For the first 20 years of the Cold War, US foreign policy usually had bi-partisan support, and politics was said to stop at the water’s edge. During the Vietnam War, however, the foreign policy consensus largely disappeared, and the last eight years were a time of acute polarization. Now, with a new Administration coming to power, there has been much talk about a possible rebirth of bi-partisanship. The November Conflict Prevention and Resolution Forum featured Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE) and Washington Post columnist Jim Hoagland who discussed what it would take to cultivate a climate of cooperation. Will President Obama be able – or even choose – to engage support from across the political and ideological divides? Will healing be possible?

SUMMARY

John Marks
Welcome to the Conflict Prevention and Resolution Forum. We have two special guests this morning, Senator Chuck Hagel, a two-term Republican Senator from Nebraska, who has chosen, for the best of reasons, not to run for re-election and who is a wonderful independent voice on foreign policy issues. Jim Hoagland is a Post columnist who has won two Pulitzer Prizes and has an extraordinary record of achievement as a correspondent. The idea here is to explore a bit in advance the question of a bipartisan foreign policy. This is something that the country seemed to enjoy in major ways during the Cold War period. We probably lost a lot in Vietnam, and now the current atmosphere is leading back to a bipartisan foreign policy. Senator Hagel is a Republican who is being talked about for a particular seat in this new administration, as someone who is ideally qualified to talk about what it will take, what will happen, what needs to happen, what are the obstacles and the like.

Chuck Hagel
John, thank you, and to my friend Jim Hoagland, thank you for your continued contributions to sanity, intense thinking, and writing, and absorbing. We have benefited many years from your observations and we appreciate it very much. Thanks, John, to you and to the institutions and schools who are organizing this dialogue. I don’t know if there is a higher objective or responsibility that our educational institutions have than to first develop the capacity for our next generation of world citizens to actually think, which is a given, but not always a practiced focus. These kinds of dialogues and opportunities to exchange ideas are important, as well as other opportunities especially for staff members. My staff members have benefited from engaging others. Thank you for what you and the other institutions continue to do for this effort.

You all know Congress is back in session, which is not only perplexing but also dangerous. We are going to attempt to address some of the most pressing issues in the world today, and probably none more pressing than the global financial crisis. At three PM today, the Banking Committee, which I am member of, will hold a hearing on this issue. The House Committee is holding a hearing this morning where Secretary Paulsen will appear. We probably will finish whatever we can accomplish in this lame duck session within the next couple of days and then we will all retreat. Some of us will actually escape and we will leave it up to the next administration, the next president, and the next Congress as they start to organize and restructure and come back to session in January and take a fresh look at these great challenges. There is some talk in Washington today about President-elect Obama in serious negotiations with Warren Buffet—for Warren Buffet to buy the entire US Government. I applaud that, I am seeking the job of Buffet’s driver, and he is the only one who has money, so we think highly of Warren. We take great pride because he is a corn husker.

Let me focus on a couple of thoughts concerning the topic at hand, and then we will open up and talk about whatever you want to talk about. Then the real pro, Jim Hoagland, will appear and elucidate and educate.

We are living through one of these great moments of historical transformation. I don’t know if there has ever been a time in the world when we have seen and experienced such an economic geopolitical diffusion in the world as we are living through today. It is being driven by many forces, and certainly energy is at the core of a great deal of this. But there are other influences effecting what is occurring in the world today. It is one of these historic confluences that come about once every one hundred year, maybe twice in one hundred years. I think the last time we saw such a time was after World War II, when we, the United States, and our allies reordered, restructured, redefined, and rebuilt the world order, which we did in the 1950s.

And we built that on the basis of a very simple principle, and it is much about what you are diving into this morning, and what John and his associates have been involved in—it was a consensus of common interest. A consensus based upon the common interest of all people. During that ten year period after World War II, we saw the establishment of every major global institution that has been at the forefront of building consensus for the past sixty years—coalitions of common interest, such as: general agreements on tariffs and trade, which is now the WTO; United Nations; NATO; Brettonwoods brought the IMF and the World Bank; dozens of multilateral banks and institutions were built. They were also built on the premise of defining relationships, defining interests based on those common interests. They were not built on defining our differences. We had plenty of differences. We have differences today. The United States has differences with some of our strongest allies and oldest allies. But if you do define your relationships and your policies based on differences, you will never be able to build a platform that will allow you to not only deal with those differences, but to resolve those differences, and come to some clear understanding of what the objective is. Because you will continue to back yourself up into cul-de-sacs that you cannot get out of. And of course there is only one retreat from that and that is some type of conflict; there is only one alternative and that is conflict.

