

>> Peter Robinson: Joining us today on Uncommon Knowledge, Christopher Hitchens, author of the best selling book God is Not Great talking today about Iraq. Two texts for us today Christopher, one is an interview that John Burns, foreign correspondent for the New York Times gave July 27th to Hugh Hewitt radio show host and then I will give you a few comments, few excerpts as well from president Bush's speech August 22nd to the veterans of foreign wars. Question is the surge working, John Burns, "There's no doubt that those 30,000 extra American troops are making a difference. In Bagdad, fewer car bombs, fewer bombs, in general, quite remarkably lower levels of civilian casualties. There is no doubt that Al Qaeda has taking a beating." Do you concur? As far as you know the surge is working.

>> Christopher Hitchens: I'm extraordinarily a strong admirer of John Burns and a slight friend of his, I'm proud to say, and I think he is one of the people who makes one proud to be in the same profession. But, and he's reporting from Iraq as from many other countries would be exemplary and courageous, but I think there's a distinct problem here. There's who support the surge, few oblige to say that it's going well when you don't have to believe going well to support it. I mean the mass murder, for example, of the Yazidi minority on the Syrian border by Al Qaeda opportunists just in the last few days. A sudden new horror show, we haven't even imagined what happened before, doesn't really support his view that there are fewer problems. There is evidence and there was before the surge by the way in Ramadi Province in particular.

>> Peter Robinson: Ramadi is in the south, I'm sorry.

>> Christopher Hitchens: I'm sorry. Wait now I may have to--

>> Peter Robinson: Anbar and Ramadi, I'm sorry just--

>> Christopher Hitchens: The Al Anbar Province.

>> Peter Robinson: Anbar, alright.

>> Christopher Hitchens: I better say because I'm better qualified to pronounce it. Have had more emails from there recently.

>> Peter Robinson: Alright.

>> Christopher Hitchens: But in any case Al Qaeda had taken a terrific pace and the evidence was that even quite extreme Sunni nationalists sectarians had turned against the Bin Ladenists. That's the very important thing. There are several wars going on Iraq. There are two that we cannot afford to lose. One is that one that denies the victory to Al Qaeda in any town or province, however obscure, and the other is the one that guarantees the gains made by the secular autonomous democratic Kurdish people not be undermined.

>> Peter Robinson: Now hang on.

>> Christopher Hitchens: That those be made permanent. Given those two things which I wish the president would say more about.

>> Peter Robinson: Right.

>> Christopher Hitchens: Then, yes, with this--the problem is this must be supported whether it's going well or not. It is a huge mistake of those who support the international [inaudible] to consider that it must be going well in order to deserve support. It's precisely when it's going valid that it needs support.

>> Peter Robinson: I understand the point. I wanna take a parentheses and this I had--because I haven't--you've raised a point that was not to be an issue. Is--are the Kurdish gains under threat? I had thought that the Kurds were home and away, that they we're--that they'd established an independent Kurds and that they've got their borders under control, that there's some threat from the Turks but we can put counterpressure on the Turks, that that was working.

>> Christopher Hitchens: I think we've really gone to them against the Turks but at the mean time the Sunni-Shi'ah gang warfare in the south and center of the country maybe enough to keep those militias busy but there are permanently attempts to nibble away the frontiers of Kurds and there have been if not many but some problems exploded there [inaudible] who were friends of mine and there's this permanent strategy of tension from the theocratic extremists in the city of Kirkuk which the Kurds hope by democratic referendum to have counted as part of their territory which will give them the control of the oil field that would supply the necessary economic material basis for an autonomous region.

>> Peter Robinson: Kirkuk is the Kurd's play for oil.

>> Christopher Hitchens: Yes. It's also the--it's the most important disputed city in Iraq and in my opinion it properly deserves to be regarded as part of the Kurdish autonomous region.

>> Peter Robinson: Alright. So the surge does not need to be working to deserve support and has to be supported whether it's working, whether it's going well in any given time or badly, it must be supported. Nevertheless in Bagdad is it your impression that it's working? That the levels of violence are considerably lower?

>> Christopher Hitchens: No I can't say it is my impression.

>> Peter Robinson: You can't say that.

>> Christopher Hitchens: I can't say that that's my impression, that that's a lasting fact, no.

>> Peter Robinson: I see, alright.

