

>> Peter Robinson: Welcome to Uncommon Knowledge, I'm Peter Robinson. Joining us today, Victor Davis Hanson. A classicist and historian at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, Dr. Hanson is the author of many books including Carnage and Culture, Landmark Battles and the Rise of Western Power, and most recently A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans fought the Peloponnesian War. This past November President Bush awarded Dr. Hanson the National Humanities Medal. A world war; former CIA director James Woolsey, military historian Elliot Cohen, critic and commentator Norman Podhoretz, all term the struggle against Islamic extremism a new world war. To inform the American public, to give people the most accurate mental image of what we're in for. Is that the term that you would use?

>> Victor Hanson: Yes I think it is because it shows you that we're in an economic cultural political struggle with an ideology that's antithetical to West, but there's one caveat and that is when you mentioned world war - we envision World War I, World War II, tanks, the vermark, but we're not gonna see those types of conventional assets. But what's stranger even than that ... none of those armies and militaries were able to take out 18 anchors in Manhattan, or hit the Pentagon. So we live in an era of communications that are global, instantaneous, miniaturization of weapons. So the enemy is fighting us on a global front and they don't have traditional assets that are visible, but they're able to inflict a great deal of damage in a way that other enemies in world wars weren't.

>> Peter Robinson: Two models of warfare: Cold War. The Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev says to Vice President Richard Nixon "we will bury you" and it remains an official matter of Soviet doctrine to promote a worldwide Communist revolution right up until 1990. They never backed down on that. Model one. Model two, the IRA which has a specific historical grievance and wants the British out of Northern Ireland. So you have an enemy that wants your complete destruction, versus an enemy that has IRA as an enemy of the British versus an enemy that has a specific, contained objective. If this is a spectrum, where does Al-Qaeda fall?

>> Victor Hanson: They fall in the model of the Soviet Union because remember they have only perceived grievances that aren't real grievances. The real grievance is existential. Sometimes it's we were in Saudi Arabia - we're not in Saudi Arabia. Sometimes it's the embargo against Iraq. We no longer have the embargo. If you read Dr. Zawahiri's complaints against the west ...

>> Peter Robinson: Remind us who Zawahiri is, he's the number two man?

>> Victor Hanson: Zawahiri's the number two man now in Al-Qaeda, the Egyptian so-called physician. But remember what he's alleged that we have done. We don't have campaign finance reform. We haven't signed Kyoto, there's 18 or 19 of these things and their dojour they change and that's just a pretense because the hatred is you are a Western, Liberal, free people and in a globalized community the world is becoming more like you and our system cannot compete and we can't get the eighth century back.

>> Peter Robinson: If you read Hitler's Mein Kampf, you'd have known his program. If you paid attention, as indeed many people did pay attention to Lennon and to Stalin, quite a lot was published and you could understand what they were about. Now many in the west didn't want to believe it or cut them slack or made excuses, but we had texts that reflected their thinking. You're arguing now, that if you read the works of or you listen to the tapes of Osama or you read the works of Zawahiri, you're not getting their thinking. Is that what you're arguing?

>> Victor Hanson: No, not at all because you're getting ... when you read Mein Kampf, or when you read Mal's Little Book, or Kadafi's Green Book, you read absurd crazy things and we can make fun of them; but they think they're very serious. The same thing with Al-Qaeda, we have the new Double Day, the Al-Qaeda reader. It's all there. Now you're gonna think, who in the world would think they could bring a Caliph back or who in the world would think they're all going to have Arab Muslim speaking people under some time of seventh century crazy Caliph. And that's exactly what they believe. It doesn't mean that they don't believe it and they won't try to destroy you to get that, absurd as it sounds.

>> Peter Robinson: Alright Second World War, military spending is more than half of GDP. Early years of the Cold War under Eisenhower and JFK, military spending is a proportion of GDP in this country's around 9 percent. Under Ike it gets up to 10 percent. Toward the end of the Cold War under Reagan, it's between 5 and 6 percent, peaks at 6 point 1 percent. Now it's still a little under 4 percent. If we're in a Cold War, excuse me, if we're in a world war are we adequately mobilized?

