

DC FOR DEMOCRACY QUESTIONNAIRE
MIKE GRAVEL

How many US troops and contractors would you leave in Iraq, if any, as part of your disengagement plan, and what would their mission be? Do you see any reason to continue combat operations?

I would withdraw all US troops from Iraq. Their presence serves only to agitate the populations there, and the soldiers themselves become the targets of violence. There is no military solution to the problems plaguing Iraq.

What are the basic elements of an effective diplomatic and humanitarian strategy for Iraq and the broader Middle East?

Diplomacy in Iraq and in the rest of the Middle East requires that the populations be given whatever mandates for change that they should choose directly and not one imposed on them. The interested parties throughout the region should come together and negotiate for stability directly. This has to include Iran and Syria, as they have a vested interest in maintaining security and reducing violence in the region. All of Iraq's neighbors are interested in the stability of the Middle East.

When, if ever, is "regime change" a justifiable policy, whether through overt or covert means? And how does the case of Iran fit into your thinking?

Regime change, whether overt or covert, has had consistently negative long-term effects not only on the populations of countries whose regimes were the targets of change, but also negative repercussions to the United States in the form of blowback. The only justifiable scenario for regime change is after the overt aggression of one sovereign nation against another.

What principles will guide your decisions to intervene in the face of future humanitarian crises?

All humanitarian crises are important especially in an age when America's international reputation is battered. The United States should be willing to provide humanitarian aide at any opportunity when it is welcomed.

Do you favor more free trade agreements, and if so, what would you do to mitigate the risks they pose?

So-called "free trade" agreements have not fostered free trade, rather they have sought to further entangle government bureaucracy with the business sector. As we see elsewhere in public policy, when the government gets involved with business, it is upper management and shareholders who benefit from such agreements, not the workers or the American people. Trade agreements, such as NAFTA, have led to the trend of deindustrialization taking place in America and the loss of jobs for American and

Mexican workers alike. It is true that management and shareholders' profits have sky rocketed since the implementation of NAFTA and other trade agreements, but the working families of America and Mexico have not fared as well. Over 1 million American jobs have been lost due to NAFTA, a third of which were manufacturing jobs. Similarly, 1.3 million farm workers in Mexico have lost their job as a result of NAFTA. The influx of illegal immigrants from Mexico is the result of Mexican farmers desperately searching for jobs and opportunities in our country that are no longer available in their country due to these debilitating trade agreements.

What mechanisms do you believe would most significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions during your presidency?

Three mechanisms are important to a serious reduction in greenhouse gases. First, I would initiate tax reform. Disposing of the income tax and replacing it with a national sales tax would encourage Americans to save rather than consume, which would lessen the carbon footprint of every American. Second, I would increase regulation by introducing a carbon tax at the source to give incentives for industry to reduce their carbon output and encourage imposing tougher emissions caps. Finally, I would prioritize renewable and sustainable energy in the scientific and engineering community so that we can finally relieve ourselves of fossil fuels. All these mechanisms would require global cooperation to be effective, and I would work to bring the international community together as the whole world stands to benefit from stemming global climate change and changing the dynamic of the world's energy supply.

What is your proposal to protect the poor from potentially expensive strategies for mitigating climate change?

The worst option for the poor is for us to do nothing to mitigate climate change. Climate change could cause the destruction of large areas of arable farmland in the face of the world's growing population. In light of the current energy policy's strain on the poor through higher energy bills and gas prices the poor are under assault now more than they would be if we decided to tackle climate change and renewable energy as a global issue. Creating a renewable energy system through innovation and industry at home could also create a significant number of new jobs and bolster America's manufacturing sector.

What would you add to the recent immigration proposal in Congress? What elements do you support, and what elements do you oppose? How would you achieve political consensus for your policy?

