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DESCENT INTO CHAOS:

THE U.S. AND THE AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN BORDER

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GRAND: I'd like to welcome everyone. My name is Steve Grand. I'm the director of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, which is housed within the Saban Center for Middle East Policy here at Brookings. The director of the Saban Center, Martin Indyk, has just joined us.

It is our great pleasure today to have with us Ahmed Rashid, a world-renowned journalist, who is a correspondent for the Far Eastern Economic Review and the Daily Telegraph, but also a frequent contributor to the Wall Street Journal, The Nation, the BBC, CNN, and many, many other publications. He also happens to be an award-winning author as well, whose most recent book is Descent Into Chaos,which is perhaps the most well-documented and disturbing account of our failures post-9-11 that I've read. He's also the author of Taliban,Jihad,and the Resurgence of Central Asia.

He's going to give -- Ahmed will give a short set of remarks and then we will open it up to comments and questions from the audience. We have asked him to focus on the Durand Line, the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which, when people aren't minding their financial bottom line, seems to be the focus of the

whole world these days.

So, Ahmed, we're very pleased to have you. Please start eating as well.

MR. RASHID: Well, thank you very much. It's a great pleasure to be here. The last time I was here was right after 9-11, and I haven't been here since, so it's very nice to see all this very new. Thank you for coming.

I know apparently there's a parallel talk going on at the Council of Foreign Relations with Bonnie Rubin and General Barno, so I'm sure there's been -- also in Afghanistan, the same topic and at the same time. So thank you very much for coming there rather than going there.

Well, I'm going to focus on the border. I'm not going to talk about the very dire situation in Pakistan and in Afghanistan, which I think is sort of crumbling very, very fast. So -- but I'd like to just focus on the border, which is what, you know, Brookings have asked me to do.

First, you know, I'm going to look at this from what the Americans and the Afghans did from their side and what the Pakistanis did or are doing from their side. Let's just start with, you know, post 9-11.

The fact is that for about three and a half years after 9-11 the Americans had literally a few hundred troops on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. They were mostly Special Forces. They were mostly involved in tracking Al Qaeda and signaling -- and trying to get signals and intelligence from Al Qaeda. They were not much involved in -- in none of the border provinces were they involved in real hearts and minds or development apart from very small local projects. Not only that, but the Special Forces who actually won the war in 2001, which were the Special Forces who spoke Arabic and Russian and various languages in the region, were all removed and replaced by the Spanish-speaking Special Forces, who were supposed to be operating in Latin America. Now, of course, there was a complete lack of, you know, cultural information, knowledge, experience, et cetera, et cetera. So up to about the end of 2003, you had literally a few hundred troops on that border.

And the U.S. focus at that time was almost totally Al Qaeda. And I think this is one of the major strategic mistakes made by the U.S. for up to five or six years after 9-11, which was this entire focus on Al Qaeda. The whole relationship with Pakistan was based on hunting down Al Qaeda. It was nothing to do with

trying to keep track of the Taliban, et cetera.

Now, if we move further south to the southern provinces of Afghanistan, there was absolutely nobody in -- and we're talking the four southern provinces: Zabol, Kandahar, Helmand, and Oruzgan, which was the heartland of the Taliban. Across the border the Taliban -- Mullah Omar and the Taliban leadership had taken refuge in Quetta, in Baluchistan Province. And yet there was no U.S. -- there was a small -- there was a U.S. base in Kandahar, but there was no outreach to the border. And there was absolutely no intelligence. I have this on very good authority. There was absolutely no intelligence coming into the American forces from Quetta for almost four years. Now, this really set the scene, if you like, for -- and, you know, what happens and Pakistan's attitude towards this.

Now, NATO deploys in 2005 in the south and, for the first time, when the British and the Canadians arrive they're absolutely shocked to see that the Americans have absolutely no material to give them on intelligence and on who's good and who's bad and what extent the Taliban have, you know, penetrated the southern provinces after the insurgency began in 2003. And the British and the Canadians have to re-jig their

whole intelligence, create entirely new intelligence, and which is missing this whole period of 2001 to 2005.

So I see this as, first of all, enormous -- I wouldn't even say benign neglect, but enormous neglect by U.S. forces. And, of course, the answer to -- the reason for that is simply, you know, Iraq. There was a huge focus on Iraq. The U.S. had set itself very limited agendas in Afghanistan, which were all connected to Al Qaeda and had very little to do with nation-building, reconstruction, winning hearts and minds, and trying to stop the Taliban.

Now, what is happening on the other side of the border? Well, the first thing is that the Pakistani military took in the Taliban leadership and gave them sanctuary, willingly, and they were very clever about it. They insisted that the Taliban leadership base itself in Quetta and no foreigners were allowed to come to Quetta in the sense Arabs, Al Qaeda, Central Asians, all the other flotsam/jetsam of the jihadi movement, who were fleeing Afghanistan, who some of them were living in the tribal areas in Pakistan, some of them were escaping back to the Middle East. But the Taliban shura was kept pure in the sense that the only people associated with the Taliban shura were the Afghan

Taliban themselves and their Pakistani sympathizers and supporters.

Now, the Taliban, at that point, in 2002, had enormous what I call, you know, rings of support, both in FATA and in Quetta. The first ring of support were the Pashtun tribesmen who had brought them across, particularly in the tribal areas in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, which we call FATA. The tribesmen who brought them across were essentially tribesmen who had fought with the Taliban in the ’90s during the civil war, but were essentially foot soldiers in the Taliban army during the ’90s, and then helped the Taliban leadership and Al Qaeda leadership come across into Pakistan.

Now, in Quetta, as I said, this took the shape of pure Taliban. In FATA you had a much more cosmopolitan settling down. You had Al Qaeda, the Arab component of Al Qaeda, you had Central Asians, Chechens, you had the Afghan Taliban allies of -- like Jalal-ud Din Haqqani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. And, of course, you had these Pakistani tribesmen, Pashtun tribesmen, who brought them across. So these Pashtun tribesmen were the first layer of protection, if you like, for this new -- for all these new jihadi arrivals.

The second layer of protection was the newly installed provincial governments in the North West Frontier Provinces and Baluchistan, which due to the rigged elections that Musharraf held in 2002, this government was led by the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam, the JUI. And if you -- some of you may have read my Taliban book, the JUI was basically the godfather of the Taliban back in 1994. And the fact that they were running the two provinces of the North West Frontier and Baluchistan gave them all the government machinery at their hands. They were able to lend this government machinery to the Afghan Taliban and this was the second layer of protection.

And the third layer of protection was essentially the Pakistan military and the intelligence services who tried to keep the Afghan Taliban separate from Al Qaeda and from what we will later see as the growing Pakistani Taliban movement.

