

## NATIONAL SECURITY

### Interview #7

Tuesday Morning, August 23, 2011

**KAUFMAN:** We're starting today on national security?

**RITCHIE:** That's right.

**KAUFMAN:** Let me ask you this, and see if you think we ought to. One of the things that amazes me is the ability of the human mind to be a computer. We can all think about things, and talk about them, and strategize, but many times you just leave it up to your mind to do the organization and it works out very well. The example I give is when Ed Meese was up for attorney general, Biden was chairing the Judiciary Committee. He announced that he was not going to make a decision on Meese until the end of the hearings. He never really liked the judgmental part of nominations. If you read the stories, he didn't look on the Bork nomination as an accomplishment and we didn't crack any champagne bottles open after it was over. It was a personal tragedy for Bork. He told the staff that his plan was not to announce on Meese until the hearings were over. So we had the first day of hearings, Meese was there and he brought his family, and gave his opening statement. Then there was a break for lunch. We all went to Senator Biden's conference room where he had a big table. The staff sat around and talked about the hearing, what was going on, what the progress was. We went over some of the charges against Meese, conflict of interest and if he had been involved in a couple of things, and how important was his conflict of interest if he was going to become the number one law enforcement officer in the country as opposed to the secretary of the treasury. We just talked about these things with the understanding that he wasn't making a decision yet. We got up, and I walked all the way back with him to the Meese hearing, so he had no time to do anything. We walked into the Meese hearing and he gaveled it to order and spoke extemporaneously for maybe 15 to 20 minutes about why he was going to oppose the Meese nomination. He was so good, he was so articulate, that Meg Greenfield printed his entire statement in the *Washington Post* the next day, without any changes. This had all been done in his mind. He had organized the speech, laid it out, the grammar and the words that he used, he just gave it, right off the top of his head. Do you think that's worth including?

**RITCHIE:** Oh, yes, definitely.

**KAUFMAN:** Okay, where are we now?

**RITCHIE:** We said last time that we would start today with national security and human rights.

**KAUFMAN:** Yes, I was on the Foreign Relations Committee, I had spent a lot of time on those issues. After I had left Senator Biden's office I was 13 years on the Broadcasting Board of Governors. I had traveled around the world, not to the spots where you want to go. I mean, when I went to Africa I went to Bamako, Mali and I went to São Tomé, and I went to Angola. I went to Kenya, but I didn't go on safari and didn't see any animals. I went to Botswana, we had a transmission site there, I didn't get to see beautiful Botswana. I actually went to China four times, and the Great Wall is right outside of Beijing, but I never got to see the Great Wall. My basic approach was that whenever I was traveling without my wife I just wanted to pack as much into my travels as I could. That was the same way with the Broadcasting Board of Governors. So I traveled all over the world and had some pretty good ideas about what was going on and I was really looking forward to serving on the Foreign Relations Committee.

The other really good thing that happened to me was Jack Reed, who is the senator from Rhode Island. He went to the Harvard Law School, has an MBA from Sloan School at MIT, was a Ranger, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne, and a wonderful person. He and Sheldon Whitehouse, the other senator from Rhode Island, you couldn't have two better people, smart and with the highest integrity, and great friends. Jack Reed is a great friend. We did a lot with so many of the people he went to high school with back in Cranston, Rhode Island. When Obama went to Afghanistan and Iraq, he asked Jack Reed to go with him. Jack and Carl Levin—Carl's head of the Armed Services Committee—and John Kerry and Dick Lugar on Foreign Relations were the Senators I looked to on foreign policy. I went to Jack when I first got there and said, "Jack, the next time you're going to Iraq and Afghanistan, I'd really like to go with you." I went with him on three trips to Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Then I went back to Iraq on another trip, so I went four times to Iraq, and three times to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The second series of two trips I took overseas were all built around the Middle East.

Let me talk about Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan first. I had a wonderful series of briefings by a number of people, one of whom before I did any traveling was John Nagl, who helped write the *Army Field Manual*, which had talked about counterinsurgency. He

had written it with [David H.] Petraeus. And I talked to a group of people, including the author of *The Accidental Guerilla*, [David] Kilcullen, an Australian. I became a real advocate for counterinsurgency. Just to show here, Kilcullen and the *Army Field Manual* document that we tried all sorts of different approaches, not just us but the British and the French, and everybody else who tried to deal with an insurgency, which is essentially an internal terrorist attack against a government. Historically the U S would use what is called counter-terrorism, which is what you would do—go out and try to find the terrorists and you kill them or put them in jail or move them out or try to get rid of them, which had some unfortunate side consequences. In Vietnam it was the famous: “Burn a village in order to save it.” We talked a lot in Vietnam about winning their hearts and minds, but our strategy was such that for a lot of reasons, which anybody who is interested can read *The Accidental Guerilla* or *The Army Field Manual* and you’ll get a pretty good idea of why it didn’t work. So Petraeus and Nagl bunch of other guys sat down and worked through this counterinsurgency strategy.

Counterinsurgency strategy was very different from counter-terrorism. It sounded the same and there’s a lot of misunderstanding about it. If I could do one thing in national security I’d force everyone who has spoken on national security at least to read Kilcullen’s book, because it’s not nation building. It’s nothing to do with that. What they came up with, which I think is sheer genius, which we really first saw in the surge in Iraq. When we were going down the tubes in Iraq, and things looked terrible, we put Petraeus in charge. Petraeus went to Iraq and started counterinsurgency. The way counterinsurgency works, as opposed to counter-terrorism, where again when you find the insurgents you either kill them, put them in jail, or drive them out, counterinsurgency said no, no, no. The terrorists are a problem, but really it’s not about us, it’s about the government and the insurgency. It’s like a campaign, think of it, it’s almost like a political campaign, where what we’re trying to do is to convince the people in a country that they are better off with their government than they are with the insurgents. In most of these cases there aren’t a whole lot of individual insurgents.

Usually, if there is an insurgency, the government is not doing a very good job. I told my wife when I got back from my first trip to Iraq and Afghanistan and Pakistan. When I met with [Nouri Kamil Mohammed al-] Maliki, head of Iraq, and met with [Asif Ali] Zadri, head of Pakistan, and met with [Hamid] Karzai, head of Afghanistan, I didn’t expect to find George Washington, but I expected to find someone a whole lot better than those three. All three of them, it’s very difficult to convince the people in Iraq,

Afghanistan, and Pakistan, that their leader is the best leader they can have, but that life is a matter of alternatives. Clearly, we have made a lot of progress in Iraq, but basically it's almost like a political campaign. . Your first objective is to Clear the area—there's a little shorthand called Clear, Hold, Secure, Build. Basically, your first objective is to go to a town or an area and clear the area of terrorists. Now, we did a lot of that in Vietnam, we did a lot of that in Iraq. But we would clear and then we would leave, and the terrorists would come back in. The effect was such that if you were a leader in a town—this was especially true in Vietnam, we got better in Iraq and Afghanistan, but the results in many cases were the same—we would clear an area and we would leave, then the terrorists would come back in and kill anybody that worked with us. That is why the second objective is to Hold the area.

What you had to do was make sure you had enough troops, and that meant a lot of local troops, to clear an area and then hold an area. Then you could start not nation building but you start a lot of things that people misconstrued for nation building. You start the third objective and that is to Build. You could start economic development. You can start building up an area until people say, "Oh, hey, this government is working for me. I support them as opposed to the Taliban." When we were first in Afghanistan, and even at the end, most polls showed that only six percent of the people supported the Taliban. These people had lived with the Taliban, they knew how bad the Taliban was, but they thought two things: one, that the Karzai government was even worse; and two, that eventually the Taliban would take over because the Karzai government couldn't fight them. So therefore they didn't want to be with the government and then have the Taliban come in and they get killed. It's kind of like, "You Bet Your Life."

The way this worked was, I remember one of the key things Petraeus said when he went to Iraq for the surge was: "Out of the Humvees." In the past, we had forward operating bases (fobs) like what we had in Vietnam, and then we'd send out troops out in Humvees and armored vehicles patrolling an area. There was no way you could really find out what was going on here, and it led to all kinds of mistakes, killing civilians. It was kind of what would happen to police operations in the United States. I remember in Los Angeles during the O.J. [Simpson] and the rest of it, the police had an attitude: We're just here almost like an occupying power. People said: No, no, you've got to get out into the community, you've got to start community policing, you've got to find out what's going on, you've got to win the community over. Well, that's very similar to what was proposed by Petraeus and Nagl and others in this counterinsurgency. I became

convinced that counterinsurgency was important.

