Chairman LEVIN. We are in the middle of a vote now in the Senate, and we're going to have, by the way, an 8-minute round here—I should have announced that—on the usual early-bird basis.

Ambassador Ross, what about the argument, "Give this a chance to work?"

Ambassador ROSS. I'm sympathetic to the idea of "give it a chance to work," but, again, I think, given where we are at this point, I tend to focus much more on, "what are the demonstrations that there is a change in behavior now on the part of Iraqis?" If there's no change in behavior on the part of the Iraqis, it doesn't matter how much time you give them. If there is a change in behavior on the part of Iraqis, then actually you can manage a transition. So, I'm looking for signs that there's a change in behavior. At this point, I see some symbols; I'm not sure I see real signs.

Chairman LEVIN. Now, the President has said that the presence of the United States will be in Iraq so long as the Government of Iraq asks us to be in Iraq. That sounds like, to me, an open-ended commitment, not putting the kind of pressure on the Government of Iraq that at least the two of you have talked about. There are no consequences, as you've described, in the statement that the President has made that we'll be there as long as the government asks us to be. There's no conditionality, as I believe one of you has said. Dr. Perry, I think you used that word. Do you believe the position of President Bush contributes to the kind of pressure which you both describe, which you believe is essential to the Iraqis coming up with a political settlement?

Dr. PERRY. I think that's the wrong statement to make. I do believe the President is backing away from that statement. I think his more recent statement, that we will not make an open-ended commitment in Iraq—that we cannot make an open-ended commitment—is tending to walk away from that statement.

Chairman LEVIN. So, you think he intends to walk away from——

Dr. PERRY. I think he intends to walk away, but I'd like him to be more explicit in the conditionality.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Do you believe, Ambassador Ross, that that statement contributes to the kind of pressure which you've described as being necessary?

Ambassador ROSS. I do not.

Chairman LEVIN. All right.

Now, in terms of consequences, the President has said that, "The consequences of failure are that extremists would grow in strength, gain new recruits, they'd be in a better position to topple moderate governments, create chaos in the region, and use oil revenues to fund their ambitions. Iran would be emboldened in its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Our enemies would have a safe haven from which to plan and launch attacks on the American people." That's the description. Those are the consequences of failure. Do you agree, Dr. Perry, that our goal should be to maximize the chances of success in Iraq?

Dr. PERRY. I agree with that, but I think we need some discussion about what "success" means.

Chairman LEVIN. But, however you define "success," do you agree that that should be our goal in Iraq and that the plan that

Digitized by Google Original from PENN STATE

PENN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

A000063502961

Digitized by Google

Original from
PENN STATE