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PROSPECTS FOR AFGHANISTAN'S FUTURE:

ASSESSING THE OUTCOME OF THE AFGHAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. INDYK: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Foreign Policy Program at Brookings. I am Martin Indyk, believe it or not, the Director of Foreign Policy at Brookings, and we're very glad to have the opportunity to host this session on the Prospects for Afghanistan's Future: Assessing the Outcome of the Afghan Presidential Election and its implication for future American policy in Afghanistan.

I don't quite know what all of you are doing here in Washington this week, but we're very glad to see you.

We are very fortunate to have a very experienced panel to lead our discussion today. I would just introduce them quickly, and then we'll hear from them some opening presentations, we'll have a bit of a discussion between us, and then we'll turn to the audience for questions.

The lead-off speaker will be Mike O'Hanlon who is the Director of Research in the Foreign Policy Program at the Brookings Institution. He specializes in U.S. defense strategy, the use of military force, homeland security and American national security policy. He has just come back on Monday from a visit to Afghanistan where he participated in the election monitoring with the International Republican Institute.

Mike, as you may know, is also the overall convener of the Iraq Index and now the Afghanistan Index and, coming to you soon, the Pakistan Index. A prolific author, his latest books are a *War Like No Other: The Truth About China's Challenge to America* which he wrote with

another Foreign Policy at Brookings Senior Fellow, Richard Bush, and also *Hard Power* which he co-authored with Kurt Campbell.

Mike, before he came to Brookings, was an analyst at the Congressional Budget Office and has also worked at the Institute for Defense Analysis and has been an advisor in particular to General Petraeus, both when he was Commander in Iraq and now as CENTCOM Commander.

He's going to be followed by Tony Cordesman. I will have to say at the beginning, unfortunately, Tony has got to run out at 4:00. So I hope you will excuse him.

Tony is also, I think, very well known here and across America. He's the Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at CSIS and a National Security Analyst for ABC News. During his time at CSIS, he's been a Director of the Gulf Net Assessment Project, the Gulf in Transition Study and Principal Investigator of the Homeland Defense Project.

He, too, is a prolific author. In fact, I think he probably is a little more prolific, if that were ever possible, than Mike O'Hanlon since he has written 50 books including a 4-volume series on the *Lessons of Modern War*.

He formerly served as national security assistant to Senator John McCain on the Senate Armed Services Committee and as Director of Intelligence Assessment in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Tony and Kim Kagan, who I'll introduce in a moment, have both worked in Afghanistan recently as part of a team that was sent out there to advise General McChrystal as he looked at his review of U.S. strategy there.

Kim Kagan is the President of the Institute for the Study of War. She's a military historian who has taught at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, at Yale, at Georgetown and at American University.

Kim has conducted six battlefield circulations of Iraq since May of 2007 as an advisor to the Commanding General, and I think it's now two tours in Afghanistan for CENTCOM and for General McChrystal. She has participated formally on the Joint Campaign Plan Assessment Team for the Multi-National Force Iraq and has a host of other advisory roles to the military.

She's the author of the *Eye of Command* and *The Surge: A Military History*.

And, finally, we'll have our very own Bruce Riedel, Senior Fellow at the Saban Center in the Foreign Policy Program at Brookings. Bruce Riedel has had over 30 years experience in the CIA as an analyst but more recently has worked in senior capacities at the National Security Council where he has been a Middle East advisor and South Asia advisor to three Presidents: Bush, Clinton and Bush. He has also served in a senior position in the Defense Department and also as the Intelligence Advisor to the Supreme commander of NATO.

More recently, Bruce was tapped by President Obama in the early days of the administration to chair the strategy review of the strategy towards Afghanistan. And, he is also the author of a recently critically acclaimed book on the surge for *Search for Al Qaeda*.

So, as you can see, we have a very distinguished panel deeply experienced in the issue that we're going to discuss today, and I'll call on Mike O'Hanlon first to lead us off about the elections.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Martin, for a very kind introduction. Thank you all for being here. And, I also, I'm sure, speak for everyone here in wanting to say a special thank you to our troops and the civilians and aid and development workers who are over working so hard, risking so much in Afghanistan right now.

I would also like to thank the International Republican Institute which, along with NDI and other organizations, monitored the elections last week in Afghanistan, and I was lucky to be part of a delegation with Gahl Burt and Connie Newman and Tom Garrett, Lorne Craner and others who were part of that group led by Rich Williamson.

I just want to say a few words about the elections and then just tee up one quick thought, one or two quick thoughts on broader issues that I'm sure Tony, Kim and Bruce will then delve into in more detail.

Let me just say a few words about the elections, and this is almost getting to be the sort of topic where you check the web site every six or twelve hours to see what's developed because it's a fairly exciting period

right now as we try to see not only who might be ahead and by how much but how the different forces within Afghanistan are, frankly, vying for their proper role in this election process.

With President Karzai and his office and supporters having been quite early to declare overwhelming victory, that would be sufficient that no second round of voting would be required. You probably know that you need 50 percent plus 1 to avoid a need for a runoff which would probably occur in October if required. And, Karzai has been out there, along with his people, saying: We got 70 percent of the vote. No need to worry about a runoff.

But it's very interesting to see the jockeying and the Independent Election Commission now saying today that they've only counted or can only vouch so far for 10 percent of the votes and out of that 10 percent it's almost neck and neck between Karzai and former Foreign Minister Abdullah.