Now, two big points that had to do with Afghanistan. One of the first things when I came to the Senate was that President Obama was going to have a reevaluation of Afghanistan, so I got involved in that. Senator John Kerry had a series of hearings, wonderful hearings, on Afghanistan. I traveled to the area. My concern when I came back from the area, first off in Iraq, I felt good about Iraq, I knew what we were doing. We had 600,000 Iraqi security forces. They had been well trained. I traveled up to Kirkuk and met with the Kurds. I met with General [Raymond] Odierno, who was in charge in Iraq. I met with the other generals. I met with Maliki and most of the leadership in Iraq. I also saw Senator Biden's son, Beau, who was with the 261<sup>st</sup> Signal Brigade. I went and met with him, they had a cook-out and I met with all the troops. The American troops are extraordinarily good. I was never a big supporter of the volunteer army, and had some concerns about it, but boy it was the best idea we ever came up with. You met with these military people, from the PFC's right on up to the generals, they were so sharp. They were dedicated. They were looking at it as a job, as a career. It was extraordinary the competence of our troops.

Unfortunately, the military part of this is not the biggest part of the problem. The military part is clear and hold, but then there's the build part of it. You can have the greatest military in the whole world—and we do—the greatest military in history—and we do—but the best words anybody ever said were, “We can't want to get rid of the insurgency any more than the Afghans and Iraqis want to do it.” If they don't want to do it, then there's nothing that we can do. In Iraq we were successful. We won over a lot of the Sunni in Anbar Province. Petraeus did an incredible job. So I went to Iraq and I really got this feeling that the counterinsurgency was working. When you get to the “build” section, we built the largest embassy we have in the world there, and that took a lot of civilian help. There were 600,000 in all the Iraqi forces. We had a very well developed civilian operation, a lot of people from the State Department, a very different story from Afghanistan. But we had real problems with the leadership. Maliki never demonstrated a real desire to bring the Kurds or the Sunnis into the government.

As I said, I went to Kirkuk on one of my trips. Their leadership was so great. When I went up there the first trip to Kirkuk, which is in the Kurd area, there were lots of problems. The Kurds wanted to have a census. Saddam [Hussein] had gone in there and moved a lot of the Kurds out of Kirkuk and moved in Iraqis—that's where 14 percent of

the oil is located. The question is: who gets the land? Is it the people that Saddam moved in, or do the Kurds get it? The Kurds are on a hair trigger. The Peshmerga, which is the military force for the Kurds, which is recognized to be a potent military force because they had fought with the Turks and had fought with Saddam's Iraq army. The leader of the Peshmerga was known to be spoiling for a fight. The first trip I went up there, the Iraqis had just put a new general in charge of the Iraqi army up there, and he was on a hair trigger. The Iraqi mayor of one of the towns had gone up into the Kurd area and almost dared them to have a fight. Guns were drawn. And then you see the brilliance of what Odierno did. He said, "Okay guys, what we're going to do now is on every patrol and at every checkpoint along this disputed area between the Kurds and the Iraqi Army we're going to have a representative of the Kurds, of the Iraqi army, and of the American army, at every one of these positions. The results, when I went back later, were just incredible. He just completely defused the whole issue. And the key to it was that the American troops on the ground—and wherever I traveled, you could tell when you met with Iraqi troops, Afghan troops, troops in the Middle East—I know this sounds a little corny, but you could tell that they looked on these American troopers and thought, "That's what I want to be when I grow up." On that checkpoint, that Kurd, that Peshmerga soldier, that Iraq army soldier, they listened to what those American soldiers told them what to do.

Now, there have been a few examples in Iraq, and especially in Afghanistan, where troops or security forces have shot American soldiers. I'm not saying everything is a bed of roses. But when you went up there you saw how that policy completely changed things. The Kurds and the Iraqis wanted the American troopers up there. They wanted to work with, so it just transformed things. There are still gigantic problems about who gets the land, and who gets the oil, but Odierno had done a great job of defusing that. So I felt good about Iraq. If you look at the counterinsurgency manual, it was working well in Iraq.

Afghanistan is a different story. First of all Karzai, I met with him three, four or five times in Afghanistan and the United States. His planning horizon seems to be three or four days. I can remember before his election we met with him, and he went through what sounded like a campaign ad. He said, there was this young couple, and they were driving outside of Kandahar, and American helicopters came in and fired on them, and the poor woman was found dead with a baby in her arms. He just goes on and on and on. Again, I understand he wants to win the support of his people, but criticizing our forces

and our behavior in order to do it just didn't seem to be either in our interests or in his interests. I said at the time, Karzai is the key. The second thing is corruption, just an incredible amount of corruption. Afghanistan, I think, is 177<sup>th</sup> on a list of 178 countries on the transparency list for corruption. Corruption is rampant and there's no desire to overcome it. I met with DEA [Drug Enforcement Administration] agents, I met with FBI agents, people who are over there trying to help. Every time we tried to get our hands around the corruption, Karzai would let people go. There was one case where we had this guy nailed and Karzai's prosecutor just let the guy go. The guy went to Europe.

There's corruption everywhere. Now, that's not to say there wasn't corruption in Iraq, because there was a lot of corruption in Iraq, but in Afghanistan there wasn't any honest base. We're trying to sell the government. This is like a campaign between the Taliban and the government in Kabul. Wherever you went, people would say, "The Taliban is terrible, but these guys are so corrupt!" You'd go down to Kandahar, which was the key area where we had all the problems with the drugs and the rest of it, Ahmed Wali Karzai, who was Karzai's half-brother, everybody said was behind everything. He's since been killed. And Karzai's brother-in-law, there were all these stories that I heard from a number of different places that he was a state senator, and they found eight tons of poppy seed in his basement. He said it was for planting, but how do you plant eight tons of seeds? Just story after story of corruption. Corruption along the border, our resupply comes in through Pakistan, and the incredible amount of corruption along that trip. So leadership was a big problem in Afghanistan and corruption was a big problem in Afghanistan.

The third problem in Afghanistan is more of our doing. When I got back I went to the State Department, and I said "This is a great opportunity for the State Department." I'm a big supporter of the State Department, and [Robert] Gates, the secretary of defense, was a big supporter of the State Department. He used to say that there are more people in the U.S. army bands than there are diplomats in the State Department. The State Department is key, and when the Department of Defense gets up and says these civilian problems are really important, if you're going to do the "build" section you need civilians out there in the countryside. Right from the beginning I can remember meeting with Jim Jones, the national security advisor, we poured billions of dollars into the civilian effort. I couldn't believe it. When I got on Homeland Security committee, Senator Claire McCaskill had a hearing that I went to, and learned that we spent \$8 billion supposedly training the Afghan police. When you're over there, the Afghan police are a major part of

the problem. They are so incredibly corrupt.

In Marja, where we went in at the beginning of the surge, when we turned this thing around and decided to have a surge in Afghanistan we went into Marja, but the people in Marja said "The Taliban was not good, but they were great compared to the Afghan police who were in here before, who were so corrupt." The Taliban actually had courts that worked. So that's the first thing, Karzai and the corruption, and the national security forces, the police and the army in Afghanistan were awful. The police were corrupt and negative. The head of security, Mohammad Atmar, he had lost a leg fighting the Russians. He was fabulous and Karzai ended up sacking him. And there weren't enough of them.

Basically, the numbers under counterinsurgency said that we should have had 600,000. What counterinsurgency says is you need so many total people on the ground to do the clear and the hold, and we needed 600,000. I can remember meeting with [General Stanley A.] McChrystal—Carl Levin, Jack Reed, and I traveled with McChrystal, when this was being debated, what this was going to look like. We were on his plane, just the four of us and the pilot and co-pilot, for an hour and a half. He went through the numbers, and when you looked at the numbers we needed 600,000 troops and we had 130,000, even after the surge, of the combined force, they call it ISAF [International Security Assistance Force]. We were pushing to have 150,000 to 200,000 Afghans, not fully trained. The training program had been awful. The police training program had been even worse. We weren't getting support from NATO. Remember, in Afghanistan we had NATO support, that was a NATO operation. In Iraq, that was totally our operation. They said that there were a lot of other people involved, but there really weren't very many. But in Afghanistan we actually had other people involved. It came to 130,000 troops. Maybe another 160,000 down the road. Three hundred thousand troops. But Afghanistan's population is probably bigger than Iraq's, and in Iraq we had 600,000 troops, and we know how dicey security was, even to this moment. How are you going to maintain it with half the troops in Afghanistan?

