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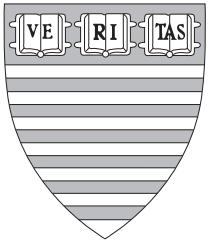
The Theodore H. White Lecture

with

Peter Beinart

Joan Shorenstein Center
PRESS • POLITICS



• PUBLIC POLICY •

John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

2005

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The Theodore H. White Lecture on Press and Politics commemorates the life of the late reporter and historian who created the style and set the standard for contemporary political journalism and campaign coverage.

White, who began his journalism career delivering the *Boston Post,* entered Harvard College in 1932 on a newsboy's scholarship. He studied Chinese history and Oriental languages. In 1939, he witnessed the bombing of Chungking while freelance reporting on a Sheldon Fellowship, and later explained, "Three thousand human beings died; once I'd seen that I knew I wasn't going home to be a professor."

During the war, White covered East Asia for *Time* and returned to write *Thunder Out of China,* a controversial critique of the American-supported Nationalist Chinese government. For the next two decades, he contributed to numerous periodicals and magazines, published two books on the Second World War and even wrote fiction.

A lifelong student of American political leadership, White in 1959 sought support for a 20-year research project, a retrospective of presidential campaigns. After being advised to drop such an academic exercise by fellow reporters, he took to the campaign trail and, relegated to the "zoo plane," changed the course of American political journalism with *The Making of the President, 1960.*

White's *Making of the President* editions for 1964, 1968, and 1972 and *America in Search of Itself* remain vital historical documents on campaigns and the press.

Before his death in 1986, Theodore White also served on the Kennedy School's Visiting Committee, where he was one of the early architects of what has become the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy. The late Blair Clark, former senior vice president of CBS who chaired the committee to establish this lectureship, asked, "Did Teddy White ever find the history he spent his life searching for? Well, of course not, he would have laughed at such pretension. But he came close, very close, didn't he? And he never quit the strenuous search for the elusive reality, and for its meaning in our lives."

PETER BEINART is editor-at-large of the *New Republic*.

In the summer of 1993 Beinart was a reporter-researcher at the *New Republic.* He went on to study international relations at University College, Oxford, where he received his master of philosophy degree in 1995. After graduating, Beinart returned to TNR as managing editor. He became senior editor in June 1997. From November 1999 until March 2006, he served as the magazine's editor.

Beinart also writes a monthly column for the *Washington Post*. He has written for the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Financial Times*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*, where he is a contributor. In 2004, he was named Columnist of the Year by the *The Week* magazine.

Beinart graduated from Yale University in 1993, winning both Rhodes and Marshall (declined) scholarships for graduate study at Oxford University.

He has appeared on ABC's "This Week" with George Stephanopoulos, "The McLaughlin Group," "Charlie Rose," and many other television programs. Beinart is the author of the forthcoming book, *The Good Fight: Why Liberals—And Only Liberals—Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great Again.*

THEODORE H. WHITE LECTURE
OCTOBER 27, 2005

Mr. Jones: Good evening. I'm Alex Jones, the director of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy here at the Kennedy School of Government, and I welcome you to this happy evening. This is one of the true high points of our year.

As some of you know, and some may not, the Shorenstein Center was created nearly 20 years ago as a memorial to Joan Shorenstein, a superb television journalist who died of breast cancer far too young. Her father, Walter Shorenstein, endowed the Center as a place for a focused and searching examination of the intersection of the press, politics and public policy. Walter Shorenstein not only made the Center possible, but he has remained vitally interested in what we do and has been our unstinting supporter and friend. He's here tonight and I ask that you join me in recognizing his great contribution.

(Applause)

By the way, Walter celebrated his 90th birthday earlier this year at a party which required taking over the entire Four Seasons Restaurant, in New York, for a night. It was a great party. If anything, I would say that as he looks forward to his 100th birthday party, he is only picking up steam.

A bit later you will hear from Peter Beinart, our distinguished Theodore White lecturer for 2005. But first I have another task to perform, which is an honor, but a bittersweet one.

Nearly a year ago, we at the Shorenstein Center lost a great and much admired friend, David Nyhan, who died unexpectedly in January. Many of you knew David well, but some of you did not, and I want to speak about him as we, this year, inaugurate the first annual David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism.

David Nyhan was a man of many parts: devoted family man, beloved friend, always boon companion. He was a big, handsome man with a killer Irish smile who had that rare power to light up a room just by walking in. I saw him do it many times when he was a fellow at the Shorenstein Center.

But tonight we honor David Nyhan, the consummate reporter and political journalist. This was the role that occupied much of his life and at which he could not be bested. David was a reporter and then a columnist at the *Boston Globe,* and his work had both a theme and a character. The theme was almost always power, political power, and also, especially, the abuse of political power by the big shots at the expense of the little guys. He loved politics, and he also loved politicians. As a group, he respected them. He felt they were often given a raw deal and judged by a standard that was smug and sanctimonious—two things David Nyhan never was.

For David, politics was the way things got done, or the reason things didn't get done. He was a reporter's reporter when it came to rooting out what really happened. It was the aspect of a political story that really interested him. And he especially loved being able to debunk the popular wisdom. He was an aficionado of hypocrisy and cant, and, at the time, he was the first person to defend a beleaguered politician whose crime was that he was human rather than that he was corrupt.

If politics was the theme of David's work, the character of that work was a mixture of courage and righteous anger, leavened by a great sense of humor and the ability to write like a dream.

But if politics was the theme of David's work, the character of that work was a mixture of courage and righteous anger, leavened by a great sense of humor and the ability to write like a dream. He relished a good—meaning a bad—fight, with a political figure or perspective. He had a knack of seeing beyond the surface issues and the baloney, to the heart of things, and especially to the reality of what was going on.

He was a self-avowed liberal and utterly nondefensive about it. I can tell you that if he were here with us tonight, no one would be watching the White House leak investigation, with its promise of perp walks tomorrow, with more delight or more shrewdness. As a columnist at the *Globe* he was a battler and a no-holds-barred advocate, but he was also always surprising his readers with his take on things. David Nyhan was his own man, and he called them as he saw them.

In his memory and honor the Nyhan family and many friends and admirers of David Nyhan have endowed the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism to recognize the kind of gutsy, stylish and relentless journalism that David Nyhan embodied. On the back of your program you will see a list of people who have contributed to the Nyhan Prize endowment. And I was just handed this right before the program tonight. It feels like a nice packet of cash, and on it it says, "It's a wonderful and very fitting tribute to Dave, and, hopefully, it will inspire many political journalists to live up to Dave's high standards. —Ted Kennedy."

Dave's wife, Olivia, his children, and many members of his family are here tonight, and I would ask them, now, all to please stand.

(Applause)

This year the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism goes to David Willman of the *Los Angeles Times.* David Willman is, without question, one of the nation's premier investigative reporters. He started out covering politics at the city and county level in California and moved on to presidential conventions and campaigns. When I asked him to give me some idea of the

work of which he was particularly proud, David cited interviews with Richard Nixon, George McGovern and Eugene McCarthy as three of his favorites.

He is a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, first, as a member of a team thrown into the breach to cover a disastrous earthquake, and, second, in 2001, for his own investigation into the Food and Drug Administration's very flawed drug approval process. In a series of articles that were both penetrating and devastating, he unmasked the corruption and flawed judgment involved with the FDA's approval of a drug for treating diabetes that proved to be so dangerous that it was withdrawn from the U.S. market.

He then went after the FDA's disregard of safety risks in an exhaustively reported and documented special report entitled "How a New Policy Led to Seven Deadly Drugs." The series described how the FDA had changed its policy of caution, consistent with the "first do no harm" physician's creed which had been the way they had approached drug approvals when considering new drugs. They changed it to something very different. In the 1990s, with the urging of the Clinton Administration, the FDA began to treat drug manufacturers as, as the Clinton Administration put it, partners, not adversaries. He then spelled out the calamity that followed in horrific detail. Eventually, all seven drugs were withdrawn, but not before more than 1,000 patients had died.

Like David Nyhan, David Willman speaks for the powerless to the powerful, representing the people who most need an advocate, in a strong, determined voice. In a series that I particularly liked, that may strike some bells with some of you, David Willman revealed that the tunnel walls of the subways in downtown Los Angeles were less than half—less than half—the thickness required, and California's public works contractor was forced to retrofit the structure at no cost to the public. Those of us who live with the aftermath of the Big Dig suspect that there may be some kinds of stories like that in our future as well. I think that we would agree that we could use a David Willman in Boston.

He is a two-time finalist for the Shorenstein Center's award, the Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting, which is given each spring for a piece of investigative reporting which has had a major impact on the public welfare. He now works at the Washington Bureau of the *Los Angeles Times*. I have no doubt whatsoever that David Nyhan is nodding his enthusiastic approval.

David Willman, please come forward to accept the first annual David Nyhan Prize for Political Reporting.

(Applause)

Mr. Willman: Thank you, Alex, for that generous introduction. I am sincerely honored to receive this award given in the memory of David Nyhan.

I'd like to thank Olivia Nyhan and all the Nyhan family members, along with the Shorenstein Center here at Harvard, including Edith Holway and

Jessica Cole, for your efforts to improve our journalism. I'd also like to recognize the constant support that I've received over the years from my wife, Joan, and our children, Allison and Joseph.

I'm just one reporter. I could not do what I do without the collaborative talents of my colleagues at the *Los Angeles Times*. Janet Lindblad, in particular, has provided invaluable research assistance for me. It's also great to see another colleague here tonight, Jack Nelson. I'm touched that both Jack and his wife, Barbara, could make it. The national prominence of the *L.A. Times* is truly Jack's legacy.

. . . my own sensibilities as a journalist were probably not too far from his. Simply put, it would be to report deeply, be the surrogate eyes and ears for those people who care, who lack access to power. Remember—always—the little guy, let the voiceless be heard.

We've been through a lot of executives at the *L.A. Times*. You may have heard about some of our issues and you might be familiar with some of our challenges. At times it has been truly interesting. But I'd like, now, also to recognize my great fortune in stumbling into working for the man I consider to be the best editor in American journalism, and that is John Carroll. Rumor has it John is trying to sell his California hot tub and move to Harvard; Harvard will be the winner.

In preparing to visit here tonight, I spoke with some old friends from New England, and they impressed upon me how generous David Nyhan was to young reporters. And, as a former young reporter, I can't tell you how important and how valued that is. They said that, unfailingly, Dave was a champion of the underdog. I never did have the pleasure of meeting Dave, but it struck me that my own sensibilities as a journalist were probably not too far from his. Simply put, it would be to report deeply, be the surrogate eyes and ears for those people who care, who lack access to power. Remember—always—the little guy, let the voiceless be heard.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Mr. Jones: If you want to know what David Nyhan's smile looked like, he's got two children here tonight who are just the living embodiment of him.

By the way, John Carroll *is* going to be here. He has accepted a position at the Shorenstein Center beginning in January, I'm very, very glad to say.

Thank you, David.

Theodore H. White was also a consummate reporter whose passion was politics. He came to Harvard on a newsboy's scholarship and went on to a

very distinguished career as a journalist and also a historian. Indeed, Teddy White, as he was universally known, changed both political journalism and politics when he wrote *The Making of the President, 1960*, about the Kennedy/ Nixon campaign. For the first time he raised the curtain on the sausage-making side of presidential campaigns and changed forever the candor and behind-the-scenes drama that is now at the heart of campaign coverage.

He followed that first book with three more *Making of the President* books, in 1964, 1968 and 1972. No one has yet matched those smart and groundbreaking examinations of what happens and why, in the maelstrom of a political campaign. And it is fair to say that Teddy White's heirs are the journalists of today who try to pierce the veil of politics, to understand what is happening, and to then analyze and deliver the goods to those of us who are trying to understand.

Before his death in 1986, Teddy White was one of the architects of what became the Shorenstein Center. One of the first moves of Marvin Kalb, the Center's founding director, was to establish the Theodore H. White Lecture on the Press and Politics in his honor. This year the White Lecture is to be delivered by a young man who, despite his years, has already established himself as one of the freshest thinkers and most brilliant voices on the liberal side of the nation's political debate.

Last year's White Lecture was, in fact, delivered by the person who we feel holds that title on the conservative side of the equation: Bill Kristol, editor of the *Weekly Standard.* More than once, after last year's lecture, I heard expressed sentiments from liberals in the audience that can be summarized as, Why don't we have someone like him? Well, in fact, liberalism does have its own counterpart to Bill Kristol, and I mean that very much as a compliment.

Peter Beinart is the editor of the *New Republic*. Under his leadership, that magazine has emerged as the clarion voice of a new liberalism and has also kept faith with the best traditions of the old liberalism. Many of you are probably familiar with Peter from his column in the magazine, as well as his work in the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and other such opinion-shaping vehicles.

Those of you who have seen Peter in action know that he is witty, smart, aggressive, and, most important, he has ideas. He has lots of ideas. *The Week* magazine named him Columnist of the Year in 2004, and he is a regular on the television talk circuit. But his most ambitious undertaking has been to dare what some have thought was impossible: to resurrect liberalism in a nation that seems to have decided that the word "liberal" is an epithet.

Oddly enough, Peter Beinart is a 1993 graduate of that hotbed of conservatism, Yale University, where he won a Rhodes Scholarship and subsequently received a master's degree from University College, Oxford. Before he left for Britain, he spent a summer as a reporter/researcher at

the *New Republic* and returned, after Oxford, as the magazine's managing editor—not bad for a first job. A few years later he was named editor.

In his writing Peter has advocated a muscular liberalism, a liberalism that is unapologetic and unblinking, what he has called a Fighting Faith. He has expressed dismay that liberalism in recent years has been largely framed in the negative—against the war in Iraq, against restrictions on civil liberties, against America's worsening reputation in the world. Enough, says Peter Beinart. His new book is entitled *The Good Fight: Why Liberals—And Only Liberals—Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great Again.*

His lecture tonight is "New Media, Old Media and the Future of Liberalism." It is my pleasure and honor to present the Theodore H. White Lecturer on Press and Politics, Peter Beinart.

(Applause)

Mr. Beinart: Thank you very much.

I'd like to thank Alex Jones, Edie Holway and the Shorenstein Center for inviting me here. It's a great pleasure to be back in Cambridge, where I grew up and imbibed all those rustic, heartland values for which the city is so rightly renowned. It is a particular privilege to be delivering a lecture named for Teddy White.

After I was asked to give this lecture, a friend told me that the organizers had been slightly concerned about my age, but then they decided, well, perhaps I'd provide a fresh perspective. This is a mistake commonly made about the *New Republic*, a magazine written by 28-year-olds who think like 65-year-olds, for an audience of 65-year-olds who want to know how the younger generation thinks.

(Laughter)

Mr. Beinart: But I took the bait and decided to speak about the new liberal, political culture emerging on the Internet. Except soon after deciding I realized I have no particular expertise on this topic, never having written a blog myself, and that I actually may be too old, too generationally out of touch, to provide an answer.

But then, as I was re-reading Teddy White, it hit me that he would have understood the blogs very well, that while they sometimes seem alien to me, they would have seemed quite familiar, perhaps, to him. Let me try to explain.

Several months ago I was re-reading Teddy White's *The Making of a President, 1972*, and I came upon his description of Gene Pokorny, the 25-year-old organizer for George McGovern's primary campaign in Wisconsin. Pokorny clearly intrigued White, and what intrigued him was the young activist's combination of idealism, organizational brilliance and intellectual parochialism. Pokorny, White explained, was building a highly agile, passionately devoted, virtually leaderless guerilla army and, with veiled analogies to Vietnam, described how it snuck up on the heavy, clumsy, top-down campaigns of Edmund Muskie and Hubert Humphrey,

and then ambushed them to win Wisconsin, and, ultimately, the Democratic nomination itself.

Pokorny , White stressed, was no dreamer and no purist. He had no interest in lost causes. He was in it to win and he was creating new ways to win, innovations that would transform the way presidential candidates were nominated. There was little innocence about Pokorny as an organizer, White wrote, as there was little innocence about McGovern's other Pokornys around the country. What innocence McGovern's guerillas were to display would be political and historical, an ignorance about the outer world beyond the guerilla theater in which they acted.