I have no idea, and I can't give you any insight into what the real numbers are. So I will apologize for that and be right up front with that in advance. Let me say a few things about what was good about this election from my perspective, what was not so good and then, as I say, finish up with a couple broader thoughts.

There were a lot of both -- a lot of good things and a lot of bad things about this election -- and I think the glass is somewhere around 55

percent full, just to give you a sense of my bottom line. That's not too precise of a figure, but there's plenty of both to go around.

In terms of the good things about these elections as I observe them, the mechanics of how election day was conducted in most of the country anyway, I think the mechanics were pretty good. Election workers seemed very well prepared, very professional. All the voting stations that we went into on behalf of IRI in Kabul and in most other parts of the country where we could observe looked like they were being fairly proficiently organized and run. People seemed to be on top of their game. IRI observers who know comparative elections much better than I do -- this was my first time monitoring an election -- said that the overall level of professionalism among the workers was pretty good, and there were actually a lot of accolades for the performance of the Afghan police and the army who provided security at the sites.

Now, of course, we read a lot of news about the violence on election day and election week more generally and tragically today, and our hearts go out to the people in Kandahar who have suffered a great loss today with a truck bomb that seems to have killed at least 40 people just in the last few hours. But, nonetheless, despite several hundred Taliban attacks and broader insurgent attacks on election day itself, there were quite modest numbers of overall fatalities, and most of these polling stations seemed reasonably well secured by primarily Afghan security forces.

Now, the big caveat, I was not in southern Kandahar or Helmand, and none of us were, and there were undoubtedly some irregularities that occurred in places like that, in the more war-torn parts of the country, that were worse. And, there may also have been some fraud, and you're seeing a healthy disagreement right now between Mr. Abdullah and President Karzai and others about how much fraud may have occurred on behalf of the state in these places. But most of what I saw was pretty well organized.

A couple other quick things, and I'm going to speed up here. The campaign process of the summer, I was not in Afghanistan for most of that, but we were lucky enough to hear from a lot of people who were and who organized watchdog organizations, who ran either private or government-sponsored but independent organizations, and they documented the amount of press coverage of different candidates and so forth. State-run media definitely favored President Karzai quite a bit too much, but private media seemed to have done a pretty good job of covering all the candidates more or less in proportion to what their respective standing would seem to warrant.

There were live televised presidential debates. There were campaign rallies around the country, including in Kandahar by several major candidates, where people actually talked about the issues -- with Abdullah Abdullah, for example, having this idea that governors in Afghanistan should be directly elected by the people of their province,

there being 34 provinces in Afghanistan, rather than being appointed by the President as is the case today.

We can get into that in discussion about the merits of that point, but right now I'm just trying to say the candidates were actually debating the merits of that system during the campaign, which is a pretty good substantive debate for a country that's so new to democracy. That's one more thing that was pretty good.

And, now we're seeing, as I say, the Independent Election Commission and the Election Complaints Commission do their work and, frankly, push back against President Karzai and anyone else trying to declare immediate results when the actual data is not yet in because people haven't yet been able to scrutinize how many of the ballots were properly documented, properly stored and therefore should count towards the outcome. And so, we're seeing again the independent organizations inside Afghanistan do a pretty good job. That's all on the good side.

The bad side, I mentioned the state media really emphasizing Karzai way too much, in the 80 to 90 percent vicinity in terms of how much coverage they gave him versus anyone else, or he got 80 to 90 percent of the total throughout the campaign period.

The enthusiasm of the Afghan people was not very high because, frankly, they didn't see any candidate apparently as being all that stellar. They probably like President Karzai and recognize his name and

otherwise are prepared to see certain virtues to continuity, but they also know that he hasn't done a great job for their country.

There's a certain amount of fragile optimism in Afghanistan that we've seen in some International Republican Institute polls and other surveys recently, but it's probably quite shallow and fragile because, of course, the overall trend line over the last three to four years is declining optimism, declining pro-Americanism, declining views towards NATO and towards the Afghans' own government. So, when you sum it all, the public opinion polls are better right now about all these things, about the future, about NATO, about us, but we better take advantage of this last opportunity because I have a feeling that it's the last fresh start we can really have in Afghanistan.

The security environment was actually and obviously quite poor. The police may have repulsed all of these attacks pretty well, but there were close to 300 of them initiated by insurgents on election day alone. There were big car bombs that went off in Kabul twice during election week and a number of other problems.

Turnout was quite mediocre to my eye. The IRI did not come up with an official estimate of what we thought were the turnout figures, but from what I saw and from what colleagues told me I would have to guess that the national turnout was probably closer to the 30 percent ballpark than to the 50 percent ballpark that has often been discussed. And, that's

a reflection of a combination of fear and apathy, and that can't be a very healthy thing when you look at it that way.

Okay. So that's my overall view on the elections.

Just two quick points to finish up on broader issues that again I'm sure Tony, Kim and Bruce will discuss in greater detail in their way, but I just want to say a couple of things.

First, I know the American public's support for this war is declining. People have a lot of questions about whether we should be in Afghanistan, whether it's becoming the next Vietnam. All these questions are legitimate in my eye, even though I'm a supporter of the mission.

