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Offering 'purple' solutions to 'red' and 'blue' issues

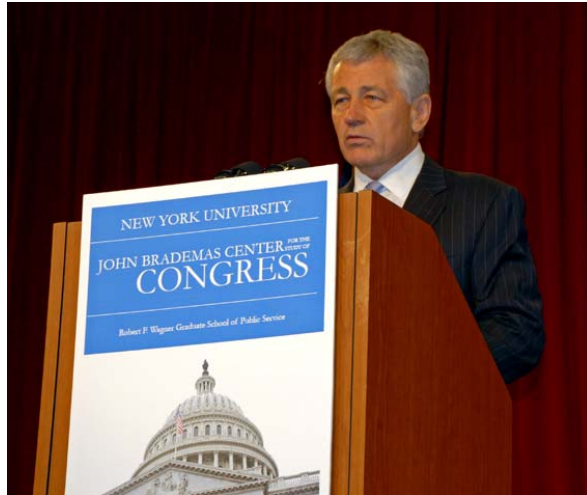
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"Senator Hagel is known for his blunt, nonpartisan realism on a range of issues," NYU professor Rogan Kersh said as he introduced Sen. Charles "Chuck" Hagel (R-Neb.) to a packed house at the Kimmel Center last night.

"At a time when so many people are talking about 'red' and 'blue' states, it seems only appropriate that he's here at NYU, where our official color is purple," Kersh said.

Sen. Hagel spoke about his new book, "America: Our Next Chapter," in which he presents problems and potential solutions for domestic and foreign issues, including the Iraq War, health care and how to be a "good" citizen.



Media Credit: Alexis Johnson
OUR NEXT CHAPTER | Sen. Hagel spoke about the Iraq war, domestic troubles and his new book.

Hagel has worked on the committees on: foreign relations, banking, housing and urban affairs, intelligence, and rules and administration. He also has a particular interest in the Iraq war, having earned two purple hearts while serving in Vietnam. In the past few years, he has often sided with Democrats such as Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) on issues from an Iraq withdrawal to immigration reform.

One of the main themes of Hagel's book is how every aspect of life and government are related.

"It's all interconnected," Hagel said. "You can't talk about environment without talking about energy. You can't talk about energy and the environment without talking about the economy. You can't talk about the economy, energy and the environment without talking about stability."

While a great deal of Hagel's speech was about domestic troubles, problems with the Iraq war also dominated his discussion.

After praising all American servicemen and women, Hagel said, "We have an all-voluntary system ... if they don't like it, they don't have to serve."

With the presidential race in full swing and Hagel's known friendships with presidential

hopefuls Sen. John McCain and Sen. Barack Obama, one student asked if Hagel would ever consider joining the cabinet of the next president if he were asked.

Hagel was cautious in his answer: It would depend on what job was being offered, if he would have access to the necessary information and how his policies compared with those of the president, although he said they did not necessarily see eye-to-eye on every issue.

With a grin, Hagel simply said, "I think any American would have to seriously consider that offer."

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