I realized Teddy White would have had a lot to say about the emerging culture of the liberal blogosphere.

When I read that sentence I realized Teddy White would have had a lot to say about the emerging culture of the liberal blogosphere. In *The Making of a President, 1972,* White chronicled a dramatic shift in power within the Democratic Party. In the minds of people like Gene Pokorny, the party insiders had been discredited: the big city bosses, the labor leaders, the veteran polls. First, of course, because they supported the war in Vietnam, but also because they had lost. They had gotten their man in 1968, Hubert Humphrey, even though the activists had wanted, first, Eugene McCarthy, then Robert Kennedy, then George McGovern himself. The insiders had pushed through Humphrey, who had supported a war the party grass roots loathed, and they had lost the 1968 presidency anyway. They had abandoned principle and it hadn't even done them any good. I'm hoping this will sound at least vaguely familiar.

Between 1968 and 1972, the party activists made sure that couldn't happen again. The Reform Commission, originally headed by McGovern himself, drastically overhauled the way the Democratic Party chose its nominees, making it impossible for local bosses to control city or state delegations and then throw them to a presidential candidate in a back-room deal. Instead, the process was opened up, with candidates forced to compete in primaries state by state. For old-style pols like Humphrey, accustomed to top-down campaigns where party leaders wielded enormous sway, this was a brave, new world and they couldn't adjust.

For young organizers like Pokorny, however, and McGovern's campaign manager, Gary Hart, who had helped write the new rules, the changes were a godsend, and they rode them all the way to the 1972 nomination. By the time the Democratic Party convened to nominate McGovern in Miami, the party had been turned upside down. Two hundred twenty-five of the two hundred fifty-five Democratic members of Congress had not been selected as delegates. Neither had the mayors of Boston, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Detroit and Philadelphia. Former New York Governor W. Averell

Harriman had tried to become a delegate and then was defeated by a 19-year-old college sophomore. There's hope for some of you out there.

What Pokorny had helped engineer, and what White chronicled, was an historic shift of power inside the Democratic Party, from the inside out, from the insiders to the activists and the grass roots.

Now fast-forward two decades, not to today and the emerging liberal blogosphere, but to the late 1980s and early 1990s, when I came of age politically. When I was discovering politics and political journalism, there were no Gene Pokornys. In fact, the Democratic Party was undergoing a reverse power shift from the outside in.

By 1984 the liberal activist base that had taken control under McGovern seemed as exhausted and discredited as Hubert Humphrey must have seemed in 1972. And a group of insiders, particularly former Capitol Hill staffers for southern and centrist Democrats, like Al From and Will Marshall of the Democratic Leadership Council, began to move, began to limit the power that the activists wielded.

First they helped establish the Super Tuesday primaries in the South to help a southern moderate candidate like Al Gore win the nomination. That failed, of course. But, in 1992, Bill Clinton managed to win the Democratic Party nomination even as he "Sister-Souljahed" the Democratic Party's grassroots base. If anyone thinks there isn't a generation gap between people my age and people who are in college today, just ask undergraduates if they know who Sister Souljah was.

I think you'll find, on balance, that politically active liberals who came of age when I did, in the early 1990s, are a bit more instinctively supportive of military force than our baby-boom elders . . .

The DLC takeover wasn't antidemocratic. In many ways, it gave a broader and more representative cross section of Democrats a voice in the nominating process. But it was, at least, partly anti-activist. And so for us who were in college when Clinton got elected, our heroes were people like George Stephanopoulos or James Carville and Paul Begala, former congressional aides, and political consultants. They were the ones who had brought the Democrats back to power.

Back then, too, like Vietnam, and Iraq today, these political shifts took place against the backdrop of war. If the Gene Pokornys were shaped by watching the Democratic Party take America into Vietnam, we were shaped by the Gulf War, which Washington Democrats and our liberal professors had opposed because they thought it was another Vietnam, but it turned out not to be, and neither were Bosnia and Kosovo. In fact, after a while it became, for us, a little frightening to contemplate what would have happened had we not fought those wars.

And that's why I think you'll find, on balance, that politically active liberals who came of age when I did, in the early 1990s, are a bit more instinctively supportive of military force than our baby-boom elders, as well as the liberals a half generation younger, of this new blog generation, for whom the formative experience is Iraq. (It might have been 9/11, but it's clearly been Iraq.)

My point is that, as a result of our experience, we didn't instinctively view the Democratic Party's activist base as either unfailingly correct on the big issues, nor very good at winning elections. We also didn't have a formative experience of seeing our government mislead us, which the Vietnam and the Iraq generations have now clearly had. (Of course, conservatives in the 1990s felt they had that experience with Bill Clinton, but that wasn't the experience for us.) For us the Democratic Party in Washington, the insiders, had done pretty well. We wanted them to continue and continue to make the country better.

All of which brings me to this new generation, the half-generation younger than me, the one that I think Teddy White would have understood so well. For this generation of liberals the defining event is clearly the Iraq War, but not only the Iraq War. It is the fact that insiders in the Democratic Party, the policy wonks, the political consultants, the very people we cheered in our college dorm rooms in 1992, largely backed the Iraq War and thus betrayed them. Those people told the party's grassroots base, which was highly skeptical, to back the war because it would turn out well, and because opposing it would be politically disastrous, just as it had been politically disastrous for an earlier generation of Democrats—like Sam Nunn—who had opposed the Gulf War and therefore had seen their political ambitions shattered.

But, of course, the war has not turned out well, and, as it didn't for Hubert Humphrey, it has not even won the Democrats power. The Democrats lost in 2002 and lost again in 2004. And so I think, again, you are seeing what you saw in 1972, the pendulum, having shifted in is now shifting out. And I think you can actually date the very moment that this began happening, the very moment that the pendulum, which had been shifting from outsiders to insiders in the Democratic Party, started shifting again from insiders to outsiders.

It was February 21, 2003, when Howard Dean, who was then virtually unknown, went in front of the Democratic National Committee's winter meeting. Interestingly, all the other candidates were training their attacks on George W. Bush. What made Howard Dean's speech significant was that he trained his attacks largely on the Democratic Party in Washington itself. Dean's riff went something like this: What I want to know is why the Democrats in Washington are supporting the Iraq War. What I want to know is why the Democrats in Washington are supporting tax cuts, and on and on like this. And at a certain point, the crowd of Democratic activists started chanting back, "We want to know, too!" That was the moment at

which power, which had been shifting in the Democratic Party, I think, ever since the 1980s, from the outside in, began to shift again, from the inside out.

And from there, of course, Howard Dean experienced this meteoric rise and, like in 1972, it wasn't only because of war, it was because of war and a change in the way that campaigns were run. This time it wasn't because of changes in the party rules, it was because of the Internet. The Internet did for Howard Dean what the change in party rules between 1968 and 1972 had done for George McGovern: it created a huge opportunity for a grassroots, decentralized, activist campaign to run against party insiders and to rewrite the rules of presidential politics.

Howard Dean lost the battle for the nomination, but he's won the war, or he's at least winning the war, for the soul of the Democratic Party.

And I think it's clearly done that. Howard Dean lost the battle for the nomination, but he's won the war, or he's at least winning the war, for the soul of the Democratic Party. When party insiders tried to put their candidates, earlier this year, in as head of the Democratic Party, they were defeated by this surge of new Internet activists, many of them, like Daily Kos, the Web site, or Mydd.com, or Moveon.org, with close ties to the Dean campaign.

What we are seeing, I think, is a new generation in the Democratic Party, a post-Clinton generation. The children of Bill Clinton are being pushed aside by the children of Howard Dean. If the Democrats win big in 2006, which I think is quite likely, I think what you will see is that those Democrats will have an identity which is fundamentally different from the Democrats, the new Democrats, who were elected after 1990.

In 1974 Gary Hart, McGovern's campaign manager, famously said, we're not "just a bunch of little Hubert Humphreys." I wouldn't be surprised at all to see the Democrats who win in 2006 say something similar about the Clintons and the new Democrats of the 1990s: we are not them. We have been shaped by a fundamentally different set of forces. And, as in the 1970s, part of the reason that these people will be so different is that this shift in power in the Democratic Party from the inside out is coinciding with other large, structural changes in American politics, again, changes that echo the changes of the early 1970s.

Political scientists sometimes talk about extrovert and introvert cycles in American history, periods where America is more optimistic about its ability to shape the world, and periods where America is less optimistic. I think you can see Vietnam as beginning an introvert cycle that ended with the Gulf War. Remember, even Ronald Reagan, considered this great foreign policy hawk, was never willing to send American troops to Central America.

It was a period where America was very suspicious of sending American troops abroad.

Starting with the Gulf War, I think you saw the beginning of an extrovert cycle, starting with Iraq, going through Bill Clinton's military interventions in the 1990s, and now culminating in Iraq. And I think this year we're starting to see that pendulum shift again. We're moving toward a more introvert cycle. Public opinion is shifting. People are becoming more focused on domestic concerns, and this will have a very powerful effect on this new generation of Democrats, this Dean generation, this post–New-Democrat generation that I think we're starting to see being born.

The other thing that tends to happen in these introvert cycles is that Congress reestablishes its power. That happened very powerfully in the mid-1970s as a reaction against Vietnam, and Watergate, and the imperial presidency. I think you're going to start to see it in the coming years as well. The Harriet Miers defeat may, in fact, be the first sign of a real reassertion of congressional prerogative, which you tend to see at the introvert moment in American political history. And all of this is shaping the character, it seems to me, of the new kind of liberals, the post-Clinton generation, that I think we're seeing emerging over the next couple of elections.

Let me just try to say, in closing, a word about what the identity of these people is. At first glance they may seem highly ideological. They may seem like a massive shift to the left in the kind of caricatured way that we think about the McGovern campaign. But although there are clearly very dovish elements in this new Internet world, I actually think that maybe, at least for right now, that is a mistaken way to understand what's happening.

And here, again, I go back to Teddy White. "Pokorny," he wrote, "has no stomach for martyrdom." The McGovern activists were not the New Left. They may have looked like the New Left to many people, but, in fact, they were people who had survived the 1960s and stayed in politics. They were people who, in their view, saw McGovern as actually a fairly mainstream, moderate candidate, a mild-mannered, long-serving senator with a heroic war record, deeply religious. Of course, they were against the war, but in a way, that fundamental litmus test freed them to be very pragmatic and to focus on tactics in the election. I think that is what really connects them to this new generation that you see today.

What's striking to me about this new generation that you're seeing emerging on the Internet is how focused they are on tactics, how focused they are on process, how quickly they assume that what's good for the Democratic Party is what's good for liberalism. The fusing, almost in a single intellectual step, of what the Democratic Party needs to do to win elections in 2006 and what liberalism should mean.

It seems to me there is great danger, not, as conservatives sometimes say, that we are seeing a gigantic shift to the left, but, in fact, that we are seeing something more akin to what happened in the mid-1970s with the

generation of neoliberals who came out of the '60s, who were elected in large numbers in 1974, and who you can associate Jimmy Carter with in 1976. A focus on tactics, an inability to create an ideological vision that replaced the Cold War liberalism that died in Vietnam, a focus on problem solving, and, as Michael Dukakis, who was elected first in 1974, said, a focus on competence, not ideology.

The achievement, I think, of the Clinton and the DLC generation was, in fact, to think about first principles, to think about the relationships between state and civil society, to think about the ability of the market to achieve traditional, liberal ends. I think that's fundamentally what distinguished them from the neo-liberals like Gary Hart and Michael Dukakis, who had emerged in the 1970s and '80s.

My fear is that the new blogosphere generation, the one that's emerging today, the children of Howard Dean, is so focused on organizational and tactical questions about how the Democratic Party can frame its message, they're not focused nearly enough on what the Democratic Party and what liberals believe. That they are so tied into the party structure itself that they don't spend nearly enough time thinking about what Democrats believe. They tend to assume that liberals and Democrats know what they believe in and, therefore, should focus on how they can package it for the country. When, in fact, that first step is not accurate at all. Liberals and Democrats don't know what they believe, and taking that second step, even if it wins an election in 2006, or an election in 2008, could produce a kind of false-dawn equivalent to the one the Democratic Party experienced in the mid-1970s, in which the Democrats actually do take power but haven't given enough serious thought to what they believe to know what to do with that power when they have it.

. . . one of the striking things about the bloggers is that they are not only activists, but they are journalists, too. The blogs blur that division.

Let me just end with a word about what this means for liberal journalism, because one of the striking things about the bloggers is that they are not only activists, but they are journalists, too. The blogs blur that division. Their stress on tactics, on winning elections rather than on first principle, I think, is bad for liberal opinion writing.

The bloggers are helping to create a journalistic culture with too much focus on what will help Democrats win, too much interest in the short-term. And it's producing cramped, small-bore, predictable and, perhaps worst of all, dull political writing. It's not what liberals need today. It's not what opinion journalism needs today. It's not even what the Democratic Party needs today, and I don't think Teddy White would have approved.

Thanks very much.

(Applause)

Mr. Jones: Thank you. Thank you, Peter.

By Kennedy School tradition, Peter will respond to questions from any of you in the audience. We have microphones here, there, up here and up here. If you would, line up at the microphones to ask your questions and also identify yourself. Please limit one to a customer, and, remember, it's a question, not a speech, that we are seeking.

As you're taking your positions, I will ask the first question. Who is the candidate, in 2008, for this new generation of Democrats?

Mr. Beinart: Well, I think the one person who it's not is Hillary Clinton. I say that as someone who admires Hillary Clinton, and admires what she's tried to do. It seems to me that what Hillary Clinton has done is taken a look at the post-9/11 world, where the Republicans created this huge advantage on national security, where people didn't think the Democratic Party was tough enough, and she said, I've seen this before. We faced exactly the same issue with crime, where the Democratic Party was not considered tough enough. And we took a series of steady, methodical steps that worked incredibly well to alleviate that problem over the course of the 1980s and into the 1990s.

It seems to me, if you look at what Hillary Clinton has done, being a very steadfast supporter of the Iraq War, supporting the $87 billion, getting on the Armed Services Committee, that's exactly what she's done: she has replayed her husband's scenario on crime, but this time on the military.

The remarkable story of 2005 . . . is that his advantage on foreign policy has basically collapsed.

But, in a very cruel twist of fate for her and her political ambitions, that very strategy has completely collapsed. The remarkable story of 2005, the last year since George W. Bush won the presidency, is that his advantage on foreign policy has basically collapsed. Even on the war on terrorism he can barely get 50 percent. And so Hillary Clinton, who is focusing all of her political energies on how she could appeal to people to her center and her right, now has this enormous problem on her political left. She has been following a political strategy—designed by her husband for a time when the Democratic activist base was willing to accept almost anything, when it was in a very unradical mood—at a time when, in fact, the Democratic Party activist base has become very radicalized.

As compelling a candidate as she is, she's going to have to go to event after event after event and answer the same question that sucked so much oxygen out of the air every time John Kerry and John Edwards tried to answer it, which was, if you don't like George W. Bush so much, how come you followed him into war in Iraq? (I should say, parenthetically, as

the editor of the *New Republic* and someone who supported the Iraq War, that is a question that I give a lot of thought to myself. But I don't have to win the Iowa caucuses.)

It seems to me that the notion people had a couple of years ago—that the space would be on Hillary Clinton's right—is no longer accurate. The space is on Hillary Clinton's left, and the question will be, is it Russ Feingold, or Wesley Clark, or John Kerry, or Al Gore? The most interesting horse race over the next year or two will be who emerges as the darling of the liberal, activist base to run against Hillary Clinton from her left. I think that candidacy could be a very potent one, particularly if someone can argue that they actually were against the Iraq War, can say what the liberal activist base wants, and can actually appeal to the country more because of various cultural factors, actually.

From the floor: Peter, right after the election you wrote a very good article. In fact, Alex referred to it in the introduction, advocating a muscular liberalism in which you harkened back to Roosevelt, to Truman, to Kennedy. Your remarks tonight seem to move away from that, recognizing that the followers of Howard Dean don't agree with that position. Have you changed your mind since you wrote the article in November, right after the election, advocating a muscular liberalism?