But let me say one thing that I came away from this trip firmly believing. Even though I haven't worked with him as much as others on this panel, General McChrystal, who now leads NATO and American forces, is an outstanding leader on a par with General Petraeus in terms of his understanding of this kind of missions, his commitment, his intensity and his willingness to accept bad news and not close his eyes to it and to build a new strategy around the reality that he's fully aware that right now we are not winning this war. And so, I just want to give a personal expression of admiration for him.

He's a commander that most Americans don't know yet very well. I hope he'll spend a little bit more time speaking to the American people. He's got a war to fight right now, and the Pentagon has to figure out how much to ask him to come back to talk about the war in the coming months

versus how much to have Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen do the talking. My own clear and strong view is that General McChrystal is the right guy because he understands the battlefield better than anyone else, and he can answer the tough questions that Americans are understandably and appropriately asking about whether this war really is winnable.

Last point, Admiral Mullen this weekend, and this actually gets to my point about why I think McChrystal is the right person to speak to the person. I'm a big fan of Admiral Mullen, but I don't totally agree with the message he conveyed this weekend when he said the situation in Afghanistan was continuing to worsen. I think it has not yet improved, and it's extremely worrisome. But, if it truly is continuing to worsen after the addition of about 30,000 additional American troops this year, people can rightfully ask why we should keep at it.

And, I think frankly a little more textured, detailed explanation of what has happened so far this spring and summer and what still must happen for us to be successful is required. I'm sure we'll get into that more in the coming speakers in terms of what's going well, what's not going well, but I would just like to register a note of mild dissent from that characterization of the war. I think we are seeing some progress in a limited way in some of the pockets where American and NATO forces have beefed up their presence in the last few months, but there is a long way to go, and most of Afghanistan is still not nearly secure enough.

I'll stop there. Thanks, Martin.

MR. INDYK: Thank you.

Tony, continuing to worsen or has it improved?

MR. CORDESMAN: Let me focus on something, if I may, a bit different. I think having watched us try to fight counterinsurgency for half a century, we often find ourselves focusing on the threat or focusing on the host country and literally focusing on ourselves.

And, Mike quite correctly pointed out the importance of General McChrystal. I'd say the same thing of Ambassador Eikenberry.

We don't normally talk about following the money or following the troops when we talk about the way you resource wars, but over the last seven years we have had almost no coherence in our strategy, in our civil military planning. It took us more than half a decade to begin to seriously resource the war. Most of the aid money has gone outside the country, been wasted or been corrupt. We found ourselves only seriously beginning to create Afghan forces in terms of actual flows of money in 2006. Our troop levels have never approached the troop levels we've had inside Iraq. And, in the process, we went from a tattered remnant of the Taliban to a movement which arguably, because no one really knows, our intelligence can't cover significant parts of the country accurately. But, according to U.N. and other maps, we've managed to lose control or see a high-risk area in about 40 percent of the country, and that has been a steady process of deterioration since 2003.

Now, General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry will come back in September or October, and, if they are successful, they are going to have to ask for substantially more resources. An article in the *Washington Post,* which directly quoted the Ambassador, noted that he needed a budget more than twice the budget he is currently given. I think that is a minimal estimate of what it would take to create the civilian side.

U.S. troops are going to be needed because no other country is going to provide them. We are going to find ourselves having to finance a major expansion of the Afghan security forces. They may have, with considerable American support, been able to secure a few polling places for several days, but the police is so far largely a failure and the army is still emerging at the battalion level.

We have not provided any transparent or honest reporting on the growth of the threat. The closest we have are metrics which came out in a Department of Defense report issued in July. That does not show the expansion of the threat area anywhere in the document. And, up until January, we were still reporting as if there were only 13 out of 364 districts threatened by the enemy. That was flatly dishonest. It did not reflect any of the maps which showed the penetration of threat influence.

So we do not have transparency. We do not have integrity. And, we have not resourced this war.

What frightens me most -- because I think Mike is right, this is our last chance -- is that there is very sharp pressure on General McChrystal

and on Ambassador Eikenberry from the White House and the National Security Council not to ask for specific additions in resources when they come back in September or October. If they don't, it takes six to twelve months to go from an increase in resources to an increase in deployed action. That, to me, will be far more important than the election because if what they issue are concepts which are politically correct, something that was forced on former Ambassador Ron Newman, by a different administration, I believe we will lose this war.

I think what I found, being in Afghanistan, was all too familiar of problems not only in Iraq but in Vietnam years ago. We take the insurgency, and we define it in terms of tactical clashes rather than areas of influence. We do not properly measure the networks. We do not properly look at this in net assessment terms.

Where are Afghan forces active?

What do our PRTs cover?

What do our troops cover?

How much of the population can we secure?

We are fighting a war half a century later that we lose for similar reasons half a century earlier.

The level of coordination within the U.S. Embassy and mission team is extremely poor. While we were out there, people were trying to draft for the first time an integrated civil military plan for actual operations inside Afghanistan for the U.S. There was major pushback against having that

plan developed and implemented. And, frankly, I don't know how it came out.

When you talk to senior officials, you hear again and again about the problems inside the NATO effort, not because of NATO but because of individual country caveats and restrictions. They are considerably worse at the level of aid where there are no measures of effectiveness, generally no public audits and no indication of whether it is actually serving the problem of counterinsurgency.