Now, let me just focus now a bit on these Pakistani tribesmen. The Pakistani tribesmen who brought them across, who brought these people across, provided the safe houses, provided the food, the wherewithal for these people to live, and made a lot of money in the process. So from being camel herders or

people with a couple of donkeys or a couple of horses, they went to being able to buy pickups and then buy a fleet of pickups; and then from having a few bodyguards, they went from being able to set up literally their own militias. And we see the growth of the Pakistani Taliban from 2004 onwards as a separate force. First, a force made up of militias in the tribal areas who had been funded and supported, you know, by Al Qaeda and by the Afghan Taliban and to which the Pakistan military again basically turned a blind eye despite now there was, you know, growing American pressure to not do so, but they flourished. And we get the Pakistani Taliban still acting now as armed protectors of the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Later on, by 2005, 2006, you get the Pakistani Taliban actually developing their own agenda. And I would say, for the last 18 months, the Pakistani Taliban have had a very distinct agenda, which is to Talibanize as much of Northern Pakistan as they can. They have in the last two years taken over control over most of FATA. FATA is this area which forms a buffer between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It has some 3.5 million people in it. It’s very rugged terrain. And they have virtually taken over the territory and they have executed -- they

have crippled and destroyed basically the tribal structure there. They have executed hundreds of tribal elders. They have elevated the mullah, the Taliban mullah above the tribal elders. And they have, you know, undermined the whole -- the tribal legal system and the tribal traditions of FATA. And over the last 18 months, what we've seen is a very steady expansion of the Pakistani Taliban into the North West Frontier Province. They are now right up to the Indus River, which is the border with Punjab Province. And they're being able to operate in towns and villages right across the North West Frontier and in the northern areas which border China and Kashmir.

So the agenda simply is to they want to set up a Sharia state, what they call a Sharia state, a state ruled by Islamic law. The long-term aim would be to Talibanize the whole of Pakistan, but in the short term I think what they're interested in is being able to expand this base area of operations from FATA right across the NWFP.

Now, this agenda has been wholeheartedly supported by Al Qaeda because obviously Al Qaeda, if the Pakistani Taliban are capable of creating this case area, who is to benefit from this but Al Qaeda because

Al Qaeda can set up more training camps, they can have more room to maneuver. And they want to get out of this FATA area and come into the more settled and much more infrastructure-friendly parts of NWFP, which is why, for example, there's been such a push in the Swat Valley, which is just north of Islamabad. The Swat Valley is perhaps one of the most advanced areas in Pakistan. There's 90 percent literacy. There's a huge infrastructure, roads, communications. It's a tourist center of Pakistan, very good accommodation, et cetera, et cetera. And the Swat Valley is very strategic because it gives you entry into FATA as well as into Afghanistan, and on the other side into Kashmir. So if you -- if Al Qaeda can move from this inhospitable, rugged terrain of FATA into one of these more developed and sophisticated valleys, obviously their potential of doing mischief is enhanced enormously.

The other most important part is that the new linkage that has formed with the Pakistani Taliban and urban Pakistani extremist groups, particularly the Kashmiri groups who were laid off in 2004, when there was a cease-fire between India and Pakistan on Kashmir and the infiltration into Kashmir stopped. And many of these groups, which were basically Pakistani groups who

had been fighting in Kashmir, who were under the control of the ISI and the army, they essentially splintered. And the hardline militant youths of these groups went up and joined up with the Pakistani Taliban and with Al Qaeda in FATA. And they have facilitated a lot of these terrorist acts that we're seeing in urban Pakistan today.

So, now where does the -- you know, very briefly, where does the army stand in all this? Well, the army first moved into FATA in the summer of 2004. That means that there were three and a half years without -- where Al Qaeda and the Pakistani and the Afghan Taliban in FATA were totally untouched. I mean, they were allowed to do whatever they wished without any interference either from the American side, the from the Afghan border side, or from the Pakistan army side.

The Pakistan army went in. I won't go into the long history. I mean, if you are interested, you know, it's there in my book. But it was a history of basically offensives launched into FATA under American pressure and then very -- taking heavy casualties very quickly and then basically tried to work out cease-fires with the Pakistani Taliban. And it was this stop-start, stop-start policy which completely demoralized the

Pakistan army, reduced its prestige in FATA, created enormous contradictions with the Americans and NATO in Afghanistan, and raised serious doubts about the integrity and about the commitment of the Pakistan army to actual deal with this threat.

And since then, we have seen now, in the last few months, the first I would say committed and consistent campaign in the Bajaur Tribal Agency by the Pakistan army, which is aimed entirely at the Pakistani Taliban who are based there. But even this campaign has had very severe limitations. It is essentially a bombardment campaign by air and by artillery. There is very little ground operations going on, even though the military has taken significant casualties. They are not like, you know, patrolling and trying to ferret out, you know, the extremists from villages and towns, et cetera.

But nevertheless, it has continued for the last two months. It started on August 6th. It is still going on. And there has been no cease-fire at the moment and I don't think there is.

Now, the problem here is, of course, that still there is this whole issue of the Afghan Taliban leadership, which remains untouched. And the simple thesis that, you know, I have in the book simply is that

it is the Afghan Taliban today which gives legitimacy to the Pakistani Taliban and to Al Qaeda. The Afghan Taliban, according to their rubric, are fighting a just war. They're fighting a war against foreign occupation. They're fighting a war against, you know, America, and they're fighting a genuine jihad, which is, you know, against these foreign troops. And that justification then is adopted, has been adopted, by the Pakistani Taliban. And the Pakistani Taliban says we are fighting with our brothers against foreign occupation. I mean, there's no foreign occupation in Pakistan. They can't talk about American foreign occupation in Pakistan, so for them it's become a huge justification. As long as the Afghan Taliban leadership is based in Pakistan and gives this mantle of justification to the Pakistani Taliban and Al Qaeda, we are going to see these continuing problems. And so far, at least, the military has not gone after the Afghan Taliban.

And I think, you know, what I was speaking about earlier, for seven years essentially, or at least the last six years, President Bush gave the military a free pass on the Taliban. Because the Bush Administration was never interested in the Taliban and there was never any real pressure to roll up the Taliban

leadership in Quetta or the Afghan Taliban leadership in FATA, you know, and the allies of the Taliban in FATA.

And, of course, today, there is enormous cynicism in Pakistan. Why is it just three months before the American elections have suddenly the administration started fingering the ISI for supporting the Taliban, which specifically happened after the bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul? Why is it that just three months before the elections you had the raids by Special Forces into Pakistan, you know, one raid into Pakistan in June? Why have missiles strike? All because, Bush is looking -- I mean, the conspiracy, Bush is looking for a scapegoat to explain his failure in Afghanistan. And that scapegoat is going to Pakistan and the Pakistan army. And shouldn't Bush have done this six months ago or even one year ago, to have exposed this double game and also to have put perhaps a package of pressures on Pakistan to deal with this issue of the Taliban on their soil?

Let me just touch on two other things very briefly. Pakistan is in a very dire economic situation. We're desperately in need of a bailout by the international community, but particularly by the Americans. It certainly hasn't come. And given the

present crisis here, I doubt it's going to come in a hurry. But two things I want to talk about.

One is that this administration has committed 700 million to FATA. That is for the development of FATA and all the rest of it. But there is absolutely no strategic vision going along with this. I mean, what -- how -- you know, how does this -- I mean, yes, you know, the money will be spent on schools and roads and, you know, all the rest of it. But there's no political vision. What is desperately needed in FATA is a political vision.

And perhaps this is not the job of the Americans, but it's certainly the job of Pakistani government. And I hope the new government, the new political government, will actually try and adopt some new vision for FATA. And the main part of that has to be incorporating FATA into Pakistan. FATA, as you know, is not ruled by the constitution of Pakistan. It's ruled by laws which were set by the British about -- over 100 years ago and it continues to be outside the ambit of the constitution.

FATA has to be brought into the mainstream. And this vision has to be expressed by the Pakistan government and slowly implemented. Obviously it can't

be implemented today or tomorrow because the Taliban is sitting there and they're going to reject everything. But in the long term, I think you have to give an alternative vision. The Taliban have their vision for FATA, which is we want a Sharia state here. And there's no competing vision for the people of FATA as to what their futures should be. And obviously it should be done in consultation with the people of FATA.