Mr. Beinart: No, no, not at all. There is an enormous amount of idealism in the liberal wing of the Democratic Party today. It seems to me the party's great challenge is to convince people who are concerned about foreign policy and the "War on Terror"—who believe that while that phrase may be wrong, something like that exists and represents a very grave threat to liberal values around the world and to America—that this is an arena in which their idealism should express itself. They should not, because George W. Bush speaks about freedom and democracy, therefore take a position that, in fact, they're the new realists. They're the ones who don't really care what happens in Egypt or Saudi Arabia.

There is a language in the liberal tradition, which is dramatically different from George W. Bush's language but is also dramatically different from Brent Scowcroft or Henry Kissinger's realist language, upon which liberalists can draw. This is really at the heart of the book that I'm trying to write, and it goes something like this: America is a great country and is capable of great things in the world precisely because it recognizes that it is capable of evil. This, for me, is the great lesson that comes out of Cold War liberalism from Reinhold Niebuhr, passed on through Arthur Schlesinger: the understanding that America is an exceptional country precisely because we recognize that we are not inherently better than anybody else. And that that constant recognition is what is at the heart of the country's greatness.

As opposed to George W. Bush's tradition, which I think you can trace back to someone like John Foster Dulles, or even James Burnham, which basically says America is inherently good, American power is always good, doesn't need to be proved, doesn't need to be earned. It simply needs to

assert itself, and anyone around the world who suggests that we are morally fallible is anti-American.

Within that tradition, you can build a language for how liberalism can make America a greater country by promoting freedom around the world in a very different way than George W. Bush does. But I think for it to work, it's going to have to be a language that appeals to liberals, that convinces them that liberal values are at stake, and not that they are doing this so they can win some swing vote somewhere—because they may be able to win in 2006 and 2008 without this language at all—but that convinces them they need to believe in it because it's in their best moral tradition.

Mr. Sitaraman: I'm Ganesh Sitaraman. I was a graduate of the College and I'm at the law school right now.

You criticized the bloggers for being a little bit too concerned with tactics rather than ideas. As somebody in the kind of half-generation below you, who grew up with the experience of Clinton, not of 1992 but of '96 through 2000, I feel like our generation is very concerned that the new Democrats were too concerned with tactics.

Do you feel like people who are centrists now, aside from yourself, are actually doing the kind of big-ideas work, or is nobody doing it at all, the bloggers or the centrists?

Mr. Beinart: Well, I think you've made a very important point. I think that one of the important arguments to make—you know, we have Elaine Kamarck in the audience, so there are people who could do this better than me—is actually to defend Clintonism, to some degree, from that charge.

It's true that there were lots of zigs and zags during Bill Clinton's presidency, but it seemed to me there was a coherent set of ideas that underlaid it: the idea that traditional, liberal ends didn't always need to mean government programs; that you could use market principles to get to the ends that liberals wanted; the recognition that civil society was an incredibly important vehicle for achieving traditional, liberal goals—not only the state; and the recognition that it was not illiberal to ask people who received from government to show responsibility. It seemed to me that those were all incredibly important principles, and the outcomes, particularly in retrospect, look pretty good.

. . . part of this effort needs to start with the defense of Clintonism.

If you look at what has been the central, liberal question ever since the 1970s in terms of domestic policy—did life for working-class people and poor people actually get better under Clinton when it had been stagnating, or getting worse, since the early 1970s?—the answer is, it did. That took place in those very last few years of the Clinton Administration, partly because of his very wise fiscal policies.

So I think that, to some degree, part of this effort needs to start with the defense of Clintonism. Obviously, one would have hoped that it would have gone further. Many people hoped that we would have had, essentially, a third Clinton term, in which you could have put some of those things into practice. But my own view is that there was a misreading of the Clinton years, which led you down an intellectual blind alley.

Mr. McKeon: I'm Rich McKeon of the Harvard Institute of Learning in Retirement.

I'm wondering if you've given us an adequate idea of what you think are the domestic policy ideas of the children of the Dean generation. Clearly, the Democratic Party is split on foreign policy, but you must have some further impression of the domestic ideas among the, what you call the "liberal blogosphere," other than acceptance of what Clinton accomplished domestically.

Mr. Beinart: Yes. I think that there were two questions there, one is about what the liberal blogosphere believes on domestic policy; the other is what I would suggest that people believe.

On the first, I think what's striking about the liberal blogosphere is actually its fiscal conservatism. I think that one of the ways in which the terms left and right get confused is that the Democratic Party has been, for quite a long time, moving to the left on foreign policy and on culture, but moving to the right on economics. This is not surprising if you think about the fact that blue-collar people have been moving out of the Democratic Party, and white-collar people have been moving into the Democratic Party.

So, many of the people who may be considered quite far to the left on foreign policy or on cultural policy are very wedded to a balanced budget. The constituency for the arguments that someone like Richard Gephardt used to make—which basically said we don't really need a balanced budget because we need to stress economic investment more—is very weak in the Democratic Party.

The great challenge is for the Democratic Party to try to answer some of the questions that someone like Jacob Hacker has laid out so well. That is to say, in the midst of a period in which the middle class in America looks like it is basically in the same place as it was in the 1970s, the life of the average middle-class American has gotten dramatically more difficult. And the American welfare state used to be one in which corporations, more than the government, provided the things on which people relied: corporations provided health care, they provided economic stability, they provided fixed pensions.

American corporations, under the threat of international pressure and technological change, have retreated from providing many of those services, and the government hasn't stepped in. What this has produced is a dramatic rise in economic insecurity, even for Americans who, at first glance, don't seem that badly off. So there has been, for instance, a dramatic rise in bankruptcy, largely as the result of health-care costs in the

middle class. But many Americans, even when their income may seem reasonably high, are really one bad turn, whether it be a health-care event or losing of their job, away from economic disaster.

The central focus for the Democratic Party and for liberals has to be how to respond to that new reality, how to deal with the fact that there's actually a kind of hidden economic desperation, even in the middle class, even, to some degree, up into the upper middle class, because there is so little economic security in America today. That seems to be the central question which liberals need to address on the domestic policy side.

Mr. O'Malley: Thank you, Peter. My name is Patrick O'Malley.

I'll frame my question just in terms of what you said. You talk about economic desperation among the middle-class Americans. I would like you to take your ideas of liberalism as you would apply them to dealing with that, but also to put them in the larger context of a liberalism that would recognize the economic desperation of most of the rest of the world, of the developing world. This situation exists mostly because of American economic policies, which have run these incredibly huge deficits, which Alan Greenspan said are unsustainable. We've heard the word again and again and again and again. They're unsustainable. Everything is unsustainable.

If you had the ideal candidate coming in, running for president, developing a platform now, a liberal, what would your advice be to him in terms of getting out of Iraq or just the war in Iraq, in terms of the equation of human rights with provisions in homeland security, the erosion of—

Mr. Beinart: These are a lot of different questions to keep track of.

Mr. O'Malley: I'm trying to find—we've heard the word liberal, liberal, liberal, liberal. We haven't yet heard one thing about what a liberal should stand for, your very point, and what economic policies to deal with the desperation of the middle classes can be developed in view of the deficits that have to be dealt with.

Mr. Beinart: Why don't I try to respond to the international dimensions of your question, because I think there's a lot of truth in that. I think that one of the themes you see in conservative thinking throughout the Cold War was the continual assertion that, in fact, Communism had nothing to do with poverty, that global poverty and Communism were completely unrelated, and that when liberals tried to suggest that one of the answers to Communism was to provide economic hope for people, that that was a way of apologizing for Communism.

. . . there is still an utter denial of the idea that economic desperation may be part of the story . . .

I think you have seen a similar kind of claim made since 9/11, on the right, about terrorism, about jihadism. The suggestion that, because the

9/11 hijackers came from Saudi Arabia, therefore, poverty is not part of this story at all. There is a willingness, for which I think conservatives deserve credit, to recognize that, in fact, a lack of political freedom may be part of the story. I think that came into the conservative movement under Ronald Reagan. It wasn't really there before.

But there is still an utter denial of the idea that economic desperation may be part of the story, a very simple-minded suggestion that because Saudi Arabia, for instance, is not a desperately poor country, the roots of jihadism have nothing to do with global poverty. Where, in fact, Saudi Arabia's GDP per capita has dropped by half since the 1980s. It is a society in economic free fall, where you have vast numbers of people coming out of college every year trained to do nothing at all, sitting around and dreaming of a kind of purified Islam.

In the same way you're seeing, in large parts of the Middle East, that even though people in the Middle East may have college degrees, some of them, those college degrees are not equipping them to do anything. They are not in societies that can absorb large numbers of people graduating from college and provide them with any kind of economic opportunity. There is a reason that you see very few jihadists coming out of India, for instance, a country which, in fact, has some degree of economic hope and economic promise.

The conservative suggestion that trade alone can answer that is simple-minded. What economists have learned in recent years is that the key is using aid as a vehicle for bringing countries into the world economy.

I don't think that the answer is for countries to stay out of the world economy. I think the answer is to bring the Muslim world into the world economy, through exactly what the 9/11 Commission asked for, through exactly what the Arab Human Development Corps asked for, which is a massive commitment to the linkage of educational opportunity in the Muslim world to economic engagement in the global economy. I think that that has to be part of the liberal story in a way that it hasn't been, except for in very marginal ways, under the Bush Administration.

Mr. O'Malley: Thank you.

Mr. Jones: Two more questions.

Ms. Adams: Hi, my name is Jama Adams. I'm a second-year student here at the Kennedy School and co-chair of the Kennedy School Democratic Caucus, and we are trying to facilitate this conversation on what do Democrats stand for, what are our values.

I'd like your opinion on leveraging the particular kinds of tools and resources we have available here on how to be leaders in helping the Democratic Party define itself.

Mr. Beinart: It seems to me the biggest problem that the Democratic Party has is that it doesn't take conservatives seriously enough. There is a very long-term, kind of patronizing, view that because there are not that many conservatives at places like Harvard, by and large, that there's not a

lot of serious, important, intellectual work going on among conservatives, and that liberals are the ones in control of ideas. I think that really has not been the case for a very long time.

Starting in the 1950s the conservative movement put an enormous amount of energy and effort into ideas, and it paid off very handsomely. What's striking to me about conservatives—if you talk to young conservatives, they know their intellectual history, they know their intellectual lineage extremely well, and liberals, by and large, have very little sense of it.

If you talk to young conservatives, they know their intellectual history . . . extremely well, and liberals, by and large, have very little sense of it.

If you ask your average 24-year-old conservative who were the people who founded *National Review,* who was Frank Meyer, they will know. They will tell you. They will go into detail about the debates between libertarians and traditionalists, and the fusion that was created in the 1950s. You find that maybe because, you know, they don't have much else better to do. But for whatever reason, I think it is the source of conservative power, and liberals make a serious mistake.

Yes, of course, it helps conservatives a lot that they have a big, kind of corporate K-Street infrastructure that funds all of these things. Yes, but liberals have plenty of money out there to fund themselves. It's a complete misnomer to think there isn't money on the liberal side; they're swimming with money.

The question is, are liberals going to invest in the kind of effort that the business community invested in in the 1950s and '60s and 1970s to produce the ideas that now liberals are desperately battling against, like Social Security privatization and medical savings accounts? Or are liberals going to fall into the trap of thinking that the only real source of conservative strength is their willingness to play so nastily in these presidential campaigns and their ability to raise so much money, and conclude that that's all liberals need to do?

If liberals think that what they need to do is just get their own version of the Swift Boat veteran, they will completely misunderstand the reason that they've been losing and the reason that conservatives have been so successful.

Mr. Hartig: My name is Luke Hartig. I'm a first-year master's candidate here at the Kennedy School of Government.

My question for you is building on the previous question and on a debate we've been having here. One of the principal objections to liberalism and to Democratic liberalism has been that it has been elitist, and that, in particular, the Democratic Party and the DNC has had this sort of top-down thing, where at the top we develop these great, elitist ideas and then

the masses don't want to support them because they're not in line with what they're thinking nearly as much as Republican ideals are.

My question for you is, should the DNC still have kind of an overarching power over this, or should we be just identifying a general liberalism, which then can be applied at the grassroots levels in whatever way is deemed necessary by the particular candidate?

Mr. Beinart: Well, as a practical matter the message tends to come less out of the DNC than out of a presidential candidate. Every four years a presidential candidate has the opportunity to define a message that then either really catches on for liberals, as I think Bill Clinton's did, or doesn't catch on, doesn't really leave you very much to work with, as, for instance, John Kerry's did.

Conservatives have really been kind of feeding off of Ronald Reagan's campaigns ever since, because there was a lot of nourishment there. So to some degree you naturally look to presidential candidates, but then you have to think about who informs those presidential candidates, how do they come up with those ideas.

It seems to me liberals have been cowed in recent years, particularly by the feeling that they're not religious enough, by this sense that they've been kind of shocked into this awareness that, in fact, they live in an extremely religious country. By and large—and the polls show—self-described liberals are less religious. This has produced this great sense of insecurity, and a lot of awkward efforts to find religious language and deploy it to make arguments that liberals would be making anyway.

If you don't naturally pocket your references to poverty by quoting the New Testament, then don't do it, because people who know the New Testament better than you will catch you out on it.

That is, in my view, a mistake. The problem that liberalism has is a lack of conviction about what liberalism is, and a lack of authenticity when liberals go out and make their arguments. If you're not a particularly religious person, if you don't naturally talk in religious terms, if you then go out and start to throw a lot of religious language into your rhetoric, quoting the Bible—first of all, if you're quoting the Bible to people who know the Bible it's a dangerous thing because they may ask you questions about it.

(Laughter)

Mr. Beinart: It seems to me it's a deeply patronizing thing to do. If you don't naturally pocket your references to poverty by quoting the New Testament, then don't do it, because people who know the New Testament better than you will catch you out on it.

The problem that liberals face is that religion has become, for conservatives, a way of talking about how "we're in it together," how we have values that are "larger than the market," and about what we have lost as a society. Liberals need to find the language to address those things, but I don't think it's a religious language.

I actually think it is more of a nationalist language. John McCain's presidential campaign in 2000, very interestingly enough, had a lot in common with Kennedy's campaign in 1960. What you can draw from those is a kind of nationalist language which says, in some ways, some of the same kinds of things that you hear from the Christian right: we're too materialistic; we've become too soft; we've become an effete society that is not willing to go after and try to do hard, difficult things together. I don't think that that language has to be framed religiously. I think it can be framed in terms of nationalism, and I think that is the better option for liberals because it's more true to what liberals themselves really believe.

Mr. Jones: Peter Beinart, thank you very much.

(Applause)

Mr. Jones: Some of you may notice that Peter is sitting beside his wife, who is expecting a baby in January. He told me before we began tonight that he expects fatherhood to mature the way he looks considerably.

(Laughter)

Mr. Jones: I'd like to remind you that tomorrow morning we will use Peter Beinart's lecture as a point of departure for further discussion by Peter and a very distinguished panel. You're all invited to come. I encourage you to come.

In addition to Peter, the panelists include John Leo, a national political columnist based at *U.S. News & World Report*; Tom Patterson, the Bradlee Professor of Government and the Press here at the Kennedy School; Dorothy Rabinowitz, a member of the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial board and a frequent commentator on the media; Jeanne Shaheen, director of Harvard's Institute of Politics, former governor of New Hampshire and chair of John Kerry's presidential campaign; Michael Tomasky, executive editor of the *American Prospect*, another great, liberal, political magazine; and David Willman, this year's Nyhan Prize winner. In other words, an all-star lineup.

We'll gather on the fifth floor of the Taubman Building, which is the building out here, at 8:30, for a continental breakfast, and we will begin the conversation at 9:00. It will go on until 11:00. I urge you to attend if you can. I think you will find it very interesting.

My thanks, once again, to Peter Beinart and my congratulations to David Willman. Thank you all for joining us. We are adjourned.

THEODORE H. WHITE SEMINAR
OCTOBER 28, 2005

Mr. Jones: Our objective this morning is to have a conversation, and so that's the way we're going to treat this roundtable. You are all, those sitting at the table and those not, encouraged to think of yourselves as participants, and I hope that you will. Let me begin by introducing this distinguished panel.