>> Victor Hanson: No we're not but we have a problem, those earlier generations when you talk about spending 10 or 9 percent GDP during the Cold War, if you look at the budgetary dollars ... we had a much smaller economy number one, but number two we were spending 70 percent of the budgetary dollars on defense of the actual budget and 30 percent on entitlements. We're spending 70 percent on entitlements and the difference is they thought that was manageable, when they had even less resources than we do. We're very wealthy and we think that's absolutely intolerable because in the age of affluence and leisure, our expectations have so geometrically progressed that we all believe we're gonna die at 90 in our sleep very wealthy and happy.

>> Peter Robinson: You mean that's unlikely?

>> Victor Hanson: It is. Sorry.

>> Peter Robinson: Within 3 weeks of invading Iraq in March 2003, Saddam Hussein's regime is toppled and we've captured Baghdad; by any historical standard, a stunning victory - 2003. 2007 - Petraeus goes to Iraq, we get a surge. In some ways it's a misnomer. It's only an addition of some 30,000 troops which is what - about a 12 percent addition to what he had or so?

>> Victor Hanson: We had that many troops before.

>> Peter Robinson: And we've had that many troops before. In any event General Petraeus has a new set of tactics, he gets a few new soldiers, and within months he has pacified Anbar Province, at least two-thirds of Baghdad and made dramatic progress elsewhere in the country. Again, I think you'd agree, by historical standards another stunning achievement.

>> Victor Hanson: Yes.

>> Peter Robinson: What went wrong in between?

>> Victor Hanson: What went wrong in between? Two things: one there were tactical and operational lapses on the part of General Sanchez and General Casey. I think everybody understands that we ... you don't allow looters to, on CNN, ransack the country. We don't know exactly the variables, but you don't just disband an army and let a lot of unemployed people, you don't just let arms depots lie around with the weaponry to be used for ID's. You don't go into Volusia and take half the city and then pull out. You don't surround Moktada Sadr and give him a reprieve. But the point is, are those mistakes unprecedented in war? No, they don't compare to anything of the lapse as we saw in World War I, World War II, and second can they be rectified? And the answer's yes. There's another thing we don't talk about. A lot of these sects we're seeing is absolutely attributed to General Petraeus, but you walk in Remade and Baquba and it's like a graveyard and you see what American Marines and Army did in 2003, 04, 05, and 06 - very unheralded, very little remarked on. You sit across ...

>> Peter Robinson: Like a graveyard. What do you mean, you can see dead tanks?

>> Victor Hanson: The dead tanks, you can see shell casings, you can see holes in walls.

>> Peter Robinson: You were in Iraq how long ago? Couple months?

>> Victor Hanson: About a month ago.

>> Peter Robinson: Alright.

>> Victor Hanson: And the point is, you talk to Arab Sheiks that are part of the Anbar awakening. They'll give you a myriad of reasons why this happened. General Petraeus was an effective leader, you had more troops, they will also say we wanted the Dubai model or the Kuwait model or the Kurdistan, we want to get in on the wealth, or they'll say we're afraid of the Shia and you're the honest broker that will protect us from these illiterates. They will say the Saudi money dried up. They'll give you a lot of reasons but off the record what they'll say is, we can't defeat the U. S. military and they kill a lot of our troops, our insurgents, and this is very telling. I asked one of them, well why did you have to do this? In 2003 when we so-called disbanded the army, and he was a member of the old Saddam officer corp., would you have joined, would you have joined us in good will gestures? Would you have served under a Shia military leadership? Did you have to

have this insurgency? And he said no. This is almost catharsis that you have to have, in other words he was telling me that the Sunni insurgents had to show the world they were not the cowards or the incompetents that surrendered in 3 weeks; that they were going to win, and they were going to defeat the Americans, and now that they have established a reputation that they didn't give up, they have restored their pride and they lost and they understand that ...

