

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON U.S.-ARAB RELATIONS
16TH ANNUAL ARAB-U.S. POLICYMAKERS CONFERENCE

**“REVISITING ARAB-U.S. STRATEGIC RELATIONS:
GEO-POLITICAL, ENERGY, DEFENSE COOPERATION,
AND DEVELOPMENTAL DYNAMICS”**

12:30 – 2:00pm: LUNCHEON AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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Washington, D.C.

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RONALD REAGAN BUILDING & INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER
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DR. ANTHONY: (In progress) – in addition to the issues, challenges, opportunities, topics for this morning’s session, the geopolitical ones, two of them, and we’ll have another one this afternoon, the focus has been somewhat east of Suez, so to speak.

And yet there are other issues, challenges, opportunities and things worthy of note that are changing as we speak. And one of the most important and laden with implications for American interests in key foreign policy objectives, as well as those of our allies, friends, and strategic partners, is the changing relationship between the United States and Libya.

A new page, a new chapter has been turned; a new book is being written as we speak, and we are pleased and privileged to have with us to make a few remarks while you eat -- he’s comfortable with that; he’s aware of the program that we’re on, and Senator Hagel’s coming there. But I’d like to introduce Ambassador Suleiman Aujali, the Libyan ambassador.

He’s formerly been the Libyan ambassador to Canada, to Brazil, Argentina, and he is Libya’s highest-ranking representative in the United States, working with the administration and with the Congress and with the media and with public groups like this and private sector organizations as well, to try to build this bridge between the Libyan people and the American people, after such a long time of not being as close as once we were.

Mr. Ambassador?

(Applause.)

AMB. AUJALI: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. First of all, I would like to – my congratulations to the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations for their 16th annual meeting. It is my pleasure and honor to be – to attend this conference for the first time since I’ve been here. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the conferences last year and the year before because I was not in Washington at that time.

Today I’m just giving you some remarks about our relation with the United States and I will be very brief.

With American – the American-Libya relation, it is not an easy one. When I came to this country in April 2007, it was a big challenge. It is a challenge because our relationship was not good for about 25 years, and there are so many issues we have to handle with care and determination. When Libya is determined to give up the weapons of mass destruction programs, when Libya decided to solve some problems concerning Lockerbie, and when the United States and Libya decided that to turn the page of our

relation, which doesn't serve any one of us. Twenty-five years we've never been able to achieve anything.

In three years, we've been able to achieve a lot of things. When I came here, it was an interest section under the umbrella of United Arab Emirates Embassy, and the United Arab Emirates . . . they did a great job for us. It was not an easy one, but in one year we've been able to move one step and we upgraded our relation to the Liaison Office.

Before the end of the year, we've been able also to move freely in the United States after the sanction has been removed, and we start working with the government, with the business community, and with the Capitol Hill. In 2006, all of the sanctions were removed; Libya's name has been taken off the country sponsors of terrorism, and trade is start between our two countries.

Libya, it is a small country with 5.5 (million) population, and with a very big -- with a very long coastal area -- it's about 2,000 kilometers, and with 95 percent of it is desert. Desert, but is good desert with oil, with gas and water.

The first to come to Libya after the normalization of relation were the oil companies, and the American companies, they were able to grab 11 blocks from 15 in the international tender in 2005. And the return of the oil companies, it was an interest not only for Americans, it was interest of the Libyans. We've been able to have a better condition with the other companies who've been in Libya for a long time. And I am proud to say that most of the oil company who've been in Libya before, they are back now to business.

But our relation with the United States, it should not be only oil and gas. The trade relation is important and we hope, through this meeting here, to reach some other companies in communication, in education, in health care, to go to see Libya. Libya, if you know how to go and how to start your business, it will be -- it will not be impossible. But is not an easy country to do business, of course, because we've been under sanction for quite some time. And sanctions, it has hurt our economy, tears our education, tore our infrastructures. But I'm asking the new -- the Americans' companies in different fields to try to invest in Libya.

