

May 15, 2007

TRANSCRIPT

Republican Presidential Debate in South Carolina

The following is a transcript of the [Republican presidential primary debate](#) at the University of South Carolina on May 15, 2007, as recorded by the Federal News Service:

Participants: Senator Sam Brownback; former Virginia Governor James Gilmore; former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani; Representative Duncan Hunter; former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee; Senator John McCain; Representative Ron Paul; former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney; Representative Tom Tancredo; and former Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson. Moderated by Fox News Channel's Brit Hume and Chris Wallace.

MR. HUME: And here now is the format for this debate. Each candidate will be asked a series of questions on foreign policy and domestic issues. Answers are limited to one minute each. If we decide rebuttal time is needed, that will be 30 seconds. We have green, yellow and red lights to help the candidates keep track of their time, and if an answer runs long, candidates, and possibly much of the world, will hear this sound: (A bell rings.) (Laughter.)

We ask the audience please to limit applause during the question and answer portion of the debate so we can devote as much time as we can to the candidates themselves.

We want to note that many of the campaigns and the candidates have issued statements of regret and condolence over the death of the Reverend Jerry Falwell today, so we will not be seeking any more reaction from the candidates on that matter during the debate.

Now, to start to the questioning, my colleague Chris Wallace.

Chris.

MR. WALLACE: Thank you, Brit.

Gentlemen, good evening. Let's start with the war in Iraq.

Senator McCain, you say that you are willing to be the last man standing for U.S. involvement in Iraq. But the Iraqi government has failed to meet one political benchmark after another for political reform. Why should Americans continue to fight and die while Iraqi politicians continue to do so little?

SEN. MCCAIN: We have to continue because it's not just the Iraqi vital national security interests that are at stake here, it's America's vital national security interests. If we fail in Iraq, we will see Iraq become a center for al Qaeda, chaos, genocide in the region, and they'll follow us home.

After we lost the war in Vietnam, we came home, they didn't follow us home. You read Zarqawi, you read bin Laden, you read al Qaeda, they'll tell you they want to follow us home.

I believe we have a new strategy and a good strategy. Only four of the five brigades that are -- that we need to implement the strategy are there.

It's long, it's hard, it's tough, it's difficult. Americans are frustrated because of the mishandling of this war. But our national interests -- the United States' national interests are at stake. I believe the Maliki government has got to improve. They've got to pass certain laws that we all know about. But we must succeed, and we cannot fail, and I will be the last man standing if necessary.

MR. WALLACE: Governor Thompson, in the last debate, you said that you would, quote, "Require the Maliki government to vote on whether or not they want us to continue to stay in Iraq." You said that you would, quote, "Require the 18 provinces to elect governments and that you would split oil revenues."

This is a freely elected government, sir. How can you require them to do anything?

MR. THOMPSON: There is no question that the al-Maliki government needs to step up and do what is right. The United States government has been there for four years. We've lost many individuals -- 3,400 individuals as of today, and it's time for the al-Maliki to vote whether or not they want us in the fifth year to stay in their country or whether or not they want us to go home.

Secondly, if in fact they do allow the 18 territories, which, geographically defined, allow them to elect their leaders like we elect the 50 governors and 50 legislatures in the United States, they will elect individuals that they would feel -- are comfortable with them, that they are -- feel that they have a stake in their government.

And if you split the oil revenues -- one-third to the federal government, one-third to the territories, and one-third to every man, woman and child -- every man, woman and child will feel they have a stake in their government, stake in their country, and they'll start using that money for peace and for building businesses and making sure they build their country. That's why my plan will work, and it will win the peace in Iraq.

MR. WALLACE: Governor Romney, can you foresee any circumstances under which you would pull out of Iraq without leaving behind a stable political and security situation?

MR. ROMNEY: Well, I'm certainly not going to project failure, and those kind of circumstances that you would suggest would be projecting failure.

It is critical for us to remember that Iraq has to be considered in the context of what's happening in the Middle East and throughout the world. There is a global jihadist effort. Violent, radical jihadists want to replace all the governments of the moderate Islamic states, replace them with a caliphate. And to do that, they also want to bring down the West, in particular us.

And they've come together as Shi'a and Sunni and Hezbollah and Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood and al Qaeda with that intent. We have to recognize that what we're doing in Iraq has enormous impact on what's going to happen in this global struggle, and that's why it's important for us to understand that if we were to

just walk out precipitously, we could conceivably see the border with Turkey be destabilized by virtue of the Kurdish effort, we could have the Iranians take over the Shi'a south, and perhaps most frightening, you could have al Qaeda play a dominant role among the Sunnis and then have a setting where you'd have something far worse than Afghanistan on their hands.

And so we recognize that it's critical for us to provide the stability to allow a central government to survive and thrive.

MR. WALLACE: Senator Brownback, when President Bush announced the troop surge, you opposed it and said that instead you favored the Iraq Study Group, which has a goal of getting all U.S. combat forces out by March of next year. You said that you wanted to find a way for Republicans and Democrats to work together.

Question: Is that any way to fight and win a war, to look for a consensus among the politicians in Washington?

SEN. BROWNBACK: I think we've got to pull together here to win over there, and Chris, I think it is a way for us to pull forward. I mean, we've got far too many divisions in this government here.

And we will win if we can pull together, and we can win the war. And I think as well, if you look at it, it's difficult for democracy and particularly for the United States, for us to win with one party for the war and one party against the war.

And I condemn the statements of Harry Reid, the majority leader of the Senate, saying we've already lost. We haven't lost. That's his declaration, but we've got to pull people together here. And when we can do that, and when we do that, we will win.

The other thing we have to do -- a much more aggressive political solution on the ground in Iraq. That has to take place, and that's why I've been pushing a three-state, one-country solution where you have a Sunni region, a Shi'a region and a Kurdish state that already exists, within a weak federation. That form of political solution aggressively pushed there, without Iraqi politicians going home for the summer but then working through these difficult political problems, can get a solid political solution on the ground there as we pull together to win here.

MR. WALLACE: Mayor Giuliani, in our interview the other day you said that congressional Republicans who say they must see progress by September are, quote, "fundamentally irresponsible," and that in effect they are giving a timetable for retreat to our enemies.

Is your commitment to winning in Iraq open-ended?

MR. GIULIANI: First of all, that isn't exactly what I said. I was talking about the timetable for retreat that the Democrats passed in Congress, in which they did something extraordinary and that I've never heard of in the history of war, which is to give your enemy a schedule of how a retreating army is going to retreat. That was irresponsible, highly irresponsible.

What the Republicans did, or suggested, I don't think is the right approach either.

And I think Senator McCain is correct, these people do want to follow us here and they have followed us here. Fort Dix happened a week ago. That was a situation in which six Islamic terrorists, who were not directed by al Qaeda but claimed to have been inspired by them, were going to kill our military in cold blood at Fort Dix. It was a 16-month investigation done by the FBI and the United States Attorney's Office, and thank God they caught them.

But we have to remind ourselves that we are facing an enemy that is planning all over this world, and it turns out planning inside our country, to come here and kill us. And the worst thing to do in the face of that is to show them weakness.

MR. WALLACE: Congressman Tancredo, you are one of those congressional Republicans who talks about disengaging -- the word you use -- from Iraq.

REP. TANCREDO: Yes.

MR. WALLACE: You opposed the troop surge. You have talked about November as a timeframe for beginning to pull some of our troops back from the frontlines. Are you in effect giving our enemies a timetable for retreat?

REP. TANCREDO: I think that we have to understand that we are going to be in Iraq or at least in the region for a long time. Our national interests dictate that. We are not going to be removing our troops from the area. We can't, for all the reasons that have been identified here.

The question is, in what capacity we will be there and what capacity those troops will be there? Will they be a constabulary force, which I do not believe they should be? Will they be a supporting force for the Iraqi government and for the Iraqi forces themselves, which I believe they should be?

The president is the one, in his state of the war message to the nation, that said, "I am establishing a benchmark of November," he said, "and by November, the Iraqi government will be in control of all 18 provinces of Iraq." I believe that that is a good benchmark to set. I will support him in that effort, and I will support our troops while they are in the field in every single way I can. That is my responsibility as a member of Congress, by the way. It is not to general the war, it is not to micromanage it, it is to support the troops that are in harm's way.

MR. WALLACE: Congressman Paul, you're one of six House Republicans who back in 2002 voted against authorizing President Bush to use force in Iraq.

REP. PAUL: Right.

MR. WALLACE: Now you say we should pull our troops out. A recent poll found that 77 percent of Republicans disapprove of the idea of setting a timetable for withdrawal. Are you running for the nomination of the wrong party? (Scattered laughter.)

