

Center for Strategic & International Studies

Schieffer Series: Jihad 3.0

Panelists:

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Julianna Goldman,
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H. ANDREW SCHWARTZ: Good evening, everyone, and welcome to CSIS. I'm Andrew Schwartz. I work here in External Relations. Thank you for coming out on a gorgeous night.

I'd like to thank Bob Schieffer and everyone at the Bob Schieffer College of Communication at TCU. We've been doing this for over five years, and Bob's been kind enough to donate his time in shepherding us through these important and thoughtful conversations. He's truly a great friend of ours.

This is our seventh Schieffer Series in our new building, which we moved into exactly one year ago tomorrow. Can't believe we've been here a whole year, and I hope you guys have enjoyed the Schieffer Series here as much as I have. It's just been terrific.

Tonight's discussion was made possible by the support of our friends at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. Their support means so much to us, and without them we would have a really hard time putting on such good presentations. So thank you to our friends at the Niarchos Foundation in New York.

Is there anybody better in Washington than Bob Schieffer? Please join me in welcoming Bob.

BOB SCHIEFFER: (Applause.) Thank you all. I take Andrew around to sort of introduce me. (Laughs.) He's very good at it.

Well, our topic today is "Jihad 3.0," and we have a terrific panel to discuss it. Most of you will know Dr. Jon Alterman, senior vice president, holds the Brzezinski Chair in Global Security here at CSIS, director of the Middle East program. He's served in senior posts in government, part of the Iraqi Study Group chaired by James Baker and Lee Hamilton, teaches at Johns Hopkins and George Washington, and has lectured in more than 30 countries.

Juan Zarate, also part of the CSIS team, senior adviser on transnational threats, homeland security and counterterrorism here at CSIS, was the deputy national security adviser in the Bush administration, a former federal prosecutor who worked on terrorism cases, including the investigation of the USS Cole.

And finally, Julianna Goldman, and who I am proud to say is our newest CBS News correspondent. She is based here in Washington. She came over from Bloomberg in August and has more than a decade of experience covering international news. She covered both of President Obama's presidential campaigns, went with him to China, got the first one-on-one interview with the president after his re-election, and reported from the White House on the night that Osama bin Laden was killed.

So Jon Alterman, let me start with you because you recently wrote that after trying hard to downplay policy on Syria and Iraq, the Obama White House has dived in. You said the recorded beheadings of two Americans had crystalized a whole new policy approach by the

administration, and you said while the new policy is more than merely military, it is more military than it should be. So it seems like a good question to start this off is, what do you mean by that?

MR. ALTERMAN: Well, I think the next 800 words I wrote tried to capture that. (Laughter.) It's on the CSIS website. I encourage you to read it.

For a long time the administration was extremely cautious about being drawn too far into Syria, in particular, and we saw that caution manifested when the president, a little more than a year ago, hesitated to use military action. There seemed to be a confluence of forces, and we pulled off. When I spoke to people in the White House, what people in the White House kept saying is, well, we're not sure what we can do in Syria that wouldn't open the door to further involvement. And in many ways, our policy was defined almost as much by what it wasn't as what it was, and there's a keen desire to avoid getting too sucked in.

What happened, having ISIS spread into Iraq, where you have a government which is welcoming of U.S. involvement, where you have Kurdish allies of the United States who are desirous for American involvement, was it took it out of this very, very messy how do you attack a hostile group that is in a hostile country and you're in some ways trying to work with a group to take down this government; on the other hand you don't want the group to win. It seemed much clearer in Iraq. It provided an opportunity in Iraq, and the American public, which had been very hostile to getting sucked into a mess in Syria, suddenly said, yes, we should be active against people killing Americans in Iraq, we support military action in Iraq.

The problem, it seems to me, and the problem that the piece talks about is, all the things that are worth doing, very few of them actually have military components. The harder parts – the diplomacy, the economics, the politics, the intelligence sharing – maybe have a military role in convincing you're serious, but you really have to accomplish them away from the spotlight with much more qualitative kinds of actions than merely bombing things from the air. After all, the issue of bombing things from the air, it just comes down to physics and chemistry, but changing the situation on the ground is much more complex. And I was worried, I remain worried that we are doing what we can but not doing what we need to be, and we have to focus more on doing what we need to do.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Do you think the policy, Juan, is too focused on the military? What has your assessment been? What do you think the policy is right now?

MR. ZARATE: Well, that's a great question, Bob. And I think in part that's the challenge for the administration, what is our policy not just vis-à-vis ISIS, ISIL, whatever we decide to call it, but what is the regional strategy and how does this fit into the other things that we care about, things like what happens in Damascus, in the Assad regime, what happens in our relationship with Iran, how are we postured for the long term. And I think what is lacking in all this, regardless of whether or not you think we're robust or not enough in the military context, is how does this fit into a broader vision for the region?

What it feels like is it's very reactive. We're reacting to the videos, we're reacting to the sense of threat, we're reacting to the reports of thousands of foreign fighters that now potentially threaten the West, and that then lends itself to a whack-a-mole approach.

And to Jon's point, I think Jon is right that a military solution is not the only solution but it has to be part of changing the landscape on the ground, because at the end of the day, this is about the laws of physics and geography. This is a group that has men, materiel, money, and has established the largest and most robust safe haven of any terrorist group that we've seen in modern history. And you have to then dislodge a group like that, and that takes military force from the air and on the ground.

And I would say one criticism from a military standpoint is that to execute a long-term strategy like that, especially in a complex environment like Syria, is going to take perhaps more than just proxy forces, hoping that you can build these forces over time to take on the fight in a place like Syria. That's the real danger, I think, for this policy, that it becomes a half-hearted attempt to dislodge the group, and at the same time we're distorting the policies that matter to us on things like Iran and Syria.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Julianna – and I know you have done some work on this – I was surprised yesterday when Ambassador Samantha Power called it ESIL (ph) or ISEL (ph) – (changing pronunciations) – or something like that. And I know the president calls it ISIL, I think, and some of us call it ISIS.

MS. GOLDMAN: Right.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I mean, you think where is Cole Porter when you need him? (Laughter.) I mean, you say tomato and I say tomato – (changing pronunciations) – and on and on.

What's the deal here? What is the name of this outfit?

MS. GOLDMAN: Well, we can confuse it even more because ISIS actually calls itself the Islamic State, after it rebranded itself in June. In the Arabic world it goes by Daesh, but ISIS doesn't like that name for itself either. And the problem for the government is that it's been trying to – it wants to refer to this group but it doesn't want to validate the idea that it is the Islamic state.

MR. SCHIEFFER: By calling it the Islamic State.