And so when we talk about a consensus to govern and a bipartisan consensus, it is critical to any functioning government’s ability to solve its problems. I think we start with a premise that no policy, no political party, no one individual has all the answers, all the time. No, maybe there is such a person, maybe President-elect Obama will prove that wrong. I doubt it, not because he is not smart or he is not a good person, he is smart and a good person. It is the reflection of a society that is represented in political coalitions. Politics represents society. It reflects the interests of society. So we are dealing with this great confluence that I spoke of today in the world, a confluence of challenges, of
issues, of dynamics, of forces that we have never ever seen before. You step back a moment and think of the world stage, think of the world leaders, that entire universe of world leaders is being changed at this moment. This year there is a wave of new political leaders who will come into power next year. I was in Latin America six weeks ago. We are going to have a new president of Brazil next year, a new president of Colombia next year, and a new president of Panama next year. All three very, very significant countries for our interests, for Latin America’s interests, and for world interests. Three weeks ago I was in China, Japan, and South Korea. Japan has a new leader, Korea has a new leader, Russia has a new leader, China will have new leaders next year. Across the board, we have new leaders, the Europeans will have new leaders, Sarkozy is new, Merkel becomes the senior leader. At the time, we have all of these global challenges and common interests coming into play, you also have a whole new universe of leaders.

Every challenge that we face today, every foreign policy challenge that the next president and the next Congress will have to face will be a global challenge. And when you inventory those global challenges, none are unique to America. You start with, I guess number one on everybody’s list, terrorism. That certainly is not unique to America and to our interests. We were one of the last countries touched by terrorism on September 11th, 2001. Most of our allies and nations in the world had been dealing with terrorism for many, many years. Extremism, environment, energy, pandemic health (specifically AIDS), endemic poverty, and certainly the most riveting, the most complete, the most immediate world crisis is the global financial crisis. There is not a corner of the world, not a town in the world that is not affected by this global financial crisis today. And you could take another tier of those issues to inventory global challenges. How about the most insidious of all challenges—despair. Because when man is without dignity, when man is chained to a cycle of despair and hopelessness (and that does not necessarily connect to terrorism or extremism), not much good will come out of that.

People are desperate today, and when you look at the universe of people, the numbers of people in this category—almost 6.5 billion people are on the face of the earth today. We are all a part of and sharing today a global community underpinned by a global economy. We cannot go back to the good ole 1950s when we drove the long-fend automobiles and the poor people were kind of cute and we liked to take our trips and say, “Oh, isn’t that interesting.” Those days are over and we will be dealing with that, that reality. That quality of life and standard of living represents the stability and security for all of us. When you examine 6.5 billion people, all global citizens who are sharing this world with us, about five billion live in developing nations and about a third of the 6.5 billion live in poverty, some in abject poverty. It is interesting when you look at where those big pockets of poverty are and the areas that represent the most troubling effects and dynamics, not only for our country, but for stability in the world, they are the areas that were left behind in the last sixty years. These are the areas of the world that did not benefit from the great strides of mankind. We should not minimize that in the framing of world affairs as we work our way into a bipartisan consensus to govern and bipartisan foreign policy. A tremendous amount was done for mankind in the last sixty years and it was accomplished through these mutual interests, these coalitions of common interests, these alliances, these structures.

I would offer that the most significant achievement of the last sixty years is that there has not been a World War III. When Eisenhower left office in 1960, when Truman left office, what John Kennedy was concerned about, what every president in those early days worried about was a World War III. They were concerned about another war and the consequences of another war, but more importantly they were living in a world where there was little margin of error. Nuclear weapons had changed that. And on that inventory list of great challenges, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction certainly has to be there. So how are we going to deal with that issue alone with a whole new dynamic of 21st century challenges when you don’t have the same kind of boundaries and shapes that you can clearly and transparently identify as an enemy or as an adversary? During the good old days of when we had the Soviet Union, it was pretty clear. I don’t think that we want to go back to those days and chain all of those people back up that were ruled over by Soviet domination in Central Asia, in Eastern Europe, and in Russia itself. But there was some clarity at least to who the adversary was. We, of course, formed NATO as much on the Soviet threat as any one reason.

Now these coalitions have been so effective and have done so much for the world, but coalitions can only do so much, institutions can only do so much—all are imperfect, all flawed, all with problems. But now think for a moment if we did not have those institutions. Do you believe that the world would be more peaceful today? Do you think that we would have accomplished more if we did not have a World Bank, an IMF, and a United Nations? I don’t think so. I think that
we probably would have blown up ourselves a long time ago if we had not had those. Now institutions can only do so much, but what these institutions did in the last sixty years plays right into bipartisan consensus on foreign policy or any policy. They built structures, they represent boundaries, they represent standards of behavior that nations must adhere to if they want to be a part of the structure, of world trade, and if they want to participate. Now do some nations cheat? Yes; do some nations lie? Yes; but so do people. People are what institutions are. But institutions continue to crowd people in so that there is some accountability, so there is some respectability, and so there is some responsibility in how nation-states behave.

Now the other dynamic that we are going to be looking at and what we will be forced in the next administration, the next Congress, and the new set of world leaders is the fact that these institutions have been effective based on 20th century challenges, based on what the world looked like fifty years ago. This is a whole new world. Now instead of just discarding those institutions or saying they are outdated, we should be recalibrating them, we should be strengthening them, we should be renewing them, we should be revitalizing them, and make them relevant to the 21st century. I think these institutions will be more important today and in the next twenty-five years than they were in the past fifty years. I really believe that, if for no other reason than there are more people on the face of the earth. The world is more complicated, more totally interconnected, and more combustible. It is going to require this dialogue, this engagement. Engagement is not appeasement; diplomacy is not threat. For some reason, too many people in this town and in this country have somehow disconnected all of that.