I mean, my critique of this whole -- and everybody's jumping in now. The Europeans are very keen to give money to FATA. But to give money to FATA at this stage, without a political game plan in FATA, I think really would be a waste of time.

Secondly, there's a lot of interest in this money that -- the Americans want to give 300 -- this administration is planning to give $300 million to the Frontier Corps, which is its main paramilitary force that has been fighting in FATA, and that is the front line of defense on the Afghan border. Now, the problem with the Frontier Corps is that, again, you know, as -- unfortunately, the legacy of the Bush Administration is that they've thrown good money after, you know, more good money, without conditionalities. Pakistan has received a total of $11.8 billion in aid since 9-11.

Eighteen percent of that has gone to the military and there were absolutely no conditionalities put on that aid.

Now, I think it's essential that the next administration puts conditionalities on that aid. First of all, we need much more aid for the social sector and the Pakistani public, not just the military. But apart from that, I think we need much more conditionalities which will make that aid targeted and focused.

The problem with this money for the Frontier Corps right now is that I think Pakistan has to take a very serious decision to revamp the Frontier Corps. It's -- the Frontier Corps has been in the front line of the jihad against the Soviets. It's been the front line of the jihad in Kashmir. It's been training the militants who've been supporting the Taliban. It's a force that is extremely confused right now because it's been this basic sort of jihadi force on behalf -- acting on behalf of the Pakistan military for over 25, 30 years now. And now it's being told that suddenly it has to turn into an anti-jihadi force.

And frankly, I mean, the Frontier Corps itself is riddled with contradictions and inconsistencies that really need to be ironed out. And unless the Pakistan

army is willing to do that, and to perhaps raised a new force basically, I mean, you know, or to weed out a lot of the old people who are imbued with this kind of jihadist philosophy, we need a revamping of the Frontier.

Now, clearly, the Americans should not be doing that. But, I mean, American money should not just be put down to, you know, giving these people arms and helicopters so that they will become more efficient. They won't become more efficient because, you know, their hearts lie elsewhere.

So again, I think that the issue of how you spend money in FATA should be much more targeted and focused and has to become much more conditional. And I hope the new administration, you know, will look at this in a far more serious manner than the Bush Administration did.

So I think I'll end here. And I hope this month, I have a piece in Foreign Affairs with Bonnie Rubin and we're talking about a solution to Afghanistan and Pakistan. And I hope, you know, you may be able to have the time to read it. It's coming out I think on the 22nd of this month. And it's trying to evolve a new approach, a regional approach to the whole Afghanistan-

Pakistan question. And I'm happy to talk about it, if you'd like.

MR. GRAND: Thank you, Ahmed. That was just perfect. If I could take the prerogative of the chair, I'd like to ask you if you could just tell us a bit more about transit between Afghanistan and Pakistan or, more correctly, from Pakistan into Afghanistan, and what efforts have, in fact, been made by the Pakistani army and the Frontier Corps to stem the flow and sort of where matters stand in that regard.

MR. RASHID: Well, you know, the history of this is very sad because, you know, this whole period between 2004, when the Pakistan army first went into FATA, and 2000 -- and now, the whole history has been these cease-fires, which have essentially been with the Pakistani Taliban. And every cease-fire has basically said as long as you don't attack the Pakistan army, we're fine. But if you want to go next door and attack the Americans, that's fine. So essentially, every cease-fire has been a failure as far as the Americans are concerned and basically -- because, you know, these Taliban militias are free, have been free to cross the border in to Afghanistan. Now, even now, I mean, what this fight in Bajaur is actually doing has pushed a lot

of the Taliban back into Afghanistan. Now, I don't know if the Americans are there on the other side to receive them and to sort of deal with them or not, but the fact of the matter is that the essential policy of the Pakistan military has been that we don't want you to fight us, but you are free to go fight the Americans. And even today, I mean, that policy is fairly consistent.

You probably heard about these tribal militias that now the army is trying to raise. Now, many of these tribal militias are still -- have been raised by the government to attack the Pakistani Taliban. But these tribal militias are also giving the slogan that we are jihadists, we believe in Sharia, and we are going to -- and we are happy to cross the border and attack the Americans in Afghanistan. These are the pro-government militias I'm talking about.

So this issue remains completely really unresolved. In the south it's even worse. I mean, the British now are saying that up to 30 percent of the manpower that is coming in to Helmand is non-Afghan. It's Pakistani. It's -- and not just Pashtun. It's from all parts of Pakistan. It's Kashmiris, it's all sorts of other people. So -- but it's people from the

provinces of Pakistan.

So, I mean, there hasn't been -- and the point about, you know, infiltration into Afghanistan, I mean, my point, it's not a question of sealing the border and putting troops and pickets on this side and pickets on the -- it's a question of the Taliban leadership living in Pakistan. As long as the Taliban leadership is free to operate in Pakistan, as long as they're able to resupply and give the, you know, supplies and troops and money and food and everything is able, and training and explosives and everything that is going in from Pakistan, sealing the border is nonsense. I mean, the border can't be sealed anyway, you know.

What needs to be done is that the Taliban leadership in Pakistan needs to be wrapped up. And I still think it can be done in a very -- without creating, you know, without creating a civil war in Pakistan, you know. The Taliban leadership, we're talking about, you know, maybe 30 or 50 or 70 people basically. It's not a big deal to, you know, to wrap up these -- this element. But clearly, it's not going to happen. Because at the moment, the army's will is not there.

MR. GRAND: Great. Let me take a couple

questions at a time. And the acoustics in this room are not very good, so if you could push your button and talk into the microphone when called up, and then when you're done hit the microphone off, I'd appreciate it. Let's start with Judith.

JUDITH: Nice to have you here. It's very complicated. It's a catastrophe, clearly. If the next president is willing to have a different approach, make the aid conditional, talk to the Europeans, we can't talk about this process or about the border without talking about a new Pakistani government, the prime minister, president, ISI, and the army. Can they handle it or is there an element among them, the army, for example, leave the government aside, Admiral Mullen meeting on the ship with the chief of staff? Is that the weakest link at this stage, the conglomeration of political power and strategic power in Pakistan and the fact that nobody's talking to anybody?

SPEAKER: Good to see you, Ahmed, again. If I can sneak in two questions: one operational/tactical and one sort of larger strategic. The operational is you talked about the Afghan Taliban leadership and the need to rev them up. Well, the news of this week is that Baitullah Mehsud is dead. What effect do you think

it will have on Tehrik-e-Taliban? How much is the group dependent on Baitullah's leadership?

And the larger strategic one is for months the Saudi Taliban negotiations with the silent British backing have been going and now it's no longer so silent. It was leaked and, you know, what's been going on is now public. What do you think about the negotiations? What kind of goals, what kind of objectives could the Taliban put on the table other than saying all troops out? Can it produce anything? And is the Afghan Taliban group sufficiently cohesive to produce any results? If you have any negotiated settlement, and that's a big if, could that be translated then into any actual change on the ground?

MR. DANZIGER: Raffi Danziger from APEC. And first of all, I want to join Steve in saying this really was a perfect talk and I certainly learned a lot. And I wanted to ask you with regard to the debate that's going on between those who say that because the Pakistani army does nothing in those areas, the United States has no choice but to go in and do the job, and those who say that by doing so, the United States alienates the population and actually causes more damage than good.