Now, the other thing which is important for us is our -- is education. In the '80s, we -- there was about 4,000 Libyan students [in the United States]. In 2004 when I came here, there was no Libyan student. Ten Libyan students arrived last year, and now we have about 160. Well, this is not bad. I mean, maybe more than 10 percent -- more than 10 times the number of students we (received ?). But these students, of course, when they came here they faced some problems to get their visas and to get used to the country. And even maybe they were frightened to come to United States in the first place. But now they're encouraging, because the first group, they came here and they've been able to encourage some of -- their friends in Libya to come.

This country, it's a great country. The Americans, they are great people, and I think that it is important to open your country for the world. This is the country of opportunity, the country of chances, and especially the Arab community that has been living in this country, they have the chances of living, they have the chance of protection. They have to work for the interests of the Americans and, at the same time, I believe, the interests of their native country. We have to work together to bring these two parties together.

What we can do together, as I said, that education, communication – in the communication field and the economic field. And also there are some political issues. We've been working against each other in many places, unfortunately, for some time. Now we are working together. We are working together in Africa. We've been able to solve some problems and we've been able to coordinate our efforts, and we've been able to talk seriously concerning some serious issue like Darfur, which is a real important issue, and there will be a conference on October 27th in Tripoli concerning the Darfur.

Also, we are for the first time five Arab countries in the eastern part of the Arab world – that's Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania. We've been able to sit together with the United States in New York this year and to talk how can we improve the region. How can we work together, how can we fight the terrorism, which is now threatening this region in the Arab world?

Then the chances are there. The determination is there. Just we need to build the confidence between our two countries. And to build the confidence is not an easy issue, but I am happy to tell you that we are doing a great job, with the help of the business community, the State Department, the different states and different department in the United States.

Now Libya is facing another serious task. Libya will be a member of the Security Council in 2008. There are so many sensitive issue we have that will be resolved before we take our seats, and we have to work very closely with the United States concerning this – in this coming two years.

We've been able to – also to exchange visitors, delegations. We've been able also to organize some important forums here. The Libyan-American Business Association, they organized last year a forum and this year also they're going to organize one in November, on the fifth of November.

This is in general just a few remarks, and I want to thank you. I want to thank the organizer. And my message to the Arab community there that you have to be involved in the American politics; you have to be aware of what we have – our problem in the Middle East, and we try to work together for the sake of the peace and the security.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

DR. ANTHONY: Thank you. We're very appreciative, Your Excellency, for those remarks. Libya's one of the least well known or understood among the 22 Arab countries and it is, as you indicated, a country that has turned a new page and offers lots of opportunities for cooperation, mutuality of benefit, and reciprocity of reward.

We're very appreciative of the fact that there are a number of diplomats here and people working for the U.S. executive branch in both the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy; but we also have a community of Arab diplomats, both at the embassies that are part of the sponsors of this conference as well as the broader Arab diplomatic community. I would like for the Arab diplomats, please, if they would stand, because so many Americans want to know who you are and would like to meet you and get to know you better. If those from the Arab embassies would just stand briefly? Thank you. (Applause.)

That's great. That's 50 to 60 there. And if there are the American government representatives who would be willing also to stand, those who are representing the United States government – I know you're here. Yes. There, here, there – and here. Thank all of you for being here. (Applause.)

(Pause.)

Ladies and gentlemen, our keynote speaker for this luncheon session has arrived, and it's my pleasure and privilege to introduce him.

Many of you who are regulars at this annual conference are aware that several years ago, Senator Hagel also addressed a packed, standing-room-only crowd when we had it at the Marriott Wardman Hotel. And so when it was known that he would agree to speak again and address the issues facing all of us here, this itself proved its own positive draw.

Senator Hagel is serving his second term in the United States Senate, and he is a member of four different committees in the U.S. Senate: Foreign Relations; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; along with Intelligence; and Rules. Senator Hagel is an individual who, unlike some in the Congress, has had a strong career in terms of civil and military affairs. And in that regard, he has the image, or the frame of reference, of Cincinnatus there in terms of the role model of a person who's committed to peace and civility and stability, but in times of war does not shirk to call the national duty call of his country.

Senator Hagel has more awards than anyone that I've ever been privileged to introduce. And I'm not going to call attention to the specific awards, only their numbers there, in terms of a total 34 major national and international awards that span the spectrum of civic affairs, business affairs, professional affairs, patriotic duties, working with the veterans, working with those who served in our armed forces, even as we speak.