>> Peter Robinson: So this is a parallel to the argument that Sadat had to invade and lose, but he had to invade before he could make peace at Camp David. That kind of notion ...

>> Victor Hanson: I think so. I don't want to ... I'm not a determinist in history, I don't think that ... I think we have free will and I think things could have enumerated all these so-called mistakes, but there's a larger truth there. We could not have convinced the Japanese in 1941 to be equitable with China and to be equitable to us. We could not have convinced Mussolini not to go into Ethiopia. That lesson and that wisdom that they finally accrued only came because their doctrine and ideology had been discredited.

>> Peter Robinson: They had to experience defeat.

>> Victor Hanson: People who thought that they wanted to ally themselves with those so-called winners, when they became losers they wanted no part of it. And that's what's happened to Al-Qaeda. They had to learn the dark side of Al-Qaeda, the Sunni's learned it. Their children were raped, they were taken captive, their fingers were cut off when they smoked, their cars were stolen, their gasoline was stolen, there's pornography on Al-Qaeda computers. These people were the scum of the earth and the Sunni insurgents who threw their lot in it had to learn that the hard way.

>> Peter Robinson: Alright we're talking about the period when things ... the feeling here is that things didn't go well, the period before the surge. Questions about 2 leaders: John Abizaid former commander in chief of the central command who oversaw ... who's superior to General Casey and Sanchez - said that he believed the war needed to won, he had a 80-20 quotation; 80 percent diplomatic, 20 percent military. Was that mistaken then but right now is it the wrong approach altogether? What do you make of that?

>> Victor Hanson: I would put it more in terms of a short term military solution but a long term political solution. You can't have any discussions of politics or reconstruction or economic vibrancy if somebody's gonna shoot you every time you string wire, or somebody's gonna cut your kid's head off. You've got to take care of those people first and that's what I think the emphasis is now, put American troops within the community and tell the Shia, tell the Sunni's we trust you, we think you can get along but you know what - the first SOB who tries to kill you we're gonna take care of. That's a military solution.

>> Peter Robinson: George W. Bush as commander in chief said during this period often, I give the commanders on the ground what they want. Do you have what you

want? We know that in the situation room, in the conferences he'd have with the big screen on the wall, he'd ask Sanchez and he'd ask Casey - do you have what you need? Question: should he have been more like Abraham Lincoln who rode his commanders and fired them until he got to Grant who would fight? Should we have had Petraeus a year or two sooner?

>> Victor Hanson: I don't ... I think you showed your hand. We did not find Ulysses S. Grant until after Vicksburg, and we did not find William D. Sherman really until 1863 as the genius of him. We went through, as you said, Burnside, Pope, McClellan, etc. Hooker ... so that's what happens in wars. We didn't know how great George Patton was really until after Italy, and we stuck with Mark Clark and we stuck with Hodges and we stuck with even Bradley too long. That's what happens in wars, but I think the consensus now is this: we think that Iraq can be won and I think it is being won as we speak, but there's only ... at least we know now that if General David Petraeus cannot win it and cannot achieve a stable peace, there's nobody else we have that can do it.

>> Peter Robinson: There's no one in reserve?

>> Victor Hanson: No one else. Well he has a lot of bright Colonels that are like him, but I'm saying at that level of command we don't have anybody with that intellectual battlefield experience and as so canny as he is and understands Iraq.

>> Peter Robinson: You visited Iraq in September. Is that correct?

>> Victor Hanson: In October.

>> Peter Robinson: In October, excuse me. You spend an hour with David Petraeus.

>> Victor Hanson: I did.

>> Peter Robinson: Give me two sentences that we can take away about that man.

>> Victor Hanson: He's gruff, he's blunt, he doesn't suffer fools easily.