>> Christopher Hitchens: And I think the reserve strength of the forces of reaction in Iraq is terrifyingly great and often they don't have to exert very much influence, for instance, to blow up a power line or control over the city [inaudible]. It takes a few people and a short amount of explosives to do that or to attack a girl's school and will keep their children home from school for the next few weeks. The investment in cruelty and violence by the religious parties needn't to be very grave to ruin the lives of great sways and concentric circles of people beyond the force that they can exert. That's what's so terrifying about this one.

>> Peter Robinson: Now, you mentioned the need to consolidate the gains of the secular democratic government. Question, again the same--

>> Christopher Hitchens: In Kurdistan.

>> Peter Robinson: Oh, in Kurdistan, I'm sorry.

>> Christopher Hitchens: Yes.

>> Peter Robinson: I'm sorry. Well, this is a separate question then. Question to Burns. I'm continuing to quote from this interview that John Burns gave. "If the surge is working, Mr. Burns, is the Iraqi government making any progress?" John Burns, "That's probably the most depressing aspect of the entire situation. I think it's fair to say that the Iraqi political leaders are further apart now than they were 6 months ago." Now, you can understand why that's not just disappointing but infuriating. American lives and treasure being expended to give them some kind of breathing space and they're not taking advantage of it.

>> Christopher Hitchens: No. I went to the scattering of the ashes of young American who've given his life, given his life, had his life taken from him actually by the scum of the earth in Mosul, in January, the other day and you know, his family could be proud and were because he had been very friendly with local Kurds, he'd been talking about making a twin city of his hometown, with the City of Dahuk and Kurdistan, had been very proud to be identified with the American course and an area where it's regarded as the liberation of the people and so forth and was awfully would induce to death and of course, the same is true with the Marines in Al Anbar and elsewhere to say, you know, we're taking Al Qaedas behind and that's what we're supposed to be doing. To lose your life in a turf war between tribal and sectarian religious partitions and Islams of Baghdad would be a terrible thing and I think it's--I think these things deserve to be separated out in the argument rather than run together as they so often [inaudible] and anti-war courses.

>> Peter Robinson: Well, so what is your view of Maliki then? Excuse me. Here, let me quote President Bush, August 22nd. "Prime Minister Maliki is a good man with a difficult job and I support him." Is the president correct to support him?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Prime Minister Maliki is an unpolished thug who's the leader of a terrible clerical party called the Dawa Party which among other things, organized a lynching of Saddam Hussein, a man who shouldn't have been executed at all but should have continued to stand on trial, should be on trial, still listening to 'til we've amassed all of the record of his crimes. In such a way deliberately to offend by doing it on the last day of the Eid holiday. The Sunni population of his country, he's a sectarian thug.

>> Peter Robinson: The sectarian thug of what?

>> Christopher Hitchens: And I think he should be told if he wanted to be head of the Dawa Party, that's fine and we can't stop you if you elected to do that. But we're not spending any money to keep a person like you in an office.

>> Peter Robinson: Really?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Absolutely.

>> Peter Robinson: So Bush is making a terrible mistake.

>> Christopher Hitchens: A terrible mistake, yeah. Sectarianism cannot be confided. Religious sectarianism is the worst poison that can ever affect the society. We are helping to empower at the center even as we are, I will say, helping to defeat it on the periphery. This is a contradiction that can't go on for very much longer. I don't believe the president understands it for a second.

>> Peter Robinson: Democratic leadership in Congress. The question would be whether they understand any better. John Burns--last time I'm going to quote John Burns I think here. Democratic leadership in Congress and every democratic candidate for president without exception wants to get out as quickly as we can. John Burns "A quick, early withdrawal of American troops would very likely lead to catastrophic levels of violence there." Do you agree with that?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Yes, that seems self evident, yes.

>> Peter Robinson: Does it seem self evident? What about the argument that if they had to sort things out by force of arms, they'd get it sorted out and the Kurds would have Kurdistan, the Sunnis would get backed by Syria and there would be some kind of region that they would carve out. It would be--

>> Christopher Hitchens: Not by Syria but Saudi Arabia, I'm afraid.

>> Peter Robinson: By Saudi Arabia?

>> Christopher Hitchens: By the most sectarian regional powers would take a hand, the Iranian theocracy and the Saudi one.

>> Peter Robinson: It would be brutal. Lots of people will be killed but they'd settle it out and achieve some kind of stability. Is that simply incorrect?