He and his brother Tom served in Vietnam in 1968, so when he speaks up and speaks out on these issues pertaining to our country's role in regional and world affairs, and what are America's true national security and related interests, and what are the proper components of our relationships with our friends and allies and partners, this is an individual who speaks from firsthand knowledge -- and not just in particular the region in which we are positioned now, but half the way around the globe from our country and almost everywhere in between.

Senator Hagel has had many positions in addition to his awards as member of boards of directors, boards of governors and boards of trustees. I commend to you his biography in the program booklet, and think in terms of your photocopying it and giving it to your sons, daughters, nieces, and nephews, and those of you who -- among educators here present today, to make sure that each and every one of your students read it and find the inspiration in those contents there. Because if he can do it, others can do it as well.

Senator Hagel.

(Applause.)

SEN. CHUCK HAGEL (R-NE): John, thank you. I am grateful for an opportunity to exchange some thoughts with you today, but I am most pleased for the opportunity to thank you for what this organization represents, the focus you put on the great issues of our day, the enthusiasm, the energy, and the resources that you have devoted to making a better world. And I am not unaware that you all have spheres of influence that take you in many directions, and your time is precious and your resources are limited. So to prioritize your efforts to help bring together a troubled region, and just as your theme notes today, it is in the common interest of all mankind.

I want to note in particular the students here today, as John has referenced some of the students and their professors. I know this is important for you, and I welcome you to this opportunity, not to hear me -- I'm the weak link in the program, but John has overlooked that -- and nonetheless to be here, and I hope you have had an opportunity to be here for Ambassador Aujali's comments. And thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for what you do, and your comments.

But also, if you can spend a good part of your day participating in this event, it gives you a good grounding for what you will inherit as the next generation of leaders in our country. You will learn a great deal, because it is through these kinds of efforts and this process and these kinds of exchanges that we find answers to these great challenges that face our world today.

And we are living in a time not unlike other transformational times in the history of man where the challenges loom large, but so do the opportunities. And it is always the responsibility of leadership to thread their way through those challenges and weave into those challenges not just the answers and solutions, but the opportunities and taking

advantage of those opportunities to in fact assure that the next generation inherits a better world, a more peaceful world, a world more fully complete in understanding each other.

I want to begin my brief comments, and then we will open it up to questions, comments, solutions, insults – (laughter) -- whatever you would like to exchange, with a focus on the theme of your gathering.

I have always found in all that I have been privileged to be part of in my life that common interests, the common denominator of common interests, in fact represents the glue that holds societies together, civilizations. And as the great historian Arnold Toynbee once wrote, that the history of man is the history of challenge response. Challenge response.

And the 23 or 24 civilizations in the history of man have always had to deal with that, that one question. And when we think of the great challenges that face our world today, 6-1/2 billion people, all now part of a global community, we will not unwind that, that global community, underpinned by a global economy.

There's no part of the world, no region of the world that doesn't affect all the other regions. We are woven together in the same fabric of the same cloth that's humanity. And if in fact we are to prevail in this world of great new challenges – extremism, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, endemic poverty, pandemic health issues, environmental challenges.

And maybe the most insidious challenge of all, most difficult to deal with: despair. Because when man is without dignity, when man is without hope, little else matters. And when you further examine the demographic of the 6-1/2 billion citizens of the world today, we find that almost 40 percent are under the age of 19 years old. And most of those reside in the most troubled areas of the world; certainly the area that you are focused on today, the Middle East, is one such part of the world. Much of Africa, a good deal of Asia, good deal of Latin America, North Korea.

These are areas that essentially were left behind over the last 65 years, as man was accomplishing astounding historic advancements for the human race, whether in health, whether in science, technology, transportation. But all people were not beneficiaries of that great human advancement, and it is there that we find our greatest challenges, in these particular areas that were left behind. Many reasons for that, much blame to go around, but the fact is we are where we are.

Our responsibility is to find enough of a solution to put enough of these challenges on some high ground so that we have hope in dealing with these great challenges. We won't fix them all, not in this generation, but these young people here today need to be prepared. They need to be inspired. They need to be ready to assume that next level of responsibility so that they can go on and fix the things we couldn't fix. And no generation has ever failed at that. And we've had some great challenges through the history of man, great challenges.