>> Peter Robinson: Your kind of guy Victor?

>> Victor Hanson: Yep, he's cantankerous in some ways but he's also ... I found him extremely candid and he does not want to have unreal expectations, and he thinks that this is going to work but he looks at the past and sees that people had not been candid perhaps and so he's very measured in his metrics of success and there's an irony there as to why we want the good news to get out from Iraq. I think it's the military, it's not the left wing spin machine alone, it's the military that does not want to raise our expectations. I had a feeling from viewing the country that things are actually going better than we are officially seeing, but he's the right man at the right time in the right job.

>> Peter Robinson: Give me ... treat me as the idiot child that I am and just give me two or three differences in tactics. What are the ... you're a colonel or a major, you're a corporal. How is your life different and how are your instructions, how are your commands different now under General Petraeus than they would have been two years ago?

>> Victor Hanson: I'd say we're poor where we're fighting counter terrorism. We had compounds, we went out, we tried to kill the enemy, we went back, and the idea was sort of ropi-dope. We're gonna work on force protection, go out at night, kill the bad guys. If the Shias and the Sunni's can't get along, they'll fight and they'll wear each other out and then we emerge. We haven't taken much casualties, the country will be stabilized. That would have worked had there been political support in the long term, but not given the ...

>> Peter Robinson: Political support at home, here in the United States?

>> Victor Hanson: Yes. The new strategy was we don't have that much political support. The time is running out, we have to take a great gamble. We cannot just stay in compounds and do counter terrorism, we've got to go out in the communities, put 10, 15 people in each block. Let's master the tribal system, let's ensure those people that they can join us or join the government without fear of retribution at night. And so we really upped the ante. It's much more dangerous under the Petraeus strategy and that's why the casualties spiked as you saw in June.

>> Peter Robinson: Our casualties?

>> Victor Hanson: Our casualties. But the possible rewards are much greater and much more quickly. I'm not saying that General Abizaid and General Casey were wrong because they understood that we had to have assets elsewhere and the surge was not sustainable, and they understood that these people have been fighting from the seventh century. But I'm just saying for here and now, given the lack of political support at home, we had to make the gamble to pacify the country immediately and get it jump started.

>> Peter Robinson: To what extent was the surge the product of thinking at the Pentagon? That is to say, when Abizaid and Casey are running things, is Petraeus back at the Pentagon thinking you know I'm not sure this is going to work? Did they have bubbling up thinking, a kind of emerging consensus that we needed to try something else? To what extent did it come through the Pentagon and to what extent did it come from the administration after getting shellacked in the elections of November a year ago?

>> Victor Hanson: Two things: administration got shellacked and so they were ready for different views. It wasn't that Rumsfeld or Casey or Abizade were imposing anything, they just thought that the system bear with us, and the system's going to bear fruit. And there were other people, Petraeus but a lot of brilliant colonels we don't talk about, absolutely brilliant Ed Hoover, H. R. McMaster, and they were saying from being right there at ground zero you've got to get out in the community and you've got to reassure

people that you're gonna protect them from reprisals; and that's gonna be really risky and here's how you do it, and it was a ground swell and only because of the 2006 election was that found to be receptive. And there's one other thing - we shouldn't dismiss the fact that one of the reasons ironically that the change in tactics was successful, that thousands of unnamed and unknown and anonymous Americans got killed and wounded in that terrible period of 2004, 05, and 06 and really it trited the enemy. They really did. We don't give them credit today, but I think that's when you walk through those cities and you see the scars and the graveyards of battles so to speak.

>> Peter Robinson: We have in this country a political consensus that what took place somewhere from roughly 2004 until last year, was a catastrophe, a disaster, one error after another, and you're saying no - it was a necessary predicate to the success we're experiencing now. Is that correct?