>> Christopher Hitchens: I think it's absolutely incorrect but it could mean in the long run--it could mean in the long run that at least with [inaudible] would not be so to say on our watch. We couldn't avoid responsibility for the immediate surge in death [inaudible] it would be and I personally cannot imagine the future composed of any three splinters, a Kurdish, a Sunni and a Shi'ah one. There's no solidarity of any ethnic or social sort within the Sunni and Shi'ah. It's a religious definition and it's a clerical definition. There are already great rivalries in [inaudible] between different kinds of Shi'ah militias, some of them supported by Iran, some not.

>> Peter Robinson: So--

>> Christopher Hitchens: Not all the Saudis--excuse me, not all the Sunnis want Wahabi Sunni gangsters in their country. Either what would happen would be what would have happened by the way if we'd never intervened which would mean there would have been invaded alright and destabilized but by a tribal and sectarian and atomizing forces, there'll be partitioners within partitions. The place will--will be [simultaneous talking].

>> Peter Robinson: So the Peter Galbraith's argument, you reject, the notion that we--the best to have done would been this--just divided this thing up into three different countries. We have to fight for a unified Iraq. We have to fight for an entity called Iraq as Iraq is understood, as it was created by the British in the '20s because there's no choice between that and the kind of endless splintering. Is that your insertion?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Well, I would--I would support. Peter Galbraith's work is very admirable and his book, *The End of Iraq*, is an extraordinary good book.

>> Peter Robinson: He knows a lot.

>> Christopher Hitchens: He's right about the Kurdish question. Even he says that we'd have to remain in a position where we could strike Al Qaeda forces in Iraq even if only from over the horizon kind of stuff. Which would mean we couldn't abandon Baghdad altogether to the nearest militia man. There would be republics within Iraq the size of a couple of cities blocks. We then would have warlord. We have to realize how atomizing and how demoralizing, how debouching, how traumatizing the 35 years of Saddam's fascism [inaudible] wreckage of any possibility of political class I imagine for example. All possible rivals destroyed. [Simultaneous talking] inculcation of fear of the nearest armed person, force to denounce one another, force to betray one another reduced really to a hubs in state. This is what. This is what.

>> Peter Robinson: Yugoslavia is not a model.

>> Christopher Hitchens: No.

>> Peter Robinson: Tito sat on the thing, held it together. He goes and they divvy it up. It's messy, very messy. Lots of people got killed but you got stability. There is such a thing as Slovenia. There is such a thing as Croatia. That is simply not an option for Iraq.

>> Christopher Hitchens: I don't believe so because I think, again, it would be a vacuum as it was becoming before in to which the Saudis, the Iranian theocracy and the others would intervene.

>> Peter Robinson: All right, President Bush once again. Here's his rationale--one of the rationales he puts forward for remaining in Iraq. "We fight for the possibility that decent men and women across the broader Middle East can realize their destiny and raise up societies based on freedom and justice and personal dignity." How do you respond to that?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Well, initially after the liberation of Baghdad in the first place, liberation of Iraq in the first place. There were very positive responses from the people of Lebanon, for example, they voted in a majority to get rid of Syrian occupation and the conversion to power of something like a multi-confessional democratic coalition. This has been a terrible counterstroke to that from Hezbollah and at Syrian and Iran and back. But, nonetheless, it was an example worth having. It started a very lively argument about democratization and reform in Egypt, the crucial country in the region and even in Saudi Arabia.

>> Peter Robinson: Egypt is crucial, why, because it is so big, 60 million people?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Yes. Someone once said, I forgot who it was now, said that Egypt is the only real country and is a nation. All the rest are just tribes with flags. It's a really is an ancient civilization, large population, because this is the crossroads country.

>> Peter Robinson: The Lower Nile--

>> Christopher Hitchens: It's got real things [simultaneous talking].

>> Peter Robinson: Got it, got it. Alright, alright.

>> Christopher Hitchens: Now that discussion has been aborted about reform and democracy in Egypt as the one that started in Saudi Arabia and other gulf states. But it did get started and then the--there were actually a lot of surprisingly helpful signs after the disarming of Libya which had a lot to do with the removal of Saddam Hussein. [Inaudible] his decision to get rid of his own weapons of mass destruction and the consequent discussion even though so far it only takes place between his sons and on his dynasty about political reform. All these things were positive. But they were coming up against very reactionary, cruel, counterblows but the yeah, the president wasn't wrong to hope that by removing the worst dictator in the history of the region that there could be an example set but what we've underestimated, where have we not underestimated this, is

the unbelievable ruthlessness and unbelievable barbarism of the forces of reaction in the area.