MS. GOLDMAN: Right. So if we look – drill down at the name, the real – in Arabic, the rub is the last word, al-Sham. And al-Sham either refers to Syria or Greater Syria, and so the "IS" at the end of ISIS is the al-Sham, it's not necessarily the Syria, and the Greater Syria refers to the Levant. And so that's why there's the ISIL element of it.

There are some in the government, I've been told, who want to come up with ways to talk about it differently, and Daesh could be among those options. The French last week announced that they're going to be using Daesh – again, as not to validate the name Islamic State.

I don't know that that's much clearer, but – (laughs).

MR. ALTERMAN: Did we ever come to closure on OBL/UBL?

MR. ZARATE: No, it depends on which transliteration.

MR. ALTERMAN: Osama bin Laden, we had the whole, I mean the government – right, the government had a whole debate as to whether it should be OBL or UBL.

MR. ZARATE: But Bob, this question of lexicon is actually very important for two reasons. One, the group itself is trying to harken back to history and to the lore of the movement that they are trying to now lead. And so this group, in establishing itself as the Islamic State, is pronouncing itself as the new vanguard of this, called the movement, in essence giving life to the imaginings of UBL/OBL, bin Laden, and really trying to give life to that inspiration. I think one of the dangers of this group is that in its inspiration, it's not only establishing territory in the heart of the Middle East, but it's inspiring others to imagine what is possible in terms of an Islamic state.

The other thing about lexicon that's important from an American standpoint is, we go through all these contortions to make sure that the terminology we use doesn't inadvertently aggrandize groups. We had this debate – in fact, John Brennan gave a speech here at CSIS early after President Obama took office, talking about not using the term “Islamic extremism” and not using the term “jihad” because jihadists, you know, use that term to validate themselves. So lexicon in this actually matters quite a bit. The problem is we end up contorting ourselves quite a bit to describe the enemy.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let me ask all three of you. The secretary of state said last week there was a part for every nation to play in the fight against – and I'm going to just call it ISIS today – in this war against ISIS and terrorism, including Iran. What is the role of Iran? And how do they fit into this, Jon?

MR. ALTERMAN: Well, Iran is in an interesting position because on the one hand, they hate these guys as much as anybody, partly because ISIS is attacking their allies in Iraq, it's attacking their allies in Syria. It's attacking their allies – some of their allies in Iraq are actually the Kurds, who the Iranians have a very constructive historic relationship with, despite the fact the Kurds also have a very constructive historic relationship with the United States. But Iran also fears U.S. plans for the region, and Iran doesn't want to give things up to the United States without getting something in return.

I think where that leaves us is the challenge of how could we work in parallel with the Iranians without coordinating with the Iranians, certainly without cooperating with the Iranians,

because it seems to me whenever we ask the Iranians for something, the next part of that conversation is, OK, so what are you going to do for us?

And so the challenge, and I think our diplomats are up for it, and our intelligence people and others, is how do you signal to the Iranians what it is we're doing, what it is we have an option to do but won't do, in deference to them, what it is we might do that would annoy them but maybe we won't in case other things happen, and keep that in a constructive direction and not fall into the trap of, if you do this, we'll do that, because on a whole series of problems, that would put the U.S. in a much more disadvantageous position.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Where do you see Iran in all this, Juan?

MR. ZARATE: I think it's perhaps one of the most difficult questions here because the Iranians have over time learned and played a great game of duality. They've been able to, where there's commonality of interest, work with the United States or work with other adversaries while at the same time undermining and attacking those interests. For example, the U.S. and Iran were aligned in interests in attacking the precursor to ISIS, the al-Qaida in Iraq, the Islamic State of Iraq, yet at the same time the Revolutionary Guard was fomenting attacks, some of the most vicious attacks against U.S. forces to create instability in Iraq. The same thing in Afghanistan, working in some ways on counternarcotic and other issues with the U.S. and NATO forces while at the same time supporting elements of the Taliban. Being opposed to al-Qaida and taking steps to, for example, put senior al-Qaida leaders under custody, but at the same time allowing al-Qaida facilitation networks to operate in and through Iran.

And so Iran is a very curious animal in this game because they've learned to play multiple games at once. They can feed from one hand and bite the other. And I think that's what makes Iran very difficult to work with. And I don't think we're going to find sort of those sweet spots of commonality in this context. I think if you're going to see activity happen, it's going to happen organically and in parallel; it's not going to happen in coordination.

MR. ALTERMAN: But if I may, I think in a Middle Eastern context, being able to play two sides –

MR. ZARATE: Absolutely.

MR. ALTERMAN: – is seen as a sign of sophistication.

MR. ZARATE: Of course. Of course.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Do you think it will be seen that way in Israel, Julianna?

MS. GOLDMAN: Well, I think right now the challenge for the administration, why Kerry is making the distinction between coordination and a role to play, is because they're trying to assemble this coalition of Arab countries. You know, they want to bring the Saudis on board, and if they bring the Saudis on board, then, you know, what are they going to say about coordinating with Iran?

The White House announced today – you asked about Israel – that the president will be meeting with Netanyahu when he comes next week, and so – you know, the Israelis have long voiced their concerns with the U.S. engaging with Iran in these nuclear talks.

MR. ALTERMAN: And of course the Iranian and Saudi foreign ministers met this week.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Juliana, do you have any information – Samantha Power said yesterday on all three networks that, yes, we have gotten commitments from some Arab countries to join in airstrikes on Syria. Do you have any idea who they are?

MR. GOLDMAN: When I talked to an administration official earlier today, what they said is there will be multiple Arab countries lining up and joining – making these military commitments.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Did they tell you one, the name of one? (Laughter.)

MR. GOLDMAN: Well, we're told it wouldn't be going out on a limb to say UAE. And also Congressman McCaul told you last week that Jordan would likely be among those commitments, and I was told again Jordan would not be going out on a limb either.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Jon, do you or Juan have any information on that?

MR. ALTERMAN: Do I have a guess? I mean, look, first, one of –

MR. SCHIEFFER: I mean, are we to take that seriously? Is that really going to happen, do you think?

MR. ALTERMAN: I think it really will happen, but it really won't be terribly decisive. You know, when we have an air –

MR. SCHIEFFER: But don't you think it would be important?

MR. ALTERMAN: It's important the same way that having the UAE and Qatar and other countries with us in Libya made it seem like there was a broader coalition; it doesn't necessarily get you better outcomes down the line, as we've seen in Libya. You know, there are lots of roles people can play. You can be the refueling guy, you can be the logistics guy, you can fly surveillance. I think we're likely to see different roles.

I think that one of the things that will be discussed is whether the Egyptians signal something visible in support as a way to try to limit some of the hostility. We've just announce we're giving them 10 Apaches that have been in the U.S. for repair.

