Ken Bacon’s remarks focused on the need for more information from the Bush administration about post-conflict reconstruction plans following a potential war in Iraq. Mr. Bacon explained that while the outcome of this war is not in any doubt, the real challenge will be in the post-conflict period. Some of these challenges include the issues of displaced people, food availability, and the rebuilding of Iraq’s infrastructure. The most important challenge in the post-conflict period will be rebuilding Iraq as a stable country moving toward democracy.

The U.S. Administration is publicly discussing military plans, but we see very little detail being discussed regarding post-war reconstruction. Mr. Bacon argued that there are many possible reasons for this lack of discussion. First, he explained that while the administration has stated its goals correctly, knowing what to do is more difficult given all of the unknown questions that will accompany a war. Plans are likely to change significantly after we know how long the war will last, the number of casualties, and the extent of damage done to Iraq’s infrastructure. Second, reconstruction plans may be incomplete. Third, lack of discussion may be due to confusion surrounding the role of the United Nations (UN), both during the conflict and in the post-conflict period.

Mr. Bacon stated that preparations by the UN are far from complete and far from adequate. The UN is typically one of the first responders to a disaster, and as it is one of the few groups operating in Iraq, it is currently playing a very important role in the country. Iraq has almost no humanitarian infrastructure and the UN has appealed for funding to meet these needs and prepare for potential conflict in Iraq. While it is impossible to tell how many people will be displaced as a result of the conflict, it is estimated that there will be 3-3.5 million internally displaced people and refugees in Iraq. These people will move mainly into Iran and Turkey, although both countries have stated that they may close their borders to Iraqi refugees. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) can care for 600,000 people, but only if they cross into Iran, and they have only received enough resources to care for 200,000 people - one-third of the preparation needed. There is currently not enough food to handle a break in the food pipeline. 16 million Iraqis depend on the Oil for Food Program and The World Food Program is warning of consequences from starvation. Rations have been distributed to the Iraqi people to last through July but these rations are nutritionally inadequate and many people have already traded or sold their rations. Medical relief agencies are also under-prepared. Iraq has less than 10,000 doctors within its borders. There will be a huge need for medical assistance from the military and from relief organizations both during and after the conflict, but these preparations have not been made.

Mr. Bacon argued that there is no reason why humanitarian organizations cannot be fully funded. Lack of funding impacts the ability of these organizations to meet their humanitarian goals. The crisis in Iraq is predictable and requires advanced preparation. It does not necessitate
the rapid response time that is often required of the UN in conflict situations. Mr. Bacon concluded that there is still time to prepare for post-conflict reconstruction, but there is a need for more progress and better explanations from the Bush administration.

Patrick Clawson argued that the U.S. administration has a clear, complete, and adequate plan for the post-conflict period in Iraq. Seventeen working groups within the government have been focusing on it. However, Dr. Clawson argued that we have to stay flexible regarding this plan because we don’t know exactly what will happen in Iraq and therefore we shouldn’t commit to one option before we know the extent of the destruction.

Dr. Clawson explained that agreement exists within the Bush administration for a military governor to administer the country during the period of stabilization immediately following a war in Iraq. But he emphasized that there is a strong Iraqi pride that must be addressed in planning for the post-conflict situation. The Iraqi people want to run the operation themselves as much as possible, without excessive dependence on the international community. It is therefore not clear how much of a role there will be for international relief organizations.

Dr. Clawson argued that if there is a war in Iraq, the situation will be very different from what happened in Iraq in 1991. In comparison to post-conflict Iraq in 1991, the country is in a much better position to rebuild. Iraq had been under sanctions for seven months in 1991 and there was no prior stockpiling of food for Iraqi citizens. In the current situation, the U.S. will not target infrastructure, and there will be no long air campaign, which delayed supplies in 1991. The U.S. forces are prepared to deliver humanitarian supplies to occupied areas, and troops on the ground will be able to help prevent a power vacuum. We also will not see significant Kurdish and Shi’a uprisings such as the ones that took place in 1991. In addition, the Iraqis now have experience running a food rationing system due to the Oil for Food program, and they have distributed adequate rations to the Iraqi population to last through July. They operate their own humanitarian infrastructure, and they do not necessarily want assistance from the UN or other non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Dr. Clawson stated that the UN oil-for-food activities in Iraq are well funded, delivering to Iraqis $25 billion in supplies over the last five years. The UN’s large program in Iraq has $10 billion worth of supplies in the delivery pipeline, including food, drugs and a wide range of goods for development, from housing to educational supplies. He is concerned that the U.S. aid plans are if anything overly large. Dr. Clawson suggested that Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART) and the contracts being awarded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) may be larger than necessary, if the oil for food program continues to function.

