind turbines that are being made that are not overly expensive. One of those wind turbines, for example, can generate enough power to handle eight to ten thousand households and produce two and a half megawatts of electricity. We have a lot of wind in America; it doesn't cost us anything. It's a matter that, right now, the production capacity is not as efficient as it could be because the economies of scale are not there. But if they were, we've got a lot of resources that are domestic that are environmentally friendly, which ought to be one of the criteria, but that also are renewable and self-sustaining.

Let me close by saying that I think there are three things that a country has to be able to do for itself in order to truly be free. One, it needs to be able to feed itself. If our country becomes dependent on the Chinese, or anybody else, for food, we are only as free as somebody else is willing to let us be with the food they give to us. So maintaining a strong agricultural economy is critical to our long-term survival. Secondly, we need to be able to fight for ourselves. If we lose all manufacturing and outsource every manufacturing, including the manufacture of our tanks, airplanes, parts, weapons, artillery, we're only as free as the countries who supply us our capacity to fight back.

And third, we have to be able to fuel ourselves. If we are dependent on anybody else for our basic capacity, not just the energy that we need to run our cities and our households, but the energy that we need to really protect ourselves and build our future, then we are not as free as we have to be. We're only as free as we allow – some other nation allows us to be. So that's why this idea that we can wait 20 years, that's nonsense. We continue to have an extraordinary engagement and involvement in the Middle East beyond what is necessary because of our dependence on their oil. We've got to come to the place where we simply are not engaged solely because of our energy needs, and the engagement would be more of just the geopolitical balance that creates some level of peace.

The sad fact is it's our oil money that essentially has provided the money that the terrorists have used against us. It filters to them in that capacity and that's another reason that energy independence is not just a matter of economic strength of the country; it really is a matter of urgent national security and ought to be addressed not with the sense of, well, maybe will come up with it in 20 years. Look, this is a country that had the

technology of bottle rockets in 1961. And John Kennedy said we're going to put a man on the moon and come home in a decade. Eight years later, Neil Armstrong had his feet on the lunar surface. It requires that kind of commitment, and I'm convinced this country has the capacity and innovative quality to be able to pull it off.

Thank you very much. It's been a pleasure to be here today. (Applause.)

DR. FLANAGAN: Governor Huckabee, thank you very much for what I think was, as I said, a very nuanced and comprehensive of the terrorism issue. I think you've set a very high standard among the candidates this year in analysis of this problem and we wish you the best of luck in the future. And I welcome you back here to CSIS at some point. Thank you.

GOV. HUCKABEE: Thank you, Steve. I very much appreciate it very much. Good to be here.

(END)