# The Surge – Collective Memory Project

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Normal speech habits—false starts, incomplete words, and crutch words (e.g. "you know") have been removed for purposes of clarity. Fi.9 ( ") Tc 0.001.3 (bi)-2.6( sp)2.7 1.44 gN-1.2 (se)-2.0 (er)1.N-1.2l0 (i)-4

for Iraq for Secretary Rice. Then for a year [00:02:00], from 2007 to 2008, I was the number two in the Near Eastern Bureau and dealt with Iraq-- not as intensively, but still on an everyday basis-- and at times I was brought in with my successor as S.I., which was David Satterfield, onissues, including the Surge. From 2007 to 2008, I was the deputynational security advisor. Iraq was not in my portfolio, because we had brought in General Doug Lute at that time, but I followed Iraq very closely and followed everything around it, and from time to time, including in the base negotiations, I was directly involved. And then from 2008 until 2010 I was ambassador in Turkey. Again, Iraq was an important issue. And from 2010 to 2012, for approxim(o)-2 abro-4 (0s R)-1 (a)13 (s)2 Imr t was th4 ( t)3 2 abisth b(2)5 (008)-SJ -0.AY(ht)

was not getting better; it was getting worse. And we culled this from the details of General Casey's reporting. While the above-the-line summaries were all positive, because that's how the U.S. military's culture is, and that's also how the expectations were when you have 130,000 troops and many tens of billions of dollars invested in something, and you don't have total disaster staring you into the face, you tend to be optimistic. But in looking at the metrics and looking at the detailed analysis of what Casey was trying to accomplish, against the goals, it was clear in September of 2005 that he wasn't meeting the goals of his own military operation. My view, and I think Phil Zelikow shared it to a [00: 05:00] very large degree, was that this was because we were not pursuing an insurgency. I had a fair amount of experience in that in Vietnam. I thought we were still in the

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

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

JEFFREY: It was incidents of violence and very detailed -- the military metrics aren't getting to the core of the insurgency. Casey had a model that in essence was a reasonable model, where you had to split the insurgency into the redeemables and the irredeemables. The irredeemables were [00:07:00] basically the Al Qaeda people and later, to some degree, I would put the Iranian-backed militias, the Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, and Kata'ib Hezbollah in that category. The more redeemable ones were the basic Sunni insurgents, the 1920 brigades, the Baathists, and Muqtada al-Sadr as Jaish al Mahdi. So the idea was that you would find political, economic, and reconciliation tools, along with some military, to deal with one segment of it. The other segment of it you would just have to fight and destroy and drive away. The problem was that we weren't really seeing much measurable success in terms of attacks, in terms of senior leadership grabbed, and in terms of flipping [00:0

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

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

JEFFREY: Oh, of course. Bob --what's his name? [00:09:00] Negroponte brought him out -- Bob, I can't think of his last name -- to run this cell. Negroponte and Casey were very much in agreementwith it. When Negroponte came out, I made the pitch to him that this was not going well, that security even around the Green Zone, let alone the rest of Baghdad, let alone the rest of the country, was terrible, and that we had a huge role, trying to turn this thing around, that it was heading South. And Negroponte very quickly agreed. I mean, he had a lot of experience, four years in Vietnam. So he set up the Red Cell with the full acquiescence of Casey, and the conclusion was that we needed -- that we had a real insurgency. We just couldn't use that word, because of Don Rumsfeld and perhaps others in Washington, but Rumsfeld comes to mind, as the person who's most often fingered(o)-1 (eg)-1 3 ( an)2 (d)-1-3 (e)-4 (c)-8 (y)28Cm9bTw T* [(f)p1.8C [(Wa1-3 (i)1 cb ( m)-

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Awakening actually began with a vengeance in early 2006. It was snuffed out by Washington and by the big military. But the special forces, the CIA, the Marines,

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

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

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

Commission and from her work with

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

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

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

away from it. Well, if this is a different kind of war, then what you're really going to have to fight, for America's survival and core interests, you're going to start getting worried, and I think any astute military officer, even the ones put in charge of Iraq, were a little bit concerned about that, and certainly the ones who weren't out there – William "Fox" Fallon, and I can get to him later -- and others were very concerned that we were over involved in it. Condi, it was one of the reasons why she was less than enthused about the Surge, felt that we were diplomatically overextended there, but certainly militarily we were, too. So we now have a military establishment that rebels about getting rid of A-10s,[00:22:00] whereas they have no role, unless we're going to go back and do another Afghanistan, which we sure as hell aren't going to do. But it doesn't matter. This is so hardwired into their system now that it can really hurt the military's ability to do the key jobs they have, because of this. So I'll leave it at that. So Casey was under great restraint. Thus Zal was under great restraint. Because remember the core problem was the military was getting this wrong. And you've asked me questions about the civilian side, and I can go into that, if I have the time, in great detail. But the point is, that isn't the long pole in the tent. The long pole in the tent, even for the civilian stufea134.1 (m)-7 ( n4 ( l)n3 (e)-4 ( )- ( )- ( )fnh (itai0 (t,)-7 ( e)(i)3 (m)-.1 ( 7n)2 3 ( l(t)3 (o)1 ( hav)3 (e)-1 (a( d)-3 i)3 ff(e)-1 (r)3 (e)-1 an lcy,h(e)-1 ( w12.9 (o)1 un)-0.9 lo havehr(d) o

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

no.  And so she had that burden on her.  She had a double burden.  One is there were certainly beliefs in the Defense Department, and I hope you're talking to people in the Rumsfeld Defense Department, that the State Department not only wasn't delivering, but it's failure to deliver was the real problem.  Because there's a whole chicken and egg thing in aninsurgency.  If everybody loved each other and

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

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

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

SAYLE: Please do.

