



PROJECT on Middle East Democracy

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**“American Foreign Policy: A View from the Senate”
The Johns Hopkins Center on Politics and Foreign Relations
1740 Massachusetts Ave, N.W. Washington D.C.
Wednesday, April 6 9:30-10:30 a.m.**

On Wednesday, The Johns Hopkins SAIS Center for Advanced Governmental Studies hosted an event focused on American foreign policy, entitled, “American Foreign Policy: A View From the Senate.” The event was moderated by **Robert J. Guttman**, founder and chair of the Center on Politics and Foreign Relations, and **Richard McGregor**, the Financial Times Washington Bureau Chief. The speaker at the event was Senator **Lindsey Graham** (R-SC).

Sen. Graham opened by stating that foreign policy could be “**the issue**” of the 2012 presidential election and that it could either be a defining factor for President Obama or it will serve as a real impediment to his re-election. Sen. Graham discussed the U.S. role in Afghanistan and Iraq and stated that he disagreed with themes that he sees amongst his constituents and across America that the U.S. is involved in societies that are not going to progress even with the help of the U.S. He argued that the youth in these countries do not want to return to the eras of Saddam and Taliban rule, but instead yearn for freedom and a better life for their children. He stated: “**This is a good investment that could pay off.**”

In regards to Afghanistan, Sen. Graham stated that we’ve been at war in Afghanistan for nearly a decade, but unfortunately we have only had the “**right force configuration**” for 18 months. With the lack of proper support he stated that the Taliban has filled power vacuums, but that we finally have enough troops to “**turn things around.**” Sen. Graham mentioned a potential strategic partnership that is currently being worked on with the Afghan Government to promote a long-term security, economic, and political agreement. He suggested to President Obama to “**seize the moment, be bold**” and work towards this initiative and a similar one in Iraq.

Strong long-term strategic partnerships with Iraq and Afghanistan, Sen. Graham believes will signal to the region that the Taliban is never coming back, and that the United States will continue to work to establish a stable Iraq. He stated that it is in both the national security interest of Iraq and the United States to establish this type of agreement because Iraq still has a long way to go before it can sustain itself. Sen. Graham argued that by the end of the year we will either have negotiated long term agreements with Iraq and Afghanistan or we will have “**punted**” and all that we had done “**will be lost.**”

When asked for his thoughts on the situation in Libya and Egypt, Sen. Graham commended the **Obama** administration for their policy in Egypt, but stated that they had failed to construct effective policy in Libya. He stated that the relationship between the United States military and the Egyptian military “**was essential**” in preventing violence and creating a peaceful transition in Egypt. He

cautioned that elections must not take place too soon because the opposition is unorganized and if elections move too quickly Islamist and former NDP members will have a clear advantage.

He stated that General **David Patraeus** had written him a letter saying that foreign operations are just as important “**as any military brigade in Afghanistan.**” Therefore, Sen. Graham argued that money and resources spent in Egypt can change the “**tide in the Middle East forever.**” He argued that Egypt is the heart and soul of the region and that supporting democracy there is essential. Sen. Graham went on to chastise those in Congress who disagree with this viewpoint that the foreign operations budget is not essential to U.S. national security interests.

In regards to Libya he stated that the U.S. has an “**unclear mission**” and that our military forces there are not “**decisive enough**” to change the situation. More airpower is needed, according to Sen. Graham, as well as more attacks on areas closer to **Muammar Gadhafi**. He finished answering this question by stating that even food aid programs in Africa are essential to U.S. national security. Sen. Graham asserted that food aid helps to prevent military conflict and Chinese domination in Africa.