>> Victor Hanson: I think it was but I'm not saying there were not errors, I'm not saying that we didn't master the system, but the accumulated knowledge that when you go into an place like Baquba or ... and you see a colonel and he has up on a PowerPoint a list of 300 sheiks, and he knows the exact relationship between all of them and he knows the history of the relationship with Americans, and he knows whose cousin, whose brother was killed by Al-Qaeda. That didn't come out of the head of Azusa overnight. That he's drawing on aggregate information of the last 3 years. I wish that weren't true, I wish we could have had this knowledge and this experience, and General Petraeus at the very beginning but I don't know any war in which that's true.

>> Peter Robinson: Victor, John Burns until recently the New York Times bureau chief in Baghdad. Listen to this quotation. "Can those who argue for a continued high level of American military involvement ..." As we sit here taping, congress and the president are going back and forth, congress doesn't want to authorize military spending unless he agrees to some kind of at least notional time table for withdrawal. So this remains a very live issue. Burns: "can those who argue for a continued high level of American military involvement in Iraq assure us that we wouldn't come to the same point of violence or civil war 3 or 4 years, and perhaps 4 or 5,000 American soldiers killed later?" That is to say, the surge is showing success but how do you convince the American people that it is not nearly delaying some sort of slide into chaos and civil war?

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Victor Hanson: Well you can't convince them, you have to show them and we're going to see now that the surge ... this month ended today, we have 36 dead Americans. That's the lowest since the war started of any November. So we're gonna watch this very carefully, but the question is, there's two factors we're not talking about. One is, as a Sunni told me, when you guys invaded the price of oil was 22 dollars, we were pumping 2 and a half million barrels per day. Even though we haven't done much to get beyond that, it's 98 dollars. That would be the equivalent of had we pumped 10 million barrels a day. So the country is flushed with 46 billion or so in unspent monies and about 70 billion in annual revenues that they can export at least 2 million barrels. And what that means is, when you are from the air and you're looking over Iraq there is capital and fusions of cash and

insidiously in a way that we haven't anticipated as enriching people. And second, the people who were really killing us were not the Shia. The people who had the expertise and they had the Saudi money were the Sunnis and the Anbar Province and the Sunni triangle. And when those people quit, and not only quit but turned on Al-Qaeda, and they did it because they had come to that wisdom not quickly, not by bribes, but over a 3 year period. I think those two factors show that there's a lot more promise than just saying that we're not going to be able to secure the country because from on high in the green zone, it hasn't filtered down yet - the political reform. But nobody wants 160,000 troops, that's not sustainable. We couldn't do it if we wanted to. Everybody in the military, everybody in both parties, wants to get down to 100 maybe in a year and a half, and as one Sunni said to me - what's the problem? You're not dying. Is food too expensive here? Is it cheaper to keep troops in Kansas? Do you have better places to shoot and to try out your tactics than Iraq? He goes, why not stay here for 3 or 4 years and help us stabilize as long as we don't kill you, you don't kill us, it's a great place. And that seems a caricature, but there was a logic to it.

>> Peter Robinson: Iran. Norman Podhoretz writing the Wall Street Journal. I'm gonna give you two quotations? Norman Podhoretz first - quote: "it now remains to be seen whether this president, George W. Bush, will find it possible to take the only action that can stop Iran from following through on its evil intentions toward both us and Israel. As an American and as a Jew, I pray with all my heart that he will." The title of that article, The Case for Bombing Iran. Retired General John Abizaid - "there are ways to live with a nuclear Iraq." Is a nuclear Iraq acceptable?

>> Victor Hanson: I don't think so.

>> Peter Robinson: What can we do about it?

>> Victor Hanson: Well between those two arguments, there is an argument in the middle.

>> Peter Robinson: There is?

>> Victor Hanson: Yes.

>> Peter Robinson: Fill me in.

