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AFGHANISTAN AND NATO: FORGING THE 21ST CENTURY  
ALLIANCE

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NATO Secretary General

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. PASCUAL: Good afternoon and welcome to Brookings in its extended format at the University of California, and thank you to the University of California for allowing us to make use of the facilities here.

It's a great pleasure to welcome you to this event with the Secretary General of NATO and the focus that he's going to allow us to have this afternoon on NATO and Afghanistan and the upcoming NATO summit at Bucharest. It truly is an honor to have Jaap de Hoop Scheffer with us really on the advent of this momentous conference.

NATO, I think all of us would argue, has been the most successful military alliance in history not because of the battles it has won in war but the victory it has really achieved in sustaining peace, and that's not solely due to NATO, but it's also part of the network of institutions and nations that have transformed the prospects for global peace and security. We saw that, obviously, right throughout the Cold War period where NATO became the foundation for solidarity against communism and authoritarianism and underscored that NATO and these countries were willing to invest in the values of freedom and choice and the rule of law.

We saw it in Europe which had been fractured for decades, and NATO was a central factor along with the European Union in bringing together France and Germany and keeping the U.K. linked to the

European body politic and facilitating a resolution of differences between Greece and Turkey and helping Spain make the transition from authoritarianism.

We saw NATO's role after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union when it made the decision to create the Partnership for Peace, when it made the decision to enlarge, giving those new independent states an incentive to reform, to achieve eternal stability, to observe human rights. Obviously, there has been a big debate and an extended debate that we even see now about the impact that this has had on Russia, but one can even argue that on Russia's border that they have stability tempered with a respect for human rights and democracy that might not have existed elsewhere.

And, of course, NATO's role in the Balkans has been well known and understood, obviously, in Bosnia and Kosovo, and now it's become an issue where NATO and its partners in the European Union and in the West are again at the forefront in the Balkans on the future of Kosovo and what will happen there and, even moving beyond Kosovo, the issues of a membership action plan and the implications for Ukraine and Georgia and how all this plays into the Russian agenda.

I mention these things because they are all the backdrop and part of what plays into the questions of Afghanistan. While Afghanistan may

have its roots in September 11th, 2001, and the American response to this act of terrorism, we have to remember that Afghanistan is operating under a U.N. mandate. There is a U.N. mission that brokered the Bonn agreement for Afghanistan. There is a democratic state that is welcomed in the U.N. and NATO. In addition to that, there is a wide range of partners as far afield as Australia and Japan and India that have been involved in different aspects of the mission in Afghanistan.

And so, while for NATO there are serious questions on whether 35,000 troops are enough, can they sustain the peace, what are the rules of engagement, what are the cross-border issues, what are the issues with narcotics and, perhaps even most challenging, what is the challenge of the interrelationship between the military parts of the mission and the civilian parts of the mission and the viability of the state, what I think we can also say is that what NATO faces in Afghanistan today is of greater, even greater consequence not just for the viability of NATO but for the entire international community because it puts to the test whether the international community can uphold the commitment to help a democratic government that has established itself and seeks support in order to be able to fight international terrorism and organized crime.

It is in that context that we are extraordinarily pleased to welcome Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. He has been a civil servant, somebody who has

served his country and the international community, first in the military with his military service in Netherlands, as a diplomat where he was in the foreign service for 10 years and eventually became Minister of Foreign Affairs, and also served as the OSCE Counsel in Office in an effort to strengthen the role of OSCE in Europe in bringing peace and democracy throughout the European sphere.

He has been a politician where he the leader of the party for the Christian Democratic Alliance and has served in the House of Representatives in Netherlands including as the head of the development committees and the justice and defense committees and as an international civil servant now in his role as Secretary General of NATO.

Mr. Secretary General, we offer you the podium.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Thank you very much.

(Applause)

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Many thanks for setting the scene and showing us all and showing me that there's a lot on NATO's agenda today.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me start by thanking Brookings for the invitation to address you today. I think it provides you with a change from the daily diet of the Presidential campaign and provides me with the opportunity to address some of the most pressing questions before NATO

today, and we've just heard, I think, an interesting inventory.

Anyone who has followed the international news, even from a distance these last few weeks, couldn't have missed what these pressing questions are: Are we failing in Afghanistan? Is allied solidarity breaking down? Are we witnessing the emergence of a two-tier alliance?

Clearly, there is a perception on the part of some NATO allies that others are not pulling their weight. Notably here in the United States, there is a palpable feeling that some European allies are underperforming in Afghanistan and that they are either unable or unwilling to make a greater effort. Needless to say, those allies who have been criticized feel that their own efforts and sacrifices are undervalued and complain about being treated unfairly.

You won't be surprised to hear me say that as the Secretary General of NATO, it is my job to calm the waves no matter who might have caused the storm, but if I plead here today for a greater dose of moderation and realism, it is not just because I see it as my professional duty to promote transatlantic harmony. In my view, we simply cannot afford to play the blame game, and we can even less afford to play it publicly.

What we should be doing instead is focusing all our efforts on building on the successes we have already achieved and identifying how

to best move forward together. So how do we do this and are the perceptions right as we see them in the public opinion and in the media?

I think, first, we need a better appreciation, broadly shared among all 26 NATO allies, of what is at stake in Afghanistan. Second, we need an honest appraisal of where we stand in this mission. Third, we need to take a hard look at how we can further enhance our operational effectiveness. Finally, we must have a more fundamental debate about our alliance and the way it operates in a radically different security environment. Allow me to say a few words on each of these issues.

First, what is at stake in Afghanistan? First and foremost, what is at stake in Afghanistan is our very own security here and in Europe as much as in Afghanistan itself, of course. In an age where external and internal security are more and more interwoven, Afghanistan is a mission of necessity rather than one of choice. Just seven years ago -- that's not long ago -- Afghanistan was the grand central station of terrorism. If this mission were not to succeed -- and let me be very clear, it is succeeding and will succeed -- Afghanistan would once again pose a clear and present danger to itself, its region but also the broader international community.

Something else is at stake in Afghanistan, and that is our evolving relationship with Asia. Afghanistan is a fragile country in a tough

neighborhood. It borders the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union. It also borders Iran, Pakistan and China, three nations whose development will have a truly global implication. Each of these countries, and I would also include India, will be affected by the situation in Afghanistan.

Pakistan is perhaps the most obvious case. Islamabad has stepped its support for our mission, and that is appreciated, but the Pakistanis make no secrets of their doubts about our stamina. They do not believe that we will be in Afghanistan long enough to turn the tide and that once we leave they will be left with the Taliban as was the case after the Soviet withdrawal.