So I think that one of the characteristics of this is there will be lots of – you can contribute at many different levels, just like in your church, synagogue, school, right, there are different levels? And I think we're going to see a lot of different levels.

The challenge, I think, from a U.S. perspective is how do you make it add up to actually mean something. I mean, if you need a strategy, you need all these pieces, and you're sort of going to rummage sales and picking up this that somebody can contribute and that that somebody can contribute; how does that actually turn into the concerted, sustained military campaign that the administration has committed to doing, and not just for a month? But if you're going to do this, you need to be serious. This is a multiyear commitment long after people have lost interest in the headlines.

MR. SCHIEFFER: What's the latest number, about 190 airstrikes that we have flown so far in this new campaign?

MR. ZARATE: I think that's about right.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Has that made any significant difference, Juan, that you can tell?

MR. ZARATE: I think the notion of degrading the group – remember, we've got two goals in the strategy that's been announced by the president: degrade ISIS and destroy it. In the context of degrading it, and certainly defending our interests and those of our friends and allies, like the Kurdish Peshmerga, the airstrikes have been very effective. The release of ISIS control of the Haditha Dam and other infrastructure, very important. The beginnings of hitting depots and other supply lines, probably important longer term.

I think the real question is, you know, we can do this in Iraq and we can imagine what the scenario looks like, the Iraqi military buttressed by U.S., perhaps even Iranian, support, the Peshmerga fighting along with us, and American air power behind it. But what does it look like once it crosses the Syrian border? And I think that's the real tricky military-political-social conundrum here.

And I would say too that in terms of the coalition, yes, it's important symbolically to have these countries involved militarily, but it also is critical to have in particular the Sunni Arab states behind the U.S. in going after the ideology, countering the narrative that this group is employing, countering funding to the extent possible. This is where Turkey becomes very important, the Qataris, the Kuwaitis, and providing a patina of legitimacy in the heart of the Middle East for what is to happen, because as Jon said, this isn't just going to be a month-long effort, this is going to be years in the making if we are to really destroy this group.

MR. ALTERMAN: Two other important – if I may, two other important pieces for the Sunni states. One is helping persuade some of the Sunni tribes to come back over.

MR. ZARATE: Right.

MR. ALTERMAN: And the other is helping create incentives for the government of Iraq to be more inclusive than it has been. They have been very much ostracized from their neighbors. And one of the things that is attractive is a sense of, you know, you can be closer,

you can be in a better environment. That's something that a country like Saudi Arabia, a country like the UAE can offer the Iraqis.

MR. ZARATE: Bob, just a quick point because I think this is important. This is a real moment of opportunity, in part for the U.S. to rejuvenate some of the strained relationships it has had and to serve in the leadership that the region's been thirsty for. Not that we put thousands of troops on the ground, but that the U.S. actually serve as a quarterback to the aligning forces to go after this group in terms of the military, the support, the ideology. The region, and the world, frankly, is hungry for U.S. leadership. The question is, can we do it credibly and do we have staying power?

MR. SCHIEFFER: Julianna, you have covered the president very closely. You've interviewed him numerous times. You've been with him on the good days and bad, as it were. It took him a while to get to where he is right now, isn't it – didn't it? I mean, talk a little bit about that. I'm amazed to hear him in his recent speech because he's come a ways.

MS. GOLDMAN: So I went back and I looked at the David Remnick interview from last January, and one of the key takeaways was something Obama said about how we're swimming in the rapids of the river of history, and that he thinks – he takes the long view, and we're really in the middle of just – he's writing the paragraph now; that's how history – his presence will be seen, as a paragraph.

So when it comes to the Middle East and the sectarian divide, he sees this as these aren't going to away with my presidency, they're not going to go away in the next presidency, and so he'd rather take his time and take a more cautious, deliberative approach.

Now, I think particularly when you look back in August, some of the messages, some of his statements have really hurt him now and hurt the credibility of this administration, whether it was saying we don't have a strategy, whether it was in the same press conference saying our goal is to degrade and to defeat ISIS, but also then saying they're a manageable problem.

And when I look at that, I kind of – it reminded me back – it reminded me of sort of the attitude and the issues Obama had before that first debate with Mitt Romney. What one of his advisers had said at the time was he was suffering from presidency disease, kind of just going through the motions, and checked out a little bit. And so it seemed like through the month of August that was kind of at least the rhetorical approach that he was taking to ISIS. And for him and his advisers, that prime time speech and his speech at NATO, they knew that they had to change the language that they were using and to come out much more forcefully and send a much stronger signal to the international community, to Congress and to the American people.

MR. SCHIEFFER: You know, one of the things that I find interesting, and I've seen a lot of administrations in – you know, you get into the second term of every administration and there's always one or two people who leave, and they didn't like what happened and, you know, they write these books and so forth. But I can't remember when as many people in the national security area – I mean, yesterday on "60 Minutes" you heard Leon Panetta say, look, I advised him to arm the Syrian moderates. You've had Gates come out. Hillary Clinton has said she

disagreed with the president. We know that Martin Dempsey, Jim Jones, the former national security adviser, hasn't been all that complimentary. What do you all make of this?

MR. ALTERMAN: So in defense of the president, just because something isn't working doesn't mean anything else would have worked better. And I think that certainly we consistently have that problem in the Middle East because there are lots and lots and lots of stupid ideas and sometimes we do the stupid things, but it's not to say anything other than the stupid idea would have turned out better. That being said, this is an administration which, even to people on the inside, people complain this is a very, very, very tiny circle of people who make all the decisions, it's not visible, that there's lots and lots of debate, debate, debate that people get tugged into these endless meetings, and then the decision is made when nobody else is in the room, two people in the room. And I think that has created an environment where –

MR. SCHIEFFER: Who do you think is the president's most influential adviser on foreign policy right now?

MR. ALTERMAN: I have never been in that small meeting. I've never met the president, unlike Julianna. So I can't tell you. You know, what people say is that the president remains close to Denis McDonough, that Valerie Jarrett weighs in on a whole range of issues, that Ben Rhodes, who's a speechwriter, has sort of a mind meld with him. Whether the national security adviser, Susan Rice, is sort of in that circle and how she fits in that circle, I don't know.

MR. SCHIEFFER: You have not mentioned yet John Kerry, who is the secretary of state.

MR. ALTERMAN: John Kerry's not here very much. (Laughter.) No, he's not. I mean, honestly, you know, and proximity matters. When I was working in State Department in the early years of – early year of the Bush administration on this fellowship, Colin Powell was terrified to leave the country, because he thought if he left the country, there would be a principals committee meeting and suddenly our policy would change on a dime, so he wouldn't leave. (Laughter.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: That did not seem to bother Henry Kissinger.