Immigrants have become scapegoats for the social and economic problems this country is facing. I support an amnesty program that allows opportunities for immigrants to pursue a path to citizenship. I do not support a construction of any physical wall or barrier along our southern border because of the negative effects it would have on the environment and the lack of historic examples of success that physical walls have. Building a bridge between the vast economic disparities in Latin America is the only strategy to make a meaningful change in immigration rates.

What role should the federal government play in the restoration of New Orleans to ensure that all of its people benefit?

The tragedy of New Orleans did not elicit the appropriate response from the federal government nor was the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) effectively utilized. President Bush left a majority of the New Orleans population to fend for themselves during one of our nation's most devastating national disasters. The federal government has a responsibility to help states protect their citizens. New Orleans has still not received the funding or resources it needs to rebuild its communities. That is largely due to the costly war in Iraq, which is draining the nation's coffers and tying up critical resources. In addition, inexperienced political appointees who were unfamiliar with the realities of disaster relief efforts mismanaged FEMA and the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (PHSCC) by denying the necessary resources and manpower to combat the chaos they were sent to expel. The PHSCC is a vital group of medical professionals whose goal is to quickly and efficiently respond to public health needs, which were desperately needed to attend to the thousands of wounded survivors. FEMA, PHSCC, and the National Guard are needed in New Orleans to assist local communities in rebuilding hospitals, schools, and housing as well as attend to the health needs of those affected by Hurricane Katrina.

What strategies should the federal government use to preserve and uplift working and middle-class communities in our inner cities? How would you empower these communities to actively participate in their development, rather than being the targets of top-down approaches?

Developments in science and technology, along with tax and healthcare reform, need to be promoted to revitalize the American manufacturing industry. These jobs are what expanded the American middle class and fueled the development of cities such as Pittsburg, Detroit and Baltimore. A strategy to re-invigorate America's manufacturing base to create and restore jobs that used to draw people to cities is essential.

What steps will you take to protect working and middle class Americans from economic insecurity caused by globalization and catastrophic debt? What role should organized labor play in a global economy?

Our current tax system prevents many Americans from obtaining economic security. The income tax favors big business and the wealthy and is not the progressive tax it purports to be. The income tax is unfair and regressive because those who earn less end up paying a larger portion of their incomes than people earning more than \$97,400. By replacing the income tax with the Progressive Fair Tax, working and middle class families will automatically pay less in taxes. Ensuring economic security begins with empowering the people to have control over their finances. In addition, we must work to regulate the growing number of multinational corporations that moved offshore to avoid U.S. laws. By tying trade agreements to environmental and labor standards, we can protect working class and middle-class families from financial insecurity.

Note: the following questions on our questionnaire were not answered by the Gravel campaign:

National Priorities

Do you support a national single payer health care system, and if not, what is your alternative? What role would private and/or employer sponsored health insurance play? How would you overcome the political obstacles to your plan?

What would you do to reduce near-record debt and deficits that threaten our national economic security?

Does a national security crisis justify the use of secret detention facilities, extraordinary rendition, suspension of habeas corpus, and violations of international standards of interrogation? If not, what would you do to reverse these departures from the rule of law?

Do you support same sex marriage (as opposed to civil unions)? If not, please explain the reason(s) for your opposition.

What would you do to restore the integrity of our election system? Do you think electronic voting is inherently unreliable, and what is your view on current legislation?

DC Priorities

If the DC House Voting Rights Act passes the Senate, will you commit to join a bipartisan delegation to meet President Bush and urge him to sign the bill?

If the DC House Voting Rights Act does not pass or has not yet come up for a vote in the Senate, will you commit to meet with at least one senator who is undecided on the DC House Voting Rights Act to persuade him/her to support the bill?

Leadership

Describe the most significant achievement of your life, something that demonstrates your ability to lead large numbers of people in the accomplishment of important goals.

Do you call yourself a progressive? If so, what values make you one? What are your proudest achievements in progressive politics?

Name the qualities that make you appealing to independents and moderate Republicans.