Greater stability in Afghanistan means greater stability in Pakistan, but the opposite is also very true. The likely outcome of a more unstable Pakistan would mean a more unstable Afghanistan. Given the fact that Pakistan is a nuclear power, I don't want to elaborate any more here except to say that the words Taliban and nuclear do not go together very well.

That brings me to the relationship between the West and Islam. Our engagement in Afghanistan is an engagement for moderate Islam. Every school we built and every development project we protect move this country away from the reach of the jihadists. Let me be clear, we are not

implanting our values on the Afghan culture. We are simply giving moderate Islam the chance it deserves, and that is why our engagement in Afghanistan has a truly global aspect. It demonstrates that the international community supports those who want to wrest themselves from the grip of radicals and from the grip of extremists.

We are not in Afghanistan to try to impose our own western social model on a country with a very different culture and a very different tradition, but we are in Afghanistan to help Afghans build a society which respects fundamental universal values. We can only succeed if the international community and the Afghan government work together as partners on the basis of these shared values. So the stakes are high, higher perhaps than some of us are ready to admit.

But this begs the question, and it's an important one: Given what we hear, given what we see, given the reports we read here in the U.S. and elsewhere, how are we doing? Are our efforts faltering as parts of the media seem to imply? Are they even futile as some segments of the public seem to believe?

It is clear that we are engaged in heavy fighting in some parts of the south. There is still widespread corruption around the country, and the opium crop is, to some extent at least, funding the insurgency. These difficulties are real, and we have to face them honestly and squarely, but

they are far from insurmountable nor is the overall situation as gloomy as it may appear. Indeed, for a country that has just emerged from 30 years of war, Afghanistan has made and is making remarkable progress.

There is one word which, in my opinion, we should write with a capital P, whose meaning we seem to forget, whose meaning we seem to lose, and that is the word, Patience. If you look at Afghanistan today, 2008, and you look at Afghanistan at where it was in 2001, I defend the opinion that Afghanistan has seen and is seeing more than remarkable progress. But if you expect that we can have a western style democracy, a U.S. or Dutch style democracy in seven years, that is, of course, absurd. We need patience. We need perseverance.

I am not going to read you statistics today, but it is good to note that almost seven million refugees have come back. It is good to note that there are six million children in school now of which about one-third are girls. It is good to know that 82 percent of the Afghan people have access to healthcare. It is good to know that we see a banking system developing. It is good to know that we see cell phone companies all over Afghanistan. It is good to note that there is a democratic government, that there is a parliament, that we have seen democratic elections in Afghanistan.

So there is absolutely no reason for gloom and doom. We are

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making progress. We can do better in some instances and in some stages, but we are making remarkable progress.

What I do want to stress, ladies and gentlemen, is that 70 percent of the security incidents in Afghanistan are confined to less than 10 percent of the provinces where 6 percent of the Afghan people are living. In areas where good governance is being practiced, an important precondition, I admit, security is up and drug production is down. As I said, the economy is picking up steam. And so, it is no surprise that the large majority of Afghans want us, the international community, to stay, to finish the job we started and to help their country stand on its own feet.

As for the Taliban, they have lost every direct engagement with our forces. Their use of roadside bombs and suicide attacks has also estranged them even further from the Afghan people. As President Karzai told us last week, those kinds of attacks are more hated than they are feared by the Afghans. As long as NATO is around, the Taliban do not stand a chance of reconquering the country and playing host to Al Qaeda.

We may not be able to defeat them in one decisive battle. This is not classical warfare we are involved in, in Afghanistan. But I'm convinced we are marginalizing and we can marginalize them enough to give Afghanistan the breathing space it needs.

And, let me add that I do simply not agree with the analysis I heard

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in testimony on the Hill a few days ago about the Taliban holding X percent of Afghan territory. That is not the analysis our military commanders make. I just was there again with all the NATO ambassadors, five, six, seven days ago, and that is not the analysis we make.

If then the central thesis is many areas are ruled by tribes, look at Afghan society. What kind of society is Afghanistan? It is a society with a tribal structure. So that many parts are ruled by tribes and are ruled by the system this country has known for ages does not mean that we are failing. It does rather mean that we are successful in Afghanistan. So I must admit that I was surprised by the analysis I heard on the Hill.

Where we stand is that we are facing challenges, important challenges from time to time, difficult challenges, but my thesis and my opinion is that the window of opportunity for helping Afghanistan turn the corner has far from closed. It is wide open. So the key question is, and that question also needs an honest answer: How can we do better?

I will define the we for you. First, we all need to discard, once and for all, the illusion that there exists a clear choice between development work and combat operations. This has had a corrosive effect on our engagement right from the start and, as we now see, it has been an artificial distinction all along. Building a school may be seen as an entirely

benign act, but let's not kid ourselves, ladies and gentlemen.

In Afghanistan, building a school is politics, empowering women is politics, providing opium farmers with alternative livelihoods is politics because each of these steps are moving Afghanistan away from the medieval ideas championed by the Taliban. Hence, we are all potential targets, whether a soldier or a development worker and whether in the north or the south or anywhere else in Afghanistan.

It is up to the political leadership in each of NATO member nations to set the record straight in this regard. Clearly, an alliance of 26 sovereign nations means 26 different political and military cultures, and it also means 26 different constitutional realities. We need to take these into account, but we cannot afford the notion that certain allies have only limited responsibilities and are confined to specific areas. Afghanistan is one country. It is one strategic theater for NATO. We need one NATO strategy.

Let me also say, to make another remark in this discussion about the perception, there are very strong signs of the growing solidarity we do need. The United States of America has taken the lead with its additional commitment of 3,200 Marines, but other allies are stepping up the plate as well. Poland, France, Belgium and the U.K. are increasing their strength. Germany will take over one of the so-called ISAF Quick Reaction Forces

in Afghanistan. In fact, the last two years, NATO has added 27,000 extra troops to ISAF, the majority of them non-U.S.

When you considered how and where we started in 2003, I come back to Patience with a capital P, with just a few thousand soldiers in and around Kabul, I hope you will agree with me that the progress is striking.

Of course, there is much more that we can and much more that we must do as NATO allies. We must fill, excuse me the horrible jargon, what we call the Combined Joint Statement of Requirements for ISAF, the CJSOR. I didn't know the word before I came to NATO, so I am not going to blame any one of you who doesn't know the word, but it is simply what we need militarily and what our military advisors tell us that we need. We need to fill that famous CJSOR.

We need to eliminate the remaining shortfalls in the forces and what we call the enablers, for example, unmanned aerial vehicles, transport aircraft and what have you.

We must work, and I'm constantly working, to remove the remaining restrictions on the use of our forces to further enhance the commander's operational flexibility.