But all in all, when you look over the last 65 years, we've accomplished an awful lot. No World War III; that's pretty significant. No nuclear exchange; that's rather significant. We've brought more people into individual liberty and freedom and democracy than ever before. We saved more people from hunger than ever before, recognizing we still have great, great strides to go, recognizing we have failed in areas; we have made mistakes in areas. The United States has been part of that.

But when we focus on a common purpose, on a common goal, on a common interest, just as the great leaders after World War II did when they built coalitions of common interest, the United Nations, NATO, World Bank, IMF, dozens of multilateral banks, development organizations. Why was that? Was that in the benefit -- for the benefit of one nation, one people? No. It was no zero-sum game.

Trade. Trade raises the standards of living for all people. Trade's not a guarantee. [There are] winners and losers. Trade is a very critical part of exchanging knowledge and information and relationships and understanding. It's imperfect, but I prefer it to sending armies against each other. But it's a common interest.

We built these institutions after World War II to bring some priorities, some ability for all mankind to prosper, some boundaries in how we do that, rather than what we experienced in the first fifty years of the twentieth century when we elbowed each other out of the way for oil, for rubber, things that led to the great conflagrations of the first half of the 20th century. All institutions are imperfect. Each individual is imperfect.

But overall, we framed a pretty good world, working together in common interest, in common purpose. And just as your theme is about the common interests of energy, of diplomacy, of trade, of humanity, we're all the same in the most fundamental ways. It matters little what your religion is, what your color of your skin is, what region of the world is your background, what your culture is, what your tradition is, what your history is. What matters most? Family, peace, opportunity, some ability of some human dignity, to express that dignity, to express your opinions, to express some sense of liberty, your own choice. That's not unique to Christianity or Judaism or Islam, that I'm aware of. It is a common interest; it is a common purpose for all mankind.

And if we are in fact to resolve these great issues, or at least begin to put these issues in a frame of reference where we can resolve them, certainly the Middle East is the most combustible area of the world today that we're dealing with -- the most dangerous, most complicated -- then we're going to have to realize that these common interests have to come into play.

Now, if you subscribe to any of that -- and what I have just said is not profound, it's not unique, it's not new -- but I intensely believe that's the way you solve problems, through cooperation. You don't solve problems at the end of a barrel of a gun. There is no military solution in Iraq. There will not be a military solution in Iraq. The future of Iraq will be determined by the Iraqi people. We can help, we can buy time, we can frame

things up, but in the end the Iraqis will have to sort Iraq out, just as every nation in the world has to figure out whether they are going to find the courage and all that goes with leading their people and putting their people first.

The United States can't do that for anyone. No country can do that for another country and another people. But there are enough common interests that allow us to help do that. And so if we are to address these great issues -- and we must, because the future of mankind is at stake -- there is no margin of error anymore in the possibility of wars.

When we're talking about weapons of mass destruction, a nuclear exchange, there is no margin of error. Even smart bombs, as precise as we believe they are, and as good as they are, as they have transformed a great deal of warfare, still kill a lot of innocent people. And if you look at the weapons being used in Iraq today, or anywhere in the world, still it is very much the family of the most crude weaponry out there that does the most damage -- suicide bombers.

Smart bombs do not stop suicide bombers. What stops suicide bombers? Well, I don't have all of that answer, but I do know that when you don't deal with the human condition and you don't focus on the future of man, and people are in fact locked into a cycle of despair, they are very easy prey for those who would use religion, those who would use philosophies about life or government or the hereafter to use these people, prey upon these people to do things that are totally alien from the interests of mankind.

It is not in the interest of mankind, regardless of what you believe or how much you've been wronged, to strap dynamite around your waist and go in and blow up innocent people. That is not acceptable, regardless of the purpose of your cause or the nobility of your cause. That is not acceptable. So how do you stop it?

You stop it by getting underneath the problems: what is it that drives this? what is it that does this to people? I'm not aware of any religion -- when you look at the Koran or the Talmud or Bible or any religious document of any standing -- that purports to use these kinds of tactics: terrorism, killing innocent people. I'm not aware of a religion today that states that and says that is acceptable because it's in the interest of my god. It doesn't happen.