MR. ZARATE: I think what you see is an erosion of trust and confidence. You also see this in the stories about the split between the military leadership and the president. And I think part of this is that the president and his inner circle have been captured and trapped by their political narrative, the political narrative of not wanting to be the Bush administration, over learning the lessons of Iraq and in that way being sort of captured by inaction. To Jon's point that, you know, not all action's advisable, but they've really been captured by inaction.

And I think there's been frustration at the top levels that there hasn't been more strategic vision. So, for example, the red line debate with respect to Syria, I'm just not sure the president realized how strategically relevant that moment was.

To your point about John Kerry, John Kerry had gone out and basically not only issued an indictment against the Assad regime for the use of chemical weapons, but had issued justification for going to war, and going to war quickly and soon for the purposes of key core national security issues. The president then went out, you know, countered his own red line, undercut his secretary of state and, I think, began a cycle of growing mistrust and lack of confidence among his senior team. And I think you're seeing reflections of that in exactly what you described.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Julianna.

MS. GOLDMAN: Well, when it comes to the decision not to arm Syrian rebels, I mean, they are digging their heels in right now. Even the president – there was a story in the Times, I think it was last week, quoting some off-the-record sessions that he had had with journalists and columnists, and even then he said, you know, look – he defended the time it took them to vet the rebels, and they look at this and they say in hindsight this isn't the silver bullet. They can't say this, but it was a few months later that the U.S., whether it was covert – I mean through covert operations began arming moderate rebels. And so they said it was important to take that time still to vet them.

But to Jonathan's point, I mean, this is a tight, tight inner circle. When they do reach out, one of the biggest criticisms is that there's never any follow-through. So the president had a bunch of former national security aides, advisers who came to dinner, I think, a couple nights before the prime time speech, and the real – it's not just a matter of having them come to the White House to listen, but whether or not there's going to be any follow-through and follow-up.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Do you have any disagreement with Jon in who are the people closest to the president? And who would you say are those most influential in foreign policy?

MS. GOLDMAN: No, I think he named them. I mean, I would also put Susan Rice in there and probably Samantha Power. But again, in the White House day to day, I would say it's probably Denis McDonough and Ben Rhodes.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let's talk a little bit about this new group that we're hearing about, Khorasan, or how do we say that?

MR. ALTERMAN: Khorasan.

MR. ZARATE: Khorasan.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All of a sudden this name surfaces. Who are these people and where do they come from?

MR. ZARATE: This is the al-Qaida senior leadership caravan that moved from Afghanistan and Pakistan into Syria, in part to take advantage of the chaos and breathing space that existed there, and in part to try to plan from Syria attacks against the West. And so great reporting from Bob Orr, CBS News, that broke the story.

The reality is that the group that is most, in some ways, lethal and focused on the West is not necessarily ISIS, which we've been talking about, though that's dangerous; it's this al-Qaida group, which not only is focused on the West but is linking other elements of the al-Qaida constellation. So linking, for example, the master bomb maker, al-Sirri, who is a part of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen, linking other parts of the network. And so in some ways these guys are becoming a bit of an operational and strategic core for a new form of the al-Qaida universe, and that's why officials are worried about them.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Is the reason that the president is so circumspect, I guess, or is so focused on listing what we're not going to do – I was just thinking about Juan Zarate just said – is it they just don't want to be the Bush administration? Is that what's going on here?

MR. ALTERMAN: I think it's partly that they thought that getting involved in Iraq in an open-ended way was probably one of the largest strategic mistakes the U.S. has made in the last half-century. I think there's probably an increasing consensus in Washington that that's true. But again, what's the alternative to it, and how should we think about terrorism, and what is the threat and what is a distraction from what is truly strategically important? I think we're still working through it.

One of my concerns about the way the administration approaches it is oftentimes they want to get the language right, but I'm not sure there's the same commitment to the policy follow-through on the language. And there's a way you need to set the language so you can make the policy rise to meet the language, to set the bar. Elliott Abrams is probably the best person I've ever seen in government at being able to set the language and then you move the policy once you've gotten the language right.

But what feels to me to be happening is in a lot of cases there's a lot of focus on just exactly what the language is, and the policy doesn't always follow through to it. We've had a lot of good language. We had the president's drone speech 18 months ago at NDU, in many ways in tension with the speech on ISIS. And I'm not sure that they are doing as well as they need to on understanding strategically where they need to go.

They had a year ago a big Middle East policy review, and notably, nobody involved in the Middle East policy review was from outside the White House, and nobody, to my judgment, had ever lived in the Middle East.

MR. SCHIEFFER: That's very interesting.

You know, we're talking about communicating, and Julianna, you've done a lot of work on this. (Chuckles.) I'm glad, better you than me, let me just say that. Julianna has become kind of our expert on jihadist social media.

MS. GOLDMAN: I have a lot of new Twitter followers. (Laughter.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: And it's just amazing at how sophisticated they are at using social media. Just tell us a little about this.

MS. GOLDMAN: So ISIS has its own media arm. It's called al-Hayat. And they're part – they're behind a lot of the savvy, well-produced videos that we're seeing. They just released last week a 55-minute video. It's all shot in HD. It looks like it's straight out of Hollywood. It was called, I think, "Flames of War." And it had – one thing that the intelligence community really took note of was that it had an American at the end, an American ISIS fighter, I believe in Syria, who was overseeing Syrians dig their own graves, and then he killed them.

But one of the reasons why they have this sophisticated and savvy media operation, one, it's to – it's propaganda and for recruitment and to terrorize. And so as they've brought more Westerners over into the fight, they bring their knowledge as well. So you have French jihadists reaching out and French in videos to French individuals, Germans to Germans, Brits to Brits.

I had a crazy experience last Saturday, two Saturdays ago, when I was in the newsroom and we started to get word that there was another ISIS beheading video, that that was about to be released. And in one of my stories, I had covered this Twitter handle called Jihad Matchmaker –

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yes.

MS. GOLDMAN: Yes, it exists.

MR. SCHIEFFER: They have a –

MS. GOLDMAN: A Twitter. And I went to see anybody who had been mentioning Jihad Matchmaker and I clicked on somebody, and I saw that they were teasing out a new video that was coming. And within a few minutes they posted a link to that video, and then a few minutes later they posted a link that said now it's up on YouTube, in all caps with an exclamation mark and the link to YouTube.

So the other side of the story is that you have YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and what is the responsibility of these companies to try and crack down on their use of social media to get their message across. Facebook has done a better job of that, but then they went to a Russian competitor of Facebook, called VK.com, and over the last couple of weeks, VK.com got a little better at cracking down as well.