>> Peter Robinson: This is the final time I'll quote John Burns to you because this seems to me to frame the political imperative. Can those who argue for a continued high level of American military involvement, read Christopher Hitchens, assure us that we wouldn't come to the same point of violence and civil war three or four years and perhaps four or five thousand American shoulders killed later? If the answer is, no they can't. Then that strengthens the arguments of those who say we might as well withdraw fairly quickly now. So we withdraw tomorrow and there is a huge up surge in violence. As you say, we would feel responsible for that but the further along matters went, the greater removal from matter in time, the less responsibility we will feel.

>> Christopher Hitchens: Yes.

>> Peter Robinson: And the question is, if that's going to happen if we withdraw tomorrow, what assurance can you give us that if we stay there for three or four years the same thing wouldn't happen then?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Well, I know exactly what you mean. I would be thinking this month about the British example in India 60 years ago. They pulled. They haven't stayed too long. They managed well so they could pull out too soon. You can get it all [simultaneous talking] and of course people are right to get impatient. When they told well, you know, it's just that if we stay there a bit longer, the long hole will anneal and says, how do you know that the blood bath wouldn't happen whenever you left--you have to stay forever or.

>> Peter Robinson: Precisely, that's exactly the point. I think that gets to the real psychological--

>> Christopher Hitchens: I'll let you put this people's argument at its stronger and I think I understand what--I repeat my two points. On the condition that we've afflicted a battle field defeat on Al Qaeda and its allies I was so not [inaudible] in Iraq but so discredited then, seen them discredited in front of the rest of the population and major and military and political [inaudible] smashing of Al Qaeda's forces in Iraq coupled with the demonstration to the whole of the Arab world that an Iraqi population saw these guys up close and turned against them, wanted them thrown out, that's a huge thing. On that condition we can say well, after these guys you are on your own, we just said we would never have Al Qaeda inherit Saddam Hussein's mottle and the second is we will not allow the Kurdish autonomous--Kurdish regional government to be subverted or invaded or undermined, that we will say that one of the great causes to pride for intervention in the region is that we have allowed the freeing of the largest people in the world without a state of their own and that--

>> Peter Robinson: How many Kurds are there?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Well, it depends--in Iraq--

>> Peter Robinson: Right that's the question because they're in Iran as well, some in Turkey.

>> Christopher Hitchens: Yes, if you take--if you--they're in contiguous in where Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria meet, rough place to be on an Arab people and on Turkish and on Persian people but they are variously measured but they're by far the largest group of people in the world.

>> Peter Robinson: Look, we leave Iraq across the seas and come here to the United States. What do you expect to happen when Petraeus testifies on Capitol Hill? I'm asking political questions now. You just told us what we ought to do. If you were president, you would face a very serious political problem in that the situation--the climate in which General Petraeus will be testifying in just a couple of weeks now, polls indicate that the American people are overwhelmingly opposed to the war, the Democratic Party is solidly against the war, every leader in Congress, every democratic candidate for president wants out. On the republican side, it seems to me that Rudy Giuliani and Mitt Romney want merely to avoid losing. You only got one candidate who demonstrates a positive appetite for something like a victory, that's John McCain who has seen his campaign implode and his standing in the polls fall to single digits. Into this enter General David Petraeus, what happens?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Again I have that same sense of tragedy and lack of synchronicity that I was mentioning with the British [inaudible]. I saw General Petraeus in Mosul in 2003 and he was considered by even the most cynical journalists, reporters, who were the most contemptuous of the American effort in Iraq as an extraordinarily impressive warrior and officer.

>> Peter Robinson: Everyone responds to this.

>> Christopher Hitchens: Yes, because we withdrawn, [inaudible]. It was left to Commander [inaudible] but in the mean time we'll never know if that was the time when we lost them. We only got returned to him when it was too late. It's not possible to know these things in that. What is possible I think to say there can be no discussion by this serious person or even the possibility of turning over a country like Iraq a keystone stage in the region and in the world economy to the tender mercies of Al Qaeda, not even one province of it, no. Now the president doesn't seem to know how to make this point to his public, I don't know why. When he does of course he's tripped up by bogus casuistry. All he would say "Well it's not really Al Qaeda. It's just another group calling itself Al Qaeda." As if in fact, this group isn't even more venomous than Bin Laden's and will bent on injury to us. So there's a shared responsibility perhaps. That's what does it for me, instead the president has decided to make the single stupidest tonality that is possible to make and the one that I've been spending four years trying to shoot down and would directly compared to--not just to China but to Vietnam.