REP. PAUL: But you have to realize that the base of the Republican Party shrunk last year because of the war issue. So that percentage represents less people. If you look at 65 to 70 percent of the American people, they

want us out of there. They want the war over.

In 19- -- 2002, I offerer an amendment to International Relations to declare war, up or down, and it was -- nobody voted for the war. And my argument there was, if we want to go to war, and if we should go to war, the Congress should declare it. We don't go to war like we did in Vietnam and Korea, because the wars never end. And I argued the case and made the point that it would be a quagmire if we go in.

Ronald Reagan in 1983 sent Marines into Lebanon, and he said he would never turn tail and run. A few months later, the Marines were killed, 241 were killed, and the Marines were taken out. And Reagan addressed this subject in his memoirs. And he says, "I said I would never turn tail and run." He says, "But I never realized the irrationality of Middle Eastern politics," and he changed his policy there.

We need the courage of a Ronald Reagan.

MR. WALLACE: Congressman Hunter, you talk about standing up the Iraqi military and that at some point soon they may be able to replace some American troops. Now the Bush administration has been saying this, the same thing for basically four -- more than four years, and we now have as many troops in Iraq, U.S. troops in Iraq, as we did when we invaded the country.

Why should we believe that this replacement is going to start happening any time soon?

REP. HUNTER: Well, Chris, because the Iraqi forces that were running a couple of years ago in places like Fallujah are standing and fighting. We've got to get all 129 Iraqi battalions into a three- or four-month military operation -- most of them have been in there by now -- and then we rotate them into the battlefield and we rotate out the American heavy combat forces.

But you've hit the nail on the head. One of us is going to be a commander in chief in a few months with a tough military operation and situation to deal with. I've been the chairman of the Armed Services Committee for the last four years. I served in uniform in Vietnam -- didn't do anything special, but I served. My son has done two tours in Iraq. I can look at the American people and say, we are in this together, and I think the other guys ought to lay out their credentials to be commander in chief.

MR. WALLACE: Governor Huckabee, you said in the last debate that President Bush made a mistake listening too much to civilians in suits and silk ties and not enough to the generals with mud and blood on their boots, especially when it came to how many troops were needed to stabilize the situation in Iraq.

If the generals were to come to you as president and say, we don't have enough troops there; we need, let's say, 300,000, would you be open to significantly increasing our presence in Iraq?

MR. HUCKABEE: A president had better be open to listening to the generals who are going to lead people into battle and put their lives on the line. That's one of the problems we face now, Chris. We listen to the diplomats; we listen to the civilians; we listen to the people running the Defense Department -- more worried about the budget than worried about the blood that might be spilled by our own kids.

That's why I think it's critical that if you're going to be commander-in-chief, you make tough decisions. But

you'd better get the best advice that you possibly can get. And that advice comes from the people who have earned the right to say to the president, Mr. President, this is what it's going to take to do the job right.

There's an old saying in the South that I'm sure people in South Carolina are familiar with. "It takes more money to do it over than it does to do it right." We're now seeing that in the United States. We're doing a lot of things over. Maybe we should have just done it right.

MR. WALLACE: Governor Gilmore, we have an internet question for you from Harry from Boston, who says, we should look ahead to the threat from Iran. He asked, quote, "What would you do to resolve this nuclear issue? And will you launch a pre-emptive strike if they were close to achieving a weapon?"

MR. GILMORE: Well, I appreciate the question about Iran, because I think it is one of the real emerging problems. And you have to look at this Middle East issue beyond just the Iraq issue.

You have to look at all the complexities of Israel and Palestine and Iran and Iraq and the entire issue of the Middle East.

With respect to Iran, I think that there is no choice at this point other than to join up with people across the world in order to put on serious mandatory sanctions against Iran and to do everything that is going to be necessary to try to bring them to the notion that it is better for them to give up this sort of plan rather than to proceed the way we are.

However, I think that we have to have an honest discussion with the American people about this. We have to ask ourselves this question: Are we prepared to have Iran have a nuclear weapon? What will be the consequences of that when Saudi Arabia says, "The people on the other side have got a nuclear weapon, we have to have a nuclear weapon." What if they go to Pakistan and ask for assistance in that? What about Egypt? And I think the American people have to at some point come to a real serious conclusion about the tough decision that has to be made when we may have to in fact strike.

MR. HUME: Governor, thank you.

Wendell Goler has the second round of questions.

Wendell.

WENDELL GOLER (Fox News): Gentlemen, we have a series of questions on the economy, the budget, taxes and entitlements. And I have one for each of you, starting with you, Governor Romney.

Your critics have called you "flip-flop Mitt" for, among other things, your decision to take the "no new taxes" pledge this year after refusing to do so in 2002. Tell me why your decision to take the pledge shouldn't be seen as a blatant appeal to the party base, sir?

MR. ROMNEY: I want to make it very clear that I'm not going to raise taxes.

As governor of Massachusetts, I made it very clear there, and I did not raise taxes. We faced a huge budget gap, and I went in and said, you know, what? I know some people want to raise taxes, but that's going to hurt

working families and scare away jobs. I recognize that raising taxes could also lead to a slowdown in our economy, and so we didn't do it. We balanced our budget, and that's exactly what I'll do with the federal government.

The key thing you have to consider, as you look at what's happening in the federal government, is that Washington is broken. We need to have fundamental change in the way business in Washington is carried out. What that means is we're going to have to have leadership that can reorganize the government. We're going to have about 40 percent of the government employees turn over in the next couple of terms. And if we can -- we can reduce the employment there, but more importantly, is to go through all the agencies, all the departments, all the programs and cut out the unnecessary and the wasteful.

We're also going to have to do something we talk about on in Iraq. We all talked about benchmarks. Well, how about benchmarks in Washington? Let's lay out what we're going to get done, and instead of just talking about the same old same old, let's streamline and make Washington more efficient.

MR. GOLER: Senator McCain, you opposed President Bush's 2001 tax cuts. Now you say you were wrong. How can you convince Republican voters you will push a Democratic Congress hard enough to make those tax cuts permanent, sir?

SEN. MCCAIN: Well, first of all, I didn't say that I was wrong. I said that the reason why I opposed those tax cuts was because we didn't rein in spending.

And the fact is the tax cuts have dramatically increased revenues. If we don't make them permanent, then every business, farm and family in America will have to adjust their budgets to what is in effect a tax increase.

In 2001, I proposed massive tax cuts, but I also proposed to rein in spending. Spending is out of control. We didn't lose the 2006 election because of the war in Iraq; we lost it because we in the Republican Party came to Washington to change government and government changed us. We let spending go out of control. We spent money like a drunken sailor, although I never knew a sailor drunk or sober with the imagination of my colleagues. By the way, I received -- (laughter) -- I received an e-mail not long ago from a fellow who said -- I repeat this story -- "As a former drunken sailor, I resent the way that Congress continues being compared to members of Congress." (Laughter, applause.)

MR. GOLER: Governor Huckabee, the alternative minimum tax caught 4 million people this year; it'll get 23 million next year unless Congress acts. How would you eliminate the tax without raising the budget deficit, sir?

MR. HUCKABEE: Well, the simplest way is an active fair tax. That's the first thing I'd love to do as president, put a "Going Out of Business" sign on the Internal Revenue Service and stop the \$10 billion a year that it costs just for them to operate.

If we had a fair tax, it would eliminate not just the alternative minimum tax, personal income tax, corporate tax, it would eliminate all the various taxes that are hidden in our system, and Americans don't realize what they're paying.

It wouldn't be a revenue increase or a revenue decrease, revenue neutral. But it also enables people at the lowest end of the economic spectrum to have a chance to reach the next rung on the ladder. It's the best proposal that we ought to have, because it's flatter, it's fairer, it's finite, it's family-friendly.

And instead what we've done is what Senator McCain has suggested. We've had Congress that's spent money like Edwards at a beauty shop. (Laughter.) And it's high time that we have a different kind of tax structure, and the fair tax would get us there.

MR. : (Off mike) -- a better one. (Laughter continues.)

(Cheers, applause.)

MR. GOLER: Mayor Giuliani --

MR. GIULIANI: Yes.

MR. GOLER: -- you get the credit for killing the line-item veto. You fought and won when it pinched New York. And yet in your administration, spending for the city rose even before 9/11, after which it soared. Show me where you exercise fiscal discipline, sir.

MR. GIULIANI: Well, as the Club for Growth pointed out yesterday in the report they did on me, I ran probably one of the most fiscally conservative governments in the last 30 or 40 years. Spending actually decreased in comparison to the increase in population and inflation. Spending in New York City decreased more than just about any other state, considerably less than the federal government, while I was the mayor.