The U.S. government, UN agencies, and regional states will take the principle roles in reconstruction efforts. Dr. Clawson explained that the role of non-governmental organizations in this process will be unclear. Southern Iraq will be under military occupation with no NGOs on the ground. There is a general distrust of NGOs in the northern Kurdish areas that is felt by the Turks as well. In the east, Iran is already working to deal with refugees. The one area that will
probably welcome outside involvement from NGOs is in Jordan and the west. Again, Dr. Clawson emphasized that it is unclear the Iraqis wants NGOs involved.

There is broad consensus from the Bush administration in favor of international involvement in the post-conflict period. The Defense Department is committed to an international role. There is an understanding that an international civil administration will run Iraq for a period of time. Dr. Clawson argued that if this does not happen, we run the risk of creating democratic institutions that lack any democratic content. Democracy will need to be installed gradually, starting with elections at the regional level.

Dr. Clawson concluded that we need to decide how to defuse authority in Iraq to avoid centralized rule before handing things over to a new Iraqi government. There is a need for checks and balances at the center of the Iraqi political system in both the central government and in the provinces, and we must avoid installing a new leader who wields the power that Saddam Hussein currently controls.

Bathsheba Crocker stated that while the administration has recently been doing more planning for post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Iraq, we still do not know enough. In the January 2003 CSIS report, *A Wiser Peace: An Action Strategy for Post-Conflict Iraq*, Ms. Crocker and her co-authors argue that while we have seen much buildup and planning for a war in Iraq, we have seen very little planning for post-conflict reconstruction. *A Wiser Peace* provides ten recommendations to help the Bush administration be better prepared for this reconstruction. Ms. Crocker focused her remarks on four of these recommendations: governance, security, justice, and economic and social well being in post-conflict Iraq.

Ms. Crocker argued that an international civilian administration, not a U.S. military administration, will be needed in Iraq. There is still confusion regarding the composition and leadership of this administration. There is also a disconnect between the UN and the Bush administration regarding the UN’s role in administering Iraq and participating in reconstruction efforts. The UN is currently planning for reconstruction, which could include a UN Assistance Mission. The U.S. would like to see UN involvement in the post-conflict period but it will be difficult without the support of the Security Council. There is broad agreement that U.S. military involvement will not be ideal for the long-term, but there needs to be more planning regarding a civilian administration.

Troops will be required to maintain security and stability in post-conflict Iraq, but it is not clear how many troops will be needed following a potential war. This confusion is troubling, particularly given expectations of inter-ethnic violence and “score settling” in the aftermath of war and concerns that there might be a political vacuum in Iraq. Ms. Crocker argued that it will be important to have both combat forces and stabilization forces in Iraq in order to separate the military operation from humanitarian work. She questioned whether the Bush administration has planned for these security issues.

The Bush administration will also have to consider the fate of the Iraqi army and the Republican Guard. Iraq will still need a defensive army but how will soldiers be integrated into
this army? Will all troops be transferred to the new army and if not, will they simply be sent home? How will they be reintegrated into society? If we do not have a concrete plan to deal with the Iraqi army, they will join the many displaced people in the region.

Ms. Crocker argued that the Bush administration has not been forthcoming in their discussion of funding, resources and debt reconstruction in the post-conflict period. A large amount of money will be needed immediately. There is the possibility that oil revenues will be used to finance the reconstruction of Iraq’s infrastructure and while this may be possible in the long-term, it will not satisfy short-term needs. In addition, Iraq’s enormous foreign debt must be addressed. Development will require a moratorium on repayment of these debts until immediate infrastructure and humanitarian work can be done. The U.S. can help by encouraging other countries to write-off Iraqi debt.

Ms. Crocker concluded that if the U.S. goes to war without UN support, it will be difficult to gain assistance from both the UN and the EU in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Japan will offer help in any case but Security Council support is essential not only for the conflict itself, but also for the post-conflict period.