>> Victor Hanson: Well there's two pieces of information we don't know. We don't know at the rate the 3,000 centrifuges are enriching uranium. So we don't know the status of that bomb. Two - we don't know the status of that government. We don't know the affect of a consensual reform in Afghanistan, in Iraq, Turkey is nearby, Lebanon is in flux, the Gulf countries are lining up against Iran. The geo political situation in the area of far from the conventional wisdom that the left said that we only empowered Iran. Iran is weaker than ever. They have a 10 billion dollar cleanup bill in Lebanon with Hezbollah. So they only have one gasoline refinery. Who'd have ever thought 3 years ago that a French president would say, it's unacceptable for Iran to have a bomb and it's

gonna be stopped. And who would ever think that a German, of all people, Germany who cashed in on Iran for years and even given them credits, is now taking a second look. So we have alternatives to escalate, whether it's embargos or it's boycotts or it's destabilizing Iran by appealing the Democratic aspirations before we get to that level of bombing.

>> Peter Robinson: You think we have time?

>> Victor Hanson: I do.

>> Peter Robinson: So the clock is ticking.

>> Victor Hanson: The clock is ticking.

>> Peter Robinson: The alarmist, I have seen quotations in the Israeli Press that say this could have ... they could have a nuclear weapon within a year. That's the earliest date I've seen, and then you've got the ... CIA says 8 years. My general feeling is that there's a kind of consensus among who read this stuff that we've got; something like 2 to 5 years. Is that right?

>> Victor Hanson: That's exactly right.

>> Peter Robinson: Okay, so we agree on the time clock - 2 to 5 years. We've got a presidential election coming up in this country, we've got ... fit the options that you have just suggested into the time frame of 2 to 5 years. Is George W. Bush going to impose an embargo in the last months of his presidency? Is he in a position to ramp up the pressure on Iran? Are ... how do you see it happening?

>> Victor Hanson: But what he's done is he's set the landscaper, he's set the framework so that when whoever succeeds him is gonna come in there and he's going to see a change of heart in Europe, he's going to see progress.

>> Peter Robinson: He's not an outlier? He represents a change in ... ?

>> Victor Hanson: Radical change.

>> Peter Robinson: Or he's changing it himself or both?

>> Victor Hanson: He's going to be ... he's not going to be a leader but he's going to be alongside us and so is Merkel and we're starting to see a change in Afghanistan as perilous as it is, and in Iraq and so we have the basic outlines of a strategy of economic cohesion, of lining up allies. Three years ago nobody would have believed that the Sunni Arab states would almost line up, not with Israel, but parallel with Israel. When Israel took out the Syrian installations there wasn't a Sunni ...

>> Peter Robinson: Syrian installations, this was about 6 weeks ago perhaps?

>> Victor Hanson: Yes. And they may or may not have been a North Korean supplied nuclear facilities. Israel preempted, took the out. Remember this is preemption, this is unilateral ...

>> Peter Robinson: This is a replay of ...

>> Victor Hanson: Those are dirty words though, in the world today. And what happened? Nothing. Nobody cared. And that's just unthinkable.

>> Peter Robinson: Nobody cared or there was a huge off camera sigh of relief?

>> Victor Hanson: You put it much better. There were people from Turkey to Saudi Arabia saying do it again if they do it. So that's a very different environment that we're facing. That gives us a lot of advantages that we didn't have before. I think even if we have a Democratic president, even after the Democratic opposition to the use of force, they will find that Israel has been a steady ally and if things ... the information comes in that they are getting a bomb very close, a Democratic president will act. But we're not there yet. We're not quite there.

>> Peter Robinson: Alright. What is to become of your field, military history? John Miller writing a national review online, "the refusal of many history departments," universities across the country, "the refusal of many history departments to meet the enormous demand for military history is striking. The perverse result of an ossified tenure system, scholarly naval gazing, and ideological hostility to all things military." Multiple choice for you Victor, since we're talking about academia. Is the discipline to which you've dedicated so much of your career - A: in good health despite the appearances, B: temporarily corrupted by academics who came of age during the 60's and are about to retire anyway, or C: about to become extinct?