The argument was made by McChrystal: "We're just going to concentrate on the areas where the Taliban are. There isn't much going on in the north and the west." Well, as soon as we drive the Taliban out of the east and the south, where do they go? All of a sudden we've got troubles in the north and the west. I said at the time, "It's like a balloon. You push one place and the Taliban goes someplace else." So you had that

whole problem. We don't have enough folks in the security forces.

Then finally, one of the biggest concerns is Pakistan. I met with President Zadari a number of times. I met with the military. I went all over Pakistan. I went up along the border with Afghanistan. If you want to appreciate this country, you've got to fly over this in a C-130 and look down. In what is called the tribal areas along the border, There are real mountains and real valleys. It is very difficult to defend and patrol all these areas. It's extraordinary. I went up to meet with U.S. troops up there—this has been reported in the papers—JSOC [Joint Special Operations Command], special forces - Seals, Tenth Army, Counter folks, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne, Elite Army Rangers. But we had a JSOC force there that was training the Frontier Corps. In the Pakistani army there's the army and then there's the Frontier Corps. For hundreds of years the Frontier Corps handled the areas that we were concerned about, which was Waziristan and tribal areas along border with Afghanistan. They were not very well trained. They were not very well paid. And they were the ones who were supposed to look after this area. One of the things we wanted to do was have more training of these troops and upgrade them, which we did. I met with the head of the effort there, Tariq Kahn, and I met with Mohammed [Najmuddin Zenulden Nqshbande], who was the head of the Iraq army unit which came to help reinforce the Frontier Corps.

Clearly, it was a very difficult effort, even if they wanted to, to track down the Taliban. But it was really amazing the change between the first visit and the second visit to Pakistan. On the first visit, it was clear that we had this policy where we were going to give them incentives, but it was all a deal. We said to them, "We'll give you this help, but you've got to go in and start clearing these people out." What the Pakistani army wanted, their main concern was India. They had some real concerns about their ability to stop the Indian army if they ever got into a dust-up. The Pakistani army is, I think it's fair to say, is an almost post-World War I army. It's an army that is built on artillery and tanks, kind of like what we have in Europe but without any of the extra frills. I can remember they had no real communications between the air and the ground - They used cell phones. It was an army that would have a difficult time stopping an Indian army. Clearly, their main defense against India was the fact that they have nuclear weapons. So that's what they wanted to do. Our deal was, "We'll help you with that, but you've got to help us in the tribal areas."

Well, you could tell in the beginning it was like a deal, and like a deal, everybody

was trying to figure their way around it. We were giving them the JSOC troops, were they really helpful there? Then the Pakistanis were thinking we might not actually stay there. We had left so many times before. We had been committed to stopping the Russians, the CIA had been very helpful, but then we had left. Then after 9/11 we came into Afghanistan and we were there, and then another big reason why we should never have gone into Iraq was we had to pull key troops out of Afghanistan. People talk about it as a 10-year war. It wasn't a 10-year war in Afghanistan. A lot of the time between 2003 and 2008, our major priority was Iraq. We had like 23 and 35,000 troops in Afghanistan. So the people were feeling, "they don't care about us." Karzai used to say this all the time: "You don't care about us, you have your own interests. Don't bother me with your concerns. You've got to stay here and that's why you're here, so I don't have to spend a whole lot of time worrying about you guys, because you're here totally for your own interests. You don't care about Afghanistan." And the people in Pakistan felt that way, too. There are clearly members in their intelligence services, the ISI [the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence], who believe we are leaving and the Taliban will take over Afghanistan and do not want to do anything to alienate the Taliban. On the ISI one of the things I concluded after making three trips there, was whenever anything goes wrong it's the ISI. It's a little like what we used to think in the '60s and '70s, that the Russians are 10-feet tall. We have a lot of problems in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but the ISI isn't nearly as good as we make it out to be here. There are some anecdotes that I cannot give because of security, about ISI, clearly demonstrating that they were okay but they weren't the geniuses that people make out when they write stories about them.

Where that came true, between my first and second trip—when we met with Prime Minister Gilani and most of the political leaders and the Army Chief, Kayani—it was clear that the Pakistan Taliban had made great advances in the Swat Valley in Pakistan, and literally had gotten within a hundred miles of the capital. So you now had a much more interested Pakistan army and Pakistan leadership in Zadari, in doing something about the Taliban in Pakistan, because the Taliban was trying to take *them* out. So we got them on our side. What we found in the Swat Valley was the Pakistan Army was using counter-terrorism approaches, not counterinsurgency, and their army wasn't really set up to do counterinsurgency. They would come to a town and level it with artillery and tanks and then go in and pick up the pieces. Well, they drove the Taliban out but they alienated just about every civilian in the Swat Valley. A lot of this criticism of them that they weren't helping us enough in Waziristan missed two considerations. One was they didn't have a military to do the job like our troops. They weren't trained to do counterinsurgency. They just barely understood what counterinsurgency was all about.

And they their real interest was, "If the Americans leave, and they leave a major military force in Afghanistan, or the Taliban takes over, which is much more logical" (looking at the Karzai government, if we leave I think the Taliban would take over in Afghanistan) "they're our neighbors, so we're going to have to have a relationship with them." So it made it very, very difficult to get them to go after the Taliban.

But when General McChrystal became head of ISAF, he made some mistakes, but McChrystal was very good. A lot of the problems were just coordination. A lack of understanding of what counterinsurgency was. A lack of commitment by the troops to counterinsurgency. I'm not sure how much our military leadership was to blame, there was always a question about that. His predecessor as ISAF head was [General David] McKiernan, we met with him, and he was good but he just didn't seem to buy into counterinsurgency and I think that's one of the reasons why they replaced him with McChrystal. But you could tell, on my last trip there, that they were really doing a much better job of communicating what was going on along the border, working with the Pakistani army and the Pakistani troops and the Frontier Corps. Petraeus was traveling to Islamabad more often, meeting with the leadership. The Joint Chiefs was there. Gates was there. It was really a much better, I felt. Part of it was evolution. If McKiernan was still there we may have been doing many of the same things. But Petraeus was perfect. Petraeus was the guy that wrote the book. There's a great financial investment book by Graham, Dodd, Cottle, it would be like doing my investments with the three of those guys helping me. They invented value investing. But with this, Petraeus is the best there is. Having him there really made a difference.

But I said from the beginning, the problem is the Karzai government's corruption and its relationship with Pakistan. We don't have enough troops—600,000 troops in Iraq and we still have security problems, and we're trying to do Afghanistan with 300,000 troops. One of the things I'm proudest of is that when [Admiral Michael G.] Mullen and Clinton and Gates testified on the surge in Afghanistan, I had them commit that they not only would begin to leave in July 2011, but that we would also under no circumstances increase our troops. There was a lot of back and forth, and frankly, Republican senators were saying, "Well, we're not really going to leave then," and "What does it mean?" and the rest of that stuff.

It was hard on the military. The military had wanted more troops, they hadn't wanted this deadline to leave. A lot of the diplomats didn't want to leave, they were afraid it would set a standard. My point was it was a stroke of genius because it sent a

clear message to Karzai: "We're going to start leaving here." Because I don't think he was really working to build up the Afghan army himself. A lot of folks in Kandahar, where he's from, he's Pashtun, where most of our problems are, they didn't want a big Afghan army. They wanted the U.S. to stay and keep the Taliban off their backs so they could do the drug trade and all the different things they were doing. They weren't interested in having a big army because a lot of the Afghan army were from the northern part of the country. They were Tajiks, and the Tajiks and Pashtun aren't best buddies. It really is true, there's not much of a national feeling. There's more allegiance to your tribe. But that was not the only problem. That was a concern, but at this point, that was not the problem.