We do need to build up much larger Afghan security forces. This is far more difficult than simply putting people through a training cycle, and there is heavier resistance to citing to us the number of mentors, trainers and partners they are being provided. But, in the last report the Department of Defense issued, we had less than 40 percent of the trainers required to deal for the force goal set in the summer of last year, and you cannot double the Afghan forces with those levels of resources.

When we talk about troop increases, as Mike did, it's important to note that it can take you three to six months to actually place troops in a new area, achieve a reasonable level of security and begin what we call clear, hold and build.

We talk about the election, but regardless of who wins we will not have people capable of governing. Karzai is corrupt and lacks capacity. Abdullah has governed precisely nothing by way of a large-scale structure. Everywhere we went, we heard about the corruption and lack of

capacity in far too many provincial governors who are not elected and who are not given money, and the situation in districts was far worse. If we are to win, we are going to have to create capabilities at the provincial and district level that do not today exist.

But, above all, if we are to have a strategy based on shape, clear, hold and build, we need to stop talking about smart power as if we had it. We don't have the civilians in the field. The so-called civilian surge will not come close to the minimal requirements. At the end of it, 80 percent of the people doing the civil and aid side of the work will still be in uniform.

And, if we can't define better what it means to do the civil side of operations -- that is hold and build -- we will continue to alienate the Afghan people rather than secure them and give them a future. As yet, you cannot find anywhere in American military literature a definition of what hold and build mean or a single statement by any U.S. official to indicate when the capability, the manpower or personpower, to provide hold and build will be deployed.

We've lost too many wars in too many places of this kind to have politically correct rhetoric and delusions. If we're going to deal with Afghanistan and Pakistan, we need transparency, we need honesty, and we need resources.

MR. INDYK: Thank you.

Well, that was a bit of a downer. Any light at the end of the tunnel, Kim?

MS. KAGAN: I think that there is some light at the end of the tunnel, but before I get to the light I would like to pick up where Mike left off and discus the comments that Admiral Mullen made over the weekend that the situation in Afghanistan is serious and deteriorating, a comment with which I agree on the basis of the time that I spent in the field this summer working with General McChrystal and his assessment team. I do not, of course, speak for General McChrystal, so let me give you my personal opinions about the situation in Afghanistan and why it is that we are facing a serious and deteriorating, really, set of circumstances.

The first thing that I would like to point out is that we can over-focus on the problems of our own institutions, and we are in fact fighting an enemy in Afghanistan. So, before we blame ourselves for all of our failures, we have to understand that whenever a large suicide bomb goes off or a large vehicle bomb goes off that is an event initiated by a thinking enemy, a person, a group of people who are trying to achieve very specific objectives on the ground.

And, the enemies that we face in Afghanistan, although diverse, are really quite startling in common in their shared objectives: first, of defeating Western powers of Afghanistan and, secondly, of distributing power within Afghanistan such that they get a major share regardless of what comes in the future. So we have a competition for political power among enemy groups, and we have anti-Westernism among enemy

groups who have been manifesting that anti-Westernism in violence against our forces.

But they are also trying to control the population and see to it that the population supports their organization rather than the government organizations. Therefore, when we look at what the enemy is doing on the ground, it's more than just these spectacular attacks that we see or the IEDs that go off and tragically kill American and Allied soldiers. Rather, what we see on the ground is an enemy that is trying to intimidate the population of Afghanistan. For example, in the southern areas of Afghanistan, where the Afghan Taliban led by Mullah Omar is quite active, we see that the Taliban is providing services to the population that normally the government would provide. Essentially, they are protecting the population. They are engaged in extracting taxes or providing justice through courts, and they are engaged in a campaign of assassination and intimidation against the population to ensure that the population does not have faith or confidence in the Afghan government.

So, as we look at these groups, their reach and their expanse, I think that we see that the areas that they control are actually increasing, the level of control that they are able to exercise is increasing, and that is why I think, particularly in southern Afghanistan, the situation is serious and deteriorating.

Likewise, in eastern Afghanistan where we see groups, such as the Hakani network, which have all sorts of links to terrorist groups within

Pakistan including Al Qaeda, we actually see an enemy that is becoming more capable of conducting spectacular attacks in the areas immediately around Kabul.

So, we have to understand that we have a capable and adapting enemy that is expanding in its reach. And, in a certain sense, our focus over the past years on violence against U.S. forces has prevented us from seeing what these enemy groups are doing against the population itself.

Now the second thing this means for us is that we do actually have a counterinsurgency fight to fight in Afghanistan, and it's really the prerequisite to a counterterrorism campaign. It can't be fought without a CT campaign, but also we can't have a CT campaign without CoIn. The truth of the matter is that we have to secure Afghanistan such that the government of Afghanistan actually has legitimate institutions that not only compete with the Taliban for control or the support of the population but actually so that they provide the services that the population needs -- making, really essentially hardening, Afghanistan against Taliban rule and the associated groups throughout Pakistan and indeed the wider Middle East that would choose Afghanistan as a safe haven again in the future should government institutions in Afghanistan collapse.

Now, that said, one could reasonably ask, as Mike has asked, why is it that if we have sent 30,000 and some odd new troops to Afghanistan over the course of the past we are not yet succeeding and what makes me

think as I do that the addition of new troops might actually make a difference?