I lowered taxes 23 times. And I'd have to point out to you, Wendell, I did it in a place where it's real hard to do it. If you can lower spending in New York City, Washington is easier than New York City to deal with!

And finally, I put controls on every one of the city agencies, which is what I would do in Washington. I'd do Reagan-like across-the-board budget cuts 5 to 20 percent. And there's a great opportunity that we have coming up. About 50 percent, just about 50 percent of the federal employees are going to retire in the next 10 years, during the term of, maybe, one of us. And we have the opportunity of not refilling all those positions. And I would pledge not to refill 50 percent of them.

MR. GOLER: Senator Brownback, gasoline prices headed north again. Should Americans resign themselves to living with \$3.50, \$4, \$5 a gallon gasoline?

SEN. BROWNBACK: Absolutely not.

MR. GOLER: How would you prevent that, sir?

SEN. BROWNBACK: How I'd prevent that is us getting more supply in the system through biofuels for one thing, like ethanol from Kansas or maybe Iowa would be a nice state, too, for it to come from -- (laughter) -- biodiesel. Us being able to drill more at home here in the United States, and we can do this in places like ANWR safely, environmentally sound, but get the supply up here.

And, we have to in the future work on more conservation here. My family, we have a hybrid car. In that car you can get up to 42, 43 miles to the gallon.

Now my 17-year-old daughter does about 25 on it, so it does matter how you drive it.

But the point of it is, is you can do better, and we can do better. And we can do this through technology, and we can do this through increasing supply here. And by that mixture we can become energy-secure in North America in 15 years, which I think should be one of our key objectives, so that we're not held hostage to a guy like Chavez in Venezuela or Ahmadinejad in Iran. We can do better, and we need to do better than \$4-a-gallon gasoline.

MR. GOLER: Governor Thompson, Brian from Fort Wayne asks this question via the internet, a question about controlling government spending. Some of your critics say you lack fiscal discipline. Tell me three federal programs you consider wasteful and would eliminate.

MR. THOMPSON: Well, first off, you've got to realize where I come from. I'm the only candidate up here that has over 1,900 vetoes. I've had more vetoes than all of the candidates on the both the Republican and Democratic side. I've reduced taxes by 16-and-a-half billion dollars when I was governor of the state of Wisconsin, and I've reduced spending. And I also cut taxes wherever I possibly could.

There are several programs that need to be cut in Washington, several of those in my former department. I would first make every agency come in with a budget at 95 percent of last year's budget and one at 100 percent.

And you will be able to use that category and that exercise in order to reduce budgets all across the line. There are many ways to do it, and there are so many programs that need to be reduced and eliminated; because what happens in Washington, Wendell, is that programs get started, nobody ever supervises those or looks at them and tries to find ways to eliminate them. But there are many departments that could absolutely have programs that could be eliminated.

MR. GOLER: Governor, I didn't hear three programs. Can you tell me one?

MR. THOMPSON: Well, the first one I would eliminate is a program in the Department of Health and Human Services in CDC that deals with the stockpile. The stockpile does a great job, but there are some inefficiencies there that we're able to make some efficiencies and make some changes in that would eliminate that program.

MR. GOLER: Congressman Paul, can you do better than that, sir?

REP. PAUL: I'd start with the departments -- the Department of Education, the Department of Energy, Department of Homeland Security. We've started with -- we've just -- the Republicans put in the Department of Homeland -- it's a monstrous type of bureaucracy. It was supposed to be streamlining our security and it's unmanageable. I mean, just think of the efficiency of FEMA in its efforts to take care of the floods and the hurricanes.

So yes, there's a lot of things that we can cut, but we can't cut anything until we change our philosophy about what government should do. If you think that we can continue to police the world and spend hundreds of billions of dollars overseas, and spend hundreds of billions of dollars running a welfare state, an entitlement system that has accumulated \$60 trillion worth of obligations, and think that we can run the economy this way; we spend so much money now that we have to borrow nearly \$3 billion a day from foreigners to take care of our consumption, and we can't afford that.

We can't afford it in the government, we can't afford it as a nation.

So tax reform should come, but spending cuts have to come by changing our attitude what government ought to be doing for us.

MR. GOLER: You would eliminate the Department of Homeland Security in the midst of a war, sir?

REP. PAUL: Well, I think we should not go to more bureaucracy. It didn't work. We were spending \$40 billion on security prior to 9/11, and they had all the information they needed there to deal with the threat, and it was inefficiency. So what do we do? We add a gigantic bureaucracy, which they're still working on trying to put it together, and a tremendous amount of increase in funds.

So I don't think that the Republican position ought to be more bureaucracy. I mean, why did we double the size of the Department of Education?

(Bell rings.)

MR. GOLER: Governor Gilmore, in the next president's term, baby boomers will retire, the costs of Social Security and Medicare will soar, sir. Tell me whether you'd be willing to reduce benefits even for wealthy Americans in order to avoid raising payroll taxes?

MR. GILMORE: Well, Wendell, one thing's for sure, and that is that we have developed a whole system, Social Security, of all these entitlement systems that are going to eat up the ability of the taxpayer to be able to pay for them. So we're going to have to address with the American people exactly what these programs are like and how we can put a cap on these in such a way that we're going to be able to pay for them and create a culture of independence in this country so people can provide for themselves through education and entrepreneurship in a way that liberates them for this.

But I want to talk to you a minute also about cutting taxes. I cut taxes when I was governor. I've been a consistent conservative my entire life. I think that the people in the audience and the people at home believe that conservatism is best. But I want to tell you, Wendell, I looked back at the California debates, and I think that some of the people on this stage were very liberal in characterizing themselves as conservatives, particularly on the issues of abortion and taxes and health care.

MR. GOLER: Who, sir?

MR. GILMORE: And I want to say -- well, let me to say to you that in this forum, it's very difficult to single people out. But I will say this -- we're going to talk about it on my website tomorrow,

gilmoreforpresident.com, and a blog from New Jersey tomorrow night.

MR. GOLER: Congressman Hunter, virtually all U.S. exporters want access to China's huge market. You have said that you would deal with the enormous trade deficit this country has with that country. Tell me how you'd do it and how fast.

REP. HUNTER: Yeah, very simple. China is cheating on trade. They devalue their currency by 40 percent.

That undercuts the American markets, wipes American products off the shelf not only here but around the world. And the latest study I've seen shows that we've lost 1.8 million jobs in the United States, high-paying manufacturing jobs, to China, 27,000 jobs lost in South Carolina alone. I would enforce the law with China, the trade rules with China.

And the other thing I would do is, I would zero the manufacturing tax on American manufacturers. Our guys are down right now. They've been buffeted by these unfair trade practices. Let's bring back the American industrial base, and that's important for national security as well.

That means we'll be able to have -- you know, I sent out my teams a couple years ago when our guys were getting hurt by roadside bombs. We found only one company left in America that could still make high-grade armor steel plate. The arsenal of democracy is leaving these shores. We need to bring it back. I'll do that.

MR. GOLER: Congressman Tancredo, there's a lot of talk about the budget deficit and reducing that. But interest on the national debt is \$400 billion. That's almost as much as the Defense budget. Do you consider that a problem? Would you reduce it, and how fast?

REP. TANCREDO: Yeah, it's absolutely a problem. And you know, reducing the national debt requires us, of course, to have some sort of fiscal discipline. Now this is amazing, to sit here and listen to people talk about fiscal discipline and then recognize that some of the things that we have done, this Congress has done, and some of the -- and votes that have been cast in this Congress and in the past several Congresses.

Republicans, we have lot the mantle of fiscal responsibility. It is incredible to listen to people talk about the fact that we have to, you know reimpose that. Well, of course we do.

But did they vote for the No Child Left Behind bill, something of course the federal government has absolutely no involvement with? Did they vote for the Medicare/prescription drug bill, a \$400 billion to some trillion dollars that we're not sure exactly where that's going to lie? What's the federal government role there? Did they vote for that? And then if they did, how in the world can you come back here and say, "We've got to be careful about spending and get it under control"?

There are a million programs that we operate and that we pay for with the federal government that are far beyond the bounds of the Constitution. Follow the Constitution and you'll know what is -- what's necessary. And that's the defense of the country. That's it for the federal government.

MR. HUME: Thank you, gentlemen.

It is time for a break. We'll be back with more of our debate, live from the auditorium of the Koger Center on

the campus of the University of South Carolina, right after these messages. (Applause.)

(Announcements.)

MR. HUME: And we are back on the campus of the University of South Carolina.

Let's continue our questioning with Chris Wallace.

Chris.

MR. WALLACE: Gentlemen, you're being awfully polite to each other, if not to John Edwards. And so let's see if we can shake things up a little bit. (Laughter.)