The other problem I saw when I went there the first time was that we were supposed to have this gigantic civilian surge, and it just never happened. We had people come, but the State Department never could get its head around that. We had very few people State people outside of Kabul to do the build section, which is the key part: clear, hold, secure and build. One of the things you can't do is to build before we did clear hold secure and build under the old counter-terrorism. We put people out there building a road and here the terrorists were wandering around shooting the people that were building the road. So you had to clear the area. When you look back on it, it was so clear: you had to clear and secure the area and then you could build the road. Kilcullen has a wonderful story about building a road in Kunar Province that demonstrates exactly what we're saying, but you need the troops in order to clear and hold. When we started the surge, we went into Marja, and into our first effort in Kandahar, and we only had—I think it was 20,000 U.S. troops and 5,000 Afghan troops. We didn't have the Afghan troops. We had numbers but they weren't trained and they weren't prepared. So that was the big thing.

My big concern, the thing that I focused on with regard to Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and counterinsurgency, was the civilian part. I talked to the secretary of state Hillary Clinton. I talked to [Anne-Marie] Slaughter, who was doing the state department program review. I talked to everybody I could talk to in the State Department. I said, "This is a great opportunity for you to do this. The military is basically saying there is a component here that the civilian role can fill. Let's get things up and do it." Hailie Soifer, who I traveled with me over there for most of the trips, just was great. I remember we came back from our first trip and we said, "You know, what we really need is this corps of people in the State Department who are ready to travel." Before the military goes into Afghanistan, like the 261<sup>st</sup> that Beau Biden was in, they

train for *months* as a unit, what they were going to do, where they were going, how was it all going to work. The civilians showed up. They were in Kabul. "Hey, my name's Ted, what's your name?" "I'm Joe." "Okay, that's great, I'm from DEA." "I'm from the FBI." "I'm from the Agriculture Department." "I'm from the State Department." "Okay, let's go out there and let's do a job."

We have to bring the same kind of rigor to the civilians as we have for the military. There's got to be training before they go over there. There was some training, but I really pushed hard for an extension of the training program. There was a Camp Atterbury in Indiana, and I went out there, and they had done a great job of building a training program where they brought Afghans over and they played the roles of the leaders in the town. You sat down with them and they went through how you do it. You spoke the language. So it was really wonderful training. My argument was that everybody had to have this kind of training before they went to Kabul. There had to be more of this training. We had to expand it. So we came back and said, "Gee, it would be great if we had this group, and it was big, and they were ready. So just like the military is ready to send their troops in, the civilian troops go in, if you're committed to counterinsurgency." We laid it out, and then, Hailie came back to me and said, "It already exists. It's over in the State Department and it's called CRS." [Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization] It was Biden-Lugar, they did it. So I went over to talk to the folks at CRS. There was no sense of urgency. They didn't have very many people in Afghanistan or Pakistan. I really pushed to expand this and make it a high priority for the State Department, but never really had much success.

My basic approach to Afghanistan was because of the incredible corruption and lack of ability of Karzai we really had to think hard about what we were doing. Now, a lot of people said we should pull out of Afghanistan. I became convinced that if we did pull out of Afghanistan, within five years there would be a major incident in the United States, like 9/11 or worse, organized and orchestrated out of the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and that the American people and the government had to be ready to deal with that possibility if in fact we pulled out of Afghanistan this could happen. I am absolutely convinced that the reason why we have not had another September 11<sup>th</sup> attack is because of the pressure that has been put on Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations over the past 10 years. The raid to get Osama shows how isolated Osama Bin Laden was.

One of the things I'm always amazed when I read in the papers about the Christmas Bomber and the Times Square Bomber, that "We were just lucky, you know, if he blew up his underwear, the Christmas Bomber, if he had done the job right, or the Times Square Bomber, he had the truck, if he knew what he was doing he would have done it." It wasn't just happenstance that they made mistakes. I'm absolutely convinced to the bottom of my being, and it's in the public record, that what happened with both of those guys was they weren't properly trained. Remember on September 11<sup>th</sup> they assembled a picked group of people, they trained them for months, they sent them to the United States, they contacted people in the United States, they had pre-positioned money and passports, they had all that stuff worked out. After 911, We have so much pressure on al Qaeda around the world. The Christmas Tree Bomber and the Times Square Bomber, I'll bet you dollars for donuts al Qaeda leadership told both of them, "Okay, here's some money. I'm going to give you a week of training. I'd give you two weeks of training but then they'll find you and they'll kill you." Because we have such pressure on them. "So we do not have enough time to really train you. We don't want you to contact anybody when you go overseas, because if you contact anybody they'll find out about it and they'll capture you." Well, the point in all that pressure is what we're doing in Afghanistan.

The unmanned aircraft like the predators, people keep talking about the success of the predators—and I'm not talking about anything secret, it's all on the record that we have predators, which are these unmanned vehicles that can for intelligence purposes travel over different places and also can fire missiles, and has been one of the key things to destabilize the Taliban, Al-Qaida, and others around the world. People say, "Well, we can just pull out of Afghanistan and just use picked groups that will come in, like the Seals that went after Osama Bin Laden, or the predators missiles will do, and we won't have to have our troops over there." I just don't see that. The amount of on-the-ground intelligence that goes into every single attack, like a predator attack or a Seals attack, is enormous. If you don't have the intelligence on the ground, you just can't do the rest of this. Remember when the number of CIA agents were killed at Bagram [Airfield]? This person they were trying to turn blew himself up, he was a suicide bomber, and killed seven CIA agents. All those stories said the CIA agents were in Bagram. They were sending people over into Pakistan. The stories about this latest incident where 30 Seals were killed, they said these Seals operations are going on all the time. It's been in the popular press that these Seals units after Osama Bin Laden, they do these things all the time. You're doing this all the time, but you've got to have the intelligence on the

ground. I just asked someone, "Where would the helicopters have come from to go after Osama Bin Laden if they hadn't come from Bagram? How far would they have come in order to get there if we weren't in Afghanistan.

I think the time has come for us to get out of Afghanistan. I think the president is on point with setting a deadline. I think probably it will go bad. And as I said, something bad will happen down the road. But it's absolutely essential that we leave. There's no way we can win a campaign with a government like there is in Afghanistan with its corrupt leadership. And by the way, let's go back through history, I know people have said, "We've got to get rid of Karzai." Well, I'm old enough to remember [Ngo Dinh] Diem. That's what we did back then. We went into Vietnam, and we had Diem in charge. He was assassinated and it didn't get us anywhere. We got [Nguyen Cao] Ky and [Nguyen Van] Thieu and all those bad guys. So the idea that there's a George Washington waiting in the wings to lead Afghanistan, it's just not going to happen. Now, there's a lot of wonderful people in Afghanistan that care and fight and do the right things, but in terms of literacy it's at the bottom, in terms of corruption it's at the bottom, based on their neighborhood, with Pakistan on one side and Iran on the other. Why don't we take a break? What time is it now?

**RITCHIE:** Almost 11:00.

[Break in the Interview]

**KAUFMAN:** Here's my thought on foreign policy is to talk about Middle East travel, not say as much about policy but basically what happened and what it's about, and then talk about human rights.

**RITCHIE:** Okay. One of the complaints back in the Vietnam era is that congressional delegations would go to Saigon and get briefed by the top generals, and then they would leave and they really wouldn't know what was going on. It sounds the way you're describing them that congressional delegations, at least the ones you went on, are very different these days.

**KAUFMAN:** Yes, they are different, but again I worked in a number of different jobs, and think I've gotten competent at looking through the dog-and-pony shows. When I worked for DuPont, we would spend days preparing when a top manager came. And

when you meet with the military, they spend days getting ready. These briefings clearly are worked out. Now, a lot of times you're in Kandahar and they don't have a whole lot of time to prepare. They're out actually getting shot at. It's like when you meet a lobbyist, if you haven't figured out how to process data, and consider the source when the source is presenting its position, you're not going to be very good as a member of Congress or a corporate executive.

But, no, traveling with Jack Reed was great. We went right out. We went into the remote, tough, places. And every place we went—this was one of the interesting things—we'd meet with soldiers, military folks from our states. So with Jack Reed we would do Rhode Island and Delaware. When Kay Hagan went with us we would do North Carolina. So we got to meet with a lot of just regular soldiers, and they were pretty straight. The great thing about Codels [Congressional Delegation] is you're incredibly busy as a United States senator. I used to feel that it wasn't just on the ground meeting with people, it was you do your briefings before you go. You meet with the State Department people. You meet with the CIA people. You meet with the think tank people. Before I took a trip to Afghanistan, Hailie Soifer and Sherman Patrick set up a whole series of meetings with ex-military, military, all kinds of people who were involved in AID and think tanks. Like this fellow John Nagl, would talk to me. He'd tell it to me straight. Did he have a point of view? Sure he had a point of view. Then you'd get on your airplane and you'd go over there. You've got these briefing books while you're on the plane, and you sit and read the briefing books. Then you get over there and you talk to the people. We used to do two media events. While I was over there I would do a press conference Q&A back to Delaware, and then on the return, Jack Reed and I and whoever else went with us would do a press conference in the senate press gallery. Also when you got back you would do television shows, radio shows, interviews, and all the rest. And then you would go to the hearings on the issues.