MR. RASHID: Well, Judith has just given me a

chance to actually just talk about what we are proposing. Look, the Taliban today have ceased to be an Afghan phenomenon. They are today a regional phenomenon. There Pakistani Taliban. There's Central Asian Taliban. And consequently, they're spreading across the region. The war itself has spread. It has not been contained inside of Afghanistan. Consequently, one result of this is that solution has to be a regional solution.

Part of the problem is that the regional competition inside Afghanistan, Pakistan's insecurity vis-a-vis India, which has been the driving force between -- for the military to keep the Taliban on ice as it were. Because they feel that the present Karzai government is being backed by India, is a pro-Indian government, it is undermining Pakistan from Kabul. Kabul is the new Kashmir where we are competing with Indian intelligence, et cetera, et cetera.

Now, when I say a regional solution, I think a new regional diplomatic initiative is needed. And the region, by "the region" I include Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and the Central Asian republics. And I think the key to this is that I hope the new administration will try and help resolve some of the

peripheral disputes outside Afghanistan before it actually addresses the issue of Afghanistan.

Now, what do I mean by that? The key at the moment to stabilizing Afghanistan is Pakistan. You have to get this Taliban leadership out there. Now, you are not going to browbeat the Pakistan army by sending in Special Forces or by blackmailing them or accusing them of, you know -- the Pakistan army's not going to be -- is going to remain -- in fact, is going to fuel more anti-Americanism inside the army. So the key to the Pakistan army is giving them some assurances vis-a-vis India. And to do that, you have to go to the Indians and you have to get a Pakistan-India dialogue going, which is actually going to seriously try and attempt to resolve issues like Kashmir and all the outstanding issues that we have with India. Only that is going to give the Pakistan army the security or the sense of security by which it can perhaps dislodge itself from the Afghan Taliban.

Now, it's not a one-day process. It's -- and what I'm suggesting here is a combination of things. The Americans need to talk to Iran about Afghanistan. Iran has to be brought into the forum of major countries who are helping to rebuild Afghanistan. Iran has been

kept out for several years and it's been a disaster.

China has been kept out. China needs to be brought in. China is a potential investor and a potential, you know, helper in Afghanistan.

So I think what we need is a regional approach where you would be carrying out half a dozen different diplomatic initiatives with the neighboring countries in order to get them to lay off from interfering inside of Afghanistan. And that should be backed by a regional economic package, which will look at this FATA both at the FATA -- the Pakistan side of the border and the Afghan side of the border. Because the problems on both sides are exactly the same. The tribes are the same. And what is needed is an economic development of this region as one region.

You cannot have money for FATA separate and you think there's a concrete barrier there, which is the border, and then we'll have another aid package for Afghanistan, which will do the other side. There's no border. There's no barrier, you know. Everybody's crossing the border every day.

And the same goes for the border with Northern Afghanistan and the Central Asian states. There's acute poverty and unrest in Southern-Central Asia, the parts

of the Central Asia that border Afghanistan. This needs to be addressed in a very big hurry because I think particularly in Uzbekistan and in Tajikistan there is an explosive situation.

So a regional strategy would be, I think, you know -- and, you know, it would give the Pakistani army a reason to back down. It would give them the kind of modus operandi to back down. It would encourage the civilian government. It would allow the civilian government to change the whole tone of the present propaganda and conspiracy theories in Pakistan. And that is that, you know, the Americans and the Indians are in bed with each other and that they are about to dismember Pakistan. And the nuclear deal, of course, has only intensified that feeling, that the Americans and the Indians together, you know, will dismember Pakistan. So you need to give the Pakistan army and the Pakistani people some kind of reassurances that you're not in bed with India, that you're actually trying to influence India to cut deals with Pakistan, to reassure Pakistan that, you know, you're interested in its territorial -- in its sovereignty and, you know, all the rest of it.

As far as, you know, I don't think Baitullah

Mehsud is dead actually. I mean, the latest reports are that he's not dead, it's all been sort of one, but we really don't know the truth. But the fact is, you see, the Pakistani Taliban are made up of tribal militias. They're not monolithic. They're far from monolithic. They're very much like what the Afghan Taliban were, you know, before 9-11 and even after 9-11.

These militias unite under their commanders and they have a common shura or a common council and they're all equal in that council. I mean, all the commanders of these various tribal militias, depending on their strengths and what manpower they have, they're all equal, you know. And they have -- they elect one, you know, chief, which is a chief among equals basically.

So I don't think -- the death of Baitullah Mehsud, if he was to die tomorrow, may lead to some power struggle inside, but eventually there would be -- which if the Pakistan army wants to take advantage of it and the ISI wants to take advantage of it, perhaps they could. But essentially it would lead to another member of this shura becoming a leader of equals. It will not necessarily lead to the disintegration, you know, of the Taliban.

On the talks, I mean, you know, I think this is a very interesting development. I think these are exploratory talks. I think it's far too early -- you know, clearly, the talks were held. Clearly both sides put down their, you know, their positions. And, you know, I think with -- this is going to be a long process. But let's not forget that at this point in time, the Taliban are -- consider themselves to be winning. They are not seeing these talks as talks of a defeated party coming to talk to the Saudis or the government. The government is on the ropes. The Taliban consider themselves winning.

And certainly I think Karzai's main aim is to get some kind of cease-fire or backing for the elections in October. He tried with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in the spring. That didn't work out. He's now trying with the Taliban. He would like to see some kind of working relationship with the Taliban so elections could be allowed, and perhaps some Taliban would be allowed to stand for the elections. But, you know, is that going to be sufficient for the Taliban? Probably not.

But there is also real questions now. I mean, there's no question that the Taliban shura itself is very deeply divided. Their loyalty is still there to

Mullah Omar, you know. They are not lessening the war inside Afghanistan. But there are Taliban who are fed up with Al Qaeda. There are Taliban who are fed up with the manipulation by Pakistan and the ISI. There are Taliban who want to go home, you know. So I think these talks would be more about -- eventually more about splitting off a moderate faction perhaps of the hardliners rather than doing a comprehensive peace deal with all the Taliban.

And -- sorry, what was the last question? Yeah, I mean, well, you know, I mean, I think I've asked that partly. I mean, I think, you know, I can understand the frustration in the U.S. military. But the fact -- the truth of the matter is, as I said earlier, the U.S. military has been pointing this out to the White House for the last three years and the White House refused to do anything about it. And now because of the elections it's all seen as a big drama, you know, in order to get McCain elected and in the house. It's not -- I mean, the Pakistanis have a terribly cynical view about this; that, you know, three months before, the ISI is accused of helping the Taliban, you know, boots on the ground in FATA, et cetera, et cetera.

I don't think this pressure's going to work.

It’s been very counter -- this one attack that has taken place has been very counterproductive. It has fueled anti-Americanism in the country, in the middle class. And also, you know, it has forced the army chief, General Kayani to order his troops to fire on Americans if it ever happens again, the big danger of more incidents. I mean, not that I -- you know, I don’t think the Americans are going to land in Pakistan again, but I think that, you know, the danger of more fire incidents and accidents happening is very great. And it’s going to fuel even less support for the American effort in Afghanistan, especially from the Pakistan army.

MS. WIELAND-KARIMI: My name is -- I’m Almut Wieland- Karimi. I work for the German -- for the Ebert Foundation, a political foundation. And Ahmed, it’s wonderful to listen to you. I think you’re one of the people who are really closely following what is happening on the ground, and I’m always grateful to a lot of your insight you’re giving to us. And I actually have two questions for you today.