Michael Tomasky is a former Shorenstein fellow. He is the editor of the *American Prospect* and has been writing about politics for a long time. I think that he is also in the camp of really interesting liberal thinkers, and one of the people who is shaping the liberal agenda as we go forward.

Next to him is John Leo. John Leo is a distinguished columnist for *U.S. News & World Report*. He, not long ago, described himself to me as a Democrat whose party left him as far as he is concerned. He is a very shrewd observer of the scene and is a person whose view of the Democratic Party and what the Democratic Party and liberalism might mean—in fact, what Peter was talking about last night—I'm very eager to hear.

Dorothy Rabinowitz is a distinguished columnist at the *Wall Street Journal*, is also a keen observer of the media, and writes about the media as well as politics.

I don't think I need to introduce Peter Beinart. Those of you who were here last night know that Peter talks very quickly. Peter had sort of more ideas in less time than just about anyone I've ever seen. It was exactly what I said in my introduction to him. He is a man who has many, many ideas, which was the most wonderful thing about his presentation last night, and there is so much to respond to and to talk about today.

Next to Peter is Tom Patterson, the Bradlee Professor at the Kennedy School, a distinguished scholar and colleague at the Shorenstein Center.

Jeanne Shaheen is the director of the Institute of Politics here at the Kennedy School of Government and also the former governor of New Hampshire and chair of John Kerry's presidential campaign.

Finally, David Willman, who is the first winner of the David Nyhan Prize for Political Reporting, based at the Washington Bureau of the *Los Angeles Times*.

I'm very glad to welcome all of them, and all of you.

Walter Shorenstein, particularly, welcome.

Let's begin with John Leo. As I said, we will speak in alphabetical order and, John Leo, would you go first.

Mr. Leo: Sure. What I said, by the way, is that I feel like a Democrat in exile. I didn't say the party moved at all.

The thing that struck me the most about Peter's good speech last night was the analogy he drew, not fully elaborated, but clearly there, between

the McGovernites and the Deaniacs. The McGovern people came out of nowhere, seeking no consensus. The word "guerilla" popped up a couple of times in Peter's speech. And Peter mentioned that they, let me get the words correctly, had an ignorance, according to Teddy White, about the outer world beyond the guerilla theater in which they acted. And then he began to talk about the Dean people, or whatever you want to call it, the Internet, the emerging Internet culture, in much the same terms.

I think if you start comparing the emerging Internet culture to a leaderless guerilla group very similar to the one that emerged in '72, in the wake of another controversial war, you're beginning to draw clouds across the Democratic horizon, because the McGovern revolution was a disaster for the party and for the country as well.

The outside end—leaderless guerilla theater—may have started as a grassroots effort, but it very much was a top-down, boss operation in Miami. They stuck it to the state delegations and told them what they were going to do; they didn't consult them. The delegates were wildly inappropriate for the party. Thirty-nine percent were atheists, I'm sorry, 34 percent were atheists, 39 percent had been to graduate school. I don't know how you win an election saying goodbye to the lunchpail set. They were much more well off than the rest of the party. The traditional base of the party was not just ignored but pretty much kicked out.

Peter mentioned that only 30 out of, whatever it was, 355, Democratic senators and congressmen were delegates, but the Iowa delegation had not one farmer. The Chicago delegation had only three white ethnics, one Pole and three Italians. The New York delegation had only three people from unions. I mean, this was an astonishing revolution that really stuck it to the base, and I think a lot of it had to do with the creation of Reagan Democrats. There is some scholarship now that suggests the emerging secularity of the Democratic Party provoked the Evangelicals (who were really unpolitical in 1972—their whole tradition was not political) into going to the right. So I think the seeds of a lot of disasters for the Democrats were planted right there at that convention.

Now, if you start comparing the emerging Internet culture to a grassroots effort, an effort, in this case, funded by one of the richest people in the world, George Soros, you'll begin to draw a picture that is not healthy for the Democratic Party. Peter, as I said, didn't really elaborate what he thought. I'd really like to know more about what he thinks about all this, but he did say that they were ideologically underdeveloped, meaning, I think, they have no ideas at all.

There are a lot of bloggers on the left, but there's nobody like Beinart on the liberal blogs, and I like Josh Marshall a bit, but most of them seem, I don't know, brain dead.

The [author of the] Daily Kos—I checked in with him yesterday, and he used the term "wingbat" nine times in the first four paragraphs. We wingbat Americans resent this. Wingbat pride. Peter says they're taking over

the party. The party is being taken over by a new youth cult, whose names you don't know, and who have no new ideas. I think this should concern you.

Mr. Jones: The way we're going to do this, I'm going to ask Peter to respond but to only take one minute. I know you're not going to be able to respond immediately to everything that is said. We'll then have more of a conversation. But I don't want to leave until the very end the chance to respond.

Mr. Beinart: I honestly think that the ideological direction of the new Dean Generation on the Web is unclear. In a strange way, if you look at a blog like Daily Kos, what's striking about it is how much more rhetorically extreme is its position on the issues. The rhetorical style is incredibly extreme, incredibly in your face, tremendously profane. I think, for that reason, problematic.

The party is being taken over by a new youth cult, whose names you don't know, and who have no new ideas. I think this should concern you.

On the other hand, there is a strange way in which the rhetorical excesses mask an actual policy set of positions that, if you look closely at them, first of all, don't seem to amount to much, but second of all, are not necessarily so extreme, so that there is tremendous enthusiasm among many of these bloggers for Wesley Clark, who is not particularly ideologically extreme at all. In fact, he is one of the Democrats who has really given the most thought to how you can develop a liberal agenda for the war on terror. So, to some degree, there is an extremism of style that masks what is not yet an extremism of ideology.

Mr. Jones: Thanks, Peter.

Tom Patterson.

Mr. Patterson: Thanks, Alex. Unlike the presidential primaries, this panel, you might have noticed, is backloaded. If your last name starts with "P" and you're second. . . .

(Laughter)

Mr. Patterson: I thought Peter's talk last night was so thoughtful and so far ranging that picking at it seems almost unfair. I think when you're that bold you leave a lot of openings. Let me talk a little bit about two.

One is I think we need to keep in mind, always, the distinction between the positioning of activists and the positioning of the public. That's critical for a party, and it's a delicate act. George W. Bush, in 2000, did it with compassionate conservatism to kind of placate the right but really play toward the center. Your example last night of Hillary Clinton, I think, strategically, that's exactly the right move, whether one agrees with the positioning or not. But strategically, in terms of thinking about the general

electorate, if you begin to have the party driven by its activists, particularly an activist group of this size and with this kind of voting record, as they extend themselves to others who look like them, that's a recipe for problems for the Democratic Party.

My larger point has to do with this issue that the Democratic Party is lacking in ideas. I think the party does have a problem. There's been a lot of Democratic Party handwringing about this after each recent election loss. We talk about a shortage of ideas and a clear-cut platform and the like, a way to reach out in something other than a negative way.

. . . what most writers, most politicians within the party see as ideas is little more than a laundry list of available issues that they think will work to their advantage.

But if you've been following in the aftermath of the 2004 election, what most writers, most politicians within the party see as ideas is little more than a laundry list of available issues that they think will work to their advantage. So they talk about, well, "we've got to talk more about education," "we've got to talk more about health." That's kind of moving the agenda around. And I think that's not really what parties and ideas, are all about. It's not so much about issues. It's not that issues are not important, but when you get into ideas, the party has to tap deeper, and that deeper is the set of enduring beliefs that characterize Americans and the American political culture.

The GOP has done that really quite successfully. There is a set of beliefs that, to a large extent, define the way we think about politics—what's acceptable, what's desirable—and Republicans have been very good at digging into individualism and working off that particular base and developing, essentially, a whole set of policy initiatives and the like.

And then it has kind of a practical element. I mean, it comes out of that core, and then it moves into things like tax cuts. And it's because of that belief that tax cuts resonate so deeply with Americans. They're not all in the top five percent—and the Democrats try to beat the Republicans over the head with the idea that it's the 95 percent against the five percent, but when you look at the polls, it's not. Twenty percent of Americans think they're in that five percent, and about another 40 percent think they're going to be in that five percent.

So there's a real underlying belief that is the foundation of the Republican effort over the last 30 years, and it's deep and, in some ways, works well because it's enduring. It surmounts particular issues of an election and that's what I think a party has to do: it has to have legs, it can't simply run in the context of individual elections.

And then you ask, well, what would that be for the Democratic Party? What is that belief that the Democrats would tap into? I think a lot of Democrats would like to tap into equality as a dimension of American life. But it's really tricky; it's a much trickier terrain than individualism. If you look, for instance, at public support for programs for the poor, what the studies show is that that derives less from ideology than it does from sympathy from people who are not well off.

And so when you have a Katrina, all of this wellspring of feeling about the poor in American society comes out and you have an extraordinary public response to it. But it's not ideology. This is not a very class-conscious society; it's more of a job-conscious than a class-conscious society. So as you try to tap into that ideologically, which the party does from time to time, it just doesn't resonate very deeply with the American public.

It seems to me that the challenge of the Democratic Party is to really, through probably some combination of thinking hard about the American belief system, to think of some kind of coherent way of working from those, presenting something that is, in fact, a liberal agenda, and that would resonate over time.

So it seems to me, and I'll somehow quit with this, that the left, historically, whether in the United States, Europe, the left really had its energy on the idea of an alternative future. That was really the driver for the left. The conservative—the right—was about today and maintaining the values of today. A powerful vision of a different kind of society, something that would look different, was the energy of the left.

And of course, as you know, beginning in the 1970s the Democratic Party became a party of today as it was catering to its particular interest groups and the like, and somehow figuring out how to project forward. In a powerful way, working off of American beliefs seems to me to be the challenge facing the Democratic Party.

. . . sympathy and compassion will never be the right model for liberals at home. It has to be something much closer to solidarity and to focus on the problems.

Mr. Beinart: Well, that's a wonderful, wonderful summation of the problem. This is something that I've been wrestling with a fair amount, and often flailing with, in the book that I'm trying to write.

I think that Professor Patterson is exactly right, that sympathy and compassion will never be the right model for liberals at home. It has to be something much closer to solidarity and to focus on the problems. And I think John Edwards was trying to get at this, just like Bill Clinton had, to recognize that, in fact, many of the problems in the American economy are actually problems that afflict the middle class very much, that are

not problems restricted to the poor. Life has become, in many ways, very insecure and even, at times, desperately insecure, even for many people in the middle class in America. The programs for the middle class that the government has provided have, by and large, remained very popular, even as they have run into fiscal problems, even as they've undergone attack. You can see this in the Social Security debate; you can see in the enduring support that people have for a program like Medicare that those programs remain very popular.

But also, liberals need to give a lot of thought to the intersection of the kind of society they want to build at home and this struggle that America faces in the world. Liberals need to avoid thinking that foreign policy is a distraction from these efforts and recognize that foreign policy can become one way in which to talk about the need for America to become stronger. This is why I think one of the themes you find in Cold War liberalism is to say to Americans, we have to become a stronger, more just, more free society at home because that's the only way we can create a world that's amenable to America's interest.

And I think that theme is one that liberals also need to pick up on, to talk about the way in which we can use these new threats that we face around the world as a new way to bring the country together, to face some of the problems at home that make us weaker and less able to deal with these new threats.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Peter.

Dorothy.

Ms. Rabinowitz: I'm glad you mentioned John Edwards, too, for a moment there. When one heard John Edwards one knew immediately, again, why it was that the Republicans were likely to win. John Edwards's view of two Americas, the dark, cataclysmic view of an America where bodies are in the streets, where the poor were lining up at the door for free food. . . . All of this catastrophe reminded me, as I listened to him, what was it about Franklin Roosevelt, in the midst of the Depression, in the bleakest of years, that so captivated, that so energized people, that so brought thousands, an unimaginably great amount of telegrams to the White House following his inauguration speech. It was that air of American confidence, the confidence that one could survive and endure with will, with friendship, with courage, and not with fear. One's voice trembles at remembering this even now, and you can still hear that speech again.

When one heard John Edwards one knew immediately, again, why it was that the Republicans were likely to win.

The Democrats, and I speak as a Democrat (which may come as a surprise to, at least, my colleagues at the paper) a registered Democrat, a person who is not the least bit interested in tax

cuts, who doesn't want Roe v. Wade turned back, who could still, never again, unless we found someone better, vote for a Democrat as the Democrats are turned out today.

Moving quickly forward, I read Peter's speech last night, although, unfortunately, I was not able to be here to listen to it, and I thought, if someone didn't know, if someone weren't around as I was during the McGovern campaign, one would have thought, reading this, that McGovern had won the election. And moving forward to Howard Dean, there is a line in it about how the Deaniacs have won. They have placed Howard Dean in the chairmanship of the Democratic Party, a triumph. It has gladdened the heart of every Republican around to know that Howard Dean is running this.

So one sees a sort of straight line of belief in everything, except the essential that is needed, which is to communicate. We are all Americans. The blogs that we are reading, of course, are steeped in the most virulent anti-Americanism, the envy of the world. All of this contributes to the ordinary voter's sense of alienation from this party because they are not crazy. They look out of the window and they do not see the America that is reflected in this tirade against their country and their government.

Compare George W. Bush with John Kerry. Kerry also had the belief that midnight is just around the corner for American democracy. He fought in Vietnam, which we were reminded of every three minutes. Compare all of this to this sunny, optimistic fellow who couldn't put two rhythmic sentences together, or even five words really, but who exuded something they recognized.

Americans do believe they live in a very great nation, in their hearts. Perhaps it's some kind of immigrant, genetic thing that comes to them. You can ask, and they, I suspect, mostly are repelled by what they read in the paper, although they don't go around talking about it. They say, "yeah, yeah, yeah, that's right, well, maybe," and they go to the polls and they pull the lever for the Republican president.

To sum up, the absence of that willingness to drop that posture of McGovernite—what shall we call it—"alienation," an appeal to the belief that America is the enemy to the world in one way or another, is what is at the heart of some of the things Americans find alien to the Democratic Party.

Mr. Jones: Peter?

Mr. Beinart: Well, let me just quickly do a brief defensive of John Edwards, who I think had far, far less class warfare rhetoric in his presidential campaign than Franklin Delano Roosevelt did on his most benign day. In fact, one of John Edwards's signature qualities was his optimism, which was exactly the reason he did so well amongst downscale, independent voters, exactly amongst Reagan Democrats.

John Edwards's "two Americas" line was not an America about the desperate, radical, militant poor versus everyone else. It was, in fact, about the vast, vast middle class against a kind of corruption and against a

government that, in fact, didn't reward the work of those people but wanted to shift the burden of taxation to them from passive wealth. I don't think that was an angry or alienated message. I think it's the very reason it resonated quite well beyond the Democratic Party.

I think it's a mistake to conflate alienation with the Bush Administration with alienation from America, just as it was a mistake to conflate alienation from the Clinton Administration, which was very profound on the right in the 1990s, with alienation from America.

I think the challenge for liberals, when faced with someone who is sunny and complacent about America, like George W. Bush, is, in fact, to be optimistic but noncomplacent. To say that America has enormous potential for greatness but that our potential for greatness comes from recognizing that we have not yet achieved greatness, recognizing that greatness is not inevitable or inherited but earned and proved by an effort to create a more just society—that is the argument against complacency, against moral complacency, where liberalism finds its opportunity.

Mr. Jones: Jeanne Shaheen.

Ms. Shaheen: Good morning, everyone.

I guess I would start by fundamentally disagreeing with the concept that liberalism equates with the Democratic Party. As somebody who ran for governor in New Hampshire and served three terms, I found the liberal left as difficult to deal with as the ultra right.

Having said that, I do think, as Peter said, that it's very important for the Democratic Party to develop new ideas and a coherent message about our vision for the future of this country. That message needs to include not just the way that we would address the domestic challenges that we're facing, but also a strong, coherent foreign policy, that, as Peter says, is one that defends freedom and liberty around the world. That means, in part, reasserting our belief in a strong defense of this country.

I would start by fundamentally disagreeing with the concept that liberalism equates with the Democratic Party.