We need to accelerate our training of the Afghan National Army and enable the ANA, the Afghan National Army, to build on its successes in recent operations together with ISAF.

I was Musa Qala last week in the Helmand Province in southern Afghanistan and, as you might know, Musa Qala was recently taken back from the Taliban. The operation in Musa Qala was of great psychological importance because there we saw the Afghan National Army taking the lead, supported of course by our NATO forces, a coalition of NATO forces.

So that is of psychological importance and that is also why I keep underlining and keep stressing that training and equipping the Afghan National Army is of great importance and, there, I think really NATO can and NATO should do more. They want it. The Afghans want it. They want to take responsibility for their own country, and they have shown at Musa Qala that they can. They should be able to build on their successes.

We also need to increase our efforts to help Afghanistan with security sector reform more generally, and we need to devote more resources to improving NATO's and ISAF's strategic communications in theater.

Let me stress, I mentioned it in passing already, that NATO allies are not alone in their Afghanistan mission. At this moment, 14 non-NATO nations contribute to ISAF from Australia to Singapore. Now this demonstrates that in an era of globalization, countries from all across the globe share certain security interests, and it all demonstrates that NATO is

an excellent mechanism for translating such common interests into a common military operation. Clearly, ISAF's contribution to creating a security environment in Afghanistan is indispensable.

But, as I said, greater security must go hand in hand with stronger development, and that means that other civilian actors must step up their support as well. Together, the international community must increase the number and effectiveness of these so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams, help the Afghan government and international agencies with their counternarcotics efforts, support the work of the United Nations which I hope will increase its presence all over the country including in the south soon, and assist the government of Afghanistan in delivering basic services and implementing sustainable development programs.

So the we, I asked rhetorically a moment ago, the we in Afghanistan is not just NATO. It is a collective effort of the international community as a whole. To increase and to improve the coordination on the civilian side and between the civilian and the military, we urgently need the strong international coordinator on the ground in Kabul, a strong figure with the terms of reference to coordinate us, to coordinate the international community, of course, in close consultation and cooperation with the ones who own that country and those are the Afghans.

But it's not just ISAF. It's not just the international community,

ladies and gentlemen, who have to do more. So must the Afghans themselves. Afghan ownership and we need more Afghan ownership. We need a more Afghan face on the operation means that the Afghan government must serve its people responsibly. It must fight corruption more resolutely, uphold universal values and human rights, and ensure that the rule of law prevails to all in Afghanistan, and work closely with the Afghan parliament. In a nutshell, all Afghan leaders must realize that providing good governance is the best investment in their own country's future.

Ladies and gentlemen, you will agree with me, but that was already clear from the introduction, that this is a fairly long to-do list for ISAF, for the international community and for the Afghans themselves. It is also clear that to pursue these objectives will require perseverance, but I think it also requires benchmarks to allow us to measure success.

What do I have in mind if I mention benchmarks? Three brief examples: I believe that over the next five years, at regular intervals, the entire international community is going to have to take stock of progress in standing up a fully equipped and trained Afghan National Army of 80,000 and an Afghan National Police of 82,000 professional personnel, on helping to build Afghan national institutions whose authority extends across the country and which can provide basic services and, thirdly,

where the narcotics production is diminishing significantly so that it no longer poses a threat to good governance.

Those are just three examples of what the international community should do, and it is for me also an important answer to the question, who are we, when we're discussing Afghanistan.

Ladies and gentlemen, in less than five weeks time, Ambassador Newlin was just telling me, 22 working days to be exact if we deduct the Easter break, in less than five weeks time, in 22 working days, we will have the NATO summit in Bucharest. It will be NATO's largest summit ever with over 60 nations and many international organizations and institutions taking part. At that summit, our heads of state and government will approve a political-military strategy that will set common goals and common benchmarks.

This will send a powerful message that the scale of our efforts matches the severity of the challenge. It will demonstrate that all the 26 NATO allies, as well as the many non-NATO countries that are contributing to the mission, have the commitment and patience to see it through. Here is the word, patience, again. It will underscore that the entire international community, and not just NATO, has a stake in Afghanistan's success.

You will see a public declaration by the heads of state and

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government, trying to bring or bringing this message across in a forceful way. We are preparing, in Brussels, that declaration.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to say a few words on NATO's longer term development. Afghanistan has already provided us with a host of lessons to learn from the need to review our force planning and force generation processes to the urgency of fighting caveats, the limitations on our forces, and enhancing the usability of our forces. In that sense, Afghanistan has become a real catalyst for NATO's evolution and transformation, very much like our Balkans engagement was in the nineties.

And, speaking about the Balkans, 16,000 NATO men and women in uniform are, as we speak, keeping a climate of security and stability in Kosovo for majority Albanians and minority Serbs alike. You have seen the developments in Kosovo. You have noticed the declaration of independence. We have seen no mass movement of people up 'til now. We have seen no refugees. We have seen no interethnic violence.

We have seen, unfortunately, unhelpful rhetoric from Belgrade. We have seen, unfortunately, the torching of the U.S. Embassy and attacks on embassies in Belgrade. But KFOR, 16,000 strong, is also doing what it is supposed to do in Kosovo, guarantee a climate of security and stability, of course, together with UNMIK, the United Nations Police Force and the

Kosovo Police Force.

Is that easy? No, it will not always be easy, but KFOR enjoys great confidence all over Kosovo in every part of Kosovo, and that is also where NATO still plays a role in this volatile and sensitive time for Kosovo and for the region as a whole.

I think that if I look at our operations, that is not only relevant for our operations, ladies and gentlemen, it is crucial that NATO accelerates this political and military transformation by doing more in Afghanistan, yes, certainly, but also by taking a hard look at how we can defend our populations against other emerging threats such as cyber attacks and attacks on our energy infrastructure which are, in my opinion, roles NATO should take on, on the basis of the added value NATO can bring in these issues.

These are issues, energy security, where NATO is not a prime player. It doesn't have prime responsibility because the protection of critical energy infrastructure is first and foremost a national responsibility. The same goes for cyber defense. But NATO can define in these areas its added value. It can create benchmarks. It can create a system of best practices. It can prepare itself to assist and to help in times of crises or terrorist attacks.

The same goes when I speak about the 21st Century challenges for

a discussion NATO is having and will have during the Istanbul summit on the important subject on missile defense. What role can a defense against rogue states launching missiles, what role should NATO play and what role can NATO play, in my opinion, what role NATO has to play in protecting ourselves and our population against the consequences of missile proliferation?