We are going to have to find our way back to some common ground of clear thinking. That consensus of governance this new President, his administration, and this new Congress are going to have to find to fix this country. I think that is what this election was about. Eighty-seven percent of the American people in a poll said that this country was going in the wrong direction. Now what does that tell you? That tells you everything; you don’t need to know another number. So, the election was pretty predictable at least in my opinion. The American people don’t like what is going on. They have lost confidence in their leaders, in the government, in the policies, in political parties; and they want us to start doing what leaders are expected to do—address the problems, build some consensus to get along. There will be differences; there should be. There should be strong debate, of course, but in the end we cannot hold ourselves to this raw political paralysis that has gripped this country, and taken this country down the wrong road, and put us in a dangerous spot over the last few years. We are all to blame; I have to take my share of responsibility, anyone who has been here. Both parties are to blame. We have a chance to start over. That is why the topic this morning is so important, John—a bipartisan consensus to bring this country together.

No president can lead without that, without some consensus to build a governing coalition around a purpose. That is what has happened in the world, people do not trust our purpose. Great nations have power, but great nations have to use their power judiciously, carefully, and for some noble purpose that at least most people in the world have confidence in. We made our mistakes, and we will make more mistakes, we are imperfect; but I don’t know if there has ever been a country that has done so much for the world as America has done. We mainly, although not always, used our power judiciously, carefully. We need to bring the world back together and I think that the world wants to follow an America that is not bumbling and stumbling. They want us to lead, but not to impose, dictate, invade, and occupy. They want us to bring the world together on some consensus. We don’t have any choice. You look at that the items on that inventory of global challenges, whether it is energy, environment, health, financial issues, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, we are all now is this together. America must break this fog that we have been in to form a consensus and that must start with a bipartisan foreign policy.

I believe that President-elect Obama believes that, and I believe that he will attempt to do that. I believe that the Congress is in a position to be a part of this and to lead with President-elect Obama. He is going to have to reach to the Congress, both parties, and I believe that he will. If he does that, then the rest of the world will develop a sense of confidence in our leadership and they will develop a sense of confidence in our purpose. Then, I think over the next four years we can see some outstanding achievements as big as the problems are, as deep as they are, as wide as they are. With this great inventory of challenges, bigger and deeper than any president has faced since Franklin Roosevelt’s first term, and perhaps worse because the challenges are global and deeper and wider in many ways, comes great opportunities and an
environment of possibilities, and an atmosphere of great dynamics that rarely come along. There is a realm of possibilities that was not available ten years ago or five years ago and that is the time in which we live. So your focus this morning, John, is as important as any one thing.

One last point I’d like to make: occasionally people will say, “Well, that’s foreign policy,” or “That’s national security,” or “That’s different than dealing with our national entitlement problems and our deficits and our infrastructures.” No, it’s not. You know why it’s not? Because how do we finance all of these programs? We are trading in the world and we have revenues coming in. We have a world that has some semblance of stability and security that affects everything we do in this country starting with tax revenues and where we put our budget. You know what the numbers are on how much we spend? Just to give you a sense of this, our federal budget the last fiscal year was a little over three trillion dollars. Of that three trillion dollars, the President and the Congress had less than a trillion dollars for us to decide where that money would go. Where did the other two trillion go? It went to what is already obligated out there. For example, interest on our national debt. We spent more on interest for the national debt last year than on Medicaid, both the state and federal contributions to it. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans’ Pensions, Military Pensions, other obligations were already gone, so the discretionary part of a budget becomes smaller and smaller each year because the obligated part becomes bigger and bigger. Now of the 960 billion dollars that the President and Congress had last year to decide where it went, the Defense Department and Homeland Security took about 560 billion dollars of that. Now I don’t think any American would say, “Let’s cut our defense budget or do less for security.” That is not the option. It does give you some understanding of what the numbers are and where they are going. When you look at the infrastructural needs and all other needs of this country, we are so far behind in financing.

We are going to have to reshape, reframe and that is going to have to require a public-private partnership that this country has never seen before. We are going to have to think in totally different ways. I mention these numbers because it gives you some idea of how critical all of this is. If we could rely on our alliances more, our friends more, and our partners more for security and all that we have to pay for. We need to recognize that we are in two wars. We are spending 10 to 12 billion dollars a month in Iraq that will end at some point, if for no other reason than the status of forces agreement that will have US forces out of Iraq by December 2011. Afghanistan is in worse shape, by far worse than any of the other seven years that we have been there. You start to see how this connects and that is the main point here.

It does connect, it is all interrelated, and it is woven into one fabric. We cannot talk about addressing our so-called domestic issues, such as entitlement reform, and all of the other issues that are important for our future and research and education for our children so that they can compete in a very competitive 21st century, by not paying attention as to what is going around the rest of the world. Foreign policy is the housing and the framework of America’s interest as to what is going on in the world. And then you get into energy, I think that fits in right there, and into environment, I think that fits in right there—that is all foreign policy. If you do not build a workable, relevant, bipartisan foreign policy, then it will wash over into every area of governance and responsibility that we have for the future of this country. I think that it is doable; I think that it can be done. I have great hope that that is what will happen and that it will fulfill the expectations that people have in this country for, not only our capacity, but also our willingness to do that. A country is as good as its people. Democracies, constitutions, institutions are important because they allow individuals the structures, the frameworks, the abilities to do great things; but it is the individual, it is the person. Institutions don’t do great things; people do great things. People lead. People figure it out. People make a difference.