Governor Gilmore, on the campaign trail you like to say that "Rudy McRomney" is not a conservative and he knows he's not a conservative. With them standing here on the stage with you, you would tell us specifically why Mayor Giuliani, Senator McCain and Governor Romney are not conservatives?

MR. GILMORE: Thanks, Chris. Actually I thought it was a pretty good line. It got a lot of attention around the country.

You know, there are reasons for this. Let's take for example the abortion issue. We've got one candidate here on the stage who has in this campaign has said that he is against federal funding of abortions, but is in favor of federal financing of abortions. But then on the other hand, he said in the last debate he was against the Hyde Amendment.

We have another candidate who says that he in fact is a tax- cutter and would cut taxes and support these programs. But at the same time, in his own state he was a dramatic tax-increaser.

We have another candidate who says that he is, in fact --

MR. WALLACE: Are you going to name names here, sir, with them all here in front of you?

MR. GILMORE: Certainly. Rudy Giuliani, of course, has taken that position with respect to abortion. With respect to taxes, Governor Huckabee has in fact raised taxes in his state significantly during his administration. On health care, Governor Romney has said in the last debate that this was a privately funded -- or a privately sanctioned type of program for health care, when indeed it is not. In fact, there's mandatory requirement for participation in that, and that's certainly government if I've ever seen it.

MR. WALLACE: All right, let's get some responses here.

Mayor Giuliani, let's start with you.

SEN. MCCAIN: Did I get left out?

MR. GILMORE: I'll come back.

MR. WALLACE: You're pro-choice, you're pro-gay rights, you're pro-gun control; you supported Mario

Cuomo for governor over a Republican. Are those the stands of a conservative?

MR. GIULIANI: First of all, I think Rudy McRomney wouldn't make a bad ticket. (Laughter.) And I kind of like the order. I kind of like the order, John.

But you know -- but in any event, you know, I think that we can respond to that and discuss all that, but there's something I think really big at stake here. We're looking at a race here in which the leading Democratic candidate for president of the United States has said that the unfettered free market is the most disastrous thing in modern America. That's a quote -- or that's a quote she agreed with. She's also said, with regard to taxes, that we have to take money from you in order to give it to the common good.

Now there's such a stark difference there that this election in 2008 is going to make a very big difference about whether we go in that direction -- the direction of removing private choice, putting government in a situation where government is in charge of so many different things -- that I think those are the things that we should be debating, and Republicans should be uniting to make certain that what the liberal media is talking about, our inevitable defeat, doesn't happen.

MR. WALLACE: Mayor Giuliani, I'm going to give you another 30 seconds to actually answer my question. (Laughter, applause.)

They say that you are pro-choice, pro-gay rights, pro-gun control; you supported Mario Cuomo for governor over George Pataki.

Are those the stands of a true conservative, sir?

MR. GIULIANI: I, according to George Will, ran the most conservative government in the last 50 years in New York City. I look for ways in which we can come together.

I think we can agree, all of us on this stage, that we should seek reductions in abortion. I ultimately do believe in a woman's right of choice, but I think that there are ways in which we can reduce abortions. Abortions went down 16 percent when I was the mayor. Adoptions went up 133 percent during the eight years that I was mayor, compared to the prior eight years. So there are ways in which we can work together and achieve results that we all want.

MR. WALLACE: Senator McCain, although Governor Gilmore did not single you out, except by name, I'd like to ask you, because you have a record that people challenge about your conservatism. You've cosponsored campaign finance reform with Senator Feingold. You've cosponsored comprehensive immigration reform with Ted Kennedy. You opposed, as Wendell mentioned, not only the Bush tax cut of 2001 but also the Bush tax cut of 2003. You voted against a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage but for expanded funding -- for federal funding of embryonic stem cell research.

But you say that your record is clear, consistent and conservative. How do you square that with the positions and the votes that I just mentioned, sir?

SEN. MCCAIN: Well, the first issues you mentioned have to do with bipartisanship, have to do with reaching

across the aisle and work for the good of the American people.

That's what I intend to do. That's what leadership is all about. And the reason why congressional approval ratings -- I saw at 28 percent as -- and you get down to blood relatives and paid staffers when you get down that low -- (laughter) -- is because they want us to work together, they want us to reach across the aisle on issues that are important to America.

We need to have immigration reform. Is there anyone who believes our borders are secure? We need to act on issues that affect America that are in the nation's interests, that we should work together, as they used to in the past when I first came to Congress. I promise you, I will reach across the aisle.

But what this is really all about is who's most prepared to lead in this challenge, this transient, central challenge that we face called radical Islamic extremism? My life, my experience my knowledge of the military and national security qualifies me most to lead.

MR. WALLACE: Governor Huckabee, you got slammed for raising taxes. How do you respond, sir?

MR. HUCKABEE: Well, it's a form of flattery to be attacked, but I wish my name would get in the moniker that Governor Gilmore is putting out there. I could use the bump. (Laughter.)

But the truth is I cut taxes 94 times when I was governor. Yes, we raised gasoline taxes in my state to build a road program that we desperately needed, but 80 percent of the people of my state voted for it. Do I apologize for going along with what 80 percent of the people of my state supported? No. Nor do I anyway apologize for building roads.

Do I apologize for complying with a Supreme Court order to improve education in a state that desperately needed it? Of course I don't, because our education system did improve.

But I don't also apologize for being a Republican governor in a very Democrat state and getting 94 different tax decreases, the first ever in my state's history, done. And I think that's a pretty doggone good record.

MR. WALLACE: Governor Romney, in 1994 you said you were a stronger advocate of gay rights than Ted Kennedy. As recently as five years ago you still supported a woman's right to choose. And as governor you signed into law one of the toughest restrictions on assault weapons in the country. Are you a clear and consistent conservative?

MR. ROMNEY: Well, let's get the record straight. First of all, there's no question that I support Second Amendment rights, but I also support an assault weapon ban. And in the -- with regards to gay rights, I have always been somebody who opposes discrimination. But I also consistently feel that it's critical to have marriage as a relationship between one man and one woman.

Look, I've been governor in a pretty tough state. You've heard of blue states. If you ever bought a suit and you look at it and you can't tell if it's blue or black, that's how blue Massachusetts is. And in that state I've had to stand up for life, and I have. I've had to stand up for traditional marriage, and I have.

In that very difficult state, I stood to make sure that we could have English immersion in our schools, because

I think kids should be taught in English. I fought for the death penalty. I fought for abstinence education.

In the toughest of states, I made the toughest decisions and did what was right for America. I have conservative values.

I have the kind of leadership that will allow America to build upon the same kind of reputation and heritage that we got from our conservative founders in this party.

MR. WALLACE: Senator Brownback, you weren't mentioned by Governor Gilmore, but I'm going to ask you a question anyway.

You say that you're a full-scale Ronald Reagan Republican, and yet, as you mentioned, you opposed the troop surge and you support comprehensive immigration reform. Are those the stands that Ronald Reagan would take?

SEN. BROWNBACK: I certainly believe he would work to pull us together to win over there, and I certainly do see him pulling us together to be able to solve a tough problem on immigration. And we had a situation in 1986 under Ronald Reagan, where he endorsed an the amnesty proposal. We had a proposal in 1996 that passed that was an enforcement-only proposal. And pulling these together for as far as getting enforcement and then working together is something that we have to do, I think, to fundamentally change and alter the situation we have in this country right on immigration where the system is failed.

The system isn't working. We've got to toughen the borders, and we need to do that. And we've got to somehow work together to see a work visa program that will allow people to get into a legal system, not an illegal system. I mean that's what people really get irritated about. It's not that people come into the country legally, it's that they come in illegally. And I think Ronald Reagan would work on those sorts of things.

But he also would work on lowering taxes, which I voted for and pushed for an alternate flat tax. (Bell rings.) He would also work to reduce spending.

MR. HUME: Wendell.

MR. GOLER: Gentlemen, the right-to-life has been a part of the Republican party platform for more than 20 years, so I want to ask several of you questions about abortion and stem cell research, starting with you, Governor Thompson.

Some researchers say the lines of embryonic stem cells that President Bush has approved federal funding for are inadequate. Tell me why they're wrong. And more importantly, tell me how you would convince them that they have -- these researchers have all the tools they need.

MR. THOMPSON: Well first, embryonic stem cells, as well as adult stem cells, show great promise for all Americans. Embryonic stem cells was started at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. In embryonic stem cells, the policy that was announced by the president on August 9th set forth about 72 lines that could be federally funded and could be used for research and still receive the federal funds.

MR. GOLER: Researchers say there are not that many, sir.

MR. THOMPSON: Well, there's not that many. There's 22 being used. There's at least three more that have not been used. Some of them were not able to be viable, some of them were not able to have what we call pluripotency, and so they were not able to continue.