And there's also a counter-argument that the intelligence community makes, which is, well, we don't have the intelligence on the ground, so this is how we're able to track these guys and get more information about them.

But it really is remarkable to see the advances that they've made and how they might be going about editing these videos. I mean, they're clearly shot with very sophisticated cameras. Somebody threw out the possibility that they could actually be in chat rooms and talking in the chat rooms about how to be editing these videos.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, do these people actually meet people on these matchmaker – I mean, I could just see this, you know: Jihadist who likes to cut people’s head off would like to meet girl who likes – (laughter).

MS. GOLDMAN: We asked the very same question. We weren’t – we were tipped off to the site. We didn’t have it, you know, completely verified. However, then when you go on and you see that these guys are actually using Jihad Matchmaker and mentioning – I mean, there was this one guy who said something like, you know, “Hook a brother up,” and sent, you know, other Twitter handles for other jihadists. But, you know, going through that Twitter handle took us to the video. So they’re on it. They’re using it.

MR. SCHIEFFER: It’s amazing.

MR. ZARATE: This is a group too, though, that has employed sexual slavery as they’ve taken over a territory, the Yazidi women, and that sort of thing. So it’s a movement that’s well-organized and knows how to sort of support its fighters.

The one thing I’d say on the media is it’s a multimedia approach, and so it’s been one of the most open campaigns you’ve seen of any terrorist group. A report, over 400 pages, laying out all of their deliverables, all the attacks for a particular year, where they’ve done it, broken down by region. They’ve put out videos not just of beheadings and brutality, but also how they’re trying to govern. So they’re trying to demonstrate legitimacy, how they’re engaged in controls in Mosul. So this is an all-out media effort to gain legitimacy and, as Julianna said, to terrorize their enemies.

MS. GOLDMAN: And also –

MR. ZARATE: And all of that’s on Twitter and it’s sort of one-to-one. I mean, there’s a personalization to this, which we’ve never seen before. They really are using social media, as Julianna suggested, in unprecedentedly sophisticated ways. It’s not just on a chat room. It’s really reaching out to you wherever you are in whatever language you speak in wherever your mindset is and bringing you on board.

MS. GOLDMAN: So, for example, they have these 60-second videos. They’re called mujatweets. And one of them showed – I think it was a Belgian fighter in Syria going around and giving – handing out ice cream to little Syrian children. So it shows, you know, a softer side, and it’s a way to say, OK, we’re not all, you know, beheadings and blood and guts; come over and join the fight on this way as well.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let’s step back a little bit and talk about Iraq right now, the new prime minister trying to put together a new government. How is that going?

MR. ALTERMAN: (Pause.) Slowly. (Laughter.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: Slowly.

MR. ALTERMAN: I mean, you know, it's Iraqi government negotiations, which are slow, which are full of threats, which are full of uncertain progress and failure to put things together. I mean, I wish I were more surprised, but it seems to me that the normal of politics in Iraq is the kind of messy politics we're seeing.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, do either of you think that this new government can actually be more inclusive, that it can actually be inclusive enough that you could field an army that could provide a – you know, ground forces, ground combat operations that then we could support with airstrikes with any kind of success? What do you think?

MR. ZARATE: I think you can rejuvenate sort of an Iraqi military force. I think that's doable. I think the real question for the new government and for the political process is, can you reverse the sense of embitterment and disillusionment among the Sunni tribes that had bought into the idea of putting their lives and communities at risk to fight the al-Qaida of old and felt very much abandoned by the Maliki government. And there is lingering resentment and disillusionment there. And even after the new government was formed, you've heard Sunni tribal leaders and others talk about that not being enough. And so the question is, can the government not only be inclusive, but can there be a rejuvenation of the Sons of Iraq so that you begin to see an organic counter-movement and fighting force, especially in western Iraq among the Sunni tribes.

And keep in mind, Bob, that those tribes also sort of cross the border, and so ISIS has erased the border between Iraq and Syria. Some of these tribes exist along those borders as well, so it's very important to have them on board.

MR. ALTERMAN: And into Saudi and other places.

MR. ZARATE: And into Saudi.

MR. ALTERMAN: Now, one of the other challenges – and this follows directly on what Juan was saying – is the spectacular sense of entitlement that people have that “we are the key and therefore we have to get this much.” And, you know, you end up sharing 300 percent of the pie because everybody says, I get 40 percent, I get 70 percent, and there's not enough pie to go around. And getting people's expectations down to size is a real political challenge, and that is part of why you can't rush this, because everybody comes in with an absolutely stratospheric sense of entitlement.

MR. SCHIEFFER: You know, yesterday on “Face the Nation” we had a roundtable and Joe Lieberman was there. And he said we should just go ahead and attack Assad and get it over with and disable their air force, crater all their air fields and just do it. What would you – if you were sitting in – the two of you were sitting with the president, and one of the advisers suggested that, what would you say?

MR. ALTERMAN: (Covers his ears to keep from hearing.) La-la-la-la-la. (Laughter.)

MR. ZARATE: My reaction would be a little different. (Laughter.) I don't think you open the gates of Damascus to Islamic marauders, basically, but I think you can triangulate here.

And to Jon's point earlier, the Middle East is known for the ability to do multiple things at once; the U.S. sort of approach to things often very linear, very binary, right? We either do one thing or the other. We can weaken Assad or ensure that what we do doesn't legitimize him and his rule long-term while also attacking ISIS. Keep in mind that he's made accommodations with ISIS in the past. He's traded with them. He's allowed them some buffers. He's attacked the Free Syrian Army versus ISIS.

And so I think you could do some strategic things, not an all-out sort of bombardment, but things like, you know, let's attack the airbase outside of Raqqa, that was taken over by ISIS, where they got military weaponry, fighter jets, et cetera, blow it to smithereens so neither ISIS has it nor the Syrian army for later.

Let's defend the Free Syrian Army installments around Aleppo. That is sort of the last bastion of where the Free Syrian Army has held territory, and they're under assault from both the Syrian government and ISIS. So let's hit some artillery that the Syrian government's using to hit our putative allies, the Free Syrian Army. So I think you can be creative with some bank shots here without opening up all-out war against the Assad regime.

MR. ALTERMAN: Look, I mean, I wonder under what pretense of legal justification would you have for doing a lot of these things. I think if we were to take down the Assad government, we would be then thinking about how do you prevent the slaughter of 2 million Alawites, who certainly would feel vulnerable and then they would be slaughtering Sunni – I mean, this idea that we're sort of one step away from breaking the logjam and then it will all come together – I mean, sometimes you break the logjam and then all hell breaks loose. And I –

MR. ZARATE: And sometimes you do nothing and still hundreds of thousands are killed –

MR. ALTERMAN: No, I totally agree.