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

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

very good at preparing effective troops, it's a tremendous drain on resources, and he just didn't want to see the Iraqi army do it, so therefore the idea was that the tribes would do it. That the Iraqis would form petroleum police units and such. These were all non-solutions that we slapped around and spent innumerable time, both in Washington and in Baghdad, trying to do, and the result was no oil flow,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

is important -- that to the extent we could get any success, Bush would swing back to his I've got to make this a Sweden, because that's what's going to solve the Middle East and make it [00:42:00] the next great success story after Eastern Europe. And I was afraid that he still had this idée fixe, so that any success -- because I felt that this was totally unrealistic and our efforts to try to do this would undercut a kind of sorry half-

stable Iraq that isn't being torn apart, that is sort of a friend of ours, I thought that that was extremely doubtful. But, what I did not want to see, from my experiences in Vietnam, was a defeated American military. I did not want to see us withdraw defeated out of there. I wanted to see, if possible, if there would be a way to at least beat [00:44:00] these guys down enough so that we could withdraw with

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SAYLER: He took everybody by surprise?

JEFFREYS: Yeah.

SAYLER: So moving into the summer, where you've mentioned Operation Together Forward, there's one and two that are unsuccessful. One of the commanders said

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

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

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

JEFFREY: Right.

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

JEFFREY: The colonels.

SAYLE: The Council of Colonels is --

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

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

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

MILLER: Fair enough

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

worked together as a team.  Remember, there was the three of us on a daily basis. [00:53:00] For various reasons, Zal felt- on administrative things he would deal with me all the time, but in terms of chain of command, he worked for the Secretary and the P

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

Iraq and worried about the legacy and worried about this thing really pulling our whole diplomatic [01:04:00], global diplomatic and security system down with it, and therefore the Secretary-- well, you can get this from Phil -- was not

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

the security situation and give the Iraqis a chance, he somehow sensed that they didn't want us there. And I had heard him once back in 2005 talk about how he didn't want a long-term bases, and I remember looking around the room, and everybody was looking at him like: Doesn't he get it? This is another Bush thing.

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

SAYLE: We --

MILLER:

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

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

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

SAYLE: In November 2006.

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

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

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

SAYLE: One big issue in the fall of 2006 is that it seems the Joint Staff officers are telling people that there are no more troops for Iraq and that that might have shaped thinking. Did that contribute -- did the idea thi4-1 (as-6 (id)-6 ( th)-3.Lb)-6 (u)-4 (te)-4 ( )]TJ 0.0

SAYE

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

SAYLE: There’s been an argument made in different circles, one that -from the Joint Chiefs angle --that if more troops were sent,1 (t )]TJ 0 Tc -0.0htac1t,1 (t f t)-3 (te)-4 (d)-6 ( th)-3

they figured that this was all eye washing and what's the Iraq Study Group, what's Congress. It's where George Bush is, and George Bush still seemed to be pretty determined to stay. They didn't like the overall policy, but what they did want to see was a determined American presence [01:24:00], not simply running away. That would add insult to injury. It's one thing to have your main security provider/911 do stupid things, like go into Iraq. It's even worse to have that entity do the stupid things and then just run away, tail between their legs, showing military incompetence. That's what they didn't want. But this kind of thing just basically falls below their radar with these guys. There had been a zillion studies and a zillion leaks and a zillion things. What caught their attention was Rumsfeld going and the elections, that's something that I'm sure --I can't prove it, because by that time I wasn't following it, and they were all hunkered down. They knew they couldn't talk to us about Iraq. The only ones who could were the Israelis, because they were very concerned about Iran, they were very concerned about the American presence and all of that. They're the only people I had any rational conversation with on Iraq in the Middle East [01:25:00] and I went through the region with Nick Burns, the undersecretary, in January of 2007, after we had taken the decision for the surge. The Israel6 (e)-4 (7l)-4 6 Td [(2 (ra)-3 (e)-4 (l6t-4 (l6-13 ( )to2 ( h)-3

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JEFr

were set out for Iraq.  Was there a point or should there have been a point [01:31:00] where policy makers sat down and thought about America's strategic goa

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

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

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

JEFFREY: The P

Elliot Abrams. And he knew that 9-11 reflected, and the UNDP[1] Report of 2002 reinforced this, coming from a totally different direction, that 9/11 reflected truly dysfunctional problems in the Middle East that went beyond what we thought we were dealing with since the late 1970s, and he was right, and I give you the Middle East today. It's just that he had a belief, because he is a believer in democracy and elections, and this is a guy who really, really believes in elections, and he took 2006 very, very seriously. That was a defeat for him. He knew it, and he knew he had to do something about it. And he's a believer in democracy and he's a believer in the humanity and that we're all alike under the skin. And at one level, he's right. The problem is there's enough caveats to that, and they all kicked in in Iraq, to

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

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

change this place. There was this hugely optimistic belief in what we could do to a very different society in a very short period of time to dry up the insurgency by reconciling irreconcilable forces and providing such competent governance, end to

similar signals to this in late 2002 [01:45:00] and early 2003. Thus the more senior people weren't allowed out, and the famous Rumsfeld thing that led to Meghan becoming famous is OK, let the girl go. Whereas what's his name now, he's now – [Tom]Warrick wasn't allowed, because he was seen as the main State Department naysayer. So the State Department had learned not to beat this drum, but still, we should have, and it should have been done by Powell and Armitage. But they were good soldiers. Once they had made their protests and such and once the President said "try your best," and I watched them, I dealt with Armitage almost every day when I ( )]TJ0.0090 Tc 0 Tw 4.35 0 Tdt (he)-rhave,theydid the.1ir best. But we hadn't dowehenh

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out Department of Justice people," and you'd go around in circles like this all the

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

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