First of all, we had in our German parliament, in the Bundestag, we had a hearing today on Afghanistan. And there’s a lot of reluctance among various parties

to prolong the mandate to send German soldiers there. And it's not what I hear here that the Germans are cowards, but the main question really is what are we achieving there and whether the conflict is winning militarily. And I think many people see that the whole approach of more fights, of more killings on both sides, and creating more and more of the people whom we are fighting is not a successful approach.

So there's a lot of our members of parliament saying rather than spending money on the military, why do we not spend more money on rebuilding the country, on the infrastructure, so on? So what I hear here, and yes, that's a very naive approach, it will never be successful.

But on the other hand, as we know, in NATO there is various actors and they all followed various approaches, so there's only one label. But underneath the label there's so many strategies and approaches that people on the ground have really difficulties to understand the different mandates, they have difficulties to understand why we are doing one thing in the north, something different in the south. And I don't think we are successful at all.

And at the same time, you mentioned what about

Russia, Iran, China? There's many people who obviously are not involved in NATO. So my question is although the U.N., as we all know, is very weak right now, but would it not be the institution to lead an international effort for the whole region? How could it -- I mean, would this be not more promising than having NATO being engaged in a conflict with so many actors involved and with a limited mandate, to a certain extent?

And secondly, you described what's happening in the tribal areas. And Of course, many people worry that when we talk about what we want to achieve there is people want to achieve the old order, what we know from colonial times, and there are people who go for a new order. So that there is definitely the international community speaking with different voices on the ground. What is your assessment of that?

SPEAKER: Thank you very much for your analysis. What I'm not hearing, and I'd like for you to clarify if possible, where is there a vision within the Pakistan government? What is the Pakistan government? To me, it's inchoate. Who's controlling whom? Who controls the ISI? Does the ISI control the civilians, civilians control over the military, the military control over this person or that person? There's going

to be no vision without a centrality to the Pakistani government.

SPEAKER: Ahmed, you noted just a little while ago about perhaps divisions within the Quetta shura, the Mullah Omar core group. Should we disaggregate the Afghan Taliban further? There are a lot of reports that you have to view it as not just simply the classic, if you will, but that right now what makes up the Taliban are basically people who are anti-regime and includes many types of criminal elements and militias that, in fact, are now labeled as the Taliban, but that, if one sees it with this kind of fabric, then the -- you don't need ideological change here. What you need is the right incentives.

MR. RASHID: Well, you know, I was in Germany last month and I took my heart in my hands and I went to address the Green Party, which was, you know, given my line about more commitment and more German troops and all was pretty scary, I can tell you. And I got some really -- really some, you know, tough questions from the Germans sitting there who called me a warmonger and, you know, all the rest of it, you know.

But anyway, I mean, you know, very simply, I mean, my -- there is no doubt that NATO is very deeply

divided. You probably read the comments by the British commander the other day from Helmand, saying the war is lost and we should talk to the Taliban, and there's a lot of that view prevalent in NATO right now. I think the -- as far as a lot of the NATO countries are concerned, I think they see the Bush policy in Afghanistan as being a failure. And what they're waiting for is a new administration to have the kind of more comprehensive policy that I've been talking about earlier.

Both candidates have called for more troops, but neither candidate has really fleshed out what else these troops will -- you know, what else is needed to go with these troops. And is it, you know, is it more aid? Is it more reconstruction? Is it this regional strategic that I'm trying to propose here? Is it something else? How do you deal with Pakistan?

More troops itself is, you know, no solution on its own unless it is going to be backed up with a lot of other things. And I think if there is a more comprehensive approach to Pakistan and Afghanistan by the next administration, I think NATO could be willing to work with that, including the Germans.

Now, my line actually with the Germans was

that they're doing a very incompetent job in Northern Afghanistan, where they're based. They refuse to patrol. They refuse to go after criminals. They refuse to indict on drugs. In fact, I would not like to see the Germans come south as some countries have suggested. I would like to see the Germans do a better job up north, where law and order is collapsing, where the Taliban are emerging, where the local population is getting rearmed. And the Germans are really basically sitting there and doing very little about it.

So I think a lot of these NATO countries need to get much more efficient in the areas where they are, even though they may not be willing to fight. It's the incompetency of some of these NATO countries because they don't want to go out of the barbed wire, you know.

And so I think could you -- could we see a new policy with a new administration and a more pliable NATO, you know, wanting to do more with the more enlightened leadership in the Untied States and a more enlightened policy? I think you could, you know, because essentially the link between NATO and the Americans is very, very tight. And the fear, for example, in Germany, which -- and I blame the government here. I mean, you have had -- there have been 50

Germans who have been trained in FATA, German intelligence, according to German intelligence. Fifty Germans, I mean, you know, white Germans, Turkish Germans, Germans of Muslim ethnic origin. But even white converts have been trained in FATA. Some of them have gone back to Germany, some of them are -- now, I mean, that's a hell of a lot. If one of those guys gets through and manages to do a bombing or an attack, I mean, you know, it's going to create a huge impact.

And the problem in Europe is that a lot of these populations have just been totally misinformed and lied to by their governments. And I told that to the Greens, too. I said I'm sorry, Angela Merkel has never come out and given you a concrete assessment of what is going on in Afghanistan, you know.

Look at the French. I mean, 10 French troops were killed last month. And there was pandemonium in France. And why? Because suddenly everybody realized, my god, we've got troops in Afghanistan. The government had never bothered, you know -- for two years nobody had ever mentioned the fact that, by the way, there are 2,000 troops in Afghanistan. There was no education of the public. There was no attempt to take the public along.

So I think, you know, if there is a new policy coming out of Washington, I hope that there would also be a new policy coming out of Europe. And the governments in Europe would be more supportive of a new U.S.-elect policy vis-a-vis Afghanistan and Pakistan, but it would also try and explain to their publics, you know, what this should be.

Now, on the U.N., I mean, my -- you know, the proposal which we've written about is actually that I think the -- there should be. The international communities should go back to the U.N. Security Council. There should be a new mandate for a contact group to be set up, which would look comprehensively -- you know, by the P5, a new mandate would be given for a contact group to look at this as a regional issue. And the U.S. would put its wait behind a U.N. diplomatic initiative. It would not -- it would also carry out its own bilateral diplomacy with India, with Iran. You know, open a dialogue with Iran, et cetera, et cetera. But the heavy hitting would be done by the U.N., so that, again, Afghanistan again is given a piece effort or a new initiative in Afghanistan is given that international mantle. I think that's terribly important for the Afghans and for the Muslim world generally, you know.

You know, what is the Pakistan government? I wish I knew, you know. I wish I could answer that question. I mean, you know, my god, you know, we had this elected government and tragically Benazir died. And if Benazir had been around, I mean, I think half these problems would not be there right now. I mean, she had the international clout. She had the clout with the military. She was somebody that, you know, you couldn't ignore the way you can ignore the current president, unfortunately.

Now, one of the tragedies has been that, you know, I mean, there were two essential problems that this government, the new civilian government had to deal with: terrorism and the economy. And basically since they've come in in March, they have dealt with neither. All right? And they've been involved, as you know, with the whole Musharraf bickering, finally getting rid of Musharraf. Then the bickering between Nawaz Sharif and the Peoples Party. They haven't really got down to the job of governments.

Now, I can't entirely blame them because the -- you know, Musharraf left this enormous pile of rubble. He had, you know, destroyed the constitution. He had left so many issues pending, the judges issue, the

whole, you know, and all sorts of other legal and constitutional issues, which he had left because of the martial law that he'd imposed last year. That -- in a way this new civilian government came in with one hand tied behind its back, crippled. Because it first had to deal with getting rid of this -- you know, all these very negative legacies of the Musharraf era, which are still not actually got rid of. But unfortunately, the focus has not been there on terrorism and on economy. I think it's desperately needed.