Obviously, there was the famous line by [George] Romney, "I was brainwashed while I was in Vietnam." Those days are done. This is a different world. Let me put it this way: If you are traveling with Jack Reed you meet with people and ask tough questions, and they're going to answer them. You talk to Odierno and ask: "How are things going with Maliki?" Then you go over and talk to Maliki. Then you talk to the press people who are covering both Odierno and Maliki. Then you talk to the think tank people who are there. Then you talk to the former military people who are there. Then you talk to the soldier who's down on the ground. You talk to the general. You take a

helicopter ride with a captain. You go down and get a briefing from the colonels. We had this incredible briefing—I wish everybody in America could have seen it. We had these three colonels when we were down in Lashkar Gah, this was right after the surge started, and this was a “striker” (which is an armored vehicle) battalion. There were three U S marine colonels there who gave us a briefing on what was going on in the town. Oh my God, they were so sharp!

I'll never forget this as long as I live, we had a private first class give us a briefing on a new piece of equipment. It was a computer that was strapped on his chest that tells everybody who is in an operation , where they are in the village, what they're doing. This is a private first class and he's answering our questions and going through this entire thing. It was like talking to a computer geek, except that he was wearing a bullet-proof vest and carrying an M-16. He said he had three weeks of training on how to use it. We all think we're geniuses. We think we can read people and see through it. But I do believe that the kind of Codels I took, just like the trips I took when I was on the Broadcasting Board of Governors, and when I was on the Senate staff, there are so many different people out there that you come away with a flavor of what it's all about.

**RITCHIE:** I've heard from others that Codels are one of the few times that senators actually get to know each other, because they travel.

**KAUFMAN:** Yes, although I think that's a little overdone. You see these people every day. If you're a senator and you don't get to know them, there's something the matter with you. But clearly on Codels you do get to spend a lot of time together on C-130s, on helicopters, on commercial flights, having dinner in restaurants. Now, most of the time you're on a Codel, and you are not actually traveling, you are scheduled on the ground from morning 'til night. Jack Reed and I really got along. As I said, and Jack was the same way, when I'm away from home and I'm not with my wife, I don't want to do any tourism. I didn't want to see a single tourist spot. I wanted to work from when I got up in the morning, early, until I went to bed at night, so I could turn a seven-day trip into a five-day trip. So it was intense. But you are on an airplane for a long time with other members.

**RITCHIE:** Is there any difference if you're traveling on a Foreign Relations Committee delegation with Senator Kerry, or if you're on an Armed Services delegation with Senator Levin? Do they go different ways and have different purposes?

**KAUFMAN:** Yes, they do, and that's what was so great about it. I traveled with Jack Reed and he was on Armed Services and I was on the Foreign Relations Committee. He was the one—he had done it before, obviously he was the senior, plus it was a Reed Codel. He would always ask me, "What do you want to do? Should we do this?" But yes, I think there's a difference. Armed Services wants to know, "How are the MRAPs [Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles] working?" Whereas somebody else wants to know, "How is the Secretary of Health implementing a program in Kandahar?" That was what was so great about being on Armed Services and Foreign Relations, it's hard to split one from the other, so they overlap.

**RITCHIE:** Did you have to wear flack jackets and helmets and other gear in some of those places?

**KAUFMAN:** Yes. We spent a lot of time in helicopters. We went to the tribal areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan, there wasn't any place we didn't go. But the way things are now, the most dangerous place to be may be in Islamabad, driving down a street, because of the way things are now.

**RITCHIE:** Had you traveled with Joe Biden when he was a senator?

**KAUFMAN:** Yes, I traveled with him on a number of trips. I'm reading a detective novel that takes place in Sarajevo in 1992 and 1993, and Joe Biden and I went there then and went around that whole area. We met with [Slobodan] Milošević and [Radovan] Karadžić. Milošević was head of the Serbian government. Karadžić was head of the Bosnia Serbs. [Alija] Izetbegović, who was the head of the Bosnian government. And [Franjo] Tuđman who was the head of Croatia. So I made a number of trips there.

**RITCHIE:** I was wondering if you noticed any difference between traveling with him back then in the '80s and the '90s as opposed to the traveling you did as a senator?

**KAUFMAN:** It's interesting, my traveling with him—Sarajevo was an exception—but he was chairman of the European Affairs subcommittee so most of the trips were to Europe. What was going on in '93, there were still snipers in Sarajevo. We were flying into Sarajevo and they said they were sending us back because there was firing on the ground. When we left there they said they wouldn't even fly us out because of the firing, so we went out in an armored car through the Serb lines. So that was a lot

like Pakistan and Afghanistan and Iraq. But that's really where I concentrated, that and the Middle East.

**RITCHIE:** When you came back from places like Pakistan and Iraq, would you talk to Vice President Biden about the situation there, as you saw it?

**KAUFMAN:** No, not any kind of a briefing with him. I saw him a lot and did discuss what I thought was going on. He couldn't have been better. He was so proud that things were going well and was so supportive of everything I did. To the extent we talked about Iraq it was that I saw Beau, his son. We'd talk about all these issues, but I didn't come back and brief him. Oh, I guess on one of the trips Jack Reed and I met with him to talk about some things, and Senators Casey, Shaheen and I saw him in Iraq. But by and large, when I talked to him about policy issues, it was just like two guys talking. I didn't brief him. When you're a senator, one of the things that's a good thing and a bad thing is that people are always trying to influence you, trying to affect your decisions, and trying to push their ideas. When you're vice president, take that and multiply it a thousand times. My approach was, if he wants to ask me about something, which he did, he's called me up lots of times and asked, "What do you think about this?" or "What's going on about that?" But I never looked at him as an outlet to achieve my objectives. We're friends. That's the reason I didn't want to become a lobbyist after leaving his office. When I was with him I wanted him to be able to feel we're talking about this as friends, this is not about some agenda I had for a client—that's why I didn't want any clients—or an agenda just because this is the way I want to do it. But he'd ask my opinion about what was going on on the trips.

**RITCHIE:** I guess the reason I asked was because sometimes the impression is that administrations hear the official points of view and don't get to hear dissenting points of view.

**KAUFMAN:** Oh, I guarantee you Joe Biden, after all these years, heard from everybody. I think it's the same with Obama. There's kind of the official point of view, but I'm sure that if you talked to the people, having spent 13 years on the Broadcasting Board of Governors, and getting the feeling of what it's like to be in an administration, I'm sure if you went to the State Department and Department of Defense they would tell you, "Oh, my God, I only wish it were so!" There are so many people that people in an administration talk to about issues that I'm sure it's a cause of frustration to them.

**RITCHIE:** Well, could you talk a little about the Middle Eastern situation?

**KAUMAN:** Yes. I was interested in the Middle East. Senator Biden, from 1973 when he was first elected was interested in the Middle East. I followed the issues and so when I came to the Senate I was interested in the Middle East because the Middle East is an incredibly important part of U.S. foreign policy. While I was Senator, I made three major trips to the Middle East. Two of them were normal Codels to the region. One was when I was invited to participate in a Saban Forum. Haim Saban, a nationalized American, made a lot of money in cartoons and he had set up the Saban Forum, funded as part of a bigger foundation he had. Once a year he would get 40 people— 20 Americans and 20 Israelis—to get together, alternating location, from year to year, to talk about how we can better accomplish peace in the Middle East. It was a great honor. I was invited along with Senator Joe Lieberman and Senator Lindsay Graham, the three of us went. The House delegation was Howard Berman, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Nita Lowy, who is the Appropriations Chair. That was a number of days, and we spent most of our time in Israel and the West Bank.

