Yes, sir, Senator. When I went before the Iraq

Study Group, I prefaced my remarks by saying I think I'll

give a rather--I'm going to be giving a rather somber

assessment of the situation in Iraq. But before I do that, I

said, let me tell you. If we leave under the current

circumstances, everything gets worse. And . . .

Three very quick areas. More Iraqis die from the

disorder inside Iraq. Iraq becomes a safe haven, perhaps more

dangerous than the one Al Qaida had in Afghanistan. And

finally, the conflict in Iraq bleeds over into the

neighborhood and threatens serious regional instability.

The immediate threat comes from providing Al Qaida

that which they are attempting to seek in several locations

right now, be it Somalia, the tribal area of Pakistan or

Anbar province--a safe haven to rival that which they had in

Afghanistan.