Now, as far as the military is concerned, the military at the moment has basically -- by this government because this government has no vision at the moment for FATA. It has had no time to address these issues. It hasn't been put -- it hasn't put any policy on paper or raised any policy before parliament. It has basically given a carte blanche to the army to do what it will to route out the Pakistani Taliban. I think that's a very dangerous policy.

I think there should have been a much more together civilian government, which should have been part of the decision-making process with the army. Essentially what I would like to see is, you know, we're not going to see civilian control of the army overnight,

but what we would like to see is a partnership between the military and the civilians, where there seems to be input from both sides and a consensus being reached. But at the moment, basically, the army continues to run not only the military operations in FATA, but also, of course, policy towards India and Afghanistan. And as long as Pakistan's regional foreign policy remains in the hands essentially of the military and the ISI, we're not going to make much progress.

Now, that's why -- I mean, you know, I don't think a new American policy has to woo the civilian government. The civilian government is there already, you know, in heart and mind, even though it's not being very effective at the moment. The new American policy has to basically woo the military. It has to back the civilian government in order to, you know, be able to give the military other options apart from this option of backing the Afghan Taliban. So I think, again, I don't see much change happening in the next three or four months until the new administration comes in and what kind of relationship the new administration will have.

Very interestingly, the public, the Pakistani public is very pro-Obama because of, you know, what he

said about, you know, opening up to the Muslim world, ending alienation with the Muslim world. He's had some very bad press with the comment about going into Pakistan and raiding Pakistan, but, broadly speaking, people have been very supportive. The army is -- the army, the intelligence services are basically supporting McCain because they think that another Republican administration will also not ask too many questions and we will be able to, you know, sort of carry on as before. And there's been an historic link between the military and Republican administrations, you know, going back to the Cold War, et cetera.

Yeah, you know, Marvin , I mean, I agree with you, you know. I mean, half these kidnap gangs -- I don't know if you saw, you know, there was a story the other day that 30 kidnappings have taken place in Kabul in the last few months. And the average ransom for each kidnapping was 3 to 5 million or something, dollars. So, you know, half of these kidnap gangs, they're not Taliban. Of course they're not. You know, I mean, some of them are and some of -- and the Taliban may cream off 10 percent or something or get its commission, but, I mean, a lot of it is criminality, simple -- because the economic situation has deteriorated so much.

I mean, you know, 4 to 5 million Afghans today are being fed by the WFP. There's starvation in parts of Afghanistan today, seven years after the intervention. There is still no electricity in Kabul, you know. There's been -- inflation's running at about 30 percent. Huge increases in fuel and food prices because of the international crisis of food and fuel, which have completely paralyzed -- you know, about 80 percent of Afghans are living on less than $2 a month. A month. So -- not a day, a month. So, you know, we're talking about a horrendous economic, humanitarian situation. I mean, forget the war for a minute and forget the Taliban for a minute. I mean, when Afghans look at what the international community -- the international community has driven us back into starvation. So, I mean, what are ordinary Afghans going to say and think about the presence of -- you know, is sending more troops a solution? Which is being discussed here. The Afghans want bread and fuel and jobs.

So anyway, let me just say that, you know, you're absolutely right. At one end of the spectrum this kind of, you know, aggrieved Pashtuns or aggrieved people: my mother was killed, my uncle was robbed, you

know, Karzai's governor messed up my farms, whatever. Okay? And at the one end you have these -- and weaning these people is basically hearts and minds and jobs and employment and et cetera a focus.

But on the other hand, you also have much more foreign fighters joining the Taliban now inside Afghanistan. You know, Central Asians, Pakistanis, Caucasians, Germans, Turks, you know, all sorts of people. Now, in one way, that's a sign of weakness because what it means is that the hardliners in the Taliban running the movement are not able to get the kind of Afghan recruits anymore. And as we know, in many of the provinces in the south, there's forced recruitment being carried out by the Taliban. Every family has to give one son to the Taliban in the village and there's forced enlistment there.

But so on the other side of the spectrum, you're getting these foreign fighters who are much more ideological, much more committed to global jihad, much closer to Al Qaeda and the whole philosophy of Al Qaeda, much more brutal, much more willing to slit people's throats and destroy civilian lives inside Afghanistan than perhaps the Afghan Taliban would themselves. A lot of these suicide bombers are foreigners, you know, the

suicide bombings taking place inside Afghanistan are foreigners.

So you have both ends of the spectrum working basically. You have this (inaudible) elements joining the Taliban and saying, oh, we're Taliban. You know, we're big shots, we're Taliban. But you also have these foreigners, more and more foreigners joining the movement and radicalizing it and ideologizing it even further.

SPEAKER: (inaudible)

MR. RASHID: Everyone. Everyone. I mean, perhaps the majority are Pakistanis, but, you know, more and more Arabs are coming from Iraq as trainers and as fighters and as commanders. More and more Central Asians are coming down, people from the Caucuses, from other parts of the former Soviet Union. And, you know, you have Europeans now. I mean, you have European Muslims and white Europeans, also. You know, Turks, which is a completely new thing. I mean, you never had Turks before fighting, you know, with the Taliban and Al Qaeda. And the Turks have their own various kind of obscure groups, right-wing groups, but they were not part of global jihad. But you have Turks now.

MR. HAGER: Mike Hager, Education for

Employment Foundation. It seems that both of the candidates for the presidency are advocating more troops. And from what I hear you say, Mr. Rashid, the answer is more in diplomacy, a longer term approach, regional involvement, and economic development. And I'd just like to ask the big question: Why the heck are we in a war there? Why not disengage the NATO troops completely and put this in terms of what you suggest: diplomacy and economic aid?

MS. YOST: I'm Carol Yost with the Asia Foundation. Ahmed, nice to see you. You had reported that hundreds of the tribal leaders have been assassinated basically. And I'm just wondering what the implications of that are in terms of is there some -- is that causing a backlash? And is there some way to win the hearts and minds of the people whose leaders have been killed? Is that significant? And if so, how?

MR. CAMPBELL: Hi. Jason Campbell, Brookings. I had a quick question. A couple of week ago, Afghan Defense Minister Wardak proposed the formation of a tripartite force that would be composed of Afghan, Pakistani, and ISAF forces to be given greater jurisdictional allowances on both side of the Durand line. Shortly thereafter, General McKiernan publicly

supported the idea. However, given the reluctance of the Pakistanis to accept direct -- at least publicly accept direct U.S. assistance in counter-insurgency, what chances do you give this of actually taking off?

MR. RASHID: Well, sir, you know, in answer to your question, sir, I mean, I would just say if you disengage right now, the government will fall. The Taliban would conquer much of southern and eastern Afghanistan and the government would then fall. And the war just can't stop, you know, tomorrow. And that could probably prompt a civil war because the non-Pashtuns in the north of the country would then start engaging the Taliban on the their own. And that would bring in all the regional countries and we would be back to the civil war situation of the 1990s.

So the question is you have to fight, but you also have to do many other things. The problem with this administration is that it has been willing to fight, but not willing to do all the other things, you know. And the question on reconstruction is, look, reconstruction is totally paralyzed at the moment. Forget about reconstruction. I mean, more than a third of the country, nobody can do anything. You can't build a road. You can't build a school. Schools are being

burned down. Okay. And nobody's rebuilding those schools.