If we look at the presidential elections over the last 30 years or so, those people who identify themselves as liberals have been relatively consistent in all of those elections. It's been between about 20 and 25 percent of the electorate. That is not enough to win the Democratic election. And where we have been successful . . . (in fact, Al Gore and John Kerry didn't lose their elections because they didn't energize the liberal base. That was not enough to win, and, in fact, Al Gore did win as we all know).

Howard Dean, I think, did not get elected chair of the DNC because of the bloggers and the people who supported him. Martin Frost is here, who ran against him, so he can probably speak to that more eloquently than I

can. But Howard Dean won because the party was looking for a pro-choice candidate, and Howard Dean made a lot of promises to party chairs in the states across the country, and that's how he won that election.

We have won, as Democrats, when we have been able to appeal to the moderate middle of this country, which has remained fairly consistent since FDR. It is the middle where the elections are won. George Bush was able to do that in 2004. There are a lot of other reasons why he won that election, but that's what we've got to be able to do, and we do that by reasserting our values in support of family and democracy.

I do believe that we live in a great nation, and I think most of us here do, as well. We need to reassert that. I think you're absolutely right, Peter, when you say as Democrats we need to have a message that, like John McCain, calls people to a greater good.

One of the things that I've been doing a lot in the last several months as director of the Institute of Politics is looking back at John Kennedy's speeches, because we are an institute that memorializes John Kennedy. He was able to do that so effectively, to say to people, we live in a great country, but we've got more that we need to do. We need to enlist your help in getting that done. When we do that I think the Democrats are going to win again. And I think we're going to be able to do that in the next two elections.

Mr. Beinart: I couldn't agree more. What's so interesting about the McCain campaign is the fusing of Kennedy's call for people to put aside private gain and focus on the public good, to give of themselves to the country, with the recognition that integral to that effort is taking back the democracy, making American democracy work better again. A kind of populous, reformist spirit that says our democracy, our congress, our elections are not working as well as they could, and that one of the reasons people feel so cynical and alienated from government, that they have turned inward, is that their institutions are not working and they need to go and take back these institutions.

I think that's a very powerful message for today, not just because of these particular scandals, but because of a deeper recognition that Americans have—most Americans live in congressional districts where they have no real choice in who their congressman is, because things have been totally gerrymandered or controlled. We have now a situation in presidential elections where you only have maybe a dozen swing states, where most Americans are ignored. In many, many ways Americans do not feel a lot of access and participation in the political process. So I think that's a very rich vein for liberals and Democrats to tap.

Governor Shaheen's point about Kerry losing in the middle is absolutely central. One of my fears about the liberal, activist base is that they believe, they want to follow Karl Rove, and they think that what made Karl Rove such a genius was that he got so many evangelicals out. Yes, they got a lot of evangelicals out, but the reason they won was because in every swing constituency, every key group—Jews, Catholics,

older women, non-Catholic Hispanics—all these groups moved significantly between 2000 and 2004 in the Republican direction.

John Kerry won 51 percent of Catholics in Massachusetts. He lost Catholics in New York State, he lost high school, he lost people without a college degree in New Jersey. This is where Democrats lost the election, not because Republicans got this huge base turnout, although they got that, but because amongst core, swing constituencies, Reagan Democrats, George W. Bush was able to do significantly better in 2004 than he was in 2000, and Democrats ignore that at their peril, I think.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Peter.

Michael.

Mr. Tomasky: Thanks. I guess I first want to say, Peter, I thought the narrative that you constructed about the flow between the inside and the outside in your paper was insightful and instructive, and I think that we all should keep that in mind. I think it's an important insight. I have, I guess, three comments or three main reactions.

The first is I'd like to throw about a half a glass of cold water on the idea that the liberal blogosphere and the Deaniacs have taken over the Democratic Party. This just is not so, folks, it's not so. Peter, you said that the Internet did for Howard Dean what the reforms of 1972 did for George McGovern. Sorry, factually not true. George McGovern was the nominee of the Democratic Party in 1972. That's what the reforms did for George McGovern—they made him the nominee. The Internet did nothing for Howard Dean in electoral terms. Nothing. He was in 31 primaries, he won one, his home state. He had no effect.

I'd like to throw about a half a glass of cold water on the idea that the liberal blogosphere and the Deaniacs have taken over the Democratic Party. This just is not so, folks, it's not so.

Now, it is true, he is the chairman right now of the Democratic Party. That could be a problem, as Dorothy says. I have mixed feelings about the man myself, but I think Governor Shaheen is right, mostly, about how he became chairman. I think he courted the party chairs, the state party chairs. That's really how he won. And if you were really deep inside this stuff, as Peter I'm sure you were, you and I both know that Simon Rosenberg had a lot of support in the blogosphere for the DNC chairmanship, and Simon is a centrist, Simon is a new Democrat, but he has embraced the potential, the organizing potential, of the Internet. He has as much blogosphere support as Howard Dean did.

I just think we can go too far in saying that the liberal blogosphere and the people who use words like the "wingbat community," have taken over the Democratic Party. I don't think it's true, and I think, to be honest, it's a

good straw man for centrist Democrats and people on the right. I don't embrace the splenetic blogosphere. I have very mixed feelings about it, but I just want to note that I think their influence is minimal.

Now, is Russ Feingold going to be the nominee in 2008 because he's the antiwar candidate? First of all, I doubt it. Second, if the Democrats do nominate an antiwar candidate, I don't think it's going to be because of the liberal blogosphere; it's going to be because 57 percent of the American people believe this war was crazy and hasn't made us any more safe. It has made us less safe. There's a difference between a liberal blogosphere and 57 percent of the American people. That's point number one.

I don't embrace the splenetic blogosphere. I have very mixed feelings about it, but I just want to note that I think their influence is minimal.

Point number two. And I don't want to turn this into a debate about the Iraq War or anything—well, partially, perhaps. But your insight also about extroversion and introversion I think also was right. I would just put an asterisk on that and say I, with you, bemoan a turn toward introversion. Now, I didn't support the Iraq War, you did. You and I have certain disagreements; we've discussed them on other panels. But, with you, I would greet with chagrin a move toward foreign policy introversion. I'm a liberal internationalist who believes in humanitarian intervention where America can do it, where we can stop a genocide, say, for example.

But I just want to add an asterisk and say let's be clear. This introversion isn't Move On's fault, it's the fault of the Bush Administration. It's the fault of the Iraq War. We are entering a period where the American people aren't going to be willing to back humanitarian intervention, say. That's not Move On's fault, it's the fault of the Bush Administration. I was at a, say, sort of a salon, I guess, in Washington Monday night, and another liberal hawk was saying that I fear liberals who were against the war have become realists . . . (by the way Richard Just's piece in that book was brilliant; it was great). He said I feel that liberal doves have become realists, and that we're going to miss the next Bosnia. And I thought, we've missed it, it was Darfur. We didn't do anything about it, and we weren't able to do anything about it because of Iraq. So introversion I regret, but it's not the fault of the liberal blogosphere or Move On or what have you.

My third point is that you accurately described the problem of the blogosphere when you said that it's more interested in tactics and strategy than it is in ideas. Partly that's the nature of blogs: they're short, they're quick. They never say what we should be thinking about for the next five years, they say how we should react to what happened yesterday. So, partly, it's the nature of the medium.

But it's a bigger problem than that, and I think you analyzed it correctly, but I would extend it to the insiders, too. This is where I criticize the Democratic Party and agree with some things that John and Dorothy said very strongly. The Democratic Party isn't a party of ideas anymore, and I think that's true of the insiders as well as outsiders. You addressed that woman from the campus Democrats who asked you the question last night and, as you know, I agree with a lot of the things you said. Young conservatives have read their Edmund Burke, they've read *The Conservative Mind*, they've read *The Road to Surfdom*. Conservatives are conversant in their intellectual history. Liberals, by and large, are not, and that is a big problem. And it doesn't apply just to the blogosphere.

I was discussing this with Jonah Goldberg, who has written a lot about it now. Jonah is right, basically, although I should add he has a book coming out next year—I'm not making this up—called *Liberal Fascism: The Totalitarian Temptation from Benito Mussolini to Hillary Clinton.*

(Laughter)

Mr. Tomasky: I have this little aphorism that if I am ever famous enough somebody might credit me for it. I think that liberals and Democrats tend to see campaigns and politics as a competition of policy positions. Conservatives and Republicans tend to see campaigns and politics as a competition of philosophies and ideas, and philosophies and ideas are always more compelling than policy positions.

Liberals and Democrats tend to see campaigns and politics as a competition of policy positions. Conservatives and Republicans tend to see campaigns and politics as a competition of philosophies and ideas, and philosophies and ideas are always more compelling than policy positions.

John Kerry had a wonderful health care policy, but who cared? And who should care? He didn't couch it in a philosophical way that was compelling to people. John Kerry's getting only 51 percent of the Catholics in Massachusetts is terrible, and losing Catholics in New York, and so on and so forth. Again, he didn't lose that because of liberal screamers in blogland, he lost it because of the insiders who were running his campaign, which was bereft of ideas.

The Democratic Party just needs to reacquaint itself with Galbraith—Richard [Parker] wrote that wonderful biography—Niebuhr, Schlesinger. They need to retrieve their intellectual heritage and start talking in broad terms. Dorothy's right about using the word "citizen" instead of the word "Democrat," about

talking about the possibilities of America in a positive and expansive way and not just talking to their interest groups.

I'll stop there. I probably filibustered.

Mr. Beinart: Well, I have to say one of the things that made me most nervous about giving this talk was giving it with Mike Tomasky in the audience, because I have so much respect for how he thinks through these things. I knew that he could have been giving this talk at least as well as I could have.

And I really agree with most of what you said, Mike. I first want to start with the second point you made, about the responsibility of those who supported the Iraq War for this turn towards introversion. I did not mean to suggest that this is the burden wholly, or even mostly, of the blogosphere. Although, in a group like Move On, I would note that they opposed the Afghan War, which preceded the Iraq War.

But those of us on the liberal side, and on the conservative side, who supported the war in Iraq have very, very serious reflection to do about the degree to which we may have pushed America beyond what was reasonable, and may have, in fact, taxed the American capacity for humanitarian intervention and for promoting freedom around the world to such a degree that we will not be able to do it the next time.

Those of us on the liberal side, and on the conservative side, who supported the war in Iraq have very, very serious reflection to do about the degree to which we may have pushed America beyond what was reasonable . . .

That's a very, very serious burden for those of us who supported the Iraq War, and something that needs to be thought about in a very nondefensive manner. Although it is, by the nature of things, hard to think about these things in a nondefensive manner. But I think your point is very well taken.

Your point about insiders is also well taken. You're exactly right on the Kerry campaign, but I think the insiders of the Clinton years, even as Clinton zigged and zagged in all kinds of crazy ways to stay politically afloat in the 1990s, had created something coming out of the DLC—and not only the DLC—that actually had something deeper to it than simply a set of issue positions. The idea that it was not illiberal for the government to demand and expect responsibility from people who were the recipients of government compassion. I think it was a very, very important idea.

The idea that the earned income tax credit could become a very important vehicle for liberals even though, originally, it had been a conservative idea, because it was really a free market, nonbureaucratic mechanism to

reward people who work. I think there was something there and I think it was lost. But you're right, it was lost not only amongst the blogosphere but amongst insiders as well.

Your last point, I guess I am somewhat more pessimistic, or from the point of view of a blogosphere, optimistic, about their influence. It's true that Dean didn't win, but he changed the debate in the Democratic Party in 2004, particularly in Iowa. Without Dean, John Kerry may very well not have voted against the $87 billion. I think that was a reaction to Dean.

To pick up on the point Jeanne Shaheen made, the notion in the liberal blogosphere that the Democratic Party's problem is that its base is not energized, that the answer to its problems is to whip up the base and try to make them the equivalent of the conservative base, is seeping pretty powerfully through. I think that is a very dangerous idea because there are various basic reasons that the liberal base will never be able, and will never be enough, in fact, to bring liberals to victory, just as the conservative base hasn't been enough for the Republican Party. But the idea that that's how you win, I think, is one that's being promoted by the blogosphere and is having a lot of effect. We'll see in 2006, but I think this will be a real test case for the competing proposition.

Mr. Jones: David Willman.

Mr. Willman: Thank you.

The benefit of being last in this format of alphabetical tyranny is that so many salient points have already been made. So I'll be brief, and I'd like to use my reporter's while really to, I think, pose some questions.

First of all, Peter, I thought the speech was excellent and obviously provided a fertile ground for good conversation. Returning to Howard Dean and his supposed ascendancy, etcetera, in your speech last night you made some remarks on this and I'd like to return to it.

If, as you say, this "enormous opportunity" for a non-hierarchical, decentralized, grassroots campaign still exists, what must a national candidate do to effectively exploit it?

Secondly, on the Iraq War, you refer, in your speech, to the checking of an anti–Iraq War box for liberals, liberal Democrats, but absent a military draft that once again puts everyone's teenager at risk. How potent, electorally, can this presumed antiwar sentiment be? In other words, we hear about poll numbers at 57 percent, but I'd like your opinion as to really how hard, how transferable this supposed passion is.

And lastly, you were asked last night to comment on various presidential candidates. One name that didn't come up, who has some southern roots, is Mark Warner. I'd just be curious as to what you make of his potential.

Mr. Beinart: On the Iraq War, I think that it's potentially quite potent in 2006, for the reason that Mike Tomasky gave, which is, it's not a sentiment that is confined to the liberal or within the Democratic Party anymore at

all. There is pretty deep and broad, widespread dissatisfaction with the Iraq War in the country at large, and I think that's going to help Democrats a lot in 2006.

The challenge Democrats will have in 2008 is to say what they want beyond Iraq. The tragedy of Iraq may be that the "War on Terror" only becomes more intense as a result, even as we start to pull back from Iraq. That, in fact, we find that the jihadist threat is greater than it was and is causing enormous problems for us, and particularly for our European allies.

The challenge for Democrats on Iraq is going to be twofold. First of all, if they want to talk about withdrawing troops from Iraq, which I personally would be against, they had better find a way of trying to make the case that it is in America's national security interest. If they basically make an argument about withdrawing troops which throws America's national security interests out the window, then I think that will be disastrous. I think it'll be bad politically and I also just think it is morally wrong.

I think the Democratic Party can't just take the position this was George W. Bush's mistake, the country's really tired of it, we want to withdraw troops because Americans want their troops home—understandably—and we don't bear any responsibility for what happens afterwards. I think that would be a terrible mistake. Democrats have to answer the question about what they think is in America's long-term national security interests vis-à-vis Iraq, and then they have to go forward and present a very aggressive, well thought out strategy about how America deals with the threat of jihadism around the world, because it's not going to go away. Even though Democrats tend to think less about it, it tends to show up less as a kind of priority for liberals than it does amongst conservatives.

I'm probably going on too long, but I think that the opportunity for a decentralized campaign is there for anyone who inspires passion and idealism amongst the Democratic base. I think that's what Howard Dean did until he kind of flamed out at the end. We've seen in elections going back to the end of the Cold War and perhaps before that, that every election has thrown up a candidate who is considered, by conventional indices, not to have much of a chance, but who managed to do far better than the kind of conventional wisdom of people like me thought they could do. Because they broke out of the narrow confines of what is considered to be a successful campaign by, in fact, tapping into a deep, populous strain in American politics, a populous strain which could be on the left, the right, or the center, and the blogosphere, I think, amplifies that.

And if Russ Feingold is the person who is able to tap into that, I think he may be able to do far better than he would seem able to do at this point, given the kind of conventional understandings we have of his particular background, how much money he could raise and that kind of thing.

And the last point I would make, on the question about Mark Warner, it just seems to me that today, a governor without national security experience

is going to have a lot more difficulty than Bill Clinton or George W. Bush did in the 1990s. Although senators clearly have problems, as we saw with John Kerry in 2004, things may not be quite as easy for governors in the post 9/11 world as they were in the 1990s.

I've heard a little bit of Michael Dukakis in Mark Warner, in the sense that he's very smart and very good on policy. He was, I think, a very, very good governor. But he strikes me as perhaps a little technocratic, a little problem-solvey for a national, presidential campaign, and I wonder about whether he can find the large, broad themes that people tend to look for in presidential candidates.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Peter.