I think that the first thing that we have to recognize is that we have not been pursuing a counterinsurgency strategy on the ground in Afghanistan and that the new troops that went in over the course of the spring in accordance with President Obama's meeting of a resource request by General McKiernan who was then in command of forces have not actually been put to use well. And, they are actually allocated to areas that are sometimes marginal to the fight, to the population, to the government, and they are not on the whole concentrated densely enough to conduct the kinds of shaping, clearing, holding and building operations that Tony has mentioned.

And so, although we have forces in Afghanistan and although they have been conducting a campaign this summer in areas such as Helmand Province where we have new U.S. Marines, they haven't been doing it right. That's something that I can tell not only from my visit to Afghanistan but by contrasting what I saw in Afghanistan with what I saw on my six or seven visits to Iraq for General Petraeus and General Odierno. Our forces are not, on the whole, securing the population. They are not securing the population in the right areas. And, the force densities are not sufficient actually to perform this task.

Although the Marines in Helmand are probably one of the best forces in this regard, as are the folks from the 82nd Airborne Division in

RC-East, we do not have a counterinsurgency campaign at large in Afghanistan, let alone the kind of operational level synergies between provinces that General Odierno was able to develop as General Petraeus's number two commander in Iraq where he was able to figure out how to allocate the resources throughout the theater so that the campaign in Baghdad had effects outside of Baghdad in essentially concentric rings, driving the enemy further out from the capital. We see none of that going on within Afghanistan.

So, General McChrystal needs to reallocate forces within Afghanistan to these new priority areas, see to it that they are conducting counterinsurgency, and, in my opinion, he will need more troops in order to obtain the kinds of force densities in the places where we have a challenge by the enemy against the population that would actually make the population turn against the Taliban or turn against the Hakani network and think about working with our Coalition Forces if not the government of Afghanistan.

Lastly, I would like to say that one of the things we're missing in Afghanistan that we had in Iraq was a surge of Afghan forces that would compare to the surge of Iraqi forces that we saw in 2007. We at the Institute for the Study of War have just published a paper by General Jim Dubik who commanded MNSTC-I during this time in Afghanistan, and he was able to create about 100,000 new bodies on the ground -- I'm sorry -- in Iraq while he was commander of the training command in Iraq.

We do not have nearly enough forces in Afghanistan right now to turn over to the Afghan army or the Afghan police, and one of the things that we need to do is quickly surge the growth rate of the Afghan army and Afghan police so that we have enough troops to partner with our Coalition Forces, to conduct joint operations, to do planning together as we did in Iraq so that there is actually something to turn over to. Right now, we really do not have that capacity.

We're talking about roughly 90,000 Afghan National Army folks by deliberate design of American policy, limited and capped so that they would not be too expensive. Needless to say, a brigade of Afghans costs less to the American public than a brigade of U.S. forces. Until those Afghan forces come online and are properly trained, there will be a gap between what the country needs to defend itself and what there is on the ground. Also, for that reason then, I think that General McChrystal will need more troops in addition to the civilian resources that Tony mentioned.

Last point, as those new troops come in, as we have seen, violence levels will go up. They did so in Iraq. They will do so in Afghanistan because we are going into areas that the enemy effectively has controlled. So we mustn't conflate or confuse a rise in violence with success or failure. We have to be nuanced about how we interpret that rise in violence and be sensible about whether we think the campaign overall is actually taking those enemy safe havens away or whether we

are simply using our forces to ill effect in the theater, and that is something that will certainly take 12 or 18 months to assess.

So I don't know if that is more optimistic than Tony's view, but the word that I would say in closing is that we have every opportunity to succeed if in fact we implement the right strategy with the right resources because we haven't done it yet.

MR. INDYK: Qualified optimism.

Bruce, tell us about how the strategy is going.

MR. RIEDEL: Well, actually, I'm going to bring us back from the arena of military strategy to the elections, which is why we convened you here today. Of course, I face the significant difficulty in that we don't have any results. This has to be the most agonizing election in recent history where we have an election and now, fully a week later, we can't really tell you what's going on.

I think that the predictions that we're hearing from President Karzai and his supporters of overwhelming victory should be put into the same category that any politician after election says I've won an overwhelming victory. When you see a politician who says, yes, I got beaten at the polls, that's one you can believe. One who says they've won before the votes are counted shouldn't be taken too seriously.

What I'd like to do is talk a little bit about the election in general terms, then give you some basis for thinking about the results as they

come in based on previous elections and then look at a couple of scenarios of what may happen over the course of the next two months.

I think the first thing to recognize about this election was it was a test and a challenge for both sides in the war. Both sides had something to prove, and both sides were severely challenged.

For the NATO forces, the ISAF forces and the government of Afghanistan, the challenge was to pull off a credible vote in order to rebuild legitimacy for a government which has largely lost its legitimacy over the course of its five years in office. Rebuilding that legitimacy is absolutely critical for any effort to reverse the momentum that the Taliban has built since then. If the government of Afghanistan now goes into free fall, something like the South Vietnamese governments of the 1960s, then all the troops in the world really aren't going to matter. If we don't have a government we can point to that has some basis of legitimacy in the country, the best generals, the best strategy isn't going to help turn it around.

Now the first part of this, staging an election, was a relatively low bar for NATO. I mean after all we have 100,000 troops there. We have somewhere nearly 150,000 Afghan army and police, a lot of them not very good, but with a quarter of a million people to guard the polling places, you should be able to pull off an election.