>> Victor Hanson: Well the key word there ... I'm not gonna answer that A, B, C, because it's the word discipline. How do you define discipline? The academic discipline within the universities? It's in bad shape. And it will become extinct but if you go to Barnes and Noble or you turn on the history channel, it's booming because whether we like it or not war is the ultimate gamble that people are willing to stake their lives and has an awful attraction in the hearts of all of us. So people in the lapse, in the absence of academic inquiry, we have biographies of Caesar. We have stories of the Persian Wars, we have the 300, we have David McCullough, we have Rich Adkinson. These people are saying to themselves, there's a whole field there. The academics think that if you ... they think if you're a military historian you must like wars. If a oncologist loves tumors, it's absurd. And then when you add in the fallout from Vietnam and the promise of the enlightenment, that if you're only educated and you're only wealthy enough, you can outlaw this aberration called war in which history tells us - you can't because it's deep within the human pathology.

>> Peter Robinson: So you're not ... you're hopeful? You are very hopeful that military history will be well represented in popular culture, even as it withers within the university.

>> Victor Hanson: Yes. But one thing the university had a role to play you see, because the university is the arbiter of scholarly standards. The whole idea of the method in which we compile research, the way we look at primary documents, that method of citation. That has to be trained within a graduate program of seminar examination, and so what we need is military history to be within that domain and then when the others come from these different other experiences, they can see how it's done. And so we don't just have ...

>> Peter Robinson: So how do you do that? How do you revive the academic discipline?

>> Victor Hanson: Well as I said, there's ... it's in peril because the academic establishment, the academic ideology is to the left, it's got the promise of the enlightenment that war is an archaic artifact. But there are some promises, I mean there's a military history program at places as diverse as North Texas State, Ohio State, there's military historians at Yale, at Duke, and they have kept it alive and I think what we're gonna see is that when this 60's generation passes out from deanships, college presidencies, foundation and heads, and we get a new generation come in here, they will see this is absurd - we have all this interest and they will institute it in the sense that it was earlier before the 60's.

>> Peter Robinson: John Adams, writing to Abigail his wife, "I must study politics and war, that my sons may have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy." That's not quite an enlightenment quotation.

>> Victor Hanson: No it's not.

>> Peter Robinson: He's saying that I study politics because this country needs ... I study war because this country needs defending. Liberty must be defended. Is that the way you read it?

>> Victor Hanson: No absolutely he's not saying I study war and so I can outlaw it, I'm studying war because unfortunately there's always going to be people in the world who think they can take something they shouldn't and most people will be willing to let them get away with it. But there's gonna take a few people who must know that from experience, by rereading history and deterrents and not some world court of United Nations is what stops bad people from doing bad things.

>> Peter Robinson: Here's an argument for you ... an argument tailored for elite universities. We have a professional office decor and a volunteer military. Let them study politics and war so that we at the elite universities, may study mathematics and

philosophy. Simple argument of division of labor. Now is there anything wrong with that?

>> Victor Hanson: There is and we see it with Iraq. Suddenly when things don't go quite as well as the public wanted, remember most people had no strong views of Iraq; 20 percent wanted to go in whether it was the NATO cons and 20 percent on the right to be candidates it's a bad idea. 60 percent were basically, I want to be allied with a winner. When the statue falls I'm all for it. When the Abu Grebe, that's not my war. So when the public is looking for answers, they didn't get it from the military necessarily and their suspicious of one another. What we need is more integration, we need ROTC on campus, we need programs for civilians to go to military bases, we need things such as we have here at Hoover. You know better than I the security programs, we get military officers to be on campuses, we need a Western system as it goes back to the Greeks where you have civilian control over the military. You need that integration and both sides ...

>> Peter Robinson: Knowledge of the military and of military history remains an essential component of citizenship.

>> Victor Hanson: Yes it does.

>> Peter Robinson: Can't be outgrown. Alright.