I would like to take my shot at changing the context slightly in what we've been discussing. Most of what we've been discussing is liberalism in terms of the Democratic Party's prospects and what it might do or might not do. I'd like to go back to the issue of liberalism in general as a question of whether Americans are inherently liberal or not.

This summer I was reading a book, a biography of Cole Porter. In 1940, right on the eve of World War II, Cole Porter was writing the lyrics and music to another movie, and, at that time, the Hays office had to look at all such things. He was not allowed to use the word "jerk," because it was considered to be offensive. I don't quite understand why, but what I'm pointing out is that in 1940 that was where we were as a nation. Our values were racist, our values had a role for women that is very different.

When you look at where we have gone from that point to today, in an astonishing, astonishing 60 years, the values (that presumably the Democrats would reflect if they're going to capture the imagination) look awfully liberal. They look like women's rights, civil rights, gay rights. The idea that you, because of the courts especially, can buy pornography virtually anywhere, and go on the Web and your local library and find it—we seem to be, as a society, living with that. We have a right to have an abortion on demand, effectively. We have had a liberal transformation of America in the past 60 years, at least if you sort of start ticking off the values.

. . . we have been in a culture war and the culture war has been won by the liberals . . .

Now, what we seem to me to be in right now is a clear and not hard-to-understand reaction to such a staggering amount of value change. Whether that's possible, whether this is sort of a war of attrition that can't ever really hope to overturn those values, I don't know.

But I would like to ask Peter, and the panel in general, to respond to the idea that we have been in a culture war and that the culture war has been won by the liberals, that electing a Democrat really is not, fundamentally, going to change that one way or the other.

Peter?

Mr. Beinart: I agree with that. This is a point that people have made about the free market for a long time, that actually the free market doesn't have very culturally conservative implications. I think that we have become a culture that has become far more liberal. And I think liberalism's greatest victories have been on the cultural side, but not just because liberals have held political power (they haven't held that much political power) but because liberating the free market—and this is obviously not a new point but is one of the ironies of conservatism—tends to produce cultural effects that are not very good at conserving traditional morality.

One of the geniuses of conservatism has been to promote a more and more liberated free market that produces a culture that people find more and more debased, and then to elect conservatives to say that they'll come and deal with that cultural problem. In fact, what they do is liberate the market more and more so Hollywood can do more and more of what it wants and creates more and more opportunities for conservatives to come in and say that they'll cure the culture.

One of the geniuses of conservatism has been to promote a more and more liberated free market that produces a culture that people find more and more debased, and then to elect conservatives to say that they'll come and deal with that cultural problem.

The problem is that liberalism has become too defined by its cultural agenda alone. That these victories, which are real victories—and victories that I embrace, certainly on something like gay rights, for instance, where we've seen enormous progress—have masked, for liberals, the tremendous problems that we've had in terms of the other core liberal values, like economic solidarity. Think about what life was like for working-class people in America in the 1950s, of the kind of economic security that people had. This is something we may never be able to get back to.

Somebody quipped that the average blue-collar worker in a union, in the 1950s, had the kind of economic security that today we only associate with college professors. If you look at all of the extraordinary things that Walter Reuther and the UAW were able to do, it was because there was a position of strength that they had, and that their members have, that liberals can scarcely imagine today.

It seems to me that liberals, because of their cultural success, have really been blinded to the degree to which many liberal values are not being expressed in people's daily economic lives. That has been the challenge that liberals have to face instead of getting beguiled by some of their victories on the cultural front.

Mr. Jones: John Leo.

Mr. Leo: Well, I agree about one percent.

(Laughter)

Mr. Leo: I make my living, mostly, by writing about the culture war, which all my liberal friends tell me is over. It isn't. Yes, there's a lot of progress that conservatives would applaud, too. We also live in a pornified, coarse culture in which our children are dancing to rap about slicing up women and shooting cops that wouldn't have flown 34 years ago.

You're at a university here where your president almost had to step down because he said something obvious and true about sexual differences. The culture is really strange and people are not accepting it.

The one thing that I thought was missing from Peter's talk was that this is a conservative country, growing more conservative every year. So, if you want to win the presidency, you're going to have to make some conservative honking because the people are not with you on these issues.

The one thing that I thought was missing from Peter's talk was that this is a conservative country, growing more conservative every year.

Anyhow, the other thing that is remotely connected is that conservatives tend to think that liberals represent a war against religion. I think that's mostly because if you could put a cork in the ACLU and People for the American Way, your ratings would jump so much.

I wrote last week how the ACLU, always looking for these little crosses in town seals, got, at a cost of $500,000 to the County of Los Angeles, the little tiny mission cross out of the seal. Now they're going after some little backwater town in New Mexico because it has an even tinier cross which is 1/100th the size of a cow in the middle of this thing.

But sometimes this is important to the ACLU. You can't have any historical reference, although many courts have said you could, since missions founded California and much of New Mexico, but they're so obsessed with these religion things they don't understand what they're breeding is resentment against it.

Mr. Jones: I think this is really quite an interesting question, because on the one hand I think you're quite right. It seems quite clear that there is a strong reaction, there's a hope, among strong conservatives that a new Supreme Court will roll back some abortion rights questions, things like that. On the other hand, we also seem to be living in a country in which people say these things but then go to porn sites, watch TV, are outraged if their spouses are not given equal treatment, and so forth.

All I'm saying is that, where are the fault lines that are actually going to make it possible to make this country want all that solidarity that Peter has

been talking about? I know that Peter, after dinner last night, began talking about nationalism, a new form of nationalism, a sort of John F. Kennedy form of nationalism as a vehicle for liberals, as opposed to a religious vernacular, to frame those values.

Peter, I wish that you would fill that out a little bit because I think that the idea of a nationalistic approach sort of sends shock waves, in some respect, to use that word. But in fact, what I think you're talking about is one that includes many of these values that are part of the culture war but would be incorporated in a way that would be calculated not to be so threatening.

Mr. Beinart: Yeah. Like Jeanne Shaheen, I was also going back and looking at the Kennedy campaign and the whole post-Sputnik kind of writing that you find among Schlesinger and Niebuhr. One of the things that is striking about them was their critique of American culture. They said it had become too materialistic, too soft, too focused on private gain. "Effete" was even one of the words they used. And then it came out in this kind of Kennedy nationalism (which I think has a lot in common with the kinds of things John McCain talked about) about a country moving away from private gain, from materialism, trying to find a new sense of community in large, national, public efforts. I think that's a language that has a lot of resonance, and is more authentic for most liberals than a religious language.

My fear about talking about the religious basis for liberal values is not that it's not there. It certainly is there, but it's not authentic for many of the people who would actually be saying it. If it's authentic for you, if that's really where your liberal values come from then, by all means, talk about it. But my fear is that there's this great danger that what's going to happen is that liberal politicians, Democratic politicians who don't usually speak this way are going to start peppering their speeches with religious terminology and it's going to be deeply, deeply patronizing to people who take religion seriously.

There is also a nationalist response that says we're all in it together, we're going to be a society where people put away their personal good and look for something larger, and better, together.

The reality is that the Democratic Party is a more secular party than the Republican Party, except among African Americans. I don't think that's going to change anytime soon. So, while liberals should be, certainly Democrats should be, respectful about religion—I agree about this tiny crosses point—I would say, parenthetically, as an American Jew, that this is partly a bit of a pathology of the American-Jewish community. The American-Jewish community has got to recognize that its religious identity does not need to be defined by looking for tiny crosses in state flags. If Jews have issues about their own

place in American life, it is not going to be solved by looking for tiny crosses. That's not going to keep their kids from intermarrying if that's what they're concerned about, as a tangent.

I think people are upset and concerned about the degree to which we don't have a common culture, about the degree to which the society seems coarse and materialistic and vulgar, all the things that John Leo was saying. I don't think the only response to that is a religious response. I think there is also a nationalist response that says we're all in it together, we're going to be a society where people put away their personal good and look for something larger, and better, together. I don't think it has to come through religion itself.

Mr. Jones: Dorothy.

Ms. Rabinowitz: I agree with much of what you said, Peter, except for the Jew part, because there are an awful lot of Hanukkah displays, and crèches, that they're knocking out of the ACLU, under the ACLU. There is a religion in America; it's called television. Television is, in very large part, very deeply implicated in the liberalization, if you want to call it, or the coarsening. You have Americans waking up every morning and finding cross-dressers on the morning show being gladly greeted by everyone and embraced. And year after year you find the outer margins of all forms of behavior that once would have been called deviant, for better or for worse, embraced in the television culture. People sit back and incorporate them into their lives so that everything becomes acceptable.

Now there are all other forms of liberalism. Black people appear on television. Jews appear on television. Everything becomes enlarged. Along with it comes a coarsening, along with it come the rappers. So we mustn't underestimate the power of the culture.

I want to say, reassuringly, that before the Hays office came along there were the smuttiest kinds of movies, you know, not coarse, not undressing, but you would be amazed at the dialogue in 1925—terrific films that people look at now as some sort of cultural memory never to be believed.

There we are. Actually, that business about "jerk" conforms to a slap in the face—you couldn't slap anybody in the face either. It just violated some norm of decent behavior.

I want to say that we mustn't underestimate the culture, but the fact remains that Americans should not be called a liberal people so much as they have always been a centrist people. They have always rejected, for themselves, behavior that was extreme, which is why there were no revolutions of any massive kind in the '30s and why, in the end, they rejected extremists.

I always like to remember, whenever I hear the end of America is coming, and American democracy, that in a time of immense anti-Semitism, comparatively speaking, when Charles Lindbergh was America's great hero, he made one terrible mistake, which had bottomless consequences for him: he denounced the Jews as the people bringing us into the war in

the '40s. It was fascinating to see how, overnight, that was the end of Charles Lindbergh.

Now, this is a very telling moment in American history. You couldn't count the number of people who withdrew from America First, everywhere. He never recovered, and I always think of that as the moment when you knew, essentially, what America was. You could do this, you could do that. You could do terrible things. You were lynchers, you could close the door to refugees who wanted to come in, but there was something in them that is this centrist, "no, we don't believe this."

I think the essential fair-mindedness of Americans has also to do with the growth of liberalism. I mean one doesn't want to beat the drum for it, but nobody brought America around to this. They grew, they were exposed to other kinds of life.

Mr. Jones: Michael.

Mr. Tomasky: I read last year, by the way, that the first motion picture made in the United States was actually a porno film—

(Laughter)

Mr. Tomasky: —in 1896 somewhere in New Jersey.

Americans, Alex, to go back to your original formulation to kick this off, are not a naturally liberal people, of course—news flash! But there are moments at which a liberal tide rises. If you look at American history, it happens. Schlesinger described the cycles of history to happen every 30 years, which did apply in the 1930s, 1960s, 1990s. So, it takes precipitating events. Americans are naturally, Dorothy, I would say, center-right, but it takes events and leadership to make people see the country and the world in a different way.

The writer Stanley Crouch, in writing about Martin Luther King's success, used a phrase that I found very compelling and that I've always remembered: King's success was based on the fact that he located the moral intersection at which people who were not directly affected by segregation could share, could understand, the burden and the hardship faced by those who were directly affected.

King's success was based on the fact that he located the moral intersection at which people who were not directly affected by segregation. . . could understand. . . the burden and the hardship faced by those who were directly affected.

That's liberalism. That's what's important. That's what makes liberalism succeed. It wasn't the Depression, it wasn't the fact that people were unemployed and the stock market was down. It was the fact that Franklin Roosevelt was able to talk that way and locate that moral intersection for Americans

who weren't directly affected by the problems that were brought on by the Depression. That was what made King succeed.

It's what Democratic leaders are failing to do today, by and large. They're not defending. They're so defensive, they're so on the run, they're so running away from the ACLU sometimes, and running away from Ward Churchill and all this sort of stuff that they don't defend what is, whether it's secular or not, a shared civic nationalism, to use your phrase. There's a civic nationalism, a civic culture of common concerns and common needs that has to exist for liberalism to thrive in America, and it has to be articulated by political leaders, and they're not articulating it.

There's a civic nationalism, a civic culture of common concerns and common needs that has to exist for liberalism to thrive in America, and it has to be articulated by political leaders, and they're not articulating it.

Democrats are not articulating it, and that's why Bill O'Reilly can go crazy carrying on about Ward Churchill for a week, because nobody is defending, no Democrat is defending a shared civic culture that Roosevelt, King, etcetera, identified and articulated.

Mr. Jones: Tom, Jeanne, David, would any of you like to chime in on this?

Mr. Patterson: That's a good question, Alex. My politics, I think, were formed, like most peoples,' early, in the '50s and '60s, and it's kind of easy to think that this is a liberal country in the sense that you're talking about it, Alex. But I'm with Michael in thinking that those are unusual periods, those are not the usual periods.

I think with the Schlesinger kind of argument about the cycles of history, in some ways you have to break out the social dimension of that from the economic dimension of that. When you look at the economic dimension I think we're kind of more the traditional liberals than the modern liberals, in terms of thinking about the role of government and the like—traditional liberalism with a touch of political democracy. I think that's been kind of the dominant thread in American history.

I think liberals misread some of what was going on in the '30s, '40s, '50s and carried it into the '60s and '70s. I think what was happening was that they interpreted equality quite literally. You're quite right about the enormous gains that have occurred in the areas of race, gender, and the like. But I think what was being tapped there was a deep commitment to an idea of what's fair. It was more the fairness principle than the equality principle that was at play. And to have a two-race society with government essentially the sponsor of that, that seemed unfair to many and had

to be changed. We used equality language in making those changes, presidents did it, parties did it, activists did it, and it worked. But I think the mass level on the part of the white population, the support for that change really derived from a sense that this really was not fair.

Mr. Jones: Is it unfair to say that it's wrong?

Mr. Patterson: Well, no, I'm getting to the point here. When that principle, the equality principle, was then pushed into using government, essentially, redistributively, then you begin to lose a lot of people. That didn't seem fair, in some ways, that government would intervene to essentially take from one group and give to another, not in the sense of legal equality, which I think was the great achievement of the '50s and the '60s. But when we started to kind of push it into substantive areas, that's what began to break apart. And there, I think, the fairness idea worked in different ways, with some people interpreting it in one way and others in a different way and, therefore, the kind of solidarity that you saw around the legal issue began to break down.

It was more the fairness principle than the equality principle that was at play. And to have a two-race society with government essentially the sponsor of that, that seemed unfair to many and had to be changed.

I think in some ways we misunderstood what was going on there. I think there's another part of this that's a problem for the left. Sometimes on the left when you win, you win by essentially putting something in place. It's not an ongoing thing. The Social Security program is an example of that. You get enormous benefits from the generations that were part of that achievement. Today you're kind of hard pressed to see exactly what Social Security means for the Democratic Party. I mean, it's a nice third rail that you can tap once in a while, but it doesn't have the legs that the Republicans' arguments about tax cuts do, which is a running issue.

We've been able to put in place these extraordinary programs that have had great benefits, but the effect of that has been that, as time has passed, the political advantage of those gains has diminished, and then in some ways kind of disappeared. Whereas on the left it would be nice to have some issues that you could run on time after time after time, which is what tax cuts are all about. Maybe you could do that with earned income credit, but it's a little hard to envision that being one of those issues.

So I think there's kind of been a strategic problem around this idea, but even more, somewhat of a misreading of what the wellspring of the response was during the time that you're talking about.

Mr. Jones: Jeanne.

Ms. Shaheen: I think that Tom has hit on something that's very important and has been a real challenge since the '60s. It was easy in the '60s, as Democrats, to support the civil rights movement, and the women's rights movement, and to have a Republican Party that was in opposition to that. We have not achieved equality, by the way, on any of those standards that you laid out, Alex. We still live, by and large, in a segregated society even though legally we've given everybody opportunity. Women still, very much, face different challenges than men. On gay rights, clearly we still have a lot of challenges there.

It's a very hard case to make to the American people—because it's very subtle—why those things are really important to advance that equal opportunity agenda.

The Republican Party has embraced all of those ideas with the exception of gay rights, perhaps, and even there in terms of the civil rights aspect of it they publicly have supported it. When you look at the kinds of government initiatives that then go to further address those problems, as Tom was talking about, whether it's affirmative action or additional funding for social programs that help the disadvantaged—that's where the Democrats and Republicans have differed. It's a very hard case to make to the American people—because it's very subtle—why those things are really important to advance that equal opportunity agenda.