We should also make better use of NATO as a unique forum for transatlantic political dialogue by building bridges with other institutions and countries across the globe and, last but not least, by helping to fulfill the aspirations of those countries that aspire to membership in NATO. You know that's the theme of NATO enlargement, which will also figure prominently on the Bucharest agenda.

Needless to say, in all these areas the inspiration and the leadership of the country I'm in, the United States of America, will be very important indeed.

Ladies and gentlemen, as our strategic environment has changed, so must our understanding of allied solidarity. During the Cold War, allied solidarity was institutionalized. All we had to do was to deploy the forces of the NATO allies along the inner German border and on our northern and southern European flanks. This would ensure that all allies would be involved in any fighting right from the outset and that no one could bail out.

In the face of today's threats and challenges, allied solidarity can no longer be expressed simply by lofty statements or by the peacetime deployment patterns of our forces. Today, allied solidarity is put to the test in our operations. That's a challenging one, that test, and there will be times when some might feel that we are failing that test.

My message to you this afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, is that we are not failing this test and we will not fail this test not least because, as Winston Churchill, Eisenhower and many other great leaders have said, the one thing that is worse than fighting in a coalition is having to fight without one. NATO is that coalition. NATO is that alliance. I think as far as those coalitions go, none is better than NATO.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for your attention. I am ready to take your comments and questions. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. BENJAMIN: Hi. I'm Daniel Benjamin, the Director of the Center on the U.S. and Europe, and it falls to me to moderate your questions.

Let me start with one of my own, Mr. Secretary General. You came back to one word on several occasions, patience.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Yes.

MR. BENJAMIN: I guess the question that many, particularly in the

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populaces of Europe, would have right now but also here is how do our political leaderships develop that sense of patience especially when we're confronted with a kind of conflict that we really haven't fought as an alliance before, specifically in a counterinsurgency? Does NATO have any particular messages to give or any particular requests to leaderships as we face this challenge?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: I think I, at least, partly answered the question by saying that political leaders should be honest and open with their public opinions, what kind of scenario we are in, in Afghanistan.

Let me take my own country as an example where there has been a fierce discussion in parliament: Is this a reconstruction mission or is this -- I translate now from the Dutch -- is this a fighting mission? It is both. It is both.

How can you build a school, how can you build a road, how can you find counternarcotics as long as you do not have a situation of security and stability?

What we are finding out on narcotics, by the way, is that we see more and more drug-free, narcotic poppy-free provinces and that the poppy production is up in those areas where there is no security and stability. So there is this very direct link.

But we should, I think, be honest and open in explaining. That is my

job. That is also the job of the political leaders in the alliance, explaining why we are there and explaining that the scenario and the situation we are in will not find a solution instantly. It will not be easily treated by a 10-second or 15-second television soundbite. That is not easy. I realize that's not easy. That is complicated from time to time.

What I am trying to say is that the military side of the operation and the reconstruction side of the operation are going hand in hand and what I'm also saying is look at the relationship between external and internal security, look at what it would mean that Afghanistan would be the failed state again it was in 2001.

MR. BENJAMIN: When you're asking a question, please introduce yourself and ensure that there is a question mark at the end of your question.

QUESTIONER: David Necrois, the Broadcasting Company of (inaudible).

My question is about Georgia and Ukraine. Governments of both countries hope to get a membership action plan at the NATO Bucharest summit. I understand the decision will be made by the member states, but do you have anything to say about the chances for Georgia and Ukraine?

Thanks, sir.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: As you will expect, 22 working days

before the summit, the final answer I cannot give you this afternoon, I'm afraid, but let me give you a number of basic principles.

First of all, any decision on NATO enlargement, wherever it would be, or any decision on the status a certain nation had in relationship to NATO is a decision taken by the 26 NATO allies and only by them. There's no *droit de regard*, as the French so nicely say, or no veto by any other nation in that process. There has never been one, and there never will be one.

We are certainly discussing, I am discussing, the ambassadors are discussing, our political leaders are discussing the positions and the requests having come from Ukraine and having come from Georgia on the membership action plan. I'm afraid it's too early to say where exactly that discussion will end, but NATO's door is open. NATO's door has never been closed. NATO has never been close and will never close its doors for nations who have the aspiration to join this unique family of democratic values and of democratic nations.

Where that exactly will end in Bucharest, I'm sorry, it is a bit early to say. But I'm in very regular touch with the political leadership in Kiev, with the political leadership in Tbilisi, and I'm trying to guide and to steer as Chairman of the North Atlantic Council, that process.

We'll use the coming 22 working days to the best of our ability to

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see that we can get to a result which is, of course, by definition in NATO, acceptable for all because you know that all decisions are taken by consensus. It is my job to be one of the consensus forgers in NATO, but the length of my pole as Secretary General, as you all realize and as I realize very well indeed in this job, the length of my pole will be finally decided in the NATO capitals.

MR. BENJAMIN: Okay. I think let's go over here.

QUESTIONER: My name is Allan Bajerski, Voice of America, Washington, D.C.

I have one question, Mr. Scheffer, regarding the enlargement of the NATO. Many times in different locations, the information from NATO members have repeated in Macedonia have met all the criteria for NATO accession and should expect an invitation from the forthcoming summit in Bucharest. Is the name issue with Greece a precondition for Macedonia's accession to NATO, if you know? That is a basically the question.

Thank you very much.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Let me, first of all, say that even as we speak now in late February, early March, the tickets for invitation are not yet punched. So there's not automaticity in and as far as the invitations are concerned, and the nations concerned should keep up their process of reform and should make the reform process what is called irreversible.

On the second part of your question, it is clear, as I answered your colleague a moment ago, that any decision, be it on NATO enlargement, be it any other decision in NATO, is taken by consensus. That means that if the key word is consensus, all 26 need to agree. That also means that the name issue is an issue although I can immediately say that it's not an issue for me as NATO Secretary General directly because you know the discussions on the name issue are going on elsewhere under the leadership of Mr. Nimitz under the umbrella of the United Nations.

I do hope that in the 22 working days we still have, a solution can be found and that there is flexibility on all sides to find a solution. My last sentence would be that one of the two nations is in and one of the other nations is not yet in, if you understand my slightly enigmatic final part of my answer.

MR. BENJAMIN: Sir?

QUESTIONER: Secretary General, Paul Koorsen from CNN.

Thank you.

In 22 days, do you expect to be making a sales pitch to the allies for Afghanistan troops and additional equipment or do you think those allies will continue to be reluctant because they want to see more benchmark measurement before they commit an additional resource?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: It's both. I am confident if I see, and I

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mentioned the figures in my speech, what we have seen as far as the increase of the forces are concerned in Afghanistan including in the south and our 10 allies active in the south. I am confident that by the time after those, by now famous, 22 working days in Bucharest, we'll see more nations stepping up to the plate. So I'm optimistic in this regard.