And for the rest of the country, the NGOs are not willing to get out of Kabul, you know. I mean, Westerners are not able to get out and drive around the country anymore, even in parts which are quite secure. So, I mean, you know, this is a security situation which has become dire.

Well, on the question of tribal leaders, let me just say this. I think, you know, this has been part of -- I mean, we saw this in the '90s in Afghanistan. I mean, what is the Taliban philosophy. The Taliban philosophy is essentially that the tribal structure -- which is elders and, you know, lesser elders and the hierarchical tribal structure -- has to be eliminated. And the mullah, who is our guy, has to be elevated.

Now, this they did in the '90s in Afghanistan. And surprisingly, after 2001, the tribal structure actually -- in Southern Afghanistan at least, the tribal structure reemerged very fast. And that's helped Karzai win the elections in 2004, you know. There were a different set of elders. They were not necessarily the same elders as 20 years earlier. They were a different set of elders, but they -- the tribal structure did

emerge and respect for the tribal structure was still there.

The Taliban had once again destroyed it in Southern Afghanistan. And the first thing the Taliban aimed to do, the Pakistani Taliban aimed to do in FATA was to do precisely this. Because the tribal structure held society together, you could not undermine society and Talibanize society without destroying the leadership. So they destroyed the leaders. And the leadership also was largely pro-government. You know, it was largely -- they were receiving, you know, money, salaries, et cetera, from the government. They were largely pro-government.

So you had to win over the population. You had to, first of all, destroy the top leadership, who would not be willing to come over to your side. And by doing so, you also destroyed the government intelligence, information, and government support in that particular locality. And then you elevated the mullah to become the kind of primary arbiter of war and peace and justice and everything else, you know, in that particular locality. And let me tell you, the Pakistani Taliban have done this much more thoroughly in FATA than actually probably the Afghan Taliban have done in most

parts of Afghanistan.

And, I mean, my whole critique is that the army failed to protect these people. The army failed to understand that what was happening before its eyes was that their entire source of intelligence, control, authority, you know, et cetera, et cetera, was being wiped out and they were not protecting it. And, you know, this was the major blunder in my opinion made by the Pakistan army.

Now, resurrecting that is going to be very, very difficult, in FATA particularly. In FATA. Which is why I think now is the moment that if you do eventually move to some kind of, you know, greater security and settlement, et cetera, where you need to change the status of FATA and bring FATA into the mainstream of Pakistan even more. Because really there's no local pro-government leadership in FATA really left anymore. I mean, there are people, there are refugees sitting outside, but most of these people have been eliminated.

Well, you know, I mean, the Wardak proposal is very interesting. In an ideal world, absolutely. But we're not living in an ideal world. And I certainly don't see any acceptance by the Pakistan army at this

stage of the game, especially after the troop landing and all that stuff, agreeing to go on joint patrol with American GIs, I mean, I just don't see it happening in the immediate future. I mean, this is a -- it's a very good proposal down the road if you can, you know, do some of the things that I've tried to talk about.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks. Garrett Mitchell from the Mitchell Report, and I'll apologize in advance for this question as sort of lowering the level of conversation, but it is with, hopefully, a greater purpose in mind.

It was about a month ago when the Republican nominee for vice president asked the $64,000 question, which was did we -- how would we tell the difference between a hockey mom and a pitbull? And the answer was lipstick.

My question is how do we tell the difference between an Al Qaeda and a Taliban? Why are those distinctions important? Are their aims different? Do we need to get away from the naming and get into the underlying sort of set of issues that we're dealing with?

I understand in this room the question doesn't need to be asked, but outside the room I think it does.

COL. DOOHAN: Good afternoon. I'm Colonel Drew Doohan . I'm the Marine fellow here at Brookings this year.

It seems to me what's not being asked and answered and why I'm having some problems with your thesis is what's the threat and what's in the U.S. national interest? If your answer to that is that it's a global caliphate seeking organization or network, you would -- whereby our allies and alliances, like the U.N. and NATO, would have a different response than if the answer to what is the threat question is simply that Afghanistan and Pakistan are locations where certain groups are there that can export terror. I'd just like to get your comments on that.

It would seem to me that if it's the latter, the focus won't be reconstruction and stabilization. The focus will be eliminating those groups and people who could export terror. If your answer is the previous, I wonder if there's an appetite across Europe and the rest of the world whereby we'd have a unifying approach to eliminating extremists writ large across the world and how much that would cost in lives and treasure.

SPEAKER: It's appropriate at a think tank

that you've thought of some very good ideas to solve what's traditionally been chaotic, locally chaotic and an impossible to unify place. What would you say would be the worst-case scenario when all these ideas that you've come up with don't work? And all of our waiting for the next administration and the next election, like everybody else does, doesn't really produce a coherent policy.

SPEAKER: You asked the right person for that.

MR. MIA: Josh Mia . I'm with the Saban Center. I'm an intern. I have -- thanks so much for this. Can you hear me?

My name's Josh Mia. I'm an intern with the Saban Center. Thanks a lot for this. I have a two-part question: one political and one somewhat ecological.

The first one is sort of on the lines of when people were -- when the question came out on what is the Pakistani government, in a recent interview with Zardari, he mentions that even with the current aid he can't actually fund each troop in a way that's equitable to the same amount of money that is provided to a Taliban fighter. And then there's other reports that come out that question his mental stability and whatnot. So even with -- even if it's very tough to define the

nature of the Pakistani government, do you think that if you assume that he's the head or whatever influence that he has, does he have the temperament to actually carry out a political vision, as you said, as necessary?

And the second question that I have is somewhat along the lines of where nation-building ends. And that is right now there's a very serious drought that's going on in Afghanistan and it obviously undercuts the ability to have different sorts of crops that one could grow as an alternative to the poppy crop. And some of the ideas that have come out recently is that maybe the U.S. should consider buying the poppy crop and then using it as the way to create more anesthetics and stuff like that, which is similar to what Turkey does. And so I wanted to know how you viewed a long-term nation-building strategy that takes these kinds of ecological considerations into account.

And that seems to almost get touched with a recent oil scarcity, which they have to deal with. And when those two things combine, a water scarcity and an oil scarcity, I'm just wondering how much it matters whether or not the military's there or not. I mean, you can't even have food security. So I was wondering how you felt about that.

MR. RASHID: Can I just ask you to -- I think your question's quite important, but I didn't understand it. Can you just --

SPEAKER: I'm not sure how you understood it was important then, but I digress. My point is this: It seems to me that your thesis makes -- is built on a premise that the threat is a broader vision threat and thereby the response that the U.S. military and the U.S. Government has applied has been inappropriate. It seems to me that we have to ask that question what is the threat? What is in the U.S. national interests there? And whatever you decide as an answer to that, we'll drive your strategy.

So, for example, if your answer to that -- and I think the American public is wrestling with this -- if your answer is we need to go get Osama bin Laden and kill him, our response will be quite different than if the threat were this is an area of global caliphate-building and we have to go at it holistically with the rest of the world, which I believe is not really willing to get on board with that fight. So consequently, although I've seen in Iraq from my own experiences when you kill a senior leader doesn't mean it's going to take down the network. Right? We got Zarqawi. It didn't do

anything. If we get Osama bin Laden. It won't do anything either, my opinion.

So the question -- that was really the question. What's the threat? And how you define the threat will then drive a strategy.

And just another pejorative. I think the folks who are waiting for the next administration to have a policy shift could be direly upset by the answer, no matter who becomes the president. But again, I digress.