John Marks
Thank you, Senator. That was more than we expected and we are very happy. For those of you who would like to hear more about Senator Hagel’s views, he has got a new book out: America: Our Next Chapter. You have heard a small part of what he is thinking about. I would just like to underline something you said, because you do not hear this too often in Washington. Successful policies and successful institutions are based upon common interests and not differences. We tend to focus on our differences. You, Senator Hagel, as a member of the Republican Party in the Senate know that there has been an extraordinary amount of wrangling over foreign policy issues. What you said is that we need a period of negotiation and negotiation should not be seen as appeasement. There are probably many in your caucus who would not
agree with you. How can President-elect Obama have a foreign policy that includes Republicans and start to build that consensus?

Chuck Hagel
Well I think, as in all things in life, it must start with some consistency of relevancy. It has to be relevant to whatever the issue is, whatever the challenge is, whoever the Congressman or constituent. You start with a relevancy to the common interest of bipartisanship to fix the problem. That has to be communicated; it has to be framed in that way. Now as I said earlier, there will never be a situation where everyone comes together and says, “Well that all makes sense. We’ll join hands. Why did we not think of that before?” We will all tiptoe out of this mess we are in and one hundred senators are all on the same track. It does not work that way, nor should it. But what you can do, and what Obama must do, and what will happen I believe, is that you build a framework of common interests of where we share the objective. For example, I don’t think that there is any question about: Do we think we need to deal with the Taliban? Do we think Afghanistan is in trouble? Is Pakistan probably the most dangerous country on earth? I think that there is pretty significant agreement on those points. Then, you work your way into how best should we do this, what has not worked? I, for example, would submit that the Middle East is more dangerous than it has ever been. I think that our situation in Iran is worse off than any time since 1979 when they took our hostages and took over the embassy, and probably more so today because of the nuclear piece. Iran’s tentacles are wrapped around every important point and interest we have in the Middle East--Hezbollah, Lebanon, Israel. Iran borders both countries in which we are at war. I use Iran as an example. How do we think we are going to do any of this without engaging Iran in some way to find some common purpose? It has nothing to do with agreeing with Iran or excusing Iran or saying, “Well, maybe they are not that bad.”

Diplomacy is about engagement. Ronald Reagan did that. I do not know of a more virulent Anti-Communist than Ronald Reagan (maybe Richard Nixon) but he actually sat down with Gorbachev. They engaged. There is a reason why I bring this up in answer to your question. Yes, there have been some differences, and pretty significant differences in my party regarding this matter, but when you ask the question, “But has it worked?” Not many people would say that it worked. By what measurement has it worked over the last few years? We are in worse shape in Afghanistan than we have been in seven years, by any metric: causalities, money, people, we are breaking NATO over it, corruption, drugs, what is happening in Pakistan, so on and so on. You have to have a relevancy of workability in order to try something that works. And the other part if this is, John, is you have to bring the other guy in, you have to bring the Republicans in whoever will say, “I don’t think that will work.” Introduce them into the conversation and ask, “Well, Senator, what do you think will work?” By the way, I have seen very little of that in the past eight years. We are all far better off in relation to the question you asked, if we turn more of our transmitters off and more of our receivers on.

Stephen Damous
I would like to point out something and then ask something. I think values are a little deeper than interests. I am wondering how do we get a constructive bipartisan foreign policy in the United States when about a third of our citizens, which is about 100 million people, are programmed or propaganda to knee jerk hostility to international law, international institutions, and the whole multilateral arena, to the point of the UN being considered the Anti-Christ, and to the point of rejection of human rights treaties? How do we re-educate 100 million people or get a constructive bipartisan foreign policy without re-educating that large portion of the American public?

Chuck Hagel
Your point cuts right to the realities of what we have and I think your points are important. I would not disregard, disagree or dismiss the seriousness of what you have noted. I would answer your question this way. I think that it is a combination and accumulation of efforts to help educate, to help inform. These forums and the institutions of sponsorship represent what has been going on for a number of years to educate and to inform and are a big part of this. Now we are never going to get everyone on this. There is always going to be the disagreeing thirty percent, whether it be the left or the right. Remember that we had a political party in the 1840s very proud to call itself the Know-Nothings. There is always going to be a Know-Nothing element of democracies. That is their choice. Certainly they have the freedom to make that judgment. If they think roll up their britches and to hell with everyone else, they have that right. But in a world that is so
vitaly interconnected, it does help to break down and produce some results, if we reach out and try to understand, “So, what scares you so much about the French?”

The French are one of those things. I will give you a good example. My family was at the movies the other night and we went to a theater out in Fairfax called Cinema Arts. It was started by an interesting group of former CIA guys. Their idea was that they would have a movie theater and bring educational and foreign movies. So a couple of the guys who own the theater come to the movie screening during the previews and they have a routine in which they ask audience members, “Should we get this movie? What do you think?” There was one movie that they were previewing is a French movie about two sisters. It has gotten good reviews, and it is subtitled. So when one of the owners asks, “So what do you do think about this movie?” Some guy in the back says, “Its French, boo!” And everyone else starts booing. This is what happens when senators have no answers. They start saying things that make no sense.