I also think, but then comes the we again and how I define the we. The examples of the benchmarks I gave you are examples which to a certain extent are relative to us, to NATO, to ISAF, and ISAF is already wider than Afghanistan, but also relevant to the other members of the international community.

It is of great importance, and that is why we have this big meeting on Afghanistan with the participation of the United Nations, of the European Union, of the World Bank, of the major donor nations, that this is a collective effort, that the international community realizes -- and I come back to patience again -- that this is a long-term commitment. They are entering it.

I'm responsible for NATO. My job is to see, and I am optimistic about that, that NATO is there in the framework of a long-term commitment.

What we now need and counterinsurgency means as much security and stability as it means development. What we do now need and what I

hope will be the result of the big Bucharest meeting on Afghanistan with the participation of President Karzai is that we strongly confirm that long-term commitment by the international community, I say again, under Afghan and as far as the international community is concerned, U.N. coordination.

QUESTIONER: What I'm not hearing, sir, is whether those benchmarks might provide a means for those allies to be reluctant, if they'll want to wait until a couple of ticks of the benchmark are measured before they say, okay, we'll commit more troops and equipment.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: No. I think that's not the discussion, sir. In all honesty, that's not the discussion.

The discussion is, of course, that I will do my utmost to see that the limitations, the so-called caveats on the use of the force, are brought down. In Kosovo, we have, by the way, been very successful in doing that, and we are working constantly in bringing those caveats down.

I'm a realist as well on the other hand. If, at the end of the day, I'm faced with a choice or the alliance is faced with a choice, do we have the forces with the certain caveats or don't we have the forces at all, I have to be a realist. But I'll not be happy and I'll not be satisfied until we see a fundamental diminishing of the caveats, of the limitations.

I do not think there is a direct relationship between the benchmarks,

which have a lot to do with reconstruction and development, and the willingness of nations to provide the necessary forces.

QUESTIONER: Hello. I'm Lana George from Voice of America. I'm going to return you to the region of southeastern Europe and try to ask actually two questions.

The first one is: Considering Kosovo, how do you comment calls for Russian peacekeepers and police to come back to Kosovo especially the northern part and actually some calls for division of Kosovo?

My second question would be: What's your message from the summit going to be for the countries aspiring to become NATO members, namely Montenegro?

Thank you.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: All right. First of all, I have no information about things I read in the press about Russian peacekeepers. So I can't possibly answer that.

I take issue, not with you personally, but with what you said about the northern part. There is no northern part. There is geographically a northern part, but Kosovo is one. Kosovo is one, and we should definitely not accept the notion that there will be two Kosovos. There will not be two Kosovos, and there cannot be two Kosovos.

But, on the Russians, I do not have information.

On Montenegro, I do think, but again this is all in the admittedly final preparatory stage. I do hope that if decisions are going to be made on only three aspiring nations, we can also see if and how we can bring our relationship a notch up with Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

I think as far as Serbia is concerned, I think we should keep the Serbs as close together to us as possible but given the present situation, I think the initiative in the relationship should now primarily come from the Serbs themselves. We have a Partnership for Peace with Serbia. We have good cooperation with Serbia, but under presence circumstances it might be a bit difficult. But we'll certainly not forget Montenegro, if that was your question.

QUESTIONER: Sorry. Just for the record, I wasn't trying to divide Kosovo, just geographically.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: But that's why I said I don't take issue, but your question gave me the opportunity to make this point.

QUESTIONER: Yunet Ingersoll with Turkish Television.

To be more specific, Secretary General, what exactly do you want from Turkey on Afghanistan, like sending 1,000 troops to the Helmand Province or lifting the caveats once and for all?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Well, there are a lot of things on my wish list, but I'm not going to single out Turkey. But I would hope that at a

certain stage also Turkey, but that goes for all the other allies, that Turkey would be in a position to do more in Afghanistan. The what and the where is then to be decided, of course, in cooperation with our military advisors.

Turkey is running, as you know, a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Wardak Province, and Turkey is militarily present. Turkey has a good history, a very positive history in Afghanistan by taking the command advice of the senior civilian representative. Former minister Hikmet Çetin was the senior NATO representative. In other words, Turkey has a good record.

But if you ask me as the Secretary General of NATO, would I be happy if Turkey could do more in Afghanistan, my answer would be an unconditional yes, sir, but that goes also for other allies, clearly.

QUESTIONER: Cynthia Schneider, professor at Georgetown and a nonresident fellow at Brookings.

Mr. Secretary General, Jaap, thank you so much for your address. I want to come back to your alignment of reconstruction and military efforts in Afghanistan. At the end of the movie, Charlie Wilson's War, there is a very memorable, haunting scene when he goes back to the Congress and says, after spending one billion to fight the Russians in Afghanistan, will you allocate one million to build schools for reconstruction, and the Congressmen laugh at him. That's a movie, but if

you look at the budget allocations of the United States today, it's very close to reality.

So when you align reconstruction and military efforts, with which you know I completely agree, are you suggesting then that the reconstruction is going to be done by the NATO forces or is it going to be done through development agencies and, if so, how will we ever get enough money in that direction and not exclusively to the military to accomplish what needs to be done?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Thank you, Professor. Thank you, Cynthia.

To explain, the professor was the U.S. Ambassador to the Hague, so we have a deal of common history together.

Cynthia, let me ask you along these lines. I go a few years back into the short history since 2001 to explain why I'm saying what I'm saying. The Taliban was chased out. The military came in. The military were the only foreign presence and the military were forced, and they did that very well by the way, to be involved in reconstruction and development, although in the beginning on a modest scale.

Then came the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, a combination of the civilian and the military. The military learned that they are a bit more than fighting soldiers, but they are also involved in and good at

development cooperation.

My opinion is that NATO should not develop into a development cooperation agency. NATO is a political-military alliance. NATO runs rather the risk in Afghanistan at the moment, for reasons you gave in your question, or overeating. We should do the job we have got from the international community and from the Security Council, and we should do it well, and that's a challenge. We are doing it well, but we should do it well.

I do think, and I come back again to the big meeting in Bucharest. I do think that what we should do is sing in the chorus of those who convince the other members of the international community and, here, I come back to the definition of the we -- who are we in Afghanistan -- to realize that also they should enter into a long-term commitment.

So, if you ask me concretely about further reconstruction and development cooperation, that is basically not a NATO job. That is not a soldier's job, but the history in Afghanistan has caused the situation that the soldiers are doing this and that the soldiers are doing it very well. It's a question of money.