But there is some tremendous new research, Wendell, going on on amniotic fluids by a Dr. Campbell. There's also some new research going on at the University of Wisconsin that says adult stem cells, if you do it the right way, will have the same characteristics as embryonic stem cells.

So until this research is done, we do not have to destroy any more embryos. There's enough lines right now and capable, with this other research going on, that embryonic stem cells, along with adult stem cells, cord blood and amniotic fluid, can continue.

MR. GOLER: Mayor Giuliani, I think you expect your stance on a woman's right to choose to attract a lot of attention in this setting, sir.

MR. GIULIANI: (Chuckles.)

MR. GOLER: You have said that you personally hate abortion but support a woman's right to choose. Governor Huckabee says that's like saying, "I hate slavery, but people can go ahead and practice it." Tell me why he's wrong.

MR. GIULIANI: Well, there is no circumstances under which I could possibly imagine anyone choosing slavery or supporting slavery. There are people, millions and millions of Americans, who are as of good conscience as we are, who make a different choice about abortion. And I think in a country where you want to keep government out of people's lives, or government out of people's lives from the point of view of coercion, you have to respect that. There are things that you can oppose, things you can be against; and then you can come to the conclusion, in the kind of democracy we have, the kind of society that we have, and the kind of society we have where we want to keep government out of people's personal lives, that you can respect other people's view on this. And I think everyone on this stage, including most Democrats, could probably very, very usefully spend a lot of time figuring out how we can reduce abortion.

It's going to take a while for the courts to figure out what to do about this.

And while we're looking at that, we should do what I did in New York, which is to try to reduce abortions as much as you can, try to increase adoptions.

MR. GOLER: Governor, has the mayor persuaded you?

MR. HUCKABEE: He has not. I have great respect for the mayor, and I -- let me tell you why I have great respect. He's been honest about his opinion. He's been honest about his position, and I think that's a healthy thing for our party and for this debate. But I'm pro-life because I believe life begins at conception, and I believe that we should do everything possible to protect that life because it is the centerpiece of what makes us unique as an American people. We value the life of one as if it's the life of all, and that's why we go out for the 12-year-old Boy Scout in North Carolina when he's lost; that's why we look for the 13 miners in Sago, West Virginia, when the mine explodes; that's why we go looking for the hikers in Mount Hood, because we

value life, and it's what separates us from the Islamic jihadists who are out to kill us. They celebrate death. They have a culture of death. Ours is a culture of life.

Now, if something is morally wrong, let's oppose it. The honest argument is I don't think it's morally wrong, and someone could take that position and then justify abortion. But if it's wrong, then we ought to be opposed to it, and we ought to find ways to find better ways to deal with our respect for human life.

MR. GOLER: Senator Brownback, no one thinks abortion should be available casually, but there are often very, very difficult decisions to be made in this case. Tell me, since you've opposed abortion in every instance except to save the life of the mother, how you would explain to a rape victim, who does not believe that life begins at conception, why her trauma should be compounded by carrying the child to term.

SEN. BROWNBACK: That would be a very difficult situation, and it is a very difficult situation. But the basic question remains. Is the child in the womb a person? Is it a viable life? And if it is a person, it's entitled to respect. And is it an innocent person?

And I think that's the thing we've got to really look at here, is, what are we doing? We talk about abortion, but abortion is a procedure. This is a life that we're talking about. And it's a terrible situation where there's a rape that's involved or incest.

But it nonetheless remains that this is a child that we're talking about doing this to, of ending the life of this child. Will that make the woman in a better situation if that's what takes place? And I don't think so, and I think we can explain it when we look at it for what it is: a beautiful child of a loving God, that we ought to protect in all circumstances in all places, here in the womb, somebody that's struggling in poverty, a family that's struggling. We should work and look at all life, be pro-life and whole-life for everybody.

MR. GOLER: Governor Romney, I want to give you another difficult abortion situation. You've explained that you once were pro-choice because a relative died after she underwent an illegal abortion. Tell me what you would say to someone else who lost a wife or a daughter to an illegal abortion, if you named the Supreme Court justice who tipped the balance and over turned *Roe v. Wade*.

MR. ROMNEY: Well, obviously, a terrible circumstance that you described; something of that nature, it just makes you sick. And I can't imagine my heart not being rent by virtue of having a circumstance like that presented to me.

I can tell you that I've looked at this long and hard. I've always been personally pro-life. I've taught that to others, it's been part of my faith. The question for me was: What should government do in this kind of setting? And the Supreme Court stepped in and took a decision, and I said I'd support that decision. And then I watched the impact of that decision as I was governor of Massachusetts. And when we came to debating cloning and embryo farming and we saw human life, human life rack after rack that's going to be experimented upon and then disposed, I said *Roe v. Wade* has gone to such an extent that we've cheapened the value of human life. And I believe that a civilized society has to respect the sanctity of human life.

And what I'm saying is that, in my view, the people should make this decision, not the court.

MR. HUME: That concludes this round. We now go to the next, which is the beginning of round four. Questions from Chris Wallace.

Chris?

MR. WALLACE: Thanks, Brit.

Gentlemen, I have a series of questions on immigration, and let me begin with you, Congressman Tancredo.

You have made the fight against illegal immigration the centerpiece of your campaign. I hope you will be as specific as Governor Gilmore was earlier. Do you think that Senator McCain and Mayor Giuliani and Governor Romney are soft on immigration, and if so, why?

REP. TANCREDO: I do. And of course you can look at the bills that they've sponsored, in this case Senator McCain in particular. He sponsored a bill that -- a little bit ago -- would have given amnesty to everybody who's here illegally. It would have required Mexico to -- required us to actually consult with Mexico as to whether or not we would build the fence along our southern border.

The issue of immigration is, of course, enormously important to me. And I see so many conversions around this room tonight on a lot of things, and this is -- I'm beginning to hint that -- or I mean I get the hint here there's conversions happening on this issue also; conversions on guns, conversions on abortion, conversions on immigration. You know, it's beginning to truly sound like a Baptist tent rival meeting here. And I am glad to see conversions. I'm glad they happen. But I must tell you, I trust those conversions when they happen on the road to Damascus and not on the road to Des Moines. (Laughter.)

And this is really the problem that we are -- this is the problem that we're facing here because this issue of immigration is one of the most serious public policy issues we face. And if we pursue this path toward amnesty -- (bell rings) -- it's a disaster for the country.

MR. WALLACE: Senator McCain, would you like to respond?

SEN. MCCAIN: Well, of course. I have never supported amnesty and never would. But the point is that what the American people expect us to do is to sit down and work this issue out together. That's what I've been doing for a couple of years now. We are very close to an agreement, led by our president and his Cabinet members -- Chertoff and Gutierrez. We are very close to an agreement that will first secure our borders. Then we would have a temporary worker program that could only be valid through a tamper-proof biometric document.

And then we would address the issue of the 12 million people who are already here.

My friend, the people that came -- that almost attacked us at Fort Dix -- thank God they did not -- those people didn't come here across our borders, they came with visas that were expired. So we've got to enforce our border. That's our first and foremost priority. But we also have to have a comprehensive solution and it has to be bipartisan. And I believe we're close to reaching that, and that's what the American people expect us to do.

MR. WALLACE: Senator McCain --

SEN. MCCAIN: The status quo is unacceptable.

MR. WALLACE: -- let me just ask you, if I can, for a 30-second follow-up.

SEN. MCCAIN: Sure. Sure.

MR. WALLACE: Because some people say that you have stepped away from the plan that you supported with Ted Kennedy last year, and also from negotiations to come up with a new plan. Is that because comprehensive immigration reform is bad politics for someone running for president?

SEN. MCCAIN: Actually, I've been heavily engaged in all -- all of the negotiations and in phone calls and conference calls and various meetings as short a time ago as Friday, and a conference call yesterday. That's why I can assure you we are very close to an agreement. I've been heavily engaged in it and I continue to be heavily engaged in it.

I come from a state of Arizona where over the half of the illegal crossings cross -- come across the Arizona-Sonora border.

I intend to lead. I don't intend to follow. I don't intend to block things. I intend to get results, and I intend to work on the hard things, not the easy ones.

MR. WALLACE: Governor Romney, you have also called Senator McCain's immigration plan amnesty. Are you prepared to say that sharing the stage with him tonight? And how do you explain your statement to the Lowell Sun last year in which you said, quote, "Those that are here paying taxes and not taking government benefits should begin a process toward application for citizenship as they would from their home country." Why isn't that amnesty as well, sir?

MR. ROMNEY: Well, my view is this. People should have no advantage by having come here illegally.

MR. WALLACE: But you're not telling them to go home, sir.