I think that it is more than anything else—education, information and trying to break these things down. And again I go back to, you are right—values are very much the essence, the foundation, and the anchor of what the common interest is predicated on, I recognize that. But those are also dynamics that have led us to dangerous waters. “Muslims don’t share our values; Muslims are dangerous people.” Why have a lot of people said that? Because we are all intimidated by what we don’t know. Some of us are a little afraid of that. Some might think, “I don’t know. They talk different and get down on mats. It’s strange. It’s a cult. That is what it is.” We are always a little intimidated by that and we need to break that down. I think that it is just a process that you keep working at. Supposedly members of Congress are better informed, supposedly better educated, and supposedly more in tune with a greater world, and so you try to work on them. God knows I would never question the quality of our elected officials. It’s why I am so popular. I think it’s just a combination of those things, but I recognize what you said is out there and it is the greatest enemy to breaking through all of this. And by the way, we are not the only country that has this. The Russians have it, every country out there has its Know-Nothing party. And of course we are much educated by great entertainers like Rush Limbaugh and other who shine a light. I wish those people would run for office. They have so much to contribute, and so much leadership, and they have an answer for everything. Rush would have been overwhelming elected if he had run for anything. People like that, they love to just rip everyone else down and try to make fools of everybody and they always have the answer. I guess that is enough.

Ray Shonholtz
I am interested in your thoughts about the development of a policy voice for development in Washington. Whether it be having more of a seat at the policy table of either Cabinet or Department meetings or within the NSC. I would like to hear your thoughts on that. Also, the idea of reconstruction or reorganization of foreign assistance through USAID. As you know, there are a lot of critiques about that agency. Also, your thoughts about building a bipartisan support for either of those points.

Chuck Hagel
I think that the next Secretary of State and the next President are really going to have to pay some attention to what you are talking about. Interestingly enough, Bob Gates has been giving the best speeches on this in the last year. I think he really understands this better than anyone at the White House or anywhere else in government. In my opinion, he is exactly right. We are going to have to build a new capacity into USAID. We have stripped USAID essentially. We will have to put more resources in there, put some more focus in there. What happened there as much as anything is that Rumsfeld and Defense took everything. They said, “The rest of you boys just stand back. We know how to do this.” Well, after almost six years that has proven not to be quite right. Remember General Frank said that we would be out of there by the end of the year, by the end of 2003? The Pentagon did not know how to do any of this. Now it is not the troops’ fault, it was the political leadership that got them into that. We put our poor troops into these situations and they perform spectacularly well. But we are going to have to rebuild, restructure, reauthorize and re-resource those institutions that have the historical, cultural knowledge and ability to do those things that are critical to building any kind of an infrastructure and any kind of a capacity for a nation to develop its own sovereignty.

Development is everything. We are learning that again and again. One problem that we have in Afghanistan is that there are no institutions of governance. It's tribal; they never have had any institutions to govern. Then you work the tribal
process, the corruption, the drugs and all the rest. You can hardly get your arms around that. The Marines can’t fix that problem, paratroopers can’t, Special Forces can’t, and Army can’t. You do what you can, but you have to get underneath this. Iraq was better. We finally got to a point in Iraq where we started to get some of this. You saw the papers this morning: thirteen billion dollars in fraud, waste, and abuse and that is just the beginning of that fiasco. Another thing that we should be careful about is that we cannot keep building new agencies. Take two or three agencies that were initially built and funded for this kind of thing. Can it be made better? Of course no agency is perfect. We all make mistakes. We have so much confused our internal structures because we have to do so much reorganization and we keep ripping things up and moving boxes around and somehow we think that that will make things better. I have always believed that simpler is better. Fund those organizations and institutions that have a clear mandate and objective, and do it the right way, coordinate it the right way. The next administration is going to have to pay a lot of attention in that area.

**Anthony Scerbo**

In the past, the United States has always leveraged its influence abroad with coupling economic assistance to shared political goals and ideals. Hypothetically, assuming that there was an emerging global power that engaged multi-laterally, bi-laterally, economically without necessarily putting any preconditions on its assistance in countries, how does the US make sure, or ensure, that its continued influence is coupled with political and shared future interests and does not delve into a competition for resources and a bartering of our values?

**Chuck Hagel**

For example, the Millennium Challenge program that was set-up during Secretary Powell’s time at the State Department. It was a program built to address exactly what you are talking about. When we are talking about assistance programs – where you invest and why you invest, what are the accountable structures that go with that, and how do you account for how they apply their money, and so on and so on – is always a tough thing. You must also bring with that a certain amount of latitude that gives some range in order to apply those resources as to where they think they can do it best or need it most. One of the effective programs that we have seen in Iraq work is called the Commanders’ Relief Program, which allows commanders’ on the spot to essentially dole out money to local chiefs and tribal leaders and mayors to help them with what makes most sense and is most relevant if you are going to try to win the hearts and minds of people. If you don’t win the hearts and minds of people, as we learned through history and some tough wars, you’ll lose in the end. It does not matter how many troops you put there. That is to do things that are important for the human condition. The human condition will drive every event and will influence outcome as it has through the history of man. The human condition: sewer systems, jobs, education, safety, water, and health care. It goes back to what you were saying about USAID and those development programs.