What I wanted to do was trying to, as quickly as possible, but over my two years, find out all the different opinions in the Middle East. So I traveled—I made a list here—to Israel, the West Bank, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, the Emirates, Iraq, Pakistan, and Kuwait, and of course Iraq and Afghanistan. I'm sure I've left something else out, and between that and their visits to Washington, I had the chance to talk to all of the leaders of those countries, because it's all tied together. I don't want to get into a whole discussion on the Middle East. We could spend another two or three days just talking about the Middle East and what went on, but it was fascinating. I really had good folks to travel with. I took two of the trips with Bob Casey. Frank Lautenberg came on one of the trips, and as I said, Lindsay Graham and Joe Lieberman. I traveled with Congressman [Timothy] Walz. We went to Syria together as part of these trips. I traveled with Senator Shaheen, the senator from New Hampshire. So I traveled to all of these countries and tried to get a view.

The one big policy change that was absolutely fascinating to me. In all those years, coming on to 40 years, that I have been involved, whenever I talked to leaders from the Middle East, from the Arab countries and Israel, the number one issue for the Arab leaders always was—and also when I talked to others—the number one issue was Israel, peace, and “We've got to do something about Israel and the Palestinians.” On my

recent trips the number one issue everywhere had changed to Iran. I came out of this whole process feeling that we had an excellent opportunity for peace, and I'll just go through the list: One was I knew Obama and Biden were committed to peace. I really felt [Benjamin] Netanyahu was committed to peace. I had known Bibi for a number of years when he was prime minister before. I met with him, oh, my gosh, between Israel and the United States I must have met with him a half a dozen times. I had some candid conversations with him. I thought his administration, [Ehud] Barak, the Defense Minister and former head of Labor party, I think they wanted peace. [Tzipi] Livni, leader of the opposition, wanted peace. I thought that we were very fortunate with the people we had on the ground. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, she understood this thing. Joe Biden probably knew more about the Middle East than anybody else. And then the president appointed George Mitchell, whom I had the highest regard for, to cover that area. I used to say when I was in Israel and the Middle East, "I'm half Irish and if you think that the problems with the Jews and the Arabs are difficult, let me tell you that the problem in Ireland between the Protestants and the Catholics is just as deep, and went on for a long time. I never thought I'd see it solved, and George Mitchell played a major role in solving it." So this was a guy who knew what he was doing, and he had already done a big study on the Middle East previously in committee. So he knew the Middle East as a senator. But George Mitchell is not a young man, so I figured he thinks he can do this. He already was in the pantheon of great negotiators because of what he did in Ireland. He didn't take this in order to not get a settlement. So coming in, I thought he would really be positive.

Then the thing that really, I thought, could make it go was that when senate colleagues and other people traveled around they would come back and say, "You know, when I sit down with these Arab leaders, the first thing they want to talk about is Iran, not Israel and the Palestinians, behind closed doors." And that's what I found when I went over there. People for the first time put Iran as the biggest threat—nothing concentrates the mind like the prospect of hanging—Iran having nuclear weapons upset everyone. It's really amazing, you traveled to Israel and they were saying, "If Iran gets nuclear weapons they are going to come after us." I will bet you dollars to donuts that if Iran gets nuclear weapons the first nuclear weapon will be against Saudi Arabia because of the Shiite-Sunni conflicts. These Sunni countries were very concerned about Iran getting nuclear weapons, and they knew we were not going to have a united front against Iran until we solve the peace treaty.

So I really thought this was a great opportunity for peace. I still believe that if it

wasn't for the Goldstone Report, we were moving very well. Then Judge Goldstone came out with his report and accused the Israelis of doing bad things.<sup>1</sup> Then the Arabs stopped negotiating. The hardest thing is getting a Palestinian leader who has the political support of enough in the Palestinian area to come forward, and that's what Abu Mazen had done. What happened with the Goldstone Report that was so damaging was that when it came out, and we were making such progress in my opinion, Abu Mazen went and talked to number of Arab leaders and said he'd like to downplay this so they could get negotiations going. He received assurances from a number of Arab leaders that that was okay. Well, I don't think anybody predicted that all hell would break loose. So the Arab leaders then pulled the rug out from under Abu Mazen. Abu Mazen was discredited with the Palestinians, he was discredited with the Arab leaders, and therefore there wasn't anybody from the Palestinian Authority to deal with.

You know, he and [Salam] Fayyad, who is the main technician there, just had done some great things. To give just one example, it's one of the keys, I thought: One of the big problems when you look at the Middle East is going to be everybody agrees we've got to have a Palestinian state; the Israelis and Palestinians want a Palestinian state; we solve the problem of the West Bank, that's where the Palestinian state should go, and Gaza; and the Palestinian authority has the authority of both locations to negotiate something. But how are you ever going to deal with the Palestinians on the West Bank for security? The big problem is the Israelis aren't going to want this force on the West Bank to be heavily armed and the rest of it. Well, what happened was there was an American general named [Keith] Dayton. He went over there and built up a Palestinian security force with the support of the Israelis, which is extraordinary.

I did not realize when Operation Cast Lead occurred, when the Israeli army went into Gaza, they pointed out to me, the Palestinians and the Israelis, that it was the first thing you would have thought would have been a restart of the Intifada on the West Bank, but it never happened. The reason it never happened was because the Palestinian Security forces, trained by General Dayton, working with the IDF, the Israeli Defense Forces, had headed the whole thing off on the West Bank. They are building 5,000, 6,000 troops, armed, on the West Bank. When I met with Dayton, I met with Fayyad, they said, "Its working and the Israeli Defense Force thinks this is great." I'm going, "Wait a

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<sup>1</sup>In 2009, Richard J. Goldstone, a South African jurist, led a UN Human Rights Council investigation of the conflict in Gaza and filed a report that accused both Israel and the Palestinian organization Hamas of having committed war crimes.

minute, I don't believe this." And by God, when I met with Netanyahu and I met with Barak, the defense minister, both of them said, "Oh, yeah, the Palestinian Security Force is great." So there were a lot of things coming together that were almost unique. But then the Goldstone Report really set things back. Abu Mazen began talking about retiring. He's the same age I am, I can understand. He said, "I'm 72 years old, do I really need to put up with this kind of aggravation anymore, especially if the Arabs pull the rug out from under me?" And there's nobody to negotiate with. If something happens to Abu Mazen, no matter where you are, by the time you get another political leader—Fayyad does not have the political support to be able to negotiate this—that there was no leader. So if you lose Abu Mazen, who are the Israelis going to negotiate with? There isn't anybody. It would take years for somebody to build up the political base, because the Palestinians are clearly split, and that's not even counting the problems with Hamas.

So there were a lot of things coming together, and then we had the Goldstone Report. And one of the examples that we were still on the negotiation track, I say, was when we had the Turkish flotilla and people were killed. Any other time in the history of the Middle East, the negotiations would have stopped dead. There was a lot of back and forth, but the negotiations still went on. But, unfortunately, a lot of things have changed, and one of the big losses is George Mitchell.

I'll tell you this one George Mitchell story. I'm in the Foreign Relations Committee and we have this briefing from George Mitchell. George Mitchell comes in and the first thing he says is, "Ah, Ted Kaufman, my favorite senator." I had known George and worked with him when he was majority leader and I was with Joe Biden. He said, "You want to know why you're my favorite senator? Because you and I are the only United States senators in history who ever were chief of staff for a senator and then took the senator's place." He had been chief of staff for Ed Muskie. He had then been appointed a federal judge. He came back and took Muskie's place in the Senate. I took Joe Biden's. I left Joe Biden's staff and then came back and took it. So that was a nice thing for him to say. But when he said he was going to retire, we lost a lot.

But we had some great candid meetings with [Racép Tayyip] Erdogan from Turkey. I met with [Bashar] Al-Assad in Damascus. Congressman Walz and I spent a great deal of time with Assad. I met with [Rafic] Hariri in Lebanon. Met with all the leaders and came back thinking we had a chance. But I remember I came back from my first trip and I met with a group from the Delaware Jewish community. I finished all this

optimism and then I said, "When you're most optimistic on the Middle East is when it's most dangerous. That's when things go bad." My favorite story is one I've heard from so many different people with different versions. The one I heard was there's a dog and a scorpion and they come to a river. The river is flowing and the scorpion can't get across. So the scorpion says to the dog, "Can I ride on your back when you swim across the river?" The dog says, "No, you'll sting me and kill me." The scorpion said, "Why would I do that? Then I'd drown too." So the dog says okay and they're halfway across when the scorpion stings him. The dog said, "Why did you do that?" And the scorpion said, "This is the Middle East." The Middle East doesn't always go where you want it to go. But maybe now that I'm kind of pessimistic, this may be the time that we actually do something.