>> Victor Hanson: That's Cicero's concept or ideal of civic militarism. He didn't say that everybody had to be in the military, but what he said was a citizen must be aware and appreciate that every day that his freedom and his bounty and his position as a Roman citizen depended on people who died at Canaanite or died at Gethsemane. And remember, if we create a society that goes by up in San Francisco, in Virginia, they go by a military cemetery with 10,000 white crosses and nobody knows what those crosses are for, or they wouldn't know the name of the battle if it was printed to them. And they don't know why they can go to Wal-Mart or watch Oprah, because people are lying rotting in that ground. Then we become bankrupt and not deserving of what we were given by those people.

>> Peter Robinson: Quick answers.

>> Victor Hanson: Yes?

>> Peter Robinson: On commanders in chief: I'll name a presidential candidate; you give me one sentence on what kind of commander in chief that candidate would make. Barrack Obama.

>> Victor Hanson: Not enough experience. Too much of a therapeutic rather than a tragic view of the world.

>> Peter Robinson: Hillary Clinton.

>> Victor Hanson: Democratic presidents whether it's Wilson or Roosevelt or John Kennedy or Truman, they actually can take us to war very successfully because they nullify the pacifism of the left and she'd find, as we'd learned in Brooklyn, that she could do things that a Republican president couldn't.

>> Peter Robinson: Republican. Eisenhower is elected to succeed the Democrat Truman in 1952 and that is a good moment for American history because the Cold War becomes bipartisan from that moment forward.

>> Victor Hanson: Absolutely.

>> Peter Robinson: So is there an argument to be made that it would be good for the United States of America for Hillary Clinton to win in 2008?

>> Victor Hanson: Not good. I would rather frame it that it would not be the disaster that people on the right say, because they would find that the left would be ... remember Bill Clinton.

>> Peter Robinson: Hillary's election not a disaster, I am sure this is going up on her campaign website within moments.

>> Victor Hanson: Her terms of foreign policy. Because remember one thing about Bill Clinton, 250,000 people were butchered and slaughtered while Europe slapped right 3 hours from Frankfurt. And what did Bill Clinton do? Did he go to the UN? No. Did he ask for a majority vote from congress? No. George Bush went to the UN, he tried, he got a resolution on October 11. Bill Clinton didn't even do that. Did you hear anybody say this is terrible? The congress wasn't consulted, the UN, no. So when a Democratic ... as I said from Wilson to JFK, when they go to war they, at least for a much longer period of time, they get a pass from the left on these issues such as preemption or unilateralism.

>> Peter Robinson: John McCain, one sentence.

>> Victor Hanson: I think he's a great man, I think he would be an ideal commander. He earns our respect by what he's suffered. I think he would be, of all the candidates, the best commander in chief in that sense.

>> Peter Robinson: Mike Huckabee?

>> Victor Hanson: I don't know enough about him. I'm a little wary of governors to become descending of small states, from Arkansas - no pun intended - as commander in chief.

>> Peter Robinson: Fred Thompson?

>> Victor Hanson: I've met him, I like him, I think he's ... I think he would be a good commander in chief.

>> Peter Robinson: Mitt Romney?

>> Victor Hanson: Met him and liked him, I think he's very knowledgeable of facts and he's not only knowledgeable with facts, he brings in all sorts of advisors and he's acquainted. He's got a lot of experience, national experience.

>> Peter Robinson: Rudy Giuliani.

>> Victor Hanson: Well we all know that he proved his medal on 9/11 and he has no romantic views about Islamists and Islamic extremists. He's not at all befuddled or he has no romance, that this is just a passing minor threat. So he would be, on this particular time with this particular place, he'd be very good facing the Islamic threat.

>> Peter Robinson: Thank you for the short answer segment of the show.

>> Victor Hanson: Thank you!

>> Peter Robinson: Victor Davis Hanson, thank you very much. For Uncommon Knowledge, I'm Peter Robinson, thank you for joining us.