So rather than screaming at each other and having all of our transmitters turned on, with all of our receivers turned off, and talking about war and threatening and bludgeoning and not engaging, well, where do you think this is going to go? It's very predictable. I have, for example, said regarding Iran, I think the United States should engage Iran directly, unconditionally. Does it mean negotiate? Maybe we will.

But I would take the country of Libya, Mr. Ambassador, and use Libya as a good example. I think Libya is better off today, I think the Middle East is better off today, North Africa is better off today, the United States, the world is better off today because, through engagement, through mutual interests, through some common denominators, we have seen a relationship develop, the United States and Libya and other nations, that is

far better today than it was 10 years ago, five years ago. I don't think Libya gave up its dignity. Libya didn't give up its sovereignty, nor did the United States.

We found some mutual interests; we found common denominators -- the relationship with the other North African countries along the Mediterranean, and the United States. Far better today than it was five years ago. Why? Because the governments of Tunisia and Morocco, Algeria, they don't want terrorists or extremists in their country, disrupting their country. Each country's different. We respect that, but we've found some common interests here through intelligence sharing and gathering. More trade, more understanding, more reaching out.

And I think one of the internal issues that the United States is going to have to refocus is, in fact, reintroducing itself to the world. We're not going to fix these problems through armies. We're not going to fix these problems through the military. We are burdening our military in Iraq; we're asking our military in Iraq to do things it can't do. Militaries are important, absolutely. It is part of the arsenal of what a nation has, to deal with the realities of the framework of foreign policy.

And foreign policy really is the framework of a nation's interests. Everything fits into that framework of foreign policy. Your energy needs, your trade, stability, security in the world, which directly affect every nation; certainly your immediate security, any nation's security; relationships with others, diplomacy, all fit within this arc of foreign policy.

But those must reside around a basis of common interests, of common purpose. And I think if we will shift -- and I believe we will in this country -- shift to paying more attention to those issues, and attaching our energy and our resources to those issues and engaging the world -- I often use the example of the president whose name is on this building, Ronald Reagan. I don't know if there was a president of the United States who was more anti-Communist in what he believed, what he said, how he said it, than Ronald Reagan. This is the president who referred to the Soviet Union always as the "Evil Empire." But what did Ronald Reagan do?

He actually sat down with the leaders of the Evil Empire. He sat down with Gorbachev, and they almost came to an agreement in Iceland to start a process to eliminate nuclear weapons. But he understood the importance of engagement. He understood things don't get better when you don't talk with people, when you don't communicate. If nothing else, the risk for unintended consequences, the risk for misunderstanding leads to military catastrophe. It leads always to catastrophe.

Now, there are some, I think, within our government and other governments; I think some in Iran, for example, who want that, who wish for that. Some in our government, the United States, I believe, truly believe that that is the way you solve the problem with Iran. I don't. We always have the last option of war, but I hope my country, the United States, has learned something from the past five years in Iraq. I hope we've learned an awful lot. It's been an expensive lesson. And until we are able to

frame up the larger issues with the essence of common interest in the Middle East, which is your topic, which is your focus, then the possibility of solving much else remains very aloof. Very aloof.

The Israeli-Arab issue, I have been told by every Arab leader, is at the core, more than any one issue, of these relationships. Now, if we can bring an Israeli-Palestinian peace process ultimately to a two-nation-state solution, which everyone agrees is the solution -- we seem to have a hard time getting there -- but if we can bring that up onto some high ground, that's not going to fix the problem in Iraq. That's not going to fix the problem in Iran. But it will go a long way toward developing not just an atmosphere and an environment and a flexibility that Arab leaders have, to have more ability and more range to deal with some of the other issues in a give-and-take, in a compromised position, in how we deal with these other issues.

They are all connected. You can't disconnect the Arab-Israeli issue from Iraq, from Iran, from Syria, from Lebanon. They are woven into the same regional fabric, and I have addressed that in legislation, in speeches. And until we are able to focus with some strategic context -- which I don't believe we've done over the last few years, in how we deal with the Arab-Israeli issue, how we deal with the Middle East -- until there's a strategic context in place, rather than just ricocheting from crisis to crisis, or good idea to good idea -- that one didn't work; let's try another one -- that's not the way great nations work. That's not the way sovereign nations can make a difference in the world.