So I think you're absolutely right, Tom. On Social Security, for example, one of the ways that Democrats in Congress talked about Social Security in rebuttal to President Bush as he was talking about privatizing Social Security, or individual accounts, was to say that we've got to preserve the safety net. Well, most people don't think about themselves as being part of the safety net, particularly with respect to Social Security. They think about it as "something I earned, I put my money into Social Security and I deserve it, it's not a safety net." And even though Democrats have won that debate, I think the perception that they want to think about it as a safety net is the wrong perception. They didn't want it because it was a bad idea, but it wasn't the safety-net aspect, as Tom points out, that was salient to the American people.

Mr. Jones: David, you want a piece of this?

Mr. Willman: I'll pass.

Mr. Jones: Okay, I'm going to open the floor.

Walter?

Mr. Shorenstein: I hesitate to speak on this, but there are several things that occurred that disturbed me, and what disturbed me more than anything else is the definition of a conservative.

In my book, in my history, conservatives are a fiscally responsible people and so all about money, and there's never any mention of money. I'm an individual that banks have told me they've loaned me more money than they've loaned anybody else, including the Bank of America, but we learned how to manage debt, and use debt. This country has not learned how to manage debt. The Republicans haven't learned how to manage debt, and I think that we may be swallowed and overwhelmed by the debt created in this country. But we don't seem to be addressing this from a political standpoint, because the burden of debt is now being placed from those that have to those that have not, and to those that are in generations coming forward.

This country has not learned how to manage debt. The Republicans haven't learned how to manage debt, and I think that we may be swallowed and overwhelmed by the debt created in this country. But we don't seem to be addressing this from a political standpoint . . .

The instant gratification of deferring debt—and you have to pay it off in the future—is highly questionable, and it's questionable whether this country can afford a war in Iraq and what's happening with hurricanes, and not pay the piper. So I'm very disturbed, when we have a dialogue of this nature, but this issue is not addressed.

Mr. Jones: Peter.

Mr. Beinart: I think what you've really gotten at is one of the core transformations about liberalism and conservatism, and the Democratic and Republican parties. One of the great problems the Democratic Party has had is that it used to be that the Republicans were the party of limits, the party which said, "Look, we have to have a balanced budget, therefore we're going to push very stringent cuts in government spending." The Republicans were not for big defense buildups in the 1950s, because they couldn't be, because they were so wedded to a balanced budget. The Republican Party was really the party telling Americans that they couldn't have everything they wanted, that they were going to have to make very hard, painful choices, and they were the party of limits.

The Democratic Party, Hubert Humphrey, was the party saying you could have everything. We could spend huge amounts on the military, we could spend huge amounts on social programs, because we could have big budget deficits.

I think the genius, politically, of Ronald Reagan was to reverse that equation, to say no, in fact, conservatives are no longer to be about America, about the limits of what you can do. Conservatives are going to say, in some ways, like liberals did in the 1950s, you can have it all. You can have

big tax cuts, and you can have a huge defense buildup. We're going to maintain the welfare state, but it will be fine because deficits don't really matter.

The Democratic Party has become more and more fiscally conservative. Howard Dean is a great example of this: the child of a Republican, Park Avenue, Upper East Side banker, who has in many ways inherited that old, conservative Republican deep, deep hostility.

Listen to Howard Dean's passion on the issue of budget deficits, which is unparalleled by almost anything else except maybe the Iraq War. You realize that there has been a whole group of Republicans who have moved into the Democratic Party and brought this fiscal conservatism with them. And I think that's very responsible. The problem is, the Democratic Party has now become the party of limits. Liberalism has become the ideology of limits, saying, "well, we're very sorry," as Walter Mondale said in 1984, "but we're going to have to raise your taxes to reduce the budget deficit."

When you're telling Americans constantly that they can't have what they want, it's hard to marry that to a sense of great, large ambition. I think that's been where conservatives' great political strength has been, but I think it's been very dangerous for the country economically.

Mr. Jones: John Leo, Dorothy, do you have a thought on this?

Mr. Leo: I'd like to chime in, yes. I was thinking of when Bill Buckley founded *National Review*—they just had their 50th anniversary. When they started there were no two conservatives in America who had the same ideas. You had Hapsburgians, you had free marketeers, Ayn Rand fans, Burkians, you had one of everything—ex-communists who became Catholics, ex-communists who refused to become Catholics. These were all different segments. It was hilarious. And this is why Buckley devoted his entire career to becoming a cheerleader that brought these fashions into some form, and that's what he did. There would have been no conservative revolution without Bill.

Now they're sort of roughly down to two or three groups, but it has worked pretty well for the conservatives because it germinated a lot of friction and ideas. The conservative blogs are vastly interesting because nobody agrees with anything, and they're all projecting things that immediately get a response, saying, "you dunderheads, you're all wrong." I advise you to do that more on the left because it makes it very interesting and creates intellectual ferment.

There is no easy way to define conservatism, except whatever conservative is, George Bush isn't one of them.

Mr. Jones: Dorothy, do you have a thought?

Ms. Rabinowitz: The only thought I have relates to elections, which is that there are three things that should, but don't, resonate in the hearts of the electorate. One of them is balanced budgets, one of them is fiscal conservatism, and the other, on the other side, is campaign finance reform.

Except in the very small circles of the elite, on all sides, this means zilch to the electorate.

Now, what does mean something to the electorate are the large issues which Michael talked about, which are absent—the defining of a view that people can relate to and understand.

Mr. Jones: Peter, do you buy that?

Mr. Beinart: While I agree that campaign finance reform doesn't mean anything, I think government corruption and the reform of government does matter. I think that that's why John McCain, even though campaign finance reform can make all of our eyes glaze over, was actually able to tap into a remarkable upsurge of enthusiasm and excitement in that 2000 presidential campaign, among young people. And it was connected to campaign finance reform. Although he wasn't talking about the details of it, he was talking about the fact that Americans didn't feel in control of their government (this was, in some ways, exactly what Ross Perot had talked about—the sense that people felt like the government had gotten away from them) and urging them to come and reclaim that government. This was partly about various changes in the way government did business. That would be my only slight disagreement with your formulation.

There are three things that should, but don't, resonate in the hearts of the electorate. One of them is balanced budgets, one of them is fiscal conservatism, and the other is campaign finance reform.

Mr. Jones: If you have a question, raise your hand and we'll get the microphone to you. There's a microphone right behind you, or just hand that over.

Mr. Browne: Thank you, sir.

I wanted just to make two quick observations. One is that I don't think we should confuse the level of debt with the use of proceeds. Secondly, in talking about Iraq, not to confuse antiwar with anti-failure.

To pose a question to the panel, Michael Tomasky mentioned locate the moral intersection; and Mr. Patterson, what is fair; and Governor Shaheen, take back democracy. So I ask the panel, taking back democracy, would it not be morally fair and also meet the moral intersection?

In the views that I find in my country, and I see here as an immigrant, people are voting with their feet by not voting, because they feel disenfranchised. Is this not one of the biggest, fundamental frustrations for people? And I'll just ask your views on proportional representation.

Mr. Jones: I want to, before you get to proportional representation and not voting, I want you to address that very interesting thought of antiwar versus anti-failure.

Mr. Beinart: Me?

Mr. Jones: Peter.

Mr. Beinart: I think that's exactly right. I think that what you find is—and I think there's some empirical evidence to back this up—is that Americans are actually more willing to accept casualties than people gave them credit for in the 1990s, if they think it's getting them somewhere, if they think they're accomplishing something.

And when the worm turned on Iraq, it wasn't because of casualties per se, it was because of the sense that, in fact, people didn't know really what we were fighting for anymore, and we didn't seem to be making any progress.

And there's some real truth to that, because power in Iraq has been ebbing away from the United States. There is a new political dynamic that has emerged in Iraq over which America has fairly limited control. So Americans are wondering what, in fact, we're really accomplishing. I think the sad reality is that it looks, from where I sit, that in many ways America is not accomplishing very much by having its troops on the ground. On the other hand, were America to pull its troops out, or even set a clear time table for a withdrawal, it could make a bad situation very, very much worse.

I think that liberals and Democrats, although it's certainly not what they want to hear, should be arguing that a withdrawal is not only bad for American security, but that it would be a violation of America's national honor. America has an obligation. We went and turned this country inside out, and we have a responsibility not to leave Iraq, and certainly not to leave people like the Kurds, to the tender mercies of a society that has now been infested and infected by jihadist killers.

So much of what they have done, particularly amongst the Shia leadership, has called into question their own commitment to liberalism and democracy that it has made it much harder to feel like we're on the side of the angels.

So, I think that the challenge, the tremendous problem the Bush Administration has had has been to try to convince Americans that they're actually accomplishing something in Iraq, but most Americans really don't believe that anymore. And the great problem has been, in a way, not the Sunnis. The great problem has been the Shia leadership we have been in bed with. Americans might have been willing to stick with this enterprise, even though there's been so much opposition in the Sunni population, if they felt that the Shia population, and the Kurds—who we were essentially in bed with, who we'd thrown in our lot with, who were forming this new government—were really acting in a broadminded, liberal way.

But, unfortunately, so much of what they have done, particularly amongst the Shia leadership, has called into question their own commitment to liberalism and democracy that it has made it much harder to feel like we're on the side of the angels.

Mr. Jones: What about the voting issue?

Mr. Beinart: I think that you're right. There are a variety of reasons that people don't vote, but one of them is clearly alienation from the political process, and that's particularly disturbing because that alienation is found much more strongly amongst poor Americans who vote and less well-educated Americans. America, actually, if you kind of look from the upper-middle class up, Americans vote in rates pretty much the same as Europe. It's really once you get down to the working class and poor that you find the voting rates start to drop off so dramatically.

There are certain practical things that make voting harder in the United States. The fact, for instance, that we don't have it on a weekend. There are studies, surveys, which show that many Americans cite the lack of time and the inability to get off work as one of the reasons for not voting. But it's much deeper than that. It's the feeling of alienation from the political process, and I think that candidates who have suggested to Americans that they have an opportunity to come back and retake that political process have usually tended to tap into something quite strong in America. I think it's still possible.

Ms. Rabinowitz: If I could just add one thing about that—

Mr. Jones: Dorothy, and then Tom and Jeanne.

Ms. Rabinowitz: I'm sorry. I just couldn't resist saying that I was on the McCain campaign bus, the Straight Talk tour, and there were some unforgettable moments on that. You would arrive at some godforsaken town in upper New York State at noon, when it was 30 below zero, and tens of thousands of people were there. They were not there about campaign finance reform, I might suggest.

But what they were there for, to take your point, was that very sense that there's somebody who embodied a sense of America that they could relate to, for whom they would cast their vote, for whom they would go to some trouble to fight. I remember talking to a rather left-of-center reporter standing with me, looking over stony parapets and saying my god, what is wrong with this Republican Party? I'd vote for this guy tomorrow, and that's not nothing. And that's the kind of thing: what did he embody?

Mr. Jones: Tom.

Mr. Patterson: We did a project in 2000 and a smaller version of it in 2004 called the Vanishing Voter Project. As you look at the conclusions, there's no question that process matters, matters to people both in terms of how they think about government but also kind of marginally. The effect of redistricting is, essentially, to take a campaign out of so many districts so that there's no energy in those districts. The media doesn't cover the campaign, there is no campaign. The challenger can't raise any

money, and therefore also the incumbent has no real incentive to mobilize and provide the public with a large campaign. That does depress turnout in those districts.

On the other hand, when you look at these as pure political issues, actually, it's hard to get traction. McCain was able to do it, I think, for a lot of reasons which had something to do with peoples' dissatisfaction with the process, but had more to do with the other things that McCain was doing. And in some ways he was able to carry that piece along with him. When you look at the vote in Colorado on essentially democratizing the electoral-college process, at what's in California about really opening up this redistricting thing to make it fair—I don't think there's just an overwhelming level of public support for process reform. I think when people talk about politics being broken they're talking more about their sense that government, and its substantive policies, is not paying a lot of attention to them. I think we need to break those two out.

Then, as a footnote, I think liberals have been the real problem on process. I think the real process problems began when the Democrats in Congress decided they wanted to lock in the New Deal realignment and essentially did all sorts of things that were incumbent-protection devices. This was at a time when Democrats had the majorities in these state legislatures, when Democrats had the large majorities in the Congress and could have changed those process rules in a way that really would have opened up the process. But, in fact, what they did was a whole bunch of things that essentially were incumbent-protection devices. And then the Republicans take power and, of course, they used them.

Again, this is one of those areas where, if we're looking for enlightened leadership on the part of those in power, if including being in power means you have the means to stay in power, I think we're going to wait a long time to have fundamental electoral reform.

Mr. Jones: Jeanne.

Ms. Shaheen: I agree. I want to go to your point about antiwar versus anti-failure first, because John Kerry tried to make the anti-failure point and he was never able to get that across.

I think that's a problem that the Democrats have going forward as they talk about the war in Iraq, because for those people who voted for the resolution to argue that Bush has made a mess of the original challenge is a subtle point that is hard to make to voters in a way that's salient.

On the reform issue, I agree with what's been said. But one of the things that we need to push for as Americans is leadership, inspirational leadership, to address the disaffection issue. But we should not have the kind of voter laws that discourage people from voting. All you had to do is look at Ohio in the '04 election to see that in the poor neighborhoods people stood in line for hours to be able to vote. And in the rich neighborhoods they could get in and out in 15 minutes. That is wrong in America. We should not let that happen.

Four of the five states that had the highest voter turnout had same-day voter registration in the last election. That should be the norm everywhere, and on federal elections we need to lobby Congress to do something about that.

Mr. Jones: Marvin. Let me get you a microphone.

Mr. Kalb: Listening to everyone this morning, and Peter last night, I have two thoughts, and I'm absolutely confident I will not be able to express them articulately, but I'll try.

One has to do with the constant statement that the Democratic Party, or liberals, have a great problem articulating their values, that they have no values, that there's a bankruptcy of ideas. I have great trouble with that because, maybe it's my own background, but I come from a background that felt very good about ideas like economic opportunity and the fight for a job, and the sense that you could get that job if you work really hard and you go to school.

The idea that Democrats won't fight for freedom abroad is simply belied by the history of the twentieth century. They do. They've done it.

It's not that there aren't good ideas. The good ideas have been there for Democrats and Republicans to seize all the time. It's something else going on that makes you all say that the liberals have no ideas, that the Republicans have great ideas—what, the privatization of Social Security? Is that the great idea? So I am puzzled by this and I don't have any solutions.

It's something else going on that makes you all say that the liberals have no ideas, that the Republicans have great ideas—what, the privatization of Social Security? Is that the great idea?

The other point has to do with John McCain, who a number of you seem to be saying has the capacity. Dorothy pointed out that moment in the campaign, of bridging Democrats, Republicans. And yet last year McCain was the man who stood so closely with the standard bearer of the Republican Party. They were indistinguishable throughout the campaign. He was on the plane at all times. And yet everybody is prepared to forget that and to embrace the idea that he represents some kind of new force in American politics.

I stand before you, having raised both of those thoughts, without any quick solutions, because I don't have them. But if we're dealing here at the Shorenstein Center with the concept of the intersection of the media and our political system as a way of influencing public policy, I think that those are issues that ought to be thought about and addressed.

I'm sure that Peter may have some enlightenment for me.

Mr. Beinart: Well, I'll try. I think you're absolutely right. I think that the core liberal idea, in terms of domestic policy, is equality of opportunity. It's

the basic idea that the genius of America is that people are not prisoners of their birth, that they can rise and fall on the content of their character. And that it is precisely that mobility in society, and that attempt to become as meritocratic as possible, that actually keeps America from having great social dislocation. I think Roosevelt said liberals are the great conservators because we allow a capitalist society not to suffer these huge social convulsions, as happened in Europe, because we reformed capitalism by giving people the means to do better than their parents and, therefore, to buy in and believe in the system. I think the legacy of that intense belief in Americanism is the gratitude that so many Americans feel, who remember the fact that things were, for the parents or grandparents, not nearly as good, but that they were able to make very, very good lives for themselves, partly because they had public good that existed—a good public school system, for instance—that allowed them to rise.