MR. ROMNEY: I am going to tell them to go home, but they start by beginning the process of applying for citizenship. But I do not believe -- or applying for permanent residency. They're not going to be barred from doing that, but they do not get any advantage by having come here illegally. That's the key part of what I objected to in McCain-Kennedy.

McCain-Kennedy, what it did is said that people who are here illegally get a special pathway. They're not like all the other immigrants in the world that want to come to this great country; they get a special pathway. That's what's wrong about it. If you're here illegally, you should not have a special pathway to become a permanent resident.

My view, you have to secure the border, number one, have an employment verification system, number two, and number three, say to those that are there illegally, get in line with everybody else; you're not going to have a special doorway, any particular advantage, by having come here illegally, to become a permanent

resident.

And my fear is that McCain-Kennedy would do to immigration what McCain-Feingold has done to campaign finance and money in politics, and that's bad. (Applause.)

MR. WALLACE: Senator McCain, you want to respond to that for 30 seconds?

SEN. MCCAIN: Well, I've -- take and kept a consistent position on campaign finance reform. Is there anyone who believes there's not enough money washing around money in politics, which has corrupted our own party? I have kept a consistent position on right to life. And I haven't changed my position even -- on even-numbered years or have changed because of the different offices that I may be running for.

MR. WALLACE: Mayor Giuliani --

MR. : (Laughs.) (Applause.)

MR. : Want to give him a follow-up?

MR. WALLACE: Mayor Giuliani, when you were running New York, you said the following about illegal immigrants: "If you come here, and you work hard, and you happen to be in an undocumented status, you're one of the people who we want in this city." If that was good enough for New York, why isn't it good enough for the country, sir?

MR. GIULIANI: Well, first of all, I'd like to thank Congressman Tancredo for saying that I'm soft on anything. (Laughter.) That's the first time in about 20 years, since I was U.S. attorney, that anybody accused me of being soft. So it may help my reputation.

The reality is, the focus on immigration should be to know everyone who's in the United States. We should have a tamper-proof ID card; we should have a database in which we can identify the people who are in this country.

I know something about security. I think I've had more experience at having to secure a city, having to deal with security in the Justice Department, than, I would say, anyone on this stage. And the reality is, we've got to be sensible about immigration. If we do the kinds of things that some of the people here are talking about, this country's going to be in greater danger; it is going to be more insecure; we're going to face a situation in which terrorists like the Fort Dix people, three of whom were illegal, can find a big underground to hide in.

So we need a fence. We need a technological fence; we need a tamper-proof ID card. And we need a way that people who are working in this country can come forward, sign up for the tamper-proof ID card, get in the database and start paying their way.

MR. WALLACE: Congressman Hunter, we have an internet question for you, sir, from Scott in Colorado Springs. He asked, what would you do to prevent foreign nationals who have entered our country illegally from using social services such as medical, low-income housing and education?

REP. HUNTER: Yeah, and I want to get into this, Chris, because you know, I built the border fence in San

Diego. When I built that fence, we had massive illegal immigration across the border. We built the border fence; we reduced illegal immigration and smuggling of narcotics by more than 90 percent. And the crime rate in the city of San Diego fell by 50 percent.

I wrote the bill that the president signed in October that takes the San Diego fence 854 miles across Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, and it's mandatory. I called up the other day, and they've done two miles of border fence.

This administration has a case of the slows on border enforcement. If we have border enforcement, we will be able at that point to start to regulate the internal problem that we've got. Because as long as you've got a revolving door and you have no border -- and this 2,000-mile porous border, incidentally, is our biggest homeland security problem; it's not just an immigration problem, it's a homeland security problem -- we need to build the border fence. We need to have a Border Patrol which is big enough to get the job done, and we need to be able to ask people when they want to come into America, knock on the front door, because the back door is going to be closed.

MR. HUME: Wendell? (Applause.)

MR. GOLER: Congressman Paul, I believe you are the only man on the stage who opposes the war in Iraq, who would bring the troops home as quickly as -- almost immediately, sir. Are you out of step with your party? Is your party out of step with the rest of the world? If either of those is the case, why are you seeking its nomination?

REP. PAUL: Well, I think the party has lost its way, because the conservative wing of the Republican Party always advocated a noninterventionist foreign policy.

Senator Robert Taft didn't even want to be in NATO. George Bush won the election in the year 2000 campaigning on a humble foreign policy -- no nation-building, no policing of the world. Republicans were elected to end the Korean War. The Republicans were elected to end the Vietnam War. There's a strong tradition of being anti-war in the Republican party. It is the constitutional position. It is the advice of the Founders to follow a non-interventionist foreign policy, stay out of entangling alliances, be friends with countries, negotiate and talk with them and trade with them.

Just think of the tremendous improvement -- relationships with Vietnam. We lost 60,000 men. We came home in defeat. Now we go over there and invest in Vietnam. So there's a lot of merit to the advice of the Founders and following the Constitution.

And my argument is that we shouldn't go to war so carelessly. (Bell rings.) When we do, the wars don't end.

MR. GOLER: Congressman, you don't think that changed with the 9/11 attacks, sir?

REP. PAUL: What changed?

MR. GOLER: The non-interventionist policies.

REP. PAUL: No. Non-intervention was a major contributing factor. Have you ever read the reasons they

attacked us? They attack us because we've been over there; we've been bombing Iraq for 10 years. We've been in the Middle East -- I think Reagan was right.

We don't understand the irrationality of Middle Eastern politics. So right now we're building an embassy in Iraq that's bigger than the Vatican. We're building 14 permanent bases. What would we say here if China was doing this in our country or in the Gulf of Mexico? We would be objecting. We need to look at what we do from the perspective of what would happen if somebody else did it to us. (Applause.)

MR. GOLER: Are you suggesting we invited the 9/11 attack, sir?

REP. PAUL: I'm suggesting that we listen to the people who attacked us and the reason they did it, and they are delighted that we're over there because Osama bin Laden has said, "I am glad you're over on our sand because we can target you so much easier." They have already now since that time -- (bell rings) -- have killed 3,400 of our men, and I don't think it was necessary.

MR. GIULIANI: Wendell, may I comment on that? That's really an extraordinary statement. That's an extraordinary statement, as someone who lived through the attack of September 11, that we invited the attack because we were attacking Iraq. I don't think I've heard that before, and I've heard some pretty absurd explanations for September 11th. (Applause, cheers.)

And I would ask the congressman to withdraw that comment and tell us that he didn't really mean that. (Applause.)

MR. GOLER: Congressman?

REP. PAUL: I believe very sincerely that the CIA is correct when they teach and talk about blowback. When we went into Iran in 1953 and installed the shah, yes, there was blowback. A reaction to that was the taking of our hostages and that persists. And if we ignore that, we ignore that at our own risk. If we think that we can do what we want around the world and not incite hatred, then we have a problem.

They don't come here to attack us because we're rich and we're free. They come and they attack us because we're over there. I mean, what would we think if we were -- if other foreign countries were doing that to us?

MR. GIULIANI: Can I have 30 seconds, please?

MR. : No, no, no, wait a second. Let's -- we'll all get 30 seconds.

(Cross talk.)

MR. GIULIANI: They are coming --

(Cross talk.)

MR. : We all want 30 seconds of time --

MR. HUME: We'll -- Wendell, go ahead.

MR. GOLER: I think I want to turn to Senator McCain and change the subject, if I will. (Laughter.) I don't think we're going to solve this tonight, gentlemen.

An Internet question for you, Senator. Royce from Philadelphia asks if South Carolina should be free to fly the Confederate flag from state buildings. (Groans from the audience.)

SEN. MCCAIN: That's --

MR. GOLER: In 2000, sir, you said yes. You have since called that one of your worst examples of political cowardice. That flag is still flying in front of the Statehouse. Should it come down?

SEN. MCCAIN: It is not flying on top of capitol. It is flying at the --

MR. GOLER: It is flying in front of the Statehouse, sir.

SEN. MCCAIN: It is not flying on top of the capitol.

Yes, I was wrong when I didn't say it -- well, when I said that I believed that it was up to the state of South Carolina. That was a wrong statement on my part.

Now, after long negotiation amongst most parties, there is an agreement that that flag no longer flies on top of the capitol of the state of South Carolina.

Almost all parties involved in those negotiations believe that that's a reasonable solution to this issue. I support it. I still believe that it should not have flown over the capitol, and I was wrong when I said that it was a state issue. But now I think it has been settled, and I think it's time that we all moved on on this issue -- especially the people of South Carolina. (Applause.)

MR. GOLER: Governor Huckabee, when you became governor of Arkansas, you wrote convicted rapist Wayne Dumond, told him, my desire is that you be released from prison. The parole board released him in 1999. The next year, he killed a woman in Missouri. Do you bear any responsibility for his release, sir?