Well, I am much encouraged that organizations such as yours, individuals such as you and the institutions you each represent, are staying focused, involved, and can continue to work with government officials on these great issues. We in the government reflect who we represent. We are products of where we come from. We must stay close to that.

And those in my business who get in trouble are the ones who, for whatever reason, come loose of their moorings, or disconnect from the realities and the people that they represent. That does not mean -- that does not mean -- that you don't have a higher obligation to lead and say things clearly.

And I think it's fundamental, not just to a democracy, but to any form of a society, whether it's a tribal society, whether it's a small town in western Nebraska, it doesn't make any difference. If we are to lead, we have only one currency, and that's trust. And if you debase that currency, if you lose that currency, you can't lead. And that applies to everything in life -- personal relationships, business relationships. If people don't trust you, if they don't trust your purpose, your effectiveness is gone. Your ability to lead is gone.

Lead -- leading is not managing. You can hire managers. You can't hire leaders, and that's what all nations look for: responsible leaders who put the interest of their nation and their people before their own interests.

If we could just fulfill that one point in the 191 nations on Earth to some modicum of success, we wouldn't need armies. If we could just do that. We must keep trying. These young people today are the ones that we will look to to help us do that. But we have to help them; we must help them prepare. And this is our watch; this is our time, and we cannot fail. Because if we fail, the Middle East just being one, but an important part of this, then these young people will inherit the most dangerous world mankind's ever known.

I prefer not to believe that that will happen. I believe that we can do better. I believe we are better. Not just the United States, I believe all people, all societies, are better. And I believe we all want essentially one thing, the same thing.

So I again thank you for what you do, and thank you for allowing me an opportunity to share some thoughts. And I'd be glad to respond to any questions or anything I can address.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

John, thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you.

DR. ANTHONY: (Off mike) – questions -- take two or three. (Off mike.)

Q: Well, we at ABC met this morning with a group of -- (word inaudible) – from Europe and they commented on what they saw as the erosion of civil rights and civil liberties in our country. How do we continue the war on terror and still be mindful of America's value of civil rights and civil liberties?

SEN. HAGEL: Well, the way I answer that is, first – is America is a nation of laws. We are a society of laws. We have one anchor that is more important than any one anchor in our country, and we must faithfully adhere to the precepts of that document, and that's called the Constitution of the United States. I take an oath of office, the President does, every elected member of any government takes an oath of office to the Constitution.

What that oath of office is all about is protecting the rights of the individuals enshrined in the Constitution and the security of our country. For over 200 years, America has done that rather well. We have protected individual liberties and also the national interest of our country. You don't have to give up liberty for security. Don't ever give up liberty for security. We're a stronger, smarter, better nation than that.

And if in fact this so-called asymmetrical challenge of war today is not about Soviet tanks and planes coming through the Fulda Gap in Germany, or great armies or great air forces or great navies coming against us, which is the case, but more of an

insidious attack, as we saw, of course, on September 11th, 2001, you're not going to fix this by giving up liberties.

We're doing – we're doing this right now in the Intelligence Committee I serve on. We're working on a revamping of the federal – or, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, FISA. And I've been one of those who has constantly pushed: no, there must be accountability. No one person should have the power to say to 300 million Americans, "Trust me. Trust me, if I have to wiretap your phones or whatever, believe me, I know and the CIA Director knows, the National Security Advisor knows, and you just put your trust in me." I don't put my trust in any one politician or any one person. You put your trust in the Constitution. I don't take an oath of office –

(Applause.)

The most difficult and pressing and realistic challenge to the security of this country is not from terrorism. That's a reality, it's a problem, we're going to have to deal with it, we are dealing with it, we're doing it pretty well. The biggest challenge to the freedoms of America is concentrations of power: big government, unaccountable government, big business, and big media. And too much power in the hands of too few people is very dangerous. That's the way I'd answer your question. (Applause.)

DR. ANTHONY: (Off mike.)

Q: Thanks for your comments on leadership, Senator. I was interested, for the last year of another two-term president, everybody's energized on Arab-Israeli peace; something about the last year brings that on. So I have to wonder, I'd like your assessment, in a country where using the word -- (inaudible) – political liability can be really carried through on that. And can we be leaders in achieving Arab-Israeli peace?

