

Text 2

LEHRER: All right Let's go another subject Lead question, two minutes to you, senator McCain Much has been said about the lessons of Vietnam What do you see as the lessons of Iraq?

MCCAIN: I think the lessons of Iraq are very clear that you cannot have a failed strategy that will then cause you to nearly lose a conflict Our initial military success, we went in to Baghdad and everybody celebrated And then the war was very badly mishandled I went to Iraq in 2003 and came back and said, we've got to change this strategy This strategy requires additional troops, it requires a fundamental change in strategy and I fought for it And finally, we came up with a great general and a strategy that has succeeded This strategy has succeeded And we are winning in Iraq And we will come home with victory and with honor And that withdrawal is the result of every counterinsurgency that succeeds that we will see a stable ally in the region and a fledgling democracy MCCAIN: And I want to tell you that now that we will succeed and our troops will come home, and not in defeat, The consequences of defeat would have been increased Iranian influence It would have been increase in sectarian violence It would have been a wider war, which the United States of America might have had to come back So there was a lot at stake there And thanks to this great general, David Petraeus, and the troops who serve under him, they have succeeded And we are winning in Iraq, and we will come home And we will come home as we have when we have won other wars and not in defeat

LEHRER: Two minutes, how you see the lessons of Iraq, Senator Obama?

OBAMA: Well, this is an area where Senator McCain and I have a fundamental difference because I think the first question is whether we should have gone into the war in the first place Now six years ago, I stood up and opposed this war at a time when it was politically risky to do so because I said that not only did we not know how much it was going to cost, what our exit strategy might be, how it would affect our relationshi We hadn't caught bin Laden We hadn't put al Qaeda to rest, and as a consequence, I thought that it was going to be a distraction Now Senator McCain and President Bush had a very different judgment And I wish I had been wrong for the sake of the country and they had been right, but that's not the case We've spent over \$600 billion so far, soon to be \$1 trillion We have lost over 4,000 lives We have seen 30,000 wounded, and most importantly, from a strategic national security perspective, al Qaeda is resurgent, stronger now than at any time since 2001 We took our eye off the ball And not to mention that we are still spending \$10 billion a month, when they have a \$79 billion surplus, at a time when we are in great distress here at home, and we just talked about the fact that our budget is way overstretched and we are borrowing money from overseas to try to finance just some of the basic functions of our government and I will not, as president, in order to keep the American people safe So I think the lesson to be drawn is that we should never hesitate to use military force, But we have to use our military wisely And we did not use our military wisely in Iraq

LEHRER: Do you agree with that, the lesson of Iraq?

MCCAIN: The next president of the United States is not going to have to address the issue as to whether we went into Iraq or not The next president of the United States is going to have to decide how we leave, when we leave, and what we leave behind That's the decision of the next president of the United States Senator Obama said the surge could not work, said

it would increase sectarian violence, said it was doomed to failure Recently on a television program, he said it exceed our wildest expectations But yet, after conceding that, he still says that he would oppose the surge if he had to decide that again today Incredibly, incredibly Senator Obama didn't go to Iraq for 900 days and never

LEHRER: Well, let's go at some of these things

MCCAIN: Senator Obama is the chairperson of a committee that oversights NATO that's in Afghanistan To this day, he has never had a hearing

LEHRER: What about that point?

MCCAIN: I mean, it's remarkable

LEHRER: All right What about that point? He raised a whole bunch of them

OBAMA: Which point?