Now, how do you control that and make sure that it is connected to our interests, accountability? Yes, it has to come with certain strings on it or accountable dynamics. No questions about that. But when we are talking about the kind of dollars we have been talking about, especially in Iraq? This is why the Inspector General just came back with his report again. We never had a structure in Iraq, for example, because the Defense Department did not know how to do that. Even though Rumsfeld and DOD said, “Let us handle that.” They did not know how to handle it; they never had any kind of structure to deal with that. That is not their deal, and not we have all kinds of problems because of that. We took resources out of USAID, we took resources out of everything, and gave it to the Pentagon. This is partly what Bob Gates has been talking about over the last year in these speeches he is giving all over the country. He sounds like the Secretary of State. He understands clearly that you cannot continue to load on his people. DOD cannot have these types of responsibilities when they are not equipped to do it. At some point, you still need to have a warrior in all of that. You cannot have the local sewer contractor and the local mayor; these poor captains are doing everything. Gates is exactly right on that. In one of the speeches he gave recently, he said, “I’ve got more people on an aircraft carrier than represents the entire professional, career Foreign Service.” 5,500 people. There are not 5,500 people in our State Department in the classification of career Foreign Service. Gates said he has more people on an aircraft carrier than the entire State Department has. Well, something is really wrong there when that happens. Gates, to his credit, has been pointing that out. Well, I think that it is all of those things, but you need it.
Everybody is accountable. We have to be accountable. It’s always delicate because you also have the dynamic of "here are these guys coming in, whether it’s America, China, or Russia, dictating how those resources are going to be used." Is it in America’s benefit, or is it in the villagers’ benefit? You have to balance that. It can be in both! Again, that is why you have to have professionals working this, people who are trained and experienced and know how to do it. We all make mistakes. You can take any agency in the government, or the UN, or any corporation, or any institution, and you can just rip the hell out of them. Look at all of the mistakes you are making Johns Hopkins, George Mason, so on and so on. And we have made mistakes in Congress. The rest are mere mortals. These are important parts of what is going to make it happen. Well, again I appreciate very much all of what you do, and you being here this morning, and the institutions that you represent, and the efforts you are making to build a better world. I think that it is possible and I think that we will do it. Thank you.

Jim Hoagland
I will respond to Chuck’s very generous remarks. I just want to very briefly touch on some points about bipartisanship, journalism, and technology. And then engage you in a group discussion. I frequently find that I learn more from questions than from answers, and I suspect that that will be the case this morning.

Asking a journalist to talk about bipartisanship is a little like asking him or her to argue against his or her own interests, because so much of journalism is founded on the attractiveness of conflict, the battles between individuals and parties. The secret here is that readers, while equating bipartisanship with the greatest good, also enjoy and pay attention to stories about conflict. We in journalism have frequently talked about running a contest on what headlines would be most guaranteed to get readers to turn the page or shift the channel. The two winners always are “Worthwhile Canadian Initiative” and “European Union Agricultural Ministers” – guaranteed to drive readers out of the room. So, bipartisanship does fall in this area of being like motherhood.

I thought that it was interesting that Senator Hagel at several points this morning offered a limited defense of bipartisanship. After all, not all bipartisan moves have always had the most splendid outcomes in American history. The authorization of the war in Iraq, for example, was a splendidly bipartisan moment. I think that many of us in the press now feel that we were amiss in not encouraging more debate, more dissent. Whatever your viewpoint is about the invasion itself, I think that it is very clear that there was not sufficient discussion of the different elements.

I thought that another point that came through very clear in Senator Hagel’s remarks was the importance of leadership in establishing a bipartisan tone and some bipartisan substance to foreign policy. Leadership in the sense of rallying others to your viewpoint, or, when necessary, adapting their viewpoint to be effective. Certainly we would have been more effective in our foreign policy over the last eight years if George W. Bush had listened to Chuck Hagel a lot more often. Let’s hope President-elect Obama is an example of the first category—winning over others to your point of view. Examples of going with the other side, when it makes sense of course, include Nixon and China, and Reagan and the Soviet Union. Then, we have the example of Jimmy Carter who went with both views at the same time and in many cases leading to confused outcomes.

Finally, I would say that Senator Hagel was very on target in talking about the importance of national consensus in establishing any bipartisan framework for foreign policy. The great example of bipartisanship in the last sixty to seventy years of course is Arthur Vandenberg, the Senator from Michigan who coined the phrase that politics should stop at the water’s edge, which is as good a definition of bipartisanship as I know. Before he said that and before he was one of the champions of the Truman Doctrine and of Dean Acheson’s foreign policy, Arthur Vandenberg had shown initiative by unilaterally changing from traditional Republican isolationism to internationalism. That was the declaration he made that underlay that period after 1945 of significant bipartisanship. That was then and this is now, Senator Hagel has pointed out.