SEN. HAGEL: Well, Dan, I think you have put your finger on a core issue, and the essence of leadership in the Middle East for the role the United States can play or can't play, and how much damage we've done to ourselves. And I think the United States has done great damage to itself in that role of an honest broker.

An honest broker implies, obviously, that that broker has the capability and the standing, from both parties – or however many parties are involved in the dispute or the issue – that there is some amount of trust in that broker. And I talked about trust a few minutes ago, about the currency of trust. And if you have a situation where one side doesn't trust you or one side thinks that you're siding with the other side, in particular the Israeli-Arab conflict, then your point is very relevant. Then we are essentially unable to be a so-called honest broker.

Now, there's no question in the Arab-Israeli issue that Israel is a nation today as a result of the United States. Israel has been a strong ally; we have been a strong ally of Israel since 1948. We will be; in my opinion, should be. But I've also said this: not at the expense of our relationships with Arab countries, not at the sacrifice of our

friendships with the Arabs. It does not need to be that way. It does not need to be that way.

And so I talked about trying to address this issue. I said it in a little different way when I said one of the great challenges we have ahead of us, I believe, is re-introducing America to the world. And within that component, if you believe that, we're in a lot of trouble in the world, by the optics of everyone else thinking that America is something we Americans don't think we are. You can take any measurement of that – take Gallup's poll, take Pew's poll, take every international poll. Zogby's poll. Take anybody's. It's consistent, whether it's Turkey having a 10 percent approval of Americans or whether it's Australia, 15 percent, whether it's our European friends and allies. Why is that?

Americans are perplexed by that; I understand that. Americans are decent people. We've done an awful lot of good in the world; made mistakes, too. But why is that optic the way it is? Well, we're going to have to understand that we have to reverse optics, too. It isn't just America's optics, that we say, "Well, this is the way we look at it, and this is the way we're going to do it, and we'll talk to you based on our conditions, our place, our time, and our agenda. Now, if that's not good enough, we won't talk to you, and -- we'll penalize you."

We've got to reverse the optics. We have to understand why is it that so many people in the world have such a negative view of America. Why is it they don't trust our purpose? What's wrong here? What has gone wrong? And we have to focus on that, or -- because your question that you asked is going to be as critical a question as there will be in this next generation. And right now, because we will be unable to broker anything.

And if you think the military is the answer to this, threatening people, "We'll go to World War III if we have to," then you'd better start figuring out in America where you're going to get the soldiers. We are now at a societal breaking point. We've got a nation of 300 million people and we're asking less than 1 percent of this society to carry all the sacrifice and bear all the burden, do all the fighting, do all the dying. And you're not going to be able to sustain that.

Why do you think the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen, is on a tour around the country -- stories in the front page of the papers yesterday -- sitting down with all these captains who are leaving the Army and the Marines? And he's trying to understand why are you leaving? And I give him great credit for doing that. And they're telling him why they're leaving.

We live in a world of abstractions in Washington. We talk about war, and "Let's send three or four more combat brigades." What does that mean? That means human beings, that means families, that means sacrifice, that means consequences, that means all the realities of humanity. But yet we live in this world of abstractions and policies and sub-paragraphs. You can't fix the problems of the world like that. It won't work. It never has worked, and it's more complicated today.

MR. ANTHONY: Last question, Dr. Bechtel.

Q: (Off mike.) I'd very much like to have your update, because at the time, Senator Fulbright identified the relationship of the Middle East as more problematic than of any other part of the world. That is indeed shared by -- (off mike).

SEN. HAGEL: Well, thank you, and I am a great admirer of Senator Fulbright's vision and his courage. And it took a lot of courage to do what he did and say what he said at a time when there were very few people in his own party taking any of those positions, let alone questioning -- questioning positions. And I think I've always at least begun with a premise in political life, one of our responsibilities, I've always believed, if we have the privilege and honor of serving, is to question politics, to question policy, to question government.

And I was told once that I was unpatriotic because I was questioning my country. And I said, "No, there's a difference." I said, "It's not unpatriotic to question your government and government policy. It is unpatriotic not to question your government or government's policy." Whether you agree with it or not, that's the whole point of a Constitution; that's the whole point of a co-equal branch of government. We have three, and it's not by accident that Article I of the Constitution is not about the president of the United States. And by the way, I'm a strong believer in a strong president. Strong believer in that. We have to have, must have a strong president.