>> Peter Robinson: Well if you read the text of the speech where he talks about--is the boat people. He talks about the collapse of Vietnam and you just said that though, haven't you that that--at least in that regard the analogy is fair. That if we pulled out of Iraq, there will be a lot of deaths. Why was that a stupid thing to do?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Well because Vietnamese society was shattered into Chinese society, where hope been shattered by a long and needless and aggressive American war which has kind of lead to mass death and exodus no matter what happens so that to say well, we have to keep on doing it unless people get killed was an argument that weighed with nobody at all. I think if the president was to say as--I can't claim that, Tom Friedman actually put it this way. Addressing the civil anti-war, liberal and left, Tom said, if you think that the Iraqi's so called insurgence of the Vietcong, you're making the biggest mistake of your life, if there're anything. You got the Khmer Rouge. Now how do you like Iraq? Now that would weigh because people--though people like myself wouldn't have been at all disconcerted to be told that we were soft on the Vietcong. The Khmer Rouge is quite different thing and the status set by the Khmer Rouge is one that is hotly, hotly, hotly emulated by the forces of Bin Ladenism.

>> Peter Robinson: The Khmer Rouge slaughter as best one can tell, at least a third of the Cambodian population, their own people, isn't that right?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Yes. The only reason some people don't wanna call it genocide is it isn't clear whether you can commit genocide against your own people. Yeah.

>> Peter Robinson: Against your own people, right.

>> Christopher Hitchens: It counts within anyone of the annals of human self destruction it's called. You say it is in cross cultural desolation.

>> Peter Robinson: Final series of questions here. January 2009, a new president will take the oath of office. Can you envision any political circumstances, political scenario? Give me what has to happen between now and then for a new president to be able and willing to continue to fight that war as aggressively as necessary to achieve those two imperatives that you laid out for us, a devastating defeat on Al Qaeda and putting Kurdistan out of bounds.

>> Christopher Hitchens: It costs me a lot to say this, but the only person who's actually said either of those two things, not always in the same breath but has said both different times is or was until recently, Mrs. Clinton. [Inaudible] in private life but because of her husband's administrations announced policy which was, as you know, the removal of Saddam Hussein in office, because of I think some of the things she found out when she was in government, as she was in effect, she's a prisoner of certain amount of knowledge about the subject. It's not a problem with most of her rivals in the nomination but she seems to realize in the mean time that the option to be the most anti-war is the only

option to be in but she's thrown aside these very serious statements that she had made about how Saddam was imbedded with Al Qaeda which he was, about the importance of defending the Kurds, which she understands. She's--these are not any longer themes in her conversation. Now it's all, "I was anti-war before you were and I was more than you were."

>> Peter Robinson: Right.

>> Christopher Hitchens: But it's puerile, it's pathetic to watch.

>> Peter Robinson: But at least there's a record in which she encountered reality and responded well to it.

>> Christopher Hitchens: She can be held to some serious statements she made on a series of occasions.

>> Peter Robinson: On the republican side, who's the least defensive if that's the way, the correct formulation?

>> Christopher Hitchens: The least offensive?

>> Peter Robinson: Yeah, least offensive. Whom would you--if you had to choose--live under a republican for the next four years and your primary concern which as I read it, it is, is Iraq, whom would you choose?

>> Christopher Hitchens: You know, I'm assuming [inaudible] right, and for that reason, it would have to be against [inaudible] a huge number of misgivings. It would have to be Mr. Giuliani because I don't believe Mr. McCain is up to it. I'm very sorry to have to say it.

>> Peter Robinson: Hmm. Alright.

>> Christopher Hitchens: Either personally or politically, I simply don't think he could be awfully be president though there are innumerable things about Rudy Giuliani that are very dismaying. On this point, he seems to be--

>> Peter Robinson: The strongest and the smartest?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Yes.

>> Peter Robinson: You give him both?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Yes.

>> Peter Robinson: Alright. Four years in Iraq.

>> Christopher Hitchens: With that expression on my face.

>> Peter Robinson: Alright.

>> Christopher Hitchens: For those of you who aren't joining us on radio.

>> Peter Robinson: We go into Iraq March 20 of 2003. We sit here in the summer of 2007. What is the Bush administration's worst mistake and highest accomplishment and what is Christopher Hitchens' worst mistake and highest accomplishment? Give me Bush first.