I just wanted to spend a minute talking about the way in which citizens acquire and use information and the effects it has on their views of a subject like bipartisanship in foreign policy. I don’t intend to offer a complaint as someone from the dinosaur part of the information business, the dead newspapers. Technology is what it is; it will transform societies. The
telegraph and the telephone did that. The internet and blogs will also help transform the way we think about things and the way we get our information about things. But I think that it is important in the context of this particular gathering to note that the intrusiveness and the immediacy of the information flow brought to us by the internet, by 24/7 cable television, by all the modern tweeter and other technological advances, or perhaps non-advances, does affect how we view foreign policy in particular.

We at The Washington Post a few weeks ago changed our practices on the internet in that we now will let viewers who come in to read a Washington Post article link to other websites. For a long time, we did not do that on the theory that we wanted to keep the people in our own community and also confine them to our advertisers, let’s be honest about it. But we have come to understand that you have to survive today, you have to become to a great extent an internet company, certainly an educational company. This is an idea that traditional journalists have resisted for a long time, but I think we are beginning to come around. Now you can link through The Washington Post to Wikipedia. You can find out more about one subject just following these links down this trail than any person in history has been able to amass in a short period of time.

That unfortunately leads to a number of negative consequences I feel. One is you lose the serendipity factor of a newspaper. Frequently people have told me that one of the great values of reading a newspaper is that they find the things they never would have expected, or they never knew they were interested in, because one article is placed beside another. When you lose the serendipity factor, you tend to narrow the focus. You do learn more about one thing, but you learn much less about others. I think we have the option to be the best informed or perhaps the most misinformed generation in history, but we can never plead that we were uninformed. That is why I though the dialogue that happened between Senator Hagel and our questioner was very important about the nature of education versus what I think of as the internet being the home for obsessive compulsives. We in the media have to make adjustments and I think we are. But I think that we have to be very aware, and you as readers and you as citizens have to be very aware of the rise in partisanship and the rise of a certain destructive nature to politics that the internet encourages, that the blogs encourage. The gate keeping function is eliminated because there are not editors that really check facts and who wave the validity and the relevancy and the opinions that are put out and read immediately. We have to work on that. You have to work on that.

Looking forward perhaps a little bit, I was particularly struck by Senator Hagel’s comments one two points that will require all of us to be more bipartisan and for politicians on Capitol Hill to be more bipartisan. One was the fact that all major challenges that we face as a society today are global. We are going to have to work much harder at bipartisanship to deal with other countries in resolving those conflicts. The second point, and it is not one that I have given sufficient thought to but I thought he put it really well, was the nature of the change in the balance between the private and public sectors in the government participating in banks, nationalizing banks, perhaps thinking about doing something similar with the auto industry. We are all going to have to rethink the partisan nature of politics in a situation where the lines are completely blurred between private and public ownership.

We come back to leadership. Yes, the tectonic plates are shifting today as they did in 1945, 1973, and 1989. We are facing the kind of scale of change in those four moments. To try to get some guidance, I went to the Obama-Biden website to look at what they had to say about bipartisanship, and I recommend that exercise to you. They have got four or five or six steps outlined here that really make a lot of sense. President-elect Obama has talked about establishing a consultative group with bipartisan leading members of Congress. The group will meet with the President once a month to review foreign policy priorities and will be consulted in advance of military action. So there is some promise here of addressing this issue in a very forthright way.

I would just end on one point where I think it is vital that a bipartisan approach be constructed. That is an example of President Bush actually having done more for Africa, in terms of providing resources, and in some ways showing a very personal interest – perhaps religious motivated – in Africa than previous Presidents have. I think that it is important for you, all of you, to put that on your list of things to hope for and to work for in terms of bipartisan approaches in foreign policy. John, that is what I had to say and I am happy to take questions now.
John Marks
Thank you for the richness of that and I would like to go back to something you said in the beginning about the nature of the media and conflict. It really seems that for most editors and reporters, conflict seems to be interesting and agreement is boring. I am generalizing which might be said, “When it bleeds, it leads.”

Jim Hoagland
That’s television, John; that’s television.

John Marks
Now one could say that attitude probably isn’t good for the country or the world. In other words, that pulls in the other direction, away from cooperation, away from agreements. In fact Senator Hagel is saying you cannot build institutions or policies that way. You certainly cannot build a foreign policy that way. Yesterday, I was reading my morning paper and I read Howard Kurtz saying in The Post that the press is being much too positive about Obama and that it is time to change. Now we are about three days into this and it is time to change, the honeymoon is over. What can one do to make the world, or this world in Washington, more cooperative when essentially there is a media cheering section which is saying, “No, we do not like that?” Probably, cable news is contributing to this and the like.

Jim Hoagland
[Cable news is] very much contributing to this and many other sins that I can think of. My answer is yes, but. As a journalist, I will confess that it is easier to write a conflict story, partly because you know that the reader is going to read it and remember it. We write stories about agreement and I am struck by how often readers say, “I never saw that,” even if it was on the front page, and even if I can question them and determine that they did read it. It is not the thing that sticks. There is also the point that I touched on earlier, which is there are times when conflict emphasizing is perhaps the right thing to do. Vietnam was that period, as you know so well. As I said, I thought that we were amiss in the build-up to the Iraq War. But it is taken too far, and I would lay a good part of the blame on the intrusiveness and immediacy of the television era and the internet era. How we adapt to that is the challenge that I was trying to point to, and I am not sure if I have all of the answers or any of the answers at this point. We need to be more aware of exactly what you are talking about. There is this feeling in Washington frequently that the most important thing in Washington journalism is to be twenty-four hours ahead with the conventional wisdom, and I think the article you referenced suffers from that.