But Article I is about the Congress -- not because I'm there; I'm just a fleeting steward at this time. And I'll -- I won't even be a footnote when it's all over. But there's a reason, and that is we, the Congress, are closest to the people. We are elected by the people. Our president's not even elected by the people, as you know. Elected by Electoral College. Matter of fact, if we were elected by the people, Al Gore would have been the president, as you know. So that's the reason.

And we have a role, the Congress, and if you have any doubt about that, which there's been some question and some debate on the floor of the Senate over the last two years, and I constantly remind some of my colleagues. And I'd pull a little of Bob Byrd and impress people and pull out my Constitution and I'd say, "Read Section 8 of Article I." It tells you about the responsibilities of Congress in -- oh, my goodness -- foreign policy. In military policy. In military affairs. And you'll be quite surprised, if you've not read Section 8 recently, the specific language in that section, in the Constitution, that gives the Congress specific responsibility for very specific things when it comes to foreign policy.

Well, that said, your question, I think, is particularly appropriate because, as you asked the question framing up the Middle East today and reflecting on what Fulbright said -- and I just finished the new book on Eisenhower, "Ike," which I would recommend to all of you. It's an astoundingly good book, I think. I know a lot of books on Eisenhower have been good; this one, Michael Corda wrote it, is really, really excellent.

And I was struck the other night as I was getting toward the end of it, it reflects on what you're talking about, what Fulbright said. Eisenhower said in the '50s about the Middle East, he said America should never, ever get bogged down in the Middle East as an occupation power for – regardless of the reason. Because if you ever do, if we ever do, it will be catastrophe. Five years, 170,000 troops in Iraq. That's an occupation power. There's no functioning government in Iraq.

And you asked about the Middle East, and in the interest of time I would just say this very briefly. I have always believed – and I noted it in some of my comments – that there cannot, will not be any prospect for any kind of peace, stability, prosperity in the Middle East unless there is a regional dynamic – strategic, regional dynamic – policy in every way framed as to the future of the Middle East. That doesn't mean nations give up sovereignty; that doesn't mean nations give up anything.

But, for example, Iran is on the front pages. We've got a president talking about maybe World War III and Vice President Cheney can hardly wait to get to the next war -- speech about attacking Iran next. Does anybody believe that there's going to be peace in the Middle East without Iran? Maybe you do. I don't.

Does anybody believe there's going to be peace in the Middle East until we find some way to start bringing this Israeli-Arab problem into some transparency, some high ground so we can move toward a two-state solution? I don't. Of course not. It's all framed in the same general area. It's complicated. And I'm not near as smart as most everybody in here about the Middle East, and I am quickly out of my depth on these things. I'm a senator, after all – (scattered laughter) – we don't know much about anything. (Laughter.) But it never stops us from giving speeches, of course, or saying anything. (Laughter.)

That's not a good answer to your question, but I think it's, at least in the interest of time, it's my general response to the question.

DR. ANTHONY: That's super.

SEN. HAGEL: John, thank you. Thank you very much. (Applause.) Thank you.

DR. ANTHONY: That was a great last question and answer, and the mention of the late Senator Fulbright is very apropos. Most people here are not aware that Senator Fulbright was the founding chairman of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations Advisory Board and held that position until his passing. A Fulbright fellow here -- and there must be Fulbright fellows out in the audience, as well.

In the few minutes we have before we go back to the main plenary session, I wanted to call attention to something I alluded to earlier, and that is that there are a number of grassroots American professors at universities who are in the social sciences who have been Malone Fellows in Arab and Islamic studies, and they in turn, in coming back, have tried to pass the baton to the coming generation of emerging American leaders

in the Arab-U.S. relations dynamic. And I mentioned that some of the students who are delegates of these countries accompanied them here.

If I could ask maybe first the students who have represented Arab countries in the Model Arab League if they might please stand? (Applause.) Thank you. And if their professors who are their faculty advisers who are passing the torch to them might also stand? (Applause.)

Okay. We'll return now to the main plenary session, where we will focus on another non-controversial issue, namely, the geopolitics of Iraq and Iran. (Laughter.)

(End of session.)