The much harder challenge, of course, is to make it credible. With the questions that we're now having about fraud, the questions about

turnout, this is still an open-ended question. Whether this election will be judged credible by the people who count the most, the Afghans, is right now up in the air.

It was also, though, a challenge and a test for the Taliban and the associated parts of the insurgency that work with it. They set themselves up. The Taliban said they were going to disrupt this election. They were not going to let people go out and vote. To a certain extent, they had some success in doing that. They were able to intimidate large numbers of voters particularly in the south, but overall they did not prevent the election from taking place.

The Taliban had a second challenge here, and it's a challenge that the Taliban, frankly, has been facing for 15 years, which is to demonstrate that they're not just a Pashtun movement. What we face in Afghanistan today is not a nationwide insurgency. It is nothing at all like what the Soviets faced in the 1980s when literally virtually every part of the country was in rebellion against them. We face an insurgency among a minority of the population who are Pashtun, and what the Taliban have been trying to do for 15 years is to demonstrate that they are really a national force.

I think again, although we don't have the election outcomes here, we probably will say the Taliban failed to do this, that once again they demonstrated that they could operate in Pashtun areas, they can raid into non-Pashtun areas, but they're not really a force in the non-Pashtun areas. When we start getting turnout from cities like Mazari Sharif and

Herat and other places in the north and west, it will be very interesting to see what the data actually tell us.

With that point, let me pivot to how you should compare the data and, hopefully, give you some insights into how to read elections results as they dribble in like Chinese water torture over the next several days.

Afghanistan has had two previous elections in its history: the 2004 Presidential election that put President Karzai in power and a 2005 election which included not only legislative seats but also provincial elections as well. The 2004 election was more a coronation than an election -- 70 percent of the electorate turned out according to the official turnout figures, and Karzai won by 56 percent, but he didn't really face an opponent. There were three or four significant ethnic opponents who were actually running not to defeat Karzai but to demonstrate their control of their ethnic neighborhood. For example, Abdul Rashid Dostum, who I'm going to speak about a lot more in a minute, ran to demonstrate his control of the Uzbek community, and he was very successful in doing that.

Karzai won with a majority support of the Pashtuns. If you look at his election that time, he won virtually the entire west and south of the country and had significant inroads in the north. But, as I said, this was largely a one-off. I don't think it is a very useful comparison.

The election we had in 2009, whatever else you may think of it, was at least a real horse race. Unless the votes are totally tampered and we

have complete fraud on the scale of what we saw in Iran, we're going to have a fairly tight election here, at least one that's worth watching.

The 2005 elections are a much more useful base to compare data to as they come in the future days. Overall turnout in 2005 was under 50 percent. The government claimed it was 49 percent. Most observers at the time said turnout was probably closer to 40 percent. So that's your baseline figure to be basing turnout this time around.

There were enormous differences by province in turnout. Some provinces had staggering turnout. Bamyan Province in the center of the country, famous for the Buddhas which were destroyed by the Taliban, had a staggering 75 percent turnout. Very few democracies in the world get 75 percent turnout any kind of election.

But there were also extreme low ends, and they're all, not surprisingly, in the Pashtun south. Zabul Province had less than 20 percent turnout in 2005. Orūzgān, which is Mullah Omar's home province, had a turnout of about 21 percent. Kandahar did a little bit better at 25 percent. Helmand, surprisingly, in 2005, had a 35 percent turnout rate. I suspect that we're going to see a substantial drop in that turnout.

In other words, the 2005 election showed us that the Pashtun belt in the south was already disaffected.

It showed us something else, though, that was very interesting: Gender mattered enormously. To put it simply, Afghan women, after voting in 2004, largely stopped voting again. There were exceptions. In

2005, one province, the Tajik province, actually had more female voters than male voters, but that was the exception. Almost across the country, female voting patterns were 20 percent lower than male voting patterns.

And, when you got into the Taliban heartland in the south, it was even more striking. Zabul, again, leads: 96 percent of the voters in Zabul in 2005 were men, 4 percent were women. Orūzgān: 86 to 14. Helmand: 86 to 14. Even in Kabul, where we had only 33 percent turnout overall, 70 percent of the voters were male.

So don't be surprised if in 2009 there's very little female participation. That's a trend in Afghan politics which is now well established and dates back to before the serious deterioration in the security situation in most of the country.

I think the key point to take away from this is this: The Pashtun belt in the south has been disaffected from the beginning. I think when we look back at this, the Pashtun majority in the southern provinces, to a lesser extent than the eastern provinces but certainly in the southern provinces, have never bought into the legitimacy of what happened at the end of 2001. They may not all support the Taliban, but they have never bought into the legitimacy of erasing the Islamic emirate of Afghanistan.

So what's going to happen next? What are we going to see as the voting comes in?

Well, if Karzai can claim a victory based on having searched through all the ballots, having fraud investigated on the first round, he

almost certainly will owe it to the endorsements that he got in the days just before the election from several warlords, not only his Vice President, Mr. Fahim but, most importantly, Abdul Rashid Dostum.

If he's going to win by somewhere around 65 percent, as his supporters are claiming, it isn't really hard to do the math. He had 56 percent in 2004. We'll assume he held his base, and he got 10 percent. Where did the 10 percent more come from? The 10 percent that Dostum won in 2004. You marry them together, and there's your 65 percent.