Kathy Gockel
I am Kathy Gockel. I work at Search for Common Ground on the US-Muslim Engagement Project. I have a question for you. We are a bipartisan project; we brought in leaders across the board. If you were going to recommend how we get this placed and how we get people to listen to it, what would your recommendations be with the media?

Jim Hoagland
What’s your message?

Kathy Gockel
Our message is that there is a huge perception gap and if we don’t start to deal with this with the Muslim world, we will have a very tough time changing policy in Washington because of the people who are still very afraid of the Muslim community.

Jim Hoagland
You put the message very well and I think what you want to do then – what we would respond to – is providing specific examples, specific narratives, specific stories to illustrate a very cogent, very important message. I would congratulate you. You know, it is like a Hollywood pitch.

Seral Kromer
I think that part of the blame of these stories being boring when they are talking about peace is the fact that reporters are approaching them as boring. I don’t think that Nick Kristof approaches peace and human-interest stories as boring and
people read him. It is important for the press’ paradigm to change a little to look at these stories in a new way to make them more interesting.

Jim Hoagland
I do agree with your basic point. I once hired Nick as a stringer for The Washington Post and have always been a great admirer of his. The stories that Nick is best known for are, in fact, about Darfur and rape and other stories that emphasize conflict.

Sheral Kromer
But he tries to bring people together.

Jim Hoagland
Well, as a columnist, he and I have the ability to do that. As a news reporter, that is not why you write the story. One of the most interesting transformations that I have had to go through was from being a reporter for most of my career to becoming a columnist. For twenty years, The Washington Post paid me to keep my opinions out of the newspaper, and then overnight they started paying me to put them in the newspaper. It was a struggle to figure out what I thought.

David Hitchcock
I just wanted to make two points. One is that I was working on the Hill in the 1950s. The whole study of bipartisanship in the 1940s, and Vandenberg, and H. Alexander Smith, and the rest of them, was motivated – I am sorry to say – by the threat of Communism. That got the Truman Doctrine, among other things, going. We have threats today, but the motivation for bipartisanship is going to have to be phrased to the American public, to that one-third of the public that is unaware and uninterested, in a way that catches their imagination. There is a threat, but it is not from Communism or Soviet Imperialism so much as the things that Senator Hagel was talking about.

Secondly, I would like to mention is that Hagel was one of the co-authors of a CSIS commission on smart power dealing with USAID and the need for reform, also dealing with public diplomacy. The issue with public diplomacy that Senator Hagel touched on is reaching out abroad to the people who also think that the United States is going in the wrong direction, but they also have got to reach out to the United States. The realm of public diplomacy is not just overseas, its how to facilitate understanding in the United States of the attitudes of others and their problems overseas. Whether it needs a new institution, I won’t get into that, although this commission does advocate that. Those are two points that I hope assisted this discussion.

Jim Hoagland
I think that they are two very valuable points. You remind me, of course, of Dean Atchison’s famous phrase from that period during the 1940s and 50s, “It was necessary to be clearer than the truth.” I think at that time considering the threat of Soviet Expansionism that worked. Today, being clearer than the truth runs significant risk with the echo chamber that Washington and the national media have become.

Gerry Dunphy
I just want to say that the wonderful principles that John and Search for Common Ground advocate should be at the forefront of everyone’s approach. I think that he and his organization have a wonderful approach. As it was just pointed out by Mr. Hoagland, it is not popular. It is not popular, for example, in Britain where I am from. To understand the Muslim people, they were saying, “Oh my god, why are all of those doctors in Glasgow so mad at us.” No one was there to try to explain the anger of the Muslim people. This is what Search for Common Ground has done. You have done it in Africa, John, and the best of love to you.

Carol Phelps
I gather you knew Katharine Graham fairly well. I was wondering what the women’s perspective, or the absence of, helped define how conflict is perceived.
Jim Hoagland
That is a fascinating question. Anybody who every met my mother would tell you I had the advantage of growing up understanding what it was like working with a strong-willed woman. Working with Katharine Graham was one of the great pleasures of my life. I’ll tell you a little story about her. We went to interview the deposed Shaw of Iran in Cairo in 1980 about six weeks before he died. We spent three and a half hours with him and he was very combative, very engaged, very lively, basically criticizing Jimmy Carter and the British for having plotted to bring him down. As we walked out, I said to Katharine Graham, because we had of course heard all of the stories about him being too sick, “Gee, he doesn’t look very sick to me. I don’t understand; he was very lively.” She turned to me and said, “You have never watched someone die of cancer.” “No,” I said. She said, “He will be dead in three months.” This was a very, very perceptive woman. What she accomplished with her newspaper proves that in spades. I will be honest; it is a little difficult for me to talk about her. John, thank you.