MR. HUCKABEE: I wish that he hadn't gotten out in light of what happened in Missouri. It's one of the most horrible things, I think, that I'll look back on, but I didn't let him go. The parole board did. I actually denied his clemency, which was my official action. It was my predecessor who commuted his sentence and made him parole- eligible. It's been used as a political weapon against me.

Do I regret having said that I thought that he had met the conditions for parole? I do, in light of what he did.

But I don't have foresight. I have great hindsight, like everybody does.

Here's what I do know. I know that we live in a very dangerous world and we make tough decisions and we have to live by them. For 10-1/2 years as a governor, I made tough decisions and saw thousands of cases cross my desk every day. I wish I could have always made them perfect, but I can't. If I'm president -- and I hope I will be -- I won't be a perfect president, but I'll be one who will do my very best to not repeat mistakes or to make them in the first place.

MR. GOLER: Thanks.

Congressman Tancredo, the ambassador from the European Union says the United States and Europe bear a special responsibility for global warming because the greenhouse gases causing the problem have been put there since the Industrial Revolution of the 1800s. We put most of the stuff up there. Do you agree? And what should we do to deal with the problem, sir?

REP. TANCREDO: Okay. First of all, the whole issue of global warming, for every single scientist that tells you it's happening and that it's our fault -- and they'll stack up to here in this reports -- I can stack up another group of reports that say just the opposite.

I don't believe that -- well, I'll tell you this, I don't know whether or not we are responsible, we the human race, are responsible for global warming.

It certainly could be happening, it certainly could be a natural phenomenon. If it's the latter, of course there isn't much we can do about that. If it's the former, there is something that we can do about it, and I'm all for it, and that is of course to reduce our dependence on petroleum products. If we do that, we automatically reduce the carbon emissions that people claim are causing global warming. And I'm all for doing that, because -- I'll tell you why. It's a national security issue. It just isn't an issue of fight over the science of global warming; it's a national security issue for us to move away from the use of petroleum products when they're coming from countries that want to kill us.

And although my dear friend Ron here -- I dearly love and really respect, but I'll tell you, I just have to disagree with you, Ron, about the issue of whether or not that -- whether Israel existed or didn't, whether or not we were in the Iraq war or not, they would be trying to kill us because it's a dictate of their religion, at least a part of it, and we have to defend ourselves.

MR. HUME: Thank you, Congressman. It's time now for our -- (applause) -- our final commercial break of the night. When we come back, dealing with a world crisis in real time. We'll challenge the candidates to see how they would react during an evolving terrorist attack. Stay tuned. (Applause.)

(Announcements.)

MR. HUME: Welcome back to the Koger Center for the Arts on the campus of the University of South Carolina.

The questions in this round will be premised on a fictional, but we think plausible scenario involving terrorism and the response to it. Here is the premise: Three shopping centers near major U.S. cities have been hit by suicide bombers. Hundreds are dead, thousands injured. A fourth attack has been averted when the attackers were captured off the Florida coast and taken to Guantanamo Bay, where they are being questioned. U.S. intelligence believes that another larger attack is planned and could come at any time.

First question to you, Senator McCain. How aggressively would you interrogate those being held at Guantanamo Bay for information about where the next attack might be?

SEN. MCCAIN: If I knew for sure that they had that kind of information, I, as the president of the United States, would take that responsibility. That is a million-to-one scenario. But only I would take that responsibility.

The use of torture -- we could never gain as much we would gain from that torture as we lose in world opinion. We do not torture people.

When I was in Vietnam, one of the things that sustained us, as we went -- underwent torture ourselves, is the knowledge that if we had our positions reversed and we were the captors, we would not impose that kind of treatment on them.

It's not about the terrorists, it's about us. It's about what kind of country we are. And a fact: The more physical pain you inflict on someone, the more they're going to tell you what they think you want to know.

It's about us as a nation. We have procedures for interrogation in the Army Field Manual. Those, I think, would be adequate in 999,999 of cases, and I think that if we agree to torture people, we will do ourselves great harm in the world.

MR. HUME: Mayor Giuliani, the former director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet, the current head of the CIA have both said that the most valuable intelligence tool they have had has been the information gained from what are called enhanced interrogation techniques to include, presumably, water-boarding.

What is your view whether such techniques should be applied in a scenario like the one I described?

MR. GIULIANI: In the hypothetical that you gave me, which assumes that we know there's going to be another attack and these people know about it, I would tell the people who had to do the interrogation to use every method they could think of. It shouldn't be torture, but every method they can think of --

MR. HUME: Water-boarding?

MR. GIULIANI: -- and I would -- and I would -- well, I'd say every method they could think of, and I would support them in doing that because I've seen what -- (interrupted by applause) -- I've seen what can happen when you make a mistake about this, and I don't want to see another 3,000 people dead in New York or any place else.

MR. HUME: Governor Romney, I'd like to draw you out on this.

MR. ROMNEY: Yeah, first of all, let's make sure that we understand that the key in electing the next president is to find somebody who will make sure that that scenario doesn't ever happen, and the key to that is prevention.

We've all spent a lot of time talking about what happens after the bomb goes off. The real question is, how do you prevent the bomb from going off? And that's what I spent my time doing as a governor over the last four years, and serving on the Homeland Security Advisory Council. And that means intelligence and counterterrorism.

Now we're going to -- you said the person's going to be in Guantanamo. I'm glad they're at Guantanamo. I don't want them on our soil. I want them on Guantanamo, where they don't get the access to lawyers they get when they're on our soil. I don't want them in our prisons. I want them there.

Some people have said, we ought to close Guantanamo. My view is, we ought to double Guantanamo. We ought to make sure that the terrorists -- (applause) -- and there's no question but that in a setting like that where you have a ticking bomb that the president of the United States -- not the CIA interrogator, the president of the United States -- has to make the call. And enhanced interrogation techniques have to be used -- not torture but enhanced interrogation techniques, yes.

MR. HUME: Governor Thompson, let me enrich the scenario just a little bit. Let's assume for the sake of discussion here that we now also have additional intelligence that indicates with high certainty that the attackers were trained in a West African country hostile to the United States, in camps openly run by the terrorist organization that sent them. What kind of response would you agree to for that?

MR. THOMPSON: I would do the first thing that President Ronald Reagan would say: Trust but verify.

Verify that that information is correct. And I would go in with all the power necessary. Colin Powell said, and I quote him, he says, "If in fact you're going to war, have a reason to go to war. Make sure you go with all the force necessary in order to do so, and have an exit strategy."

If there's a country in Africa that is not friendly to America, that is anti-America and is promoting terrorism, and those terrorists are going to attack, it's -- be incumbent on all of us to make sure that we do what is right. The president of the United States has got to lead that effort, and if it's necessary, it's got to take those camps out as deliberately and as methodically as possible, as long as that information is credible and can be checked and make sure that it is accurate.

MR. HUME: Senator Brownback, if the decision were up to you, would you do that? And if so, would you decide to go to the United Nations, for example, first to seek some kind of international authorization to do it or would you just move in the way that Governor Thompson described?

SEN. BROWNBACK: I would not go to the United Nations in the situation you've described. You've described a situation where American lives have been lost and we think more are pending to lose. And I think your real question you have to have here as the chief executive, as the leader of the country, what are you measuring here? Is your primary concern U.S. lives or is it how you're going to be perceived in the world? And my standard is U.S. lives, and I'm going to do everything within my power to protect U.S. lives, period.

I will do it. I'll move aggressively forward on it. If we have to later ask and say, "Well, it shouldn't quite have been done this way or that way," that's the way it is. But the standard must be protection of U.S. lives. That's the job of president of the United States, and I would take it seriously, and I would do it.

MR. HUME: How would you respond, Congressman Hunter?

REP. HUNTER: Yeah, let me just say this would take a one-minute conversation with the secretary of Defense. (Laughter.) I would call him up or call him in. I would say to SECDEF, in terms of getting

information that would save American lives, even if it involves very high-pressure techniques, one sentence: Get the information. Have it back within an hour, and let's act on it. Let's execute with Special Operations or whoever else is necessary, and I will take full responsibility. Get the information.

MR. HUME: I'm going to come to the others in a moment, but I want to circle back to you, Senator McCain. You've heard reference here from me and others of the -- what the administration calls the enhanced interrogation techniques. I may have misunderstood you, but it sounded to me as if you regard those techniques, or from what you know about them, as torture. Do you?

SEN. MCCAIN: Yes, and the interesting thing about that aspect is that during the debate, when we had the detainee treatment act, there was a sharp division between those who had served in the military and those who hadn't. Virtually every senior officer, retired or active-duty, starting with Colin Powell, General Vessey and everyone else, agreed with my position that we should not torture people.