You mentioned your own nation, your own government. Why is the situation in the east of Afghanistan, at the moment, going relatively well? That is because the United States of America, on the basis of experience

with counterinsurgency, are also spending huge amounts of money, relatively to what the others do, on the Quick Impact, on the reconstruction projects. So that group of Afghan people who are sitting on the fence, who are not anti-the international community in Afghanistan, who are not anti-ISAF but sitting on the fence and are looking how the dice will roll, do see that they are much better off with the support of the international community than without it.

But, at the end of the day, I do think and that's why I made the plea for the U.N. coordinator, for the U.N. hopefully being in the position of having its offices also in other parts of Afghanistan. I really think that we need this coordinator. I really think that the international community on the civilian side needs to coordinate its activities better because they are responsible, together with the Afghan government, for reconstruction and development and at the end of the day, not NATO, although we are doing very well.

I'm a regular visitor, so I see your guys, your forces. I see the international forces, and they are doing extremely well.

MR. BENJAMIN: Would you like to hazard a guess as to when we'll have that coordinator?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Well, I do hope that after the slightly unfortunate end of the candidacy of Lord Ashdown, sooner, rather than

later. If I say sooner, rather than later, I would hope that here we are again, in the 22 working days we have between now and the summit in Bucharest, we would have the international coordinator.

QUESTIONER: Mr. Secretary General, Tim Stotzenberger with CNN.

You mentioned earlier that there could not be two Kosovos. This is sort of a two-part question or response to that question. Do you foresee any danger in Serbian nationalists in regards to trying to partition a piece of Kosovo or at least ratcheting up their efforts and, if they do so, do you think NATO should and will send additional troops there preemptively?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Well, here we are in the situation that I must make a few remarks about the division of labor because KFOR, the NATO forces in Kosovo, is not a police force. As I said, I think, we have the Kosovo Police Force. The problem at the moment is that Serbs are leaving the Kosovo Police Force, and that's an important notion. Then we have the UNMIK Police, the United Nations Police Force and then we have KFOR.

So KFOR is not in the first line. KFOR has a mandate, a Security Council mandate creating freedom of movement, creating security and stability. If that KFOR mandate would need extra forces, we have planned and, if the reserves are necessary, the reserves will come. But I said in

my speech, we have -- and I'm very grateful for that -- not as yet seen a need for extra soldiers coming into Kosovo.

But do realize what the division of labor in Kosovo is. KFOR will do its job, but the UNMIK Police is also doing its job.

And, I agree with you, there is one Kosovo.

MR. BENJAMIN: You're not from CNN, are you?

QUESTIONER: No, I'm not. Secretary General, I'd like to know if you would agree with what Secretary Gates was saying recently during his European tour which is to say that there's a confusion in the mind of European electorates. They confuse Iraq with Afghanistan, and that is making it harder for NATO countries to recruit, to send troops to Afghanistan.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: I think, quite honestly, that is over. When I became NATO Secretary General, which was in early 2004, there were many unhealed scars of the Iraqi War. But I think, as we speak in 2008, now I think those scars are healed. I do not think that public opinion in Europe, which I follow fairly closely, is using these elements or that political leaders are using these elements. I think that's over, quite honestly.

I do think, by the way, that in the longer term NATO is running a training mission in Iraq. In the longer term, having a more stable and

more secure Iraq is very important. All allies realize that, despite the fact that they were very divided when this whole thing started, but that was not only in NATO, the case. That was in the European Union and the Security Council because they are basically the same nations, of course. But I think that argument does not play a role.

QUESTIONER: Sir, thank you. Salva Kenter, I'm Chairman of the Atlantic Council of Montenegro, and I'm really glad to be here today.

I think that people in the Balkans, in that area, really appreciate everything that NATO has done in the past. But if we are talking about the future, I think that we really have to realize that, if I may say, the only or the best warranty for the security in that region is that all three countries -- Croatia and Albania and Macedonia as well -- become members of NATO at the Bucharest summit.

I don't want to ask you about that because I know that you cannot predict what's going to happen, but I really think that they should become members and I think that all of you here agree with that.

Regarding Montenegro, I just want to stress that Montenegro is almost ready and will be ready very soon to send our troops to Afghanistan or Iraq and in that way to show that we really want to contribute to the alliance. So in that respect, what can Montenegro expect from the NATO summit in Bucharest?

Thank you.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: I spoke with your President only a few days ago in Brussels. I hope I can make your day to a certain extent by answering you that indeed the exact results of the summit, I cannot and will not predict. That would not be appropriate.

But I can underline and completely agree with you when you say that I also do see, and I've said this many times, only one recipe for lasting security in your region, and that is Euro-Atlantic integration. That is integration into NATO and integration, I hasten to add, into the European Union. I think that is the only way, the only path, the only route to security and stability.

But -- here comes the but -- that's a performance-based process. NATO's door is open. There's no enlargement fatigue in NATO. If we detect a certain amount of enlargement fatigue in the European Union, I do not detect that in NATO at all.

So I hope that we'll have an positive summit. I can express my hope. I can't predict the end result. I can express a hope that we have a productive and positive summit for your region.

QUESTIONER: Hi. I'm Adam Graham Silverman, Congressional Quarterly.

Mr. Secretary, I wanted to get your reaction to a couple of

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comments about Afghanistan from U.S. officials recently. First, from Secretary Rice, who said in recent weeks that NATO allies have prepared for a peacekeeping mission whereas they should have been preparing for a peacemaking mission, implying that there will be casualties and the need for a long-term commitment there.

Secondly, from several defense officials that the approach in Afghanistan has been a minimalist one, that this idea of doing what we can as opposed to what we must. The implication there is that even if there is appropriate patience, the strategy may not be appropriate.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Let me note the last part of your question is a bit difficult for me to comment on, unidentified defense officials, because I know many unidentified defense officials.

Let me answer your question seriously by saying that the reasoning behind the first part of your question, I would not follow given the fact that many NATO allies have suffered many fatalities and casualties in Afghanistan. I think the Canadian rate is now over 80 as we speak. So I think that all NATO allies realize that this is a tough mission.

I said in my introduction and there I follow what you were saying in your remarks and in your question, that this is not a simple peacekeeping mission. I don't like those discussions, by the way, peacekeeping or peacemaking. It is to hide the fact and to create fog or mist that in

Afghanistan reconstruction and development is not possible by also acting militarily against the ones who would like to spoil that process of reconstruction and development, and that's exactly what NATO is doing.

There, we have to be fair. I take your point, and I take Secretary Rice's point. There, we have to be fair with our public opinions and not telling them and not explaining them that we have a force which is now almost 50,000 strong, by the way, that we have a force which is patrolling a bit and keeping the peace a bit. That is not the case.