>> Christopher Hitchens: Good. I was gonna use the reverse order. If it's--if it was well, if it was the Bush family's mistake, it wasn't--obviously, do insist, always insist on this is not getting this done in 1991. That is compared to all mistakes made since and I know quite a lot about them. They're all dwarfed by that one. Then I think the mistake was to try to frighten people rather than educate them without the two very important questions of the next as the weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. Essentially, the president was right that Iraq was either latently or blatantly threatening in both those ways but some corners were cut to scare people rather than educate them in this respect. I'm sorry to say. Then it was also represented to people that a victory would perhaps be somewhat easier and swifter than it would--[simultaneous talking].

>> Peter Robinson: They believed it themselves.

>> Christopher Hitchens: Oh no. I don't think it was any bad faith in either of these cases, no.

>> Peter Robinson: Hmm. Hmm. Alright.

>> Christopher Hitchens: But they're certainly out of bravado perhaps and in one case, the willingness to go to the scare tactic rather than the painstaking explanation.

>> Peter Robinson: And the highest accomplishment?

>> Christopher Hitchens: The rush in Kurdistan, the holding of elections. Now we almost forget this even if--yeah. The attempt to draft an oil law that would provide the material basis for federal democratic Iraq because we--as well as trying to draft the oil law, we've actually found deposits, large ones, of oil in Anbar on the Sunni areas. So the old basis for dictatorship and sectarianism in Iraq, the uneven distribution of oil could actually be overcome in real time and we can surge Iraqis. You can have civil war, you can have civil war with all these, you can have civil war with only one group, one of those another terrifying dictatorship and invasions of other countries or from other countries, we have. But we will continue to hold up to the option of the federal system [simultaneous talking] which they want to enrich and 'cause there's more oil possibly than Saudi Arabia and in which differences between them will be settle in the democrat level.

That is hugely to the credit of United States. It's one of the noblest thing that's ever done is to continue patiently to say you could try this as well.

>> Peter Robinson: Right, right. You--

>> Christopher Hitchens: Actually defend and stand by those Iraqis, Kurdish and others who--and Arab--who feel the same way.

>> Peter Robinson: Your own worst mistake over these four years.

>> Christopher Hitchens: I remember arguing with even the administration before the intervention saying well I hope we've got this clear. We're not gonna let the Turks come in to Kurdistan with us 'cause a lot of people of thought it was the administration would be willing to pay for northern front. Not at that pay, we won't pay. People said no, don't worry about that. We're not gonna let them. Even if they weren't last in northern front, we're still not gonna pay that prize. Good! And we're not gonna let General Sharon, I remember saying 'cause people were afraid of this too, take advantage of the confusion to do something stupid on the west bank. No, no those areas have been told nor that. I'm not ashamed of that either but I never said, by the way I presume the army core of engineers knows how get lights turned on in Baghdad, doesn't they? That's taken care of. We assume minimum competence on that level. I must say I've taken that for granted, that was a big mistake. That was a very big mistake and that you know there had been enough guys to guard the museum.

>> Peter Robinson: Assuming competence--

>> Christopher Hitchens: Nobody wants my advice on you know General Hitchens' views on these things. They're not needful or [inaudible]. No, who cares but on the--no, on the political and moral question on whether it's really going to be a regime change. We're not going to just decapitate the Saddam system and then try to rule by proxy through their army and their police work. I knew that wasn't gonna happen but I didn't ask about the--[inaudible]. I thought we would kind of do to that extent I must say.

>> Peter Robinson: What action--what column that you've written, what action that you've taken has set the best example for your children during these last four years? What are you proudest of?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Trying to destroy the allure of religion.

>> Peter Robinson: Really?

>> Christopher Hitchens: Yes.

>> Peter Robinson: Really.

>> Christopher Hitchens: And try to [inaudible] what happens when the parties of god get a freehand. Never always holding up to people what happens when the faith based have ruthlessly parted. What evil and wickedness that is.

>> Peter Robinson: Alright. Christopher Hitchens, thank you very much. Christopher Hitchens, the author of God is Not Great: How Religions Poisons Everything. See this show that we taped earlier today to see how religion might not poison everything. In any event, Christopher Hitchens, the author of God is Not Great. Thank you very much. I'm Peter Robinson.

>> Christopher Hitchens: Nice for you to have me.

>> Peter Robinson: This is Uncommon Knowledge. A pleasure, Christopher, as always.