One of the reasons is, is because if we do it, what happens to our military people when they're captured? And also, they realize there's more to war than the battlefield.

So yes, literally every retired military person and active duty military person who has actually been in battle and served for extended times in the military -- (bell rings) -- supported my position, and I'm glad of it.

MR. HUME: All right, thank you, Senator. (Applause.)

This kind of attack would pose immediate and obvious problems for the U.S. economy -- they've hit shopping centers. What kind of measures would you take, Governor Gilmore, to assure that the U.S. economy continued to grow in the face of an attack of this kind?

MR. GILMORE: Brit, I actually had to deal with this issue. I was the governor of the state of Virginia during the 9/11 attack. The Pentagon was in fact struck; it's in Arlington, Virginia.

But before that time, I'd been asked by the United States government to chair the National Commission on Terrorism and Homeland Security. We issued two reports. Before the 9/11 attack, the third one was complete. We did two more after that. So I have the experience to deal with these issues, and I've done a lot of scenarios like this.

MR. HUME: Well what would you do?

MR. GILMORE: Well, with respect to the United Nations, first of all let me say that I would go to the U.N., but it would be to state an opinion and to take advantage of our rights on an international law, not to go ask for permission. And then I would go in, after having explained exactly what we were doing to the world and asking for world support, but even without it, we would go in and act decisively against that.

Meanwhile, with respect to homeland security, we've got to put a system in place that talks about a complete partnership and community of preparedness between federal, state and local people, private sector community leadership, and that particularly means information sharing between federal, state and local authorities, something we said as early as the year 1999. And if you do that, I believe from my experience as

prosecutor and attorney general, that you can get this information -- (bell rings) -- and then find ways to protect the country even in a shopping center.

MR. HUME: Governor Huckabee, there might be a need for economic policies to change. What policies would you propose?

MR. HUCKABEE: One of the things that happened after 9/11, the president told us essentially that we all needed to get back on airplanes and fly, we all needed to go back to shopping centers and shop, we need to go ahead and travel. And I understand what he meant by that -- to put our economy back in motion. And I think that was a good thing to say, but it may have been interpreted by the American people as business as usual.

The problem is, it'll never ever be business as usual when you attack innocent Americans on our soil. It can't be business as usual. We've got to make a different kind of business -- go after those who murdered -- and let's use the word "murder" -- murdered fellow American citizens, then let's make sure that we do more than simply protect our borders and bring justice to those who did it; but that we ask the American people to join together in a sacrifice, the same kind of sacrifice that we had when we were attacked at Pearl Harbor, the same kind of sacrifice that we've been called upon as a nation repeatedly to do.

That's what America would have to do.

MR. HUME: Congressman Paul, one last question for you on this. The president believed after 9/11 that the tax cuts that he had put in place were helpful in softening the economic downturn that occurred, and allowing the United States economy to rise out of it. Would you propose -- what economic policies would you propose under this scenario to avert or soften a recession?

REP. PAUL: Well, the lower the taxes the better, and I think cutting taxes would be beneficial. But we should find places where we could cut spending as well, because eventually a deficit can be very, very harmful to us. But you know, I think it's interesting talking about torture here in that it's become enhanced interrogation technique. It sounds like Newspeak.

Nobody's for the torture, and I think that's important. But as far as taking care of a problem like this, the president has the authority to do that. If we're under imminent attack, the president can take that upon himself to do it.

But just think. We gave the president authority to go into Afghanistan, and here we have Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. They have nuclear weapons, and we're giving them money.

And we forgot about him, and now we're over in -- in Iraq in a war that's bogging us down, and we have forgotten against -- about dealing with the people that attacked us. (Bell rings.) And here you have a hypothetical attack that you're dealing with; we ought to be dealing with the one we have right now on our hands.

MR. HUME: Congressman Tancredo, let me give you the last word in this round. Go ahead, sir.

REP. TANCREDO: Well, let me just say that it's almost unbelievable to listen to this in a way. We're talking

about -- we're talking about it in such a theoretical fashion. You say that -- that nuclear devices have gone off in the United States, more are planned, and we're wondering about whether waterboarding would be a -- a bad thing to do? I'm looking for "Jack Bauer" at that time, let me tell you. (Laughter, applause.)

And -- and there is -- there is nothing -- if you are talking about -- I mean, we are the last best hope of Western civilization. And so all of the theories that go behind our activities subsequent to these nuclear attacks going off in the United States, they go out the window because when -- when we go under, Western civilization goes under. So you better take that into account, and you better do every single thing you can as president of the United States to make sure, number one, it doesn't happen -- that's right -- but number two, you better respond in a way that makes them fearful of you because otherwise you guarantee something like this will happen.

MR. HUME: Congressman, thank you.

We have time for a last quick round with Chris.

Chris?

MR. WALLACE: Thank you. I've got a couple of final questions, and I then I know Wendell does as well.

Governor Gilmore, let me start with you. It's been suggested that the 10 of you could all be members of the same country club. What does it say about the Republican Party? And you used to be the chairman of this party and tried to build the tent, to build the base; what does it say that there is no woman, no Hispanic, no African-American, no minority in this field of presidential candidates?

MR. GILMORE: You know, Chris, as national chairman of the party, I worked very hard with the rest of the party to reach out in the Hispanic community, reach out in the African-American community. I made appropriate appointments. As governor of Virginia, I did the same thing. I brought people together and brought people in.

As a person who has a record with the African-American community when I was the attorney general of the state -- there were church burnings that were going on all across the South -- I stepped up with my fellow attorney generals and spoke out against that, and it stopped. As the governor of Virginia, I favored the African-American universities in order to draw people together.

MR. WALLACE: Governor, if I may -- because we're running out of time, I'd like to ask you, if you'd answer the question, which is, does it bother you that as you sit here and we see the 10 candidates on the stage, there is not a single minority running for president in your party?

MR. GILMORE: Listen, there will be people from our party who are in the minority who will be candidates, and we have people that are prepared to do that in the immediate future.

But the fact of the matter is that the people of the United States have got to judge the people who in fact have stood up and decided to run, have put themselves into the arena.

And they have to judge it on the way of the record, Chris.

I mean, I recognize that I shook things up here a little bit. But the fact is, the people of the United States deserve to know where people really stand, and the only way to do that is to examine the record.

MR. WALLACE: Governor Romney, during this campaign, you have been criticized -- and again tonight you've been criticized -- for changing your position on some issues. You say that it's a part of learning from experience. Can you point to an area in which your learning from experience led you to change to a position that is less popular with the Republican base?

MR. ROMNEY: Sure, a number -- quite a few, actually.

And as Senator McCain did, as he mentioned the flag issue -- I have issues that take me in the same direction. One is No Child Left Behind. I've taken a position where, once upon a time, I said I wanted to eliminate the Department of Education. That was my position when I ran for Senate in 1994. That's very popular with the base.

As I've been a governor and seen the impact that the federal government can have holding down the interest of the teachers' unions and instead putting the interests of the kids and the parents and the teachers first, I see that the Department of Education can actually make a difference. So I supported No Child Left Behind. I still do. I know there are a lot in my party that don't like it, but I like testing in our schools. I think it allows us to get better schools, better teachers; allows us to let our kids have the kind of hope that they ought to have.

I think, by the way, the civil rights issue of our time is not what's going on on this stage right here, but what's going on in the schools in the inner cities of America, because the kids are not getting the education they need for the jobs of tomorrow.

And so I'm very proud of the position I've taken. I support the president in that regard, and that's where I stand.

MR. HUME: Wendell.

MR. GOLER: Congressman Hunter, many people feel that billions of dollars in American debt that China holds is a problem. If the Chinese decide to convert those dollars to euros, the value of the dollar drops. Do you see that as a security threat, and what would you do about it?

REP. HUNTER: Well, Wendell, if we don't do anything about it, it will be a security threat. And the other thing that will be a security threat is the fact that China is buying ships and planes and military equipment with hundreds of billions of American trade dollars coming their way. They've bought the Sovremenny class missile destroyers from the Russians that were designed to do one thing: Kill American aircraft carriers. So there is a security threat as we move -- as we allow China to continue to cheat on trade, they are arming with American trade dollars, and they're lending our money back to us. And some people say well, they'll treat us right if we get in a crunch. And I say, yeah, just like they treated that guy in front of the tank at Tiananmen Square.

It's time for us to enforce trade rules with China, create a two- way street, not a one-way street, and that will give us much less exposure on the economic side that you're talking about, and the security side.

MR. HUME: There'll be many more debates, but that is it for us tonight. Our thanks to the candidates and their staffs, and to our debate partner, the Republican Party of South Carolina. And also to the terrific people here at the University of South Carolina and the Koger Center for all of their help.

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