Abdul Rashid Dostum is worth more than just a moment to look at. This is a man renowned for his brutality, even by Afghan standards, and that's a pretty high standard. This is a man who began his career in the 1980s in the Afghan Communist Army, working with the Soviets. He built the only really loyal militia force that fought on behalf of the Soviet Union. It was feared throughout Afghanistan as being more cruel than the Soviets in how it dealt with Afghan mujahedeen.

Then, when the Soviets left, he stayed loyal to the Communists for a good two and a half years. It's Dostum's defection from the Communists in 1992 that led to the end of the Najibullah regime.

It also led to the beginning of the inter-mujahedeen civil war. Mr. Dostum along with his partners, Mr. Hekmatyar and others, are responsible for the destruction of Kabul in the 1990s. He fought Ahmed Shah Massoud. Then he aligned with him. Then he fought with him, back and forth. He switched sides so many times in this civil war that you

literally had to use a pencil to keep track of what side he was on because you had to erase it virtually every day.

From a stronghold in the northern Uzbek territories, he was able to basically be one of the critical warlords in fighting the Taliban, although from time to time he also aligned himself with the Taliban.

If I haven't painted a picture yet of a man who is entirely disreputable, then I've failed grievously in the last couple of minutes.

He had been ousted from the north by the Taliban and returned with Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001. He was recently ousted again from Afghanistan on Karzai's instruction because of an interaction he had with another warlord in the Uzbek areas. He came back in August at Karzai's request and endorsed the Karzai government.

The point here is if Karzai is returned to office now because of Dostum as his supporter, then hopes for anti-corruption and good governance and the rest are going to be rather bleak in the new second round of a Karzai administration.

On the other hand, if we go to a second-round runoff, then really all bets are off. I don't think anyone really knows what a second round is going to look like. There are several scenarios, and there are intricate linkages between them, all of which are very complex.

One scenario you will hear a lot of is that there's going to be a backroom deal, that Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah, if they go to a second round, will somehow come to an arrangement which will obviate the need

for an election, and they'll share power. I'm skeptical of this. It's certainly possible. Politicians making deals happens everywhere. But I think at this point if Abdullah Abdullah does get to a second round the desire to see if he can actually win the whole thing is going to be overwhelming.

Secondly, there's going to be a lot of other deals going on. If Mr. Dostum can endorse Karzai in the first round, he can also not endorse him in the second round. And, there are a lot of other Afghan politicians and warlords who will be in exactly the same business, all of whom will be looking for promises for what job they're going to get in the next administration.

Thirdly, the Taliban and Al Qaeda are certainly going to make a higher priority than ever before to do something they singularly failed to do in the runup to this election, which is assassinate one of the candidates. Had the Taliban assassinated any of the 40-some odd candidates, the election would have automatically been postponed, even if it was the least important of the 40. If they are successful in going after either Karzai or Abdullah Abdullah, they will throw the whole thing back up into the air.

And, finally, we may have a disputed outcome. The odds certainly favor, if the first round is full of fraud, allegations of fraud in the second round.

But there is a fifth possibility which should offer us some measure of hope, which is if there is a second round it provides almost immediately credibility and legitimacy to the process. More democracy is better than

less democracy, and having a second round in which there is a real runoff between two individuals will send a message to Afghans that voting counts, just as it does in any electoral process. This would be a significant boost for the credibility of whoever wins in a second round, and it will provide the basis for NATO's opportunity for its last chance.

Here, I agree with what I think both Kim, Mike and Tony said, that this really is the last chance. We've had three chances to get it right in Afghanistan. We've blown the previous two in the 1990s and after 2001. You only get three chances in baseball, and, in Afghanistan, I don't think you can expect a fourth chance either.

The final point I would make very briefly is that the outcome of these elections and how they're managed and whether they're credible or legitimate matters a lot inside of Afghanistan; it also matters enormously in Pakistan. If these elections are seen in Pakistan has having been a fraud, lacking credibility and producing an illegitimate Afghan government, the conclusion Pakistanis and particularly Pakistanis in the army will decide is the base for the American and NATO operations in Afghanistan is gone. That will reinforce the deeply-held belief that we're going to cut and run in Afghanistan sometime in the next two or three years, and all they need to do is wait us out, and then their Taliban friends will be able to take over at least half of the country.

MR. INDYK: Thank you to all four of you for excellent presentations.

Tony, you're going to have to go in a minute, so if you'll allow me just to pop one question to you. The *New York Times* on the weekend drew the comparison between President Obama's dilemma now and President LBJ's, Johnson's, in Vietnam back in the sixties. I wonder whether you think that's appropriate given your experience in analyzing all of these wars. And, what do you do if you're President Obama about it, if it is the right analogy?

MR. CORDESMAN: Well, first I hate historical comparisons in counterinsurgency because they're always chosen in ways that rig the game. Most of the time in counterinsurgency, you win quickly and brutally and the insurgency disappears. It's only the bad cases that create the debates, and they're all different enough so that when you do this it's the sort of thing you might do in an op-ed piece, which is, as we all know, the utter depth of intellectualism.

More seriously, however, the real issue for the President I think is going to be very simple. How on Earth do you have a national security advisor who talks to a reporter for the *Washington Post* in the presence of a military officer in the field and says, don't ask for more troops because the President might ask embarrassing questions afterwards?