MR. ZARATE: – and refugees flow across and you have our worst nightmares emerging, like a terrorist safe haven in the heart of the Middle East, in part because we haven't done anything.

MR. ALTERMAN: There are multiple bad options.

MR. GOLDMAN: No, and I don't know that the options –

MR. ZARATE: That's the art of national security: bad options and worse options.

MR. GOLDMAN: – I mean, that kind of the options really changed that much from a year ago, when Obama was trying to – was faced with the chemical attack and deciding whether or not to go in and try and take out Assad that way. I mean, the reason – one of the reasons that

they did not is because they didn't know what would come the next day. And that question still exists now.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I want to go to questions in the audience, but while you're thinking, tell us why is ISIS different from anything we've confronted here-to-now.

MR. ZARATE: they have more men, materiel and resources and have established safe haven in the heart of the Middle East in a way that al-Qaida's only imagined and in a way that we haven't seen before. And the danger there is they can not only inspire and deploy foreign fighters – we've seen plots in Australia, attacks in Belgium, other plots disrupted around the world – but they can also foment inspiration and a new platform for this global movement. That's what makes these guys dangerous.

And they continue to hold territory. We saw the Syrian – the Kurdish refugee problem because they're pushing in the Northeast in Syria. They overran some Iraqi military installations in Western Iraq. They are not stopping.

MR. SCHIEFFER: And they're extremely well-financed.

MR. ZARATE: They're well-financed because they run a war economy. They've used the same oil-for-food smuggling routes that once operated. They've tapped into some of the Baathist resentments, so Ibrahim al-Doury, who sits in Damascus probably funding some of this. And they are flush with money.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right. And please – in the back, right there. Yes. And please tell us who you are.

Q: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ahmad Bitar (ph). Actually I'm from Syria. I moved recently, in like couple of months ago. I witnessed the whole thing. I want to be like a devil's – is it – (testing the microphone).

MR. SCHIEFFER: We hear you. We can hear you.

Q: I want to be like a devil's advocate. I'm here. I'm lucky to know the Americans' point of view. But actually I want to take you – to tell you what the Syrians, or usually the Muslims, say. For America, they are helping the world, they are getting rid of terrorists, but for the rest of the Islamic world, there is an infidel country attacking a Muslim people. The problem is the U.S. Army or the U.S. government are treating with, let us say, the symptoms, not the roots of the problem.

Now, they did that in Afghanistan, they did that in Iraq, and now they are doing that in Syria. And the problem will continue. Instead of seeing people just fighting in the mountains, now we are seeing them on social media. I'm very educated. I can understand the reason behind the American intervention. But the rest of the Syrian are not and the regime is using that in his propaganda.

What my question is – I will not taking so much time. My question is, what is the American government policy in terms of media or justifying this intervention? For the rest of the – for the Islamic world or in general, they believed in the beginning that ISIS is created by CIA. And this theory is very dominating. It's like you open – just open any Arabic website and you'll see that. It's like the same thing with al-Qaida, the same thing with those radicals.

That those radicals – I want to tell you something. My background is Arabic-Islamic, so those radicals are not monsters; they are driven by an ideology.

MR. ZARATE (?): That's right.

Q: This ideology – like, if you killed those people, you will see much worse than those people because they have the ideology. And those groups, like if you compare al-Qaida with ISIS, both are having the same goal, which is Islamic caliphate or something like this. But their product, they are competing who is the worst. So if you ended ISIS or you eliminate ISIS, you will see much worse people because in order to the new group to earn, like, legitimacy, they need to prove that the previous people are not doing enough to support Islam.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right.

Q: So just I want to know about the media or what you are doing to address the Arab world in terms of this intervention. Thank you.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Jon, Juan, want to –

MR. ALTERMAN: Yeah. First, I don't think we're very good at persuading people that, you know, we come in peace to the Muslim world, and it's partly because there are so many well-developed operations and so many deeply held feelings that the U.S. really does come with an agenda against Islam.

I also think that we shouldn't want to be loved in the Muslim world. I think we should explain what we're doing, I think we should explain why we're doing it, and we should demonstrate the sincerity of our actions. But if people want to say that the United States created ISIS, if there's anybody who created ISIS, it's – Bashar al-Assad was desperate for an enemy like ISIS because that creates precisely the opponent he wants to fight against. He wants to come and says, who do you really want to win? Side with me against these monsters. And as Juan suggested, I think there's a lot of money either coming directly out of Damascus or implicitly permitted by Damascus to allow these guys to have traction.

You can talk about it; I'm not sure you persuade people. I think the United States as a government is miserable at keeping secrets and absolutely incapable of having a secret strategy. We can't do it. And so I think we should just be clear about what we're doing and ultimately not get too involved with, you know, is the approval rating of the United States in a country like Egypt 7 percent or 12 percent. You talk about what you're doing and you leave it where it is, and I think part of our goal should be if people are deeply, bitterly, violently against the United States and you can make them neutral and grudging, let's find a way to capture that as a success,

because if they can go bitter and violent into, sort of, annoyed and begrudging, for a lot of people that's a big success.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Do you want to add anything, Juan?

MR. ZARATE: Yeah, just very quickly. I've heard a counter-narrative as well, though, deep resentment in the Syrian population for what is felt to be abandonment from the West. And so there is a cross-current of that, as well. And so it's a damned if you do, damned if you don't approach within in the U.S., which is often the case in especially Middle East policy. But I would say that's why the administration has put so much stock on coalition building, on the narrative of legitimacy, legal legitimacy and international legitimacy.

But to Jon's point, I think we are terrible at trying to counter violent extremism and the ideology. We're just not very good at it. And frankly, the most credible voices don't sit in Washington and New York; they sit in Baghdad, Cairo and Beirut.

MR. ALTERMAN: And Riyadh and China.

MR. ZARATE: And Riyadh and China. (Laughs.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: Go ahead.

Q: Yes, sir. My name is Kami Butt. I'm with the Pakistani Spectator.

And my question is about this Khorasan organization. Couple of month ago there was news in Pakistani media that Pakistan got couple of billion of dollar from Saudi Arabia, and all those troublemakers that Pakistan used to send to India and Kashmir and in Afghanistan to kill Americans are being directed toward Iraq or this Syria area. If that is true, because you are specialists in financial transaction. And I asked this question to General Gul. He used to be the ISI head a couple of decades ago, I guess. He said this is all propaganda; we've been telling Americans for a couple of decades that they are not going to get anything out of Afghanistan. Whereas if you talk with Christine Fair, she will tell you it's Pakistanis who are killing our American troops and who made us pack our bags from Afghanistan.