But let me also repeat what I said in my speech, that as we speak, 70 percent of the security incidents are taking place in 10 percent of the territory of Afghanistan where 6 percent of the population lives. I think I would like to see those figures improve, but given patience again, given the situation where we came from, that is not that bad.

MR. BENJAMIN: Let me interrupt here with one question that I think is the flipside of the gentleman's question. One argument that one hears in particular from Afghans is that there is waning support for the mission in some quarters because there have been too many civilian casualties in part because of perhaps too, shall we say, robust efforts at force protection and too high a reliance on air power.

Is this something that NATO is looking at? Should we expect any change in the rules of engagement?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: We have looked at that very carefully when there was criticism, also public criticism about President Karzai. We've taken him and that criticism very seriously, and we have adapted and amended our procedures as far as the question is concerned, how can avoid as much, as we can, innocent civilian casualties. Completely avoidable, I hope you will agree with me, in such a conflict, you can never completely and totally avoid civilian casualties, but we have amended and adapted our procedures to avoid civilian casualties wherever possible.

I always add, by the way, the Kandahar suicide attack killing 80 innocent Afghan civilians. Talking about civilian casualties, we are in a different moral category than the ones who blow themselves up and kill innocent Afghan civilians, but we do too, and I apologize on behalf of NATO if we do. It is not totally unavoidable and inevitable, but we have adapted our procedures.

QUESTIONER: Secretary General, I'm with the Afghanistan service of the Voice of America. You can see we are well represented here today.

You spoke earlier about the need for the Afghan government to do more to take on more ownership of its future. Do you think the government has not done enough in this regard so far and what specifically, what specific measures or steps in the near term would you like to see?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: I gave a few elements in my speech. I would like to see the fight against corruption being fought stronger by the Afghan government, why not at a certain stage visibly bringing people to court. We have made that plea with President Karzai last week when we were there in Afghanistan.

I would like to see that governors, police chiefs are seriously vetted as far as their stake in corruption is concerned. We really need noncorrupt governors. We have seen a lot of improvement here.

I think that the Afghan part of the counternarcotics strategy could be stronger.

So, in other words, when we are discussing, as we do here and now in Washington at Brookings, there is also an Afghan side of the medal. An Afghan ownership and an Afghan face means that we also agree, to give you another example, that we are defending universal values there and that we share those universal values. I say this fully respecting, of course, the Islamic character of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. As I said, we are not going to impose anything of our culture on Afghanistan, but there are universal values, and that is the reason that the U.N., the United Nations Security Council sent us there because we have to defend universal values.

We should do that together, and I think in some of these areas a

greater effort would be highly appreciated.

QUESTIONER: Thank you for coming, Mr. Secretary General. My name is Stacy Foust. I'm from Tchecky and Company Consulting, Incorporated.

You already talked a little about the international development community and the importance of development and reconstruction projects to the mission and also the need for division of labor between NATO and the military side of it and the development side.

I was wondering if you could say a few more words about the relationship between the international development community and the projects and the development workers that are there and the NATO alliance and also where this relationship needs to go in the future. What can the development community and NATO do to help each other in the mission?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: We should, given the fact that we have a shared responsibility, and that's also new to NATO in Afghanistan. That's also new. We should and we're having a dialogue with the international development community.

We have a dialogue with the nongovernmental community, and you know that the NGOs do not all think alike. Some of them think that working too closely with the military is an infringement on their impartiality

and neutrality. I think we have to respect that. Others are working with the military in the PRTs or in any other way.

But we do need, if you want really to have a comprehensive approach, that's our jargon again for doing things together in Afghanistan. We do, as NATO, a discussion with the development community. I think I mentioned the World Bank with whom I am and we are in regular touch.

The same goes that we are at the moment, seeing how we can bring our relationship with the United Nations on a more structural footing because after all it is the U.N. In almost all NATO operations and missions, ladies and gentlemen, do not forget that NATO is operating under the banner of the United Nations. Afghanistan is U.N. Kosovo is U.N. The NATO training mission in Iraq is U.N.

The assistance of the African Union is not directly U.N. but has a U.N. blessing because there's no resolution for the reasons we all know on Darfur. If we're going to support the African Union as far as Somalia is concerned, it will also be with the blessing of the U.N.

The only operation which is not directly or indirectly U.N.-mandated is our naval operation in the Mediterranean which started after 9/11, which is in Article V of the Washington Treaty Operation, anti-terrorism. The interesting thing is in that operation the Russians participate with us. So it's interesting also in the NATO-Russia relationship that the only Article V

operation NATO is having is from time to time with Russian participation.

But if you say the international development community, NATO should not develop -- I repeat -- into a development cooperation agency. We are not. But we do need, if you want to take the comprehensive approach seriously, we do need to talk with the international development community.

I have also opened a dialogue with the European Commission. NATO and the European Union were channeling their relationship which is not without complexities from time to time, as you might know, through (inaudible), through the Council. The commission, but also if you look at Afghanistan, is very important because the commission is financing projects in Afghanistan.

So my answer to your question is an unconditional yes as long as NATO is not pretending that we are going to coordinate others. We are coordinating with others, and that's a major difference, I think.

QUESTIONER: Landos, Greek Daily.

Mr. Secretary General, did you discuss the name issue between Athens and Skopje with President Bush in the White House area today? Also, could you clarify for us the NATO position vis-à-vis to Greece's right to exercise a veto?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: My answer to your first question is yes, I

did discuss it with President Bush, but that's all he had. That's all I'm going to say about this, I'm afraid, because the Oval Office is the Oval Office. But, yes, we did discuss it.

I can also tell you, as you might know, that Monday next, in three days time, I'll go to Athens to meet Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis and Minister Bakoyannis and others in Athens.

In answering your question, I have to say two things. First of all, NATO, of course, does not play a direct role because that role is between the two parties, the two nations concerned under the aegis of the United Nations. I'm not saying that it is not a relevant subject for NATO.

And, I'm going to repeat my slightly enigmatic last sentence I used 25 minutes ago: One nation is in the alliance and the other one is not or not yet, I should say perhaps.

QUESTIONER: Mr. Secretary, Ivo Pulis from VOA.

Is Croatia in or out -- you must mentioned in and out -- and are you happy with the performance of Croatian soldiers in Afghanistan?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Oh, extremely happy. The Croatian participation, and that goes for many other partners, is very important. One of the yardsticks, of course, by which nations who are knocking on the door NATO, one of the yardsticks by which they are measured is are they willing to be a security exporter with us, not only a security consumer

but also a security exporter. Croatia is clearly one of those nations who has a good track record of being a security exporter, and I'm happy to hear from my Montenegrin friend that Montenegro, I know that, is also in the process.