I think the great problem of liberalism has been that those public goods have atrophied. The public school system in urban areas is a great example of that, so people have become more and more cynical that government has the ability to provide the public goods that, in fact, make equality of opportunity possible. They have started to see the possibility for mobility more and more as something that you get by limiting government or by fleeing from government.

The argument that conservatives make is that liberals have ideas that are based on the New Deal, that are completely outdated in this more individualistic society that we have today. The great challenge for liberals is to make the argument that those principles still endure, that the principles about public good that people can access so that they can then rise and fall on the content of their character rather than being prisoners of their birth are still deeply relevant. But the challenge is how to put them into new forms that respond to the realities of today rather than doing what conservatives want to do, which is basically to repeal what tattered social safety net or public infrastructure we have, in the view that if people are forced into ever-more Darwinian situations, they will become more and more virtuous.

This is a view that most Americans reject, which is why they responded so strongly, that there is actually, remarkably, this deep wellspring of support that Americans have for government programs that they think provide tangible benefits to the broad middle class. I think that's where the liberal opportunity is.

Mr. Jones: And what about McCain?

Mr. Beinart: You know, I guess this is what makes McCain a fascinating character, one of these people that someone will write a great biography about someday, maybe even a great novel. He's a bit of a Rorschach Test, I suppose. You can see in McCain what you want to see in McCain. So those of us who have some sympathy for McCain tend to think, oh, well, yeah, you know, we didn't like that, he was being cynical, he knew he needed to do that because he knows the only route for him is in the Republican

Party, but it's not really what he believes. We could be fooling ourselves. What I think makes him a great man and a potentially very important force is that, like other great men, people see in him different things. That's one of the cores of his power.

What he really believes in his heart—I really don't believe that his basic views about American society at home are similar to George W. Bush's. I've never heard him speak with passion about upper-income tax cuts or about something like Social Security privatization or about the conservative cultural agenda. What I hear him speak passionately about is about the taking back of American government, is about American society which is more focused on public good, and about America's role in creating a freer and better world.

I was at an event with McCain. He was talking about Rwanda. Remember, Rwanda was happening at the depths of conservative isolationism, at a time when most Republicans didn't want to do anything in the world at all. And McCain said he had watched Rwanda, and he turned to his aide and he said, with just a small number of American troops we could have stopped that, and I would never allow that to happen if I were president of the United States. Something about the way he said it made me believe him.

Mr. Tomasky: Alex, may I?

Mr. Jones: Yes, Tom, and Michael. Michael Tomasky.

Mr. Tomasky: I'm kind of a McCain dissenter. The way he's sucking up to the religious right—I mean, he's going to wake up one morning and turn into Elmer Gantry.

(Laughter)

Mr. Tomasky: To address your more serious point about Democrats and ideas, if I said earlier that Democrats don't have any ideas, I somewhat misspoke or exaggerated. I just want to add a point that I think is worth bringing out in a panel like this. I think part of the problem that Democrats have in communicating ideas has to do with the professional, political class that runs Democratic campaigns, has to do with the pollsters and the consultants and the advisors and the way they advise Democrats to run.

I think part of the problem that Democrats have in communicating ideas has to do with the professional, political class that runs Democratic campaigns . . .

This is the problem, I think, in a nutshell. They do polls, and they get the results that majorities agree with the Democratic position on the environment, on spending for education, on this, on that. It's a fact: majorities do agree with the Democratic position on most of these things. So the pollster tells the candidate, "see, 58 percent are with you here, 61 percent are with you here. All you have to do is talk about the

issues and you're going to win." It's vulcanized, it's segmentation. It doesn't, often enough, add up to a real vision. I think the fact that, perhaps paradoxically, majorities agree with the Democratic position on a series of particular issues is a problem.

Mr. Jones: Anyone else want to weigh in on that? Steve. Steve Hess and then Diane.

Mr. Hess: I've got a question left over from last night, Peter.

I understand that when any party loses two national elections, everybody has to put on their sackcloth and ashes, and those that care have to look for new ways of doing things. There's a slight difference in conversation whether we're really talking about how to elect a Democratic president or how to elect a liberal, Democratic president.

When any party loses two national elections, everybody has to put on their sackcloth and ashes, and those that care have to look for new ways of doing things.

If the question is how to elect a Democratic president, I found you were either silent or dismissive about the one successful, in the last half of the twentieth century, president, a Democrat, who's done it. The only one who ever got reelected was Bill Clinton. True, he threw away two years of his presidency because he couldn't keep his fly zippered, but that wasn't in the Democratic platform. He went back and forth until he got someplace, but that's the way all politicians, Franklin Roosevelt, did. Franklin Roosevelt came in in '32 proposing a balanced budget.

Okay, we know we have roughly a 50-50 country and each side is trying to tug the other over. Certainly, in 2000 at least, if the Democrats had had a better candidate and a better strategy, Al Gore would have been elected. Maybe less true four years later, but I probably would make the same statement even there: better candidate, better campaign.

So, if you're looking to win in 2008, what is it that Bill Clinton did wrong that wasn't in his gestalt, in the whole collection of things that he did? You touched on it a little this morning: that you couldn't say, "hey, we've got it in mothballs, all we have to do is take it out three years from now." It's true, he had found a sort of a middle way, borrowed it from the British. But, nevertheless, a lot of people thought that was the future of the party.

Lose two elections closely and now we're looking for Howard Dean. I'm not quite sure why you were sort of dismissive when the question was Hillary, who we could take for a surrogate for the Clintons, too. So I'm sort of interested.

Mr. Beinart: I didn't mean to be dismissive. In fact, I think Bill Clinton did some things, some extremely important things, in the 1990s, and they came after a lot of work, and a lot of pain, and anguish, and infighting in

the Democratic Party in the 1980s. Which was to say that being, for instance, very tough on crime was not illiberal, that long prison sentences were not illiberal. In fact, even support for the death penalty would no longer be a kind of liberal litmus test. And most importantly, I think, to say the government has the right to demand responsibility and moral behavior from the poor and from people who receive government largesse in general—I think that was an extremely important principle that Bill Clinton pushed, and I think there's a lot to work with there.

The problem for Democrats is that Bill Clinton managed, I think, to create a fairly coherent, and quite workable, kind of liberalism in a period where foreign policy didn't matter at all. One of the great benefits that he had was that the Republicans couldn't run their 1988 campaign, which was the last, I think, campaign of the Cold War, in 1992, because the Cold War had ended. If you were able to put Bill Clinton in a tank he probably would have looked as bad as Michael Dukakis had in 1988, but there were no more campaigns to be run or putting people in tanks in 1992. I agree with my colleague, John Judis, and Ruy Teixeira, who wrote this book called *The Emerging Democratic Majority*. In an environment where foreign policy was politically marginal, the trends were aligned for the Democratic Party to continue to do very, very well, notwithstanding the kind of fluke loss in 2000. I think they would have clearly won in 2004 had it not been for foreign policy.

In an environment where foreign policy was politically marginal, the trends were aligned for the Democratic Party to continue to do very, very well, notwithstanding the kind of fluke loss in 2000.

It was 9/11 and the massive reemergence of the problem the Democratic Party has had since Vietnam on foreign policy that has created this new, very difficult twist that Bill Clinton didn't have to deal with. I think that problem has been masked to some degree by George W. Bush's tremendous problems recently in Iraq.

But in the long term, the Democratic Party has to do what Bill Clinton didn't really have to do, which is to come up with a version of liberalism which has an answer to the long-term concerns that people had about the Democratic Party on foreign policy and national security, rather than simply on the domestic issues.

Mr. Hess: What about Kosovo?

Mr. Beinart: Well, I think that Kosovo was the beginning of something very important. Tony Blair gave a very interesting speech in Chicago after Kosovo. He went further than Clinton trying to lay out what a hawkish,

liberal interventionist, internationalist vision would be, and I found it very compelling.

It had various important attributes, one of which was renewed, reinvigorated international institutions to give humanitarian interventions legitimacy so that they weren't unilateral exercises. Another was a recognition that sovereignty could not be as core a principle of international relations as it had been in the past, that the world community had the right to intervene when governments were not protecting their people. A third was the recognition that states were no longer the sole, dominant actors in international relations, but that non-state actors were becoming increasingly important.

I really believe there was something to work with in the wake of Kosovo. I think the Clinton Administration was getting there. The tragedy, for me, of liberalism is that if 9/11 had happened when Al Gore was president, I think he would have gone into Afghanistan, and there would have been an opportunity to actually take those principles and develop them further. I think there was a growing willingness to accept a certain kind of nation building, not the kind of national building exactly that we've seen in Iraq, but a certain kind.

Certainly those of us who supported the Iraq War deserve as much, and perhaps more, blame than those on the left end of the Democratic Party. But, for whatever reason, the polling now is actually quite remarkable. If you look at liberals' priorities, they just do not prioritize the "War on Terror," whatever you want to call it, nearly as much as conservatives do, and nearly as much as most Americans do. In the long term, it may not hurt the Democrats so much in 2006, but I think in the long term, assuming we do have this continuing jihadist threat—which I think we will—that could be a real problem.

I asked them which one was the Democrat, and they said, well, the warm guy, you know, the nice, smiley guy. They just assumed.

Mr. Jones: Diane, and then Rich.

Ms. Francis: Just one observation. I'm an American who has lived in Canada as a journalist for many years. I watched the debates, a couple of the debates, Kerry and the President, with the sound off, in a living room with Canadian kids who kind of know Democrat/Republican, have a sense of it. And I asked them which one was the Democrat, and they said, well, the warm guy, you know, the nice, smiley guy. They just assumed. There's an audio/video mismatch, and there's a lack of likeability in many of the Democratic candidates.

I don't know whether it's the governments, whether it is the fact that the party may be in the grip of elitists but, whether it's Reagan, or I Like

Ike versus Adlai Stevenson, it seems to be a problem for Democrats, and I don't know why they don't have more likable candidates. Hillary's going to have this problem. She may even skate McCain on side because he's very frightening if you turn the sound off and look at him.

(Laughter)

Ms. Francis: It's just an observation, so I just wondered what people thought about it and what the Democrats can do about that.

Ms. Rabinowitz: The real question is why they thought the smiley one was the Democrat.

Ms. Francis: Because the Democrat should be speaking for the common guy, should have the warm message, the compassionate message. He's just more likable, to look at Bush, as opposed to Kerry, who looks patrician, cold. He looks like a Republican.

Ms. Rabinowitz: Well, those divisions of what parties should or should not be actually seem to have eluded the electorate. I don't think that people think that anymore. I think they see what's before them. One, they saw a brooding, quasi-Hamlet, without the poetry; the other one, they saw a serious, regular guy whom they could believe, said what he felt.

Mr. Jones: So what if it had been Bill Clinton debating George W. Bush?

Ms. Rabinowitz: Well, as you see, Mr. Clinton won. That's the answer. He won. I go into London streets and cabbies, cabbies are in love with Bill Clinton. They start a conversation. All over Europe they still love Bill Clinton.

Mr. Jones: Richard.

Mr. Parker: It may be because I recently published a lengthy biography about John Kenneth Galbraith that I think about these issues, and I think Peter did a wonderful job about raising some of these issues. But, like other people at the table, I feel perplexed about how to get to some of the answers.

It seems to me that Walter has touched on a whole arena of problems that need to be incorporated into your thinking. They stem from the fact that the United States became the world's largest economy in the 1890s and will continue to be the world's largest economy for another 15 or 20 years, after which it will become the second largest economy, and by the middle of this century, become the third largest economy. That's going to fundamentally alter our relationship to the rest of the world.

We're also in a globalizing economy in which last week Delphi's option for workers, to survive as employees of Delphi, was to take a two-thirds pay cut. General Motors is to cut health and pension benefits. The process of lowering the living standards of Americans because of the increasing intensification of global competition means that the world that Americans face is fundamentally different from the world that the Republicans and Democrats have been arguing about since the Second World War.

And without shifting to that understanding, I think that a lot of what

we've been talking about today comes to naught, tragically, because the issue, I think, is not simply one of providing public goods, through government, for an economy that is basically self-sufficient and globally dominant, but to think about the balance between markets and governments, and the scope of governments, not just regulation, not just provision of public goods. Regulation of markets on a domestic and international basis is at the center of what is going to redefine politics for our children and their children.

So, I simply put that forward as a different frame that might help this group think through what it is that liberalism ought to be about by the middle of the twenty-first century, not what it was in 1972 or 1932.

Mr. Jones: Peter.

Mr. Beinart: I think that's a wonderful and very, very important point. There has been an interest on the left, amongst liberals and people to their left, in recent years, in trying to think about these questions of international economic regulation, about how you can, in a globalized economy, try to create living standards for people—environmental standards, but also living standards.

I think that the Clinton Administration, again, in its kind of tentative, two-steps-forward, one-step-back way, was trying to get at this a little bit. Look at the kind of trade agreements that they were trying to push through in the late 1990s. I'd be interested to see what Mike thinks about this, but it seems to me that there was some kind of emerging thinking about, amongst liberals, on the question of trade.

And maybe even an emerging synthesis which said that, in fact, we want a trade agreement, we recognize that the country was going to become more and more integrated in the global economy. We couldn't stop that, and we shouldn't try to stop that. But, that said, we should use this as an opportunity to try to change the societies with which we were trading and have a race to the bottom but have this trade actually produce meaningfully better lives for people there, which would also be better for ourselves.

This is an enormously difficult effort. One of the many, from the liberal point of view, tragedies of the Bush Administration is that the Bush Administration isn't interested in that agenda and has basically pushed through trade agreements that have very little in the way of those kinds of protections. Democrats and liberals, kind of not surprisingly, have basically retreated to the view that they're against all trade agreements, which is not a long-term, sustainable view.

So I think your point is very right. I guess the only thing I would say in closing is that this question about public goods, particularly the American educational system, things like the degree to which Americans know math and science, is very, very much connected with how America will fare in this new environment.

You don't have to agree with everything Tom Friedman says to believe that, in fact, the changes in technology mean that Americans will face much, much more rigorous competition from people whose geographical distance from them matters less than it did before. In fact, the long-term answer to that will have to be that the American work force become more and more productive, and more and more educated, and that we're not doing a good enough job of that.

Mr. Parker: One comment. The only problem is the WalMart memo that came out which says, internally, you understand that our workers, after seven years, are no more productive than they are after the first. We can try to pile on math and science education, but that's not a solution for 90 percent of America's work force. You can't upscale a WalMart worker in a system that constantly de-skills workers, as a form of managerial control, and also profit incentive, and expect that by keeping kids in school longer you're going to produce a work force that, with better math training, are going to make better cashiers scanning product codes across a scanner. There's a more structural problem here that goes beyond better education.

Mr. Jones: Walter, you'll have the last word.

Mr. Shorenstein: I think I should since maybe I'm paying for it, but that's okay.

(Laughter)

Mr. Shorenstein: What did Ronald Reagan say? It's his mike so he has the privilege of speaking.

It seems to me fundamental, and I can't seem to transcend it. As journalists you're not necessarily dealing with debt, as a person like myself is constantly dealing with debt. But understanding that when you create debt you have to pay your debt in order to continue. I don't know how long this country can last, to create and pile on debt and not be willing to pay for it.

I don't know how long this country can last, to create and pile on debt and not be willing to pay for it.

I'm not worried about this country in a competitive form because we can out-compete any other country, and the ability of upward mobility, which people like myself and others have had, is always going to be there. But the whole big question is, how do we handle this debt and what is our ability to be willing to pay for it? And I don't think this issue is being fully addressed, politically and otherwise.

Mr. Jones: With that, I'm sorry to say we've come to the end of our time.

I want to thank this wonderful panel. I think this panel has been one of the very best we've ever had, and I find really very interesting. I especially want to thank Peter Beinart for being here and stimulating this conversation, which I think all of us have found so very provocative, and which

has raised all kinds of questions, enduring questions, questions that have very hard answers, like the ones Walter has raised and others.

I'm very, very pleased with the way this Theodore White lecture and panel has gone, and I want to thank you all for making it so excellent.

Thank you.

(Applause)