So my question to you is this: If Pakistani armies or Pakistani generals are really that kind of evil thing, why didn't we go after them? Or if they are not and we didn't attack them, then maybe we have to learn a lot from them, because they spend, like, one penny equal to our hundred dollars and they're a lot more effective to deal with these things.

MR. SCHIEFFER: OK.

So I hope you understand the question. Thanks.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right.

MR. ZARATE: Yeah, absolutely. And I think there are complicated relationships across the board here. Pakistan's a great example of this, where clearly the ISI and the Pakistani intelligence and military have seen defense in depth in the context of Afghanistan and the use of proxy forces as part of their national security and part of their interest. That has been in direct opposition to U.S. interests at times. At the same time, Pakistan has been an ally against al-Qaida in certain cases. The same thing goes with Qatar, which is an ally of the U.S., hosts one of the most important bases in the Middle East, but has also supported extremist causes.

And so there is a balance in the relationship, and part of it is having open and honest conversations in quiet and holding these regimes to account where possible, but also realizing we need them. We can't go it alone.

MR. SCHIEFFER: This lady right here, who's been very patient. You.

Q: Thank you very much. Pat Bergstresser, formally with the State Department, focused on Iraq. And my question to you is, Juan used the term "dismiss," but my question is, what is the role of the clerics in terms of discrediting ISIS. I've read the Quran, and nothing in the Quran says you can rob banks or behead people without Sharia law, or trade women for sex trade.

So what role do you see in terms of organizing the Islamic clerics, like the Islamic scholars, to make public statements and discredit them? They're criminals.

MR. ALTERMAN: We've seen a lot of that already, and this is one of the things that started in Saudi Arabia in 2003, when the Saudis were themselves victims of terrorist attacks in May and November and they really began to line up the clerical establishment against jihadis. We have certainly seen more of that. I just spoke to somebody today who was in Saudi Arabia last week. He said, you know, the government is scared, clerics are lining up; the people are not so hostile to the Islamic State, but the government and the clerical establishment certainly is.

I think if you look at the defeat of al-Qaida's ideology, remember in 2001 there really was a genuine fear that the germ of jihadism would spread throughout 1.3, 1.5 billion Muslims around the world, and it really didn't. And I think we systematically underestimate the role of states, the states' relationship to the clerical establishment, and the clerical establishment's systematic rejection of jihadism which contain that.

I totally agree with you, there is a role for clerics to discredit this. What I hear from people who know much more about Islam than I do is that the theology of ISIS is somewhat more mainstream than other jihadi ideologies have been, so it's not quite as easy to discredit it, but certainly the offenses in terms of slavery of women and the murders and all those other things, there is ample argument in Islam that says that's absolutely atrocious, and I think we are seeing and will continue to see as part of this effort a de-legitimization.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Right here.

I'm sorry, Jon.

MR. ALDERMAN: No, I'm done.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I thought you were done.

Q: Thank you. Paolo von Schirach, Schirach Report.

We've heard, and you've confirmed here, obviously, that there is an endgame, degrade and destroy ISIL. But you, Mr. Schieffer, also pointed out a moment ago at the introduction there's been 190 sorties. Now, if I recall correctly, during the Kosovo campaign there were several thousands to fight a third-rate enemy, that was Slobodan Milosevic, to bend him to our will and essentially let Kosovo go.

Now here we have 190 sorties. Each sortie is one machine gun post, one vehicle, something like that. This progression, at this rate, with the Syrian army that we understand is going to take – or rather the Syrian fighters, the moderate fighters, it's going to take more than one year to train them. There are a few thousands of them. The Iraqis that you illustrated we're not exactly sure how long it will take for them to organize and to get enough credibility to convince the Sunni tribal leaders to come onboard and really re-engage in another – you know, in another surge, if you wish, a la 19 – 2008.

So given all this – there is an endgame, no boots on the ground, no American military forces committed, we don't really understand who is on our side at the moment, the allies may come, but of mostly symbolic value as opposed to substantive value – who's going to fight the war? Which is, by the way, not a war, as we are told, because we're not calling that way. And the president said it's going to be more akin Yemen or Somalia. So it's Yemen and Somalia, it's not a war, it's not a conflict, no American boots on the ground, and so far, 190 sorties.

Is that serious?

MR. SCHIEFFER: I think it's an excellent question. (Laughter.)

MR. ZARATE: I mean, it's in part what I said; part of the danger here is a strategy and an execution that's basically half-measures. And I think you're absolutely, right, especially as you move across the border into Syria. You know, this is a president that has staked his claim on ending wars, right? The tides of war are receding. And he has not wanted to invest in either lexicon of war – he himself has not used the term “war” in his presentation to the nation, and not wanted to commit boots on the ground other than special advisers and spotters, perhaps.

So I think at the end of the day we're going to have to degrade for a long time and hope that the allies come along with us and are willing to fight and die on behalf of this cause, understanding what are own limitations are.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let's go to the other side over here. There's a lady in the back there. And this is going to have to be pretty close to the last question.

Q: Having been a senior adviser and tactical instructor to the U.S. Marine Corps on counterinsurgency in both Iraq and Afghanistan, one of the things that struck me most is we say the right thing, as one of the gentlemen on the podium said, we very rarely are seen to be doing the right thing. Very often that's manifested in all the so-called experts we've sent to particularly Iraq, but to some extent in Afghanistan, as well, where there are lots of experts with no expertise, who are confined to megabases and minicities and don't really know what we're dealing with.

We need to be within a community, the communities that have grudges, grievances and frustrations against their own establishment. Sadly, however, we've abrogated that role, in either being unwilling or unable to tackle how communities think and feel, and the vacuum and void that's been created there has been taken over by the extremists and fanatics that we're now having to deal with.

So that has been the bane of my existence in 12 ½ years in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I don't know how anyone's going to be able to address that since that has been across the board under two very different administrations. Thank you.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yeah, do you want to –

MR. ALTERMAN: You know, again, it comes down to this issue I think we're very comfortable with physics and chemistry, and what you're describing is this incredibly nuanced psychology and politics and all these other things. And I've yet to see a bureaucracy that's very good at institutionalizing understanding and knowledge of that. I mean, I think one of the problems the U.S. intelligence community has writ large is, how do you go from knowledge to wisdom? You can know lots of facts, but how do you know what to do with it? As an institution it's really hard.

And that's one of the things – you know, think tanks – and I see my boss there – think tanks are all about, right, letting people do things with the idea that a lot of different people will do a lot of different things, and somehow, out of the middle, you'll end up in the right place, but no individual decision is necessarily absolutely the right decision.

I think what your experience suggests to me is we have to think as a nation how deep into this can we get. I mean, we know the outcome we want. What outcome can we produce? And the challenge of that is, if you become too reticent, and I think people – a lot of my Arab friends have complained the Obama administration is much too reticent – then people think there's actually nothing you're willing to do and you become less relevant.