SPEAKER: May I just add to that, that, believe it or not, that is essentially what my question was about.

MR. RASHID: I see that Bonnie Rubin has arrived. Thank you, Bonnie, for coming. So obviously the council's meeting ended very quickly, I mean, you know.

SPEAKER: They found solutions quicker than (inaudible).

MR. RASHID: Yeah, exactly. Or it was much smaller, depending.

Well, let me just try and, you know -- look, I think the terrorist threat per se has enlarged enormously. Al Qaeda was obsessed with targeting the

Americans before 9-11 and all those terrorist attacks were basically aimed at America. Today, almost every major European country faces an Al Qaeda threat. Their nationals are training in FATA. There are links. They have -- Al Qaeda has cells in these European countries. And we've seen all the, you know, Spain, Holland, Denmark, Germany, you know, all these, Britain, of course, enormous. So, I mean, in seven years we've seen the Al Qaeda threat actually spread to Western Europe for the first time. And this is my frustration with the governments of Western Europe, that they're not explaining this properly. I think they would bring a lot of people behind their policies in Afghanistan if they would explain the threat and the danger that exists for them, for their national interest, which is coming out of Afghanistan.

And this is a job for European leaders to do. This is not a job for Americans to boss them and dictate to them what they should be doing, but for European leaders to do it themselves. And this is what they have failed to do.

So in a sense, you know, you've got Al Qaeda in North Africa today. Yes, Al Qaeda has probably been defeated in some way or the other in Iraq, but the

expertise of Iraq has all arrived in Afghanistan. You know, the IEDs and the bomb-making and the new tactics and how the Americans fight and how we can counter the Americans' ability to fight, et cetera, et cetera. All this has been learned in very close quarters by Al Qaeda in Iraq who brought this to Afghanistan and probably spreading it in other places. So I think the terrorist threat has -- the extremist threat has increased.

Now, you have a separate problem about the issue of Pakistan and Afghanistan. We already know the story of failed states. The West abandoned Afghanistan and it created a failed state, which led to Al Qaeda taking it over. An even bigger danger of that exists in Pakistan. Now, I don't believe for a moment that the Taliban can take over Pakistan. But they can certainly take over a part of Pakistan and they can set up base areas in parts of Pakistan which will allow them incredible access and abilities to do things that you and I could not even dream of. And that is my very big fear, you know.

And secondly, they will set in motion such a state of anarchy in Pakistan that there will be a loss of state control basically. And, of course, we all know the big fear of the Americans: This is a country with

nuclear weapons. This is a country which borders so many strategic countries, et cetera, et cetera.

State failure in Pakistan would be momentous. It would be basically -- I mean, I can't even begin to imagine what it would mean for the outside world. So I think the stakes there are enormous.

So I think we have to look at this in two different ways. Now, you know, whether you're fighting the caliphate, no, I mean, you know, I don't think Al Qaeda's in a position today to announce a caliphate, you know, movement around the world and take over the world or anything like that. I mean, it is now very specifically orientated towards creating as much mayhem as possible in Western countries.

So I think you have to look at the Pakistan-Afghanistan syndrome in a slightly different way to the way you're looking. The terrorist threat has to be dealt with by police action, by intelligence, by, you know, targeted and focused abilities rather than sending in, you know, 5,000 Marines, with all due respect.

So -- but Afghanistan still -- Afghanistan faces a Taliban threat today, which is completely different from an Al Qaeda threat. Yes, Al Qaeda's there in background, but the Taliban have the potential

to overthrow this government. And I don't think that's something that the Americans can live with and I don't think anyone in the region can live with that either. So I think, you know, these are two different things.

In answer to your question, I think the biggest failure of the aid-giving community after 2001 was a failure to invest in agriculture. You know, 70 or 80 percent of the Afghans live in villages. Three million Afghans went back as refugees. And instead of going back to their villages where there was nothing, they went to the cities and clogged up the cities and became sort of unemployed, lumpen, you know, elements in the cities, which, of course, is fueling all -- a lot of this kind of kidnapping and crime and all this kind of stuff, you know.

Only this year is the American -- is the U.S. Government and some of the Europeans actually putting money down for agriculture. If this had been done seven years ago, I think many of the problems that we faced would have (inaudible) warlordism, the militias, the return of the refugees, you know. Even the growth of the Taliban would have been halted and, of course, drugs. Now -- not halted, but -- you would not have been able to halt drugs, but you would have certainly

been able to take it. Because if you had by now built up a system of Afghan -- trained Afghan extension workers in agriculture who would be able to go out into the villages, in to the fields, and do -- you know, deliver the new fertilizer, the crops, the seeds, teach new methods, et cetera, et cetera, you know, you wouldn't be having this drugs problem.

I don't think buying up the crop is any kind of solution. I mean, the -- that kind of solution works in a country where you have an infrastructure and where you have a state that is capable of saying we will buy up so much and the rest of you will not do anything. And we will stamp on you if you dare grow drugs. In Afghanistan, there's no such state. There's no such state control on buying up a certain amount of opium and you can't stop the others from growing opium who are outside the net. And the traffickers will get the others to grow. So I don't think that is a solution.

I think the key to state-building in the Muslim world and in the Third World is agriculture. This is where the bulk of the population live. And the spinoffs of agriculture can be, you know -- one crop is in in six months, you know. The spinoffs can be very fast and very immediate and very beneficial. And this

was something completely missing from the U.S. agenda after 9-11.

Zardari's political vision, well, what can I say? You know, he does not have the political vision or the worldliness of his wife, there's no question. But I think, you know, he understands the basics of what needs to be done and what is wrong. I think there's no question about that either. I mean, I think his heart is in the right place. I think he knows the threat that terrorism poses. He knows the dangers of an economic collapse. He knows that he has to find some kind of answer to working with the army and, at the same time, at the end of the road, putting the army in its place. But all these are incredible jobs, incredibly difficult, and he needs a team. And so far, he's not proved -- he's not put a team together, a team that would be -- which would probably involve bringing people in from outside the People's Party rather than just people from the People's Party; bringing in experts on the economy and national security and other things who could create programs, which would be implemented and which could be discussed with the military or with other stakeholders in the system.

And I think, you know, that is critical to

good government in Pakistan. We need less of an influence -- we need less of an emphasis on one man rule or -- you know, and I think the Americans need a lesson in not going through one man anymore. I think you've seen what happened with Musharraf. I wouldn't like to say that you now or the next administration replaces Musharraf with Zardari and say, oh, we'll put all eggs into this basket and, you know, he'll deliver. Well, that's not the way to go.

There are many stakeholders in Pakistan. It's a very complicated situation. Every Secretary of State who visits has to visit six different people before you can get any sense of what's going on, and this should continue. I mean, until there's clear leadership and vision, this is the way you will have to go. It will be really wrong if you built up one man again as somehow the deliverer or the savior or, you know -- because he can't deliver. And he is not -- you know, he's not that kind of man. So you have to work with all the stakeholders in Pakistan.

And hopefully, we will see, you know, a new policy. I hope, you know, there is a (inaudible), but, hopefully, we will see a new policy in the United States. And I think, you know, that will bring back the

Europeans and I think it will create an impact in the Muslim world. And I certainly think it will also help the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

MR. GRAND: Perfect. Thank you, Ahmed. You know, we asked you to comment on a border, which, in many ways, a border that only exists on a map. And I think from that very narrow topic we were able to move out and you really gave us a tour de force of the region as a whole, so thank you. Thank you for enlightening us and for joining us today.

Thank you, everyone, for coming.

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

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