The hearings I had, the people I met in Washington, all the different think tanks and the ability to talk to them—one of the great things about being a United States senator is everybody returns your call. It's just extraordinary the ability to marshal information.

**RITCHIE:** You said earlier that everybody tries to shape a senator's opinion.

**KAUFMAN:** Yes, exactly.

**RITCHIE:** I would assume that on Middle Eastern issues you must have had a lot of people trying to influence your positions.

**KAUFMAN:** Yes, but it's very difficult, because I had such a depth of knowledge and such experience. When you talk to many of these people who care about these issues, it's just not a fair fight. You have the advantage of so much. When I talk to people about Afghanistan, most of them don't have even a portion of the information you'd need in order to make a decision. Not to say that they don't know, and not to say that they're right and I'm wrong. But when you start to talk about the Middle East, people just don't have the access to information. Now, this can build up chutzpah, but you have to be careful not to fall into "I know everything and no one else knows anything." I don't believe that, but on some of these issues it's a little like why members of Congress do so well in town meetings. A senator dealing with a constituent in many, many, many cases has the advantage, although I've learned a lot of listening. I'm not saying you know everything, but when people try to influence you, you're likely to know

the most. It's like in the old days—and I just saw a little piece of this in North Carolina when I was in school—they have the old country fairs. All things are going on at the old country fairs, and one of the things is that somebody would come to town and set up a boxing ring and they'd have a professional boxer. They would invite people up to box. "If you can stay three rounds with Harry, you get \$100." It's as much of a scam as throwing three rings around the bottles. The boxer weights 150 pounds and these 250 pound lumber jacks go in the ring. They dance around for a while and then pow, pow, it's over. That's kind of the way this is. When you spend all your time in Washington going to hearings, reading books, getting staff, you're getting briefed, you're getting information from all these different organizations, and then you come home and some guy who reads the *Sunday New York Times* is now going to tell you about what you should be doing.

Now again, on certain issues you really do know a lot about it. This sounds like I don't think that you should listen to what other people say. Look, my knowledge of the Middle East was great, and most people's knowledge of the Middle East is not great. But when we were doing healthcare reform there were loads of people who read the *New York Times* on Sunday who gave me ideas about what we should be doing on healthcare. It's just that there are a few issues that if you make yourself an expert on it's hard to get good advice. But there are still plenty of experts that I talked to. Every one of these trips I would talk to think tanks, and academics, and people from the community, and people from Delaware. Every time I took one of these trips, when I came back I would meet with folks from the community and talk to them about it. But you do have just incredible access to information.

**RITCHIE:** There's a political truism that people rarely vote for somebody because of a foreign policy issue.

**KAUFMAN:** Right.

**RITCHIE:** But, on the other hand, do you hear a lot from constituents on foreign policy issues?

**KAUFMAN:** Yes, I hear from groups. You hear from the Greek community. You hear from the Turkish community. You hear from the Jewish community. You hear from the Arab community. There is that. But, no, foreign policy, one of the things—it's

interesting that you say that—I've watched so many presidents now, working in the Senate and reading about them in the past. They all gravitate towards foreign policy. They all do. I predict you will see President Obama, if he is re elected getting more involved in foreign policy. The reason they do is really simple, and it's the reason why senators gravitate towards foreign policy. When it comes to foreign policy, as president you can speak in big broad strokes. You can let yourself go. It's like painting on a gigantic canvas. Because most of the electorate doesn't know that much about foreign policy. They know so much more about domestic policy. You start painting big broad strokes on Medicaid, and you're going to hear from somebody who says, "Wait a minute, in Section 4, Article 3, it says in fourteen days, seven, green, blue, right." You know. Whereas you can say, "What we need to do in the Middle East is deal with the Palestinian problem." So it's not that most Americans are not concerned about the Middle East, it's just that they're so concerned about domestic policies.

One of the things early on I learned was that if you want to find out what a constituent is concerned about, start with the issues that are most important to him. If you say you're going to alter the path of the highway to go through this person's home, you've got their attention. Joe Biden used to say that it was so much more difficult being on the county council than being a senator, because the issues that you deal with have such a direct effect on people. I learned that during busing, when we had two-thirds of the students being bused in different directions to achieve racial balance. People did *not* want to talk about foreign policy, they didn't want to talk about anything except busing. Now they want to talk about jobs, which is at it should be: jobs, jobs, jobs. People all over the world are focused on local issues. When I went to Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan, the people said on polls that the number one problem was not enough jobs. In all three it was the same as in the United States: jobs. If there's one thing you could do in Afghanistan that would just turn that thing around on a dime was if you could get the unemployment rate down. The same thing is true in Pakistan. Bad things are driven by the fact that people don't have jobs. Now, in many countries people say, "Why are we so concerned about your country and you're not concerned about us?" It's because what we do in the U S directly affects their lives. What's going on in China, although becoming more important, is not as important to Americans. The Chinese leaders just don't understand why we don't have more coverage of China, why the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* don't have more stories about China, because they've got stories about the United States in all their newspapers all the time. Why don't we have more? Because China doesn't have that much direct influence on the U S . Now, with economic

issues, China's getting more involved, and with the balance of payments and those things.

But, no, it's not that people aren't interested in foreign policy. They're interested in foreign policy. But they're much more interested in putting food on the table, what happened to their kids, what happens to their job and house. That what drives most Americans, and what drives most politicians to do foreign policy is that it's just a lot more fun when you can make big broad generalized statements at a town meeting and not have people bring you up short by explaining how Medicare 237 works or what we should be doing about AMTRAK, something like that.

**RITCHIE:** I just remember Senator J. William Fulbright who was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee for years but he also was very concerned with chickens in Arkansas, and made a big deal of chickens

**KAUFMAN:** Hey, Joe Biden, you said the two things. Chickens are Delaware's biggest agricultural product, and he was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. One of the big things he always talked about was that Russia was blocking our chickens from coming into Russia. When he went to Russia, one of the issues he talked to [Vladimir] Putin about was "What are you doing to my chickens?"

**RITCHIE:** Well, that's one of the things that keeps a senator in office, because people vote on chickens more than they vote on foreign policy issues.

**KAUFMAN:** Well, yes, but one of the things I believe from the bottom of my being is that especially in smaller states they vote on the person, and their character. What they're looking for is candidates with the character who will do what they think is right. The polling data show that when you ask Americans who they think is in charge in Washington, they don't say the president, and they don't say the Congress, they don't say the Supreme Court. They say interest groups. So you can have the greatest ideas in the whole world. You can have all the greatest positions in the world. And you can say all you want about chickens and the rest of it. But if the people believe that when you go to Washington that you're not tough enough, that you're not smart enough, that you're not committed enough, that you're not going to stand up to the interest groups, they're not interested. And they're very good about picking that out and seeing that. One of the things that I think is true is that it isn't your position on the issues that's important, it's

how you deal with the issues. And it's not just for the president. I'm talking about real character. I'm not talking about whether you're cheating on your wife or cheating on your husband, that can really hurt you. But it's really the character to stand up for what you believe in—I can remember Jesse Helms, when he ran against the governor —

**RITCHIE:** Oh, yeah, [Jim] Hunt.

**KAUFMAN:** Governor Hunt. David Sawyer, who has since died, was a brilliant media guy. He came and gave us a presentation on what the race was going to be like, and how difficult it would be to beat Jesse Helms. One of the things he said—I don't know if it's true or not, but he was smart and I believe there's something to it—but he said, "A lot of people think that Jesse Helms opposes having a Martin Luther King holiday and is successful in North Carolina because of racism." He said, "Well, there are racists everywhere, but why the Martin Luther King holiday works for Jesse Helms is because it says to everybody in North Carolina: 'I am going to take this position. This is not the position that people in Washington want. This is not the position that people in the country want. I have the character to stand up to all those interest groups, all those powerful people and say no, I don't believe in this.'" Sawyer said that's what made Jesse Helms so unbeatable, is that the people in North Carolina were convinced that Jesse Helms would never be pushed around by an interest group, and he had the internal character to do what he thought was right. I think that is what gets people elected. Now, at certain times you can have an issue. Like right now, you vote to go into Iraq and it turns out Iraq's bad. There are all kinds of different issues. But I think a lot of it is they know that Washington is a tough place. They think that most people who go to Washington for the first time are honest, but that Washington corrupts them. If you're trying to figure out why people vote, a lot of it has to do with: "He or she may have a lot of good ideas, but do they have the character to carry it through?"