As a country, I think, we have to be better at figuring out where we can do things. There is some physics and chemistry involved. There are times when we have to be very precise about applying psychology, politics, the other kinds of things, and times when you say, you know what, that is just too delicate; we can't do that and we'd best off compensate for if they go in another direction.

I think this is about a world which has become much more complex, in which there's been a democratization of destruction, in which a lot of individuals can have global reach, which

never was possible even 10 years ago. I think we're still – we're still trying to swallow what it is we can do, and I think it's going to take us a while to get there. But your experience, I think, to me not only highlights that they were – we were unable to do in the narrow sense what you were encountering in Afghanistan and Iraq, but it's very – as you know better than anybody in this room, to get a really smart bureaucracy, a really smart bureaucracy, that, in all my time of working with the U.S. government, I haven't seen really smart bureaucracies.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I –

MR. ZARATE: I think we did get this right in the surge and the al-Anbar awakening, by the way, at least in part.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yeah. The surge was successful.

MR. ZARATE: It worked.

MR. SCHIEFFER: It worked.

MR. ZARATE: Even – both administrations admitted at the end of the day that it worked.

MR. SCHIEFFER: We're going to have to close here, but I'm going to have – I have the rare opportunity here to call on someone who's been in Washington longer than I have. Lloyd Hand is right down here, who was here during the Johnson administration, and he just raised his hand. Lloyd, you may ask the last question of this session today.

Q: Thank you, Bob. You didn't need to call on me that way. (Laughter.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, I may never get another chance. (Laughter.)

Q: No, I'm only kidding. I have a two-part question. If I had orange socks on, you'd know I went to the University of Texas.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yes.

Q: And I see your purple socks and I know that's TCU. But Jonathan, what school has fuchsia socks? (Laughter.)

MR. ALTERMAN: Well, so I honestly got these socks – they're bishop socks I got at a papal supply store in Rome. (Laughter.) And my son and I got matching socks. (Laughter.)

Q: (Inaudible.)

Here's my question. The president has said, and it's been repeated by others, that ISIL, or ISIS, constitutes an existential threat to the Middle East, to the region, to others who adhere to

the religious tenets. Seventy-one percent of the American people, last poll, believed our country should do something.

It's been very interesting, genuinely interesting to listen to this analysis and some good questions. Here's my question I'd like for each of you to comment on. What should the president have done; what should the president do?

(Pause.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: Julianna, we'll just start with you.

MS. GOLDMAN: No, let's start with Jon. (Laughter.)

MR. ALTERMAN: I'll start. That's fine. Look, I –

Q: Ladies first.

MR. ALTERMAN: There you go.

MS. GOLDMAN: No –

MR. ALTERMAN: She's calling on ladies first. There you go.

MS. GOLDMAN: Go ahead.

MR. ZARATE: Want me to go?

MS. GOLDMAN: Yeah, go ahead. I feel less comfortable saying what he should and shouldn't be doing.

MR. ZARATE: Well, you know, I sat with President Bush in the last four years of his administration, a very difficult time, where it felt like we were losing in Iraq, it felt like we began to lose in western Pakistan, and at a certain point, the president and the country have to commit to real sacrifice and a real fight if that's what we're up against, if that's the reality. If not, we can leave it for others, we can maintain or contain it. But if we are going to fight a group that has global ambitions, that wants to reach and touch the West, that wants to attack us, that's giving life to a broader global jihadi movement, we better be ready for a fight. And that means not taking things off the table.

So the thing I would say the president should not do, if he were listening to me – he's not – is stop saying what we're not going to do, start believing in what we say we are going to commit to, because then our allies will really follow and then we can really quarterback, like a good University of Texas quarterback or a TCU quarterback. You call the plays, the play gets run, and you know what's going to happen.

Otherwise, we're going to flail around and we're going to be caught in a broader quagmire. And I think the real danger for this president is, all of the things that he's wanted to avoid are coming to fruition for lack of action when it matters. Because there are moments of reflection, but there are moments of action, and there are strategic windows where action matters more than most. And we're running the danger of missing those strategic opportunities.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I think, Lloyd, that the administration should recognize that the war on terror – you can call it whatever you want to – is not over. Yes, Osama bin Laden is dead, and General Motors is alive. (Laughter.) But the war on terrorism is still there and it won't be over till the terrorists say it is over. And I think that's simply recognizing reality. I don't think that's going back on your word. I don't think that's talking about, well, I don't want to be the Bush administration. They're there. They're trying to kill us. And I think we simply have to recognize that.

And I think, you know, when Americans are murdered on television, I don't think it calls for a measured response. I think you'd have to hit back, if I were advising the president, and hit back hard, and then step back and talk about what's going to be our long-term strategy here.

Jon.

MR. ALTERMAN: And there are two more things. First, very much along the lines of what you described, I thought last August, September, the president should have done something demonstrative and humiliating to Bashar al-Assad. Not launch missiles from the middle of the Mediterranean, but something that showed we can do whatever we want to do, when we want to do it; and the reason we're not is because we don't want to, not because we can't, not because we don't care enough; and put everybody on notice that there's not a predictability to U.S. action or inaction. I think that would have been helpful.

I think as we look at ISIS, we have to think about what happened in the Sunni Awakening, we have to understand that this is a lot about politics, it's a lot about resources, it's a lot about people feeling very vulnerable, and we have to work to shrink the area where ISIS can operate. And you do that by bringing people over, making difficult deals with nasty people, and ultimately moving toward making this group – drying it up and there are a smaller number of people who you'll have to capture or kill. And a lot of people will say, you know what, we're going to deal with this new environment.

And I don't see us thinking through where this needs to go strategically. Where this needs to go strategically is some sort of deal whereby the people who are letting these guys operate, whereby the people who are buying oil from them and doing all those things, say, we're going to stop and because we see a better way. I'm not sure we understand where that's going, and we keep trying to, you know, pound them into the ground. But as long as they have a place to operate, they're going to keep operating.

MS. GOLDMAN: I'll just add that the messaging is going to be very important. As you said, Americans are scared. They're seeing people being beheaded on television. And the response from the president should be one of leadership, should be one of reassuring the

American people and behind honest with the American people, and not necessarily getting into the rhetorical, semantic games. I mean, the question of whether or not there will be boots on the ground, I mean, there are essentially boots on the ground now. It's going to be up to the president to be honest and to admit if they need to recalibrate the strategy as it's going and to not automatically be ruling things out, to welcome a transparent debate in Congress, as well.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, thank you all very much on behalf of CSIS and TCU.
(Applause.) Thank you.

(END)