Let us not fool ourselves. Also, very small contributions are relevant. I mean I'm not going to expect Montenegro to send us a brigade. Of course, not. Small contributions are important. Niche capabilities are important, and Croatia, I can unconditionally answer you, plays already for quite some time a very important role in this regard.

QUESTIONER: Is Croatia ready for the Bucharest summit?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Have I answered that question? Thank you for finding another intelligent formula. No tickets are punched yet, but I think Croatia is on the right track, but the decision will be made in Bucharest and not at Brookings. They both start with a B, but let's leave to Bucharest.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. Okay.

MR. BENJAMIN: We're deeply disappointed.

QUESTIONER: Mr. Secretary General, Croatian News Agency.

MR. BENJAMIN: It's the old one-two.

QUESTIONER: Do you expect that NATO will be able to build a consensus for enlargement at Bucharest despite the critics who say those

three countries are not prepared for membership and they only intend to be beneficiaries, not contributors, to the security umbrella?

Second question, how do you evaluate the influence of the establishment of an independent Kosovo will have on speeding up the process of NATO enlargement in the region?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: On the very first part of your question, my answer is yes, I think there will be a consensus in Bucharest. I do not exactly know, and I'm not going to speculate because here we have another try, on what the result of that consensus will be, but I am confident that there will be consensus.

On the second part of your question, I do not think that the events in Kosovo will fundamentally influence the process of the relationship between NATO and the region.

The only remark I've made and I repeat, I am very much in favor of seriously building on our relationship with Serbia. That is not so easy at the moment, and I think that if we look at who should take the initiative, that initiative should now come from Serbia. We took the very important decision last year to have Serbia in the Partnership for Peace. On the whole I think Serbia, as a very important nation in the region, should come closer to Euro-Atlantic structures, but the Serbs finally decide themselves what they want and what they do.

But, on the whole, I do not think that that will have a major influence on NATO's relationship with the nations concerned in the western Balkans.

MR. BENJAMIN: I think we have time for two more questions.

QUESTIONER: Mr. Secretary General, I'm Viola Gienger from Bloomberg News.

Regarding the comments you made about disagreeing with Mike McConnell's estimate of control of territory in Afghanistan, did you discuss that with President Bush and can you say more about that?

And, in reference to the declaration you mentioned being planned for Bucharest, related to a call for the international community, not just NATO members, to help more in Afghanistan, did you have something particular in mind or some particular countries who might be in a position to help in Afghanistan?

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Well, on the second part, I think the fact that we all get together in Bucharest in this format, a major group of nations around the table and a major group of international organizations around the table, is not so much inviting Nation A or Organization B to come forward to do more but on the basis of the Afghanistan Compact and in the presence of the head of state of Afghanistan, President Karzai, show that we do care and show that our commitment is a longer term

commitment.

I hope that on that basis then, individual member states of the European Union, that the World Bank, that the U.N. can translate such a signal of solidarity in very concrete things. That is the object of the exercise, I think.

But let's not forget, we are not reinventing the wheel here. We have an Afghan Compact which everybody signed up to. We have an Afghan National Development Strategy. So we have the documents in place. We think, given the fact that so many non-NATO allies are participating in ISAF and that we attach so much importance to our relationship with other international organizations, that bringing them all back together is the good idea in Bucharest.

It goes without saying that what I say publicly I also discuss privately. The opposite is not always true, of course. Also, on the basis of the analysis our military commanders on the ground make -- I tell you I just got back from Afghanistan five days ago, six days ago -- I do not share that analysis

The implication, that is probably not what was said. I haven't read that verbatim yet, but the implication of it in the media, I read in your reports that as soon as the word, tribal, was used, it was that is because the international community is failing. That link, I think, is not correct.

That link is wrong as it, in my opinion, not correct to say that -- how many percent was it, James?

JAMES: Ten.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Pardon?

JAMES: The Taliban controls 10 and the government, 30.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: Yes, that the Taliban controls 10 and the government, 30. I think simply that analysis is not on the mark. So, there, I have the privilege to disagree with this intelligence estimate. That can happen, as you know.

MR. BENJAMIN: Maybe it should happen more often.

QUESTIONER: Colonel Datta, FPA and President of Indian Veteran Officers Association in America.

My question is the British operated in India for 200 years and intentionally operated in frontier provinces as well as in Afghanistan, but they couldn't master the Afghan psyche. Now, 50,000 troops and more are operating.

Mr. Secretary General, are you satisfied with that orientation, knowing the cultural nuances and the languages of Pashto and Dardic.

SEC. GEN. SCHEFFER: I'll be the first one to admit, sir, I'm glad to have a question from you coming from India because India, as you know, is also playing an important role in Afghanistan.

I'll be the first one to admit that this problem, for the reasons you mentioned, is a very complex one, and that is not so easy to solve. Let's be honest and fair about that, if I leave you here with the Secretary General of NATO thinks it is complex and it's difficult.

But if we realize, and I think I said it in so many words in my speech, sir, that instability in Pakistan and instability in the frontier means instability in Afghanistan, the opposite is also true. So that is very much interlinked.

What do we need? What do we need? First of all, we need a serious military to military dialogue between Afghanistan, Pakistan and NATO. That's what we have in the so-called Tripartite Commission. What I'm trying to do, and I was the first NATO Secretary General ever to go to Islamabad slightly over half a year ago, is that we, us in NATO, we need a political dialogue matching that close military cooperation.

Point number three, we need to depart from the notion that Pakistan is part of the solution and we should not only brand Pakistan as part of the problem.

But you're right, it is complex. History does prove that it is complex, as you said. But we have to do everything we can to assist and help the Pakistanis. I can tell you it's my intention that as soon as there is a new government in Pakistan I intend to travel again to Islamabad to talk to the president, to talk to the government, to see how we can lift the level of our

political dialogue in the interest of minimizing this cross-instability around the borderline there.

MR. BENJAMIN: Mr. Secretary General, I want to thank you very much. Technology always lets you down.

I want to thank you very much for a very wide-ranging and insightful discussion with us today. I think you've given us a real flavor for the challenges that the alliance faces in the runup to Bucharest and the issues that will be on the table there. You've certainly given us a much deeper understanding of what we face together in Afghanistan and at the same time you've given us, I think, a strong declaration of determination and resolve and optimism as well as a defense of that cardinal virtue, patience.

You, on a number of occasions, invoked the number, 22, as the number of working days left before the summit. I have a strong suspicion that you will actually be working on days that are not working days.

We wish you all the best in your labors.

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