**RITCHIE:** For a long time there was a slogan that politics stops at the water's edge and there were more bipartisanship in foreign policy. Is foreign policy more partisan now?

**KAUFMAN:** Well, The Kerry-Lugar Bill on aid to Pakistan passed and I think just about everybody voted for it. You saw it raise its ugly head a lot with the START [Strategic Arms Reduction] treaty. We had hearings and we had the major secretaries of state that were alive and the national security advisors that were alive and their only

criticism was that maybe it wasn't as big a treaty as it should be, but nobody thought it undermined the security of the United States. Henry Kissinger came, [Brent] Scowcroft came, all the Republicans, and they said it would be potentially very damaging not to pass this. It's not that great a treaty, but as the old argument Joe Biden used to make when he was pushing the SALT II treaties, this is a process. You pass these treaties, but if you ever get off the tracks, putting them back on track would be terrible. Even Ronald Reagan, who came in thinking the "Evil Empire" and all the rest, realized how correct it was that we should have these treaties. So it just seemed to me when you went to these hearings, Republicans and Democrats, in terms of the policymakers, they were all for it. But there was a group at the Heritage Foundation and in the right-wing of the Republican Party that just seized on the START treaty and started talking about what the Russians were saying about the START treaty, and what was not in the START treaty, and tried to turn it into a whole battle about our nuclear configuration. I sat there incredibly frustrated. And then I watched the Republican senators, one after another, vote against the START treaty.

By the way, I am sure the Democrats have done it too, but I have not seen it. Now, we had some kind of partisan blow-up over the AWACS [Airborne Warning and Control System], I think it was a pretty partisan vote back in '81 or '82. But it does really stop at the water's edge. I think Kerry and Luger are great. Luger supported the START treaty.

It gets to another issue. One of the things that is going on in the country, and we went through it in the '70s, when I got involved, and that is there is a left-wing of the Democratic Party that would just go crazy. They'd come up with an idea and say, "This is it and we're not going to negotiate." That's where we are today with the Republicans. I get the feeling that the communications system that has built up around Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck, and [Bill] O'Reilly and those guys. Some issue will come up, like that mosque in New York at the 9/11 site, that's been around for years and then all of a sudden somebody decides that they're going to do it, and they're going to go on the TV shows and the radio shows and talk about it. I remember they went after Lindsay Graham for something, the Republican from South Carolina. I guess he was involved in some negotiations on cap and trade, what we are going to do about it, and man, all of a sudden, in South Carolina there were committees voting to throw Lindsay Graham out. I think right now the Republicans in the Senate—and I don't question their motives—but it did seem they were being influenced by this incredible megaphone that was being blasted

into their districts. I think that's what happened. That's the only way I can explain the START treaty because it doesn't make a whole lot of sense any other way.

**RITCHIE:** Did you find much division in the Foreign Relations Committee? Or were the members pretty much internationally minded?

**KAUFMAN:** Oh, yes, they were good. A lot people who, when you looked at their voting you would say were conservative, starting with Luger, who is conservative, but on foreign policy issues has been pretty bipartisan. Then there is Johnny Isakson, who is a great guy I really like a lot and respect a lot, a smart guy. Bob Corker is the same. Just going down the whole list, John Barrasso, Senator Risch, Johanns, just a great group of smart committed guys. By and large very conservative, but very bipartisan on foreign policy. Now, take a shot at the president? Yes, but that is definitely not a partisan issue. Being critical of the president on Afghanistan, on the surge or any other things. Yeah, but look at the Democrats. There wasn't a single thing Bush did on Iraq, except going in that the Democrats supported.

Now, there are a lot of conservative senators on Foreign Relations, but not real conservative. The thing that was interesting at the end was that Senator [James] Inhofe got on the committee. Senator Inhofe can be very difficult. At one point we were talking about the START treaty. We had had a series of hearings which I thought were extraordinarily good in terms of the majority picking some witnesses and the minority picking others. But Inhofe was upset because he said they couldn't find anyone to testify on the START treaty that was opposed to it. I'm sitting there thinking, "Yes, that means maybe the START treaty is a pretty good idea." And Inhofe is complaining that they couldn't find anybody to testify against it. Talk about turning everything on its head! All those Republican national security advisors came in were for it, all those Republican secretaries of state were for it. We couldn't get a secretary of state or national security advisor of either party that would come forward and say that defeating the START treaty was a good idea. So, yes, every once in while you have those kinds of things, but Senator Inhofe is one of a kind.

**RITCHIE:** It's interesting when you mention some of the senators from the different states. I'm thinking about the two senators from Georgia, [Saxby] Chambliss and Isakson. When Senator Biden came to the Senate, they would have both been Democrats, but their politics would have probably been pretty much the same. The

conservative Democrats were replaced by conservative Republicans. He would have had to work with conservatives in his own party, while you worked with conservatives in the opposition.

**KAUFMAN:** Yes, but what it did was—I think I talked about this before—it allowed the Democratic Party to become much more of a consolidated party. So, yes, we lost Georgia, but we picked up Pennsylvania. When you look at the breakdown. The southern states are red and the northern states are blue. The Democrats have done pretty well in that trade. We gained a lot more north of the Mason-Dixon line than the Republicans did south of the Mason-Dixon line.

**RITCHIE:** Most of New England, for instance.

**KAUFMAN:** Republicans used to be strong in Pennsylvania. Senators Arlen Specter, Hugh Scott and [John] Heinz. So yes, Georgia is a conservative place. But here is the other point—it's an interesting point that you raise—but when we were doing Dodd-Frank Wall Street reform, I went and talked to some of these southern Republicans. Back when there were southern Democrats, they would have been against Wall Street. The same thing in the west, Wyoming and the rest of those states, they didn't trust Wall Street banks. I thought maybe we could pick up some votes there for Dodd-Frank and for Brown-Kaufman, because basically the Brown-Kaufman bill said we ought to slim down these big Wall Street banks. And there were very few people in Georgia who were in favor of big banks. But I could never get Johnny Isakson to vote aye on Dodd-Frank. The votes may have seemed like the same, but I think it was a different place. You still have the regional concerns, too. Like energy, there's incredible regional concerns. It doesn't matter who is the senator from West Virginia they're going to be using more coal.

**RITCHIE:** The Armed Services Committee has always had a strong contingent from the South, because that's where all the bases are.

**KAUFMAN:** Exactly.

**RITCHIE:** When Mendel Rivers chaired the House Armed Services Committee, every branch of the services had a base in his district.

**KAUFMAN:** Exactly. Oh, no, that's right. That's the way it went. That's the way they liked it and that's the way they kept it. Now, it starts to change when you don't get these people getting reelected from the South. That's another difference. When the Democrats were in charge, the Solid Democratic South, you had Mendel Rivers, and Strom Thurmond, and these guys get the seniority and be able to run the committees and make sure to bring home the bacon.

**RITCHIE:** Now there are more contested elections in the South.

**KAUFMAN:** Yes, but as I said before the other day it turns out there are getting to be less and less contested elections around the country. More and more primaries are contested, and but there are less general election that are contested, but it's a disturbing trend. Shall we break?

**RITCHIE:** Yeah, I was thinking that one of the things I'd like to talk about are the Judiciary issues like impeachments and nominations.

**KAUFMAN:** Sure, and I'd like to take a few minutes to talk about the Internet Caucus, the human rights issues, and then we get into those. We've also have to do the federal workers. The impeachments—it's amazing how they got senators who are incredibly busy to actually sit down and have a trial for a district court judge, and *loved* it. McCaskill loved being a judge. I sat there and I listened and it was absolutely fascinating. But you know for hours after hours these men and women that are on four and five committees said okay, and they came.

**[End of the Seventh Interview]**

*Photos from top to bottom:*

Ted and Lynne Kaufman with President Jimmy Carter and Senator Joe Biden.

Senator Ted Kaufman with President Bill Clinton

With President George W. Bush

With President Barack Obama at the White House for the signing of the Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act, May 20, 2009, with Senators Amy Klobuchar, Patrick Leahy, and Harry Reid, and Representatives John Conyers, John Larson, and Robert Scott.