We do have, I think we've all agreed, probably one more chance. The real issue here is can Ambassador Eikenberry and General McChrystal come back to Washington, ask for the resources they think will actually make the difference and the authority because it isn't just troops

and money. It's the ability to force coordination, to put pressure, to get those forces effectively used.

If they come back and they're not allowed to do this, and my guess at this moment is that is the White House policy, the President has failed before this strategic review begins.

Just to make it clear, I absolutely agree with what Kim has said about both the threat and the need for more troops. It is not just civilian resources. The question, frankly, in October will be: Is this administration and this President going to be one bit more honest about Afghanistan than President Bush and his national security advisor?

MR. INDYK: Thank you, Tony, and I'm very grateful for your being able to turn up today. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MR. INDYK: Mike, you were on the ground just last week. As you told us, you're a supporter of this war. I think it's clear that you're a supporter of more troops as well. But what did you see on the ground? Was there anything you saw on the ground that led you to reassess some of your assumptions about the way to fight this war and win this war?

MR. O'HANLON: Thanks, Martin.

I certainly think that when you spend time at military command, and I had far less time than Kim and Tony and our colleague, Jeremy Shapiro. By the way, I should make a nod to Jeremy and Jason Campbell for their great work on the Afghanistan Index that I'm honored to be even slightly

associated with right now. But www.Brookings.edu/AfghanistanIndex will help you track this war with the kind of metrics that President Obama has said he will use in the coming months to assess the strategy.

I think I was struck by the somber and sober tone of what I saw at ISAF. Kim is right, no doubt, that the situation -- I mean I don't want to make too much of a semantic issue of whether the situation is continuing to deteriorate or just bad and staying bad. All I'm trying to argue is that if there is a reason to add more forces, we should be able to see that in some of the places that we've sent all these 25,000, 30,000 additional troops this year and sacrificed so many American lives and NATO lives, with the NATO total fatality tally for this year now approaching 300 and the American number at 172, that at least tactically where we put these forces we can start to see that they have some impact. Now that's not enough to add up to a change in momentum at the national level, but it may be enough to begin to talk about hopefully potential for a plateauing of the threat at an unacceptable and dangerous but still gradually stabilizing level.

So, again, I'm dancing around semantic distinctions. I really don't disagree with Kim, and I'm glad she was emphatic in our point because that does characterize what I heard from the troops and the commanders, that they are very sober about the situation.

But I also think I heard some people talk about how they are confident that once they put resources in place, at least locally and

tactically, they're starting to see an impact and a difference. And so, it's the idea of spreading the oil spot. We can just begin to see the faint outlines of some small oil spots, and that's a reason for hopefulness, but now we have to make those oil spots a lot bigger and reinforce and strengthen them.

So, just to clarify what I was trying to get at before and to explain in answer to your question what I heard from people, I think that's the best summary I can give.

MR. INDYK: Kim, I was struck by one thing you said about the fact that the new forces aren't being deployed in the way they should have been. I wonder if you could give us a little bit of an explanation why that is the case.

And, also as a corollary to that, if you're going to clear, hold and build you need an Afghan government that's going to come in and build behind our forces. Do you have confidence that that's going to be there?

MS. KAGAN: Great questions, Martin.

The first thing that I'd like to do is take the first part of your question and talk about how the new forces were added to the resources already existing in Afghanistan because I think it is important to remember that we have to have forces doing the right thing in the right place. Otherwise, we are not maximizing the effects that we can have in-country.

For example, some of the new forces that went into Afghanistan or I should say many of the new forces that went into

Helmand Province, which of course is an important area for the Taliban. It is perhaps the area that they use to transit back and forth between Pakistan and the interior and, more importantly, where they make the most money from the narcotics trade, not necessarily by selling narcotics but by taxing the narcotics trade in a variety of ways. Of course, our British allies have been fighting very hard in Helmand Province for a number of years.

Sadly, I think that the marines were put in a place that has less importance than other places. They were put in what is known operationally as the Fish Hook which is to say an area quite far south along the Helmand River that is far from the major population centers and the major command and control centers of the Taliban in that area. Then the question is why? Why did they go there?

We as civilians here in the United States should be asking questions about how our military commanders use forces. That's what we do at www.understandingwar.org. That is something that I think is incumbent upon us.

And, I think what we saw was that the previous command had an idea that border interdiction was as important to success as counterinsurgency, that somehow the insurgency in Afghanistan was largely emanating from Pakistan and that if only those elements flowing from Pakistan to Afghanistan could be stopped then it would be possible to secure Afghanistan better.

Although it may be the case that if you could stop those accelerants to violence coming from Pakistan it would have an impact on Afghanistan, we cannot stop those accelerants through interdiction and the majority of the insurgency in Afghanistan is an indigenous insurgency and the kinds of technical expertise and funding that come from out of country is but a fraction of what actually exists in the country. Therefore, the interdiction strategy was misguided, but the application of resources this spring focused on that interdiction strategy. And so, therefore, we have Marines much farther south than perhaps we should.

Likewise, General McKiernan had placed and reinforced an area that his predecessors had reinforced up in the Korengal Valley in the eastern region of Afghanistan, again, a not too populous place, a place where we have seen some accelerants to violence coming from Pakistan, but really the amount of force that we're using in that area is disproportionate to the importance of that area. We've done a paper on that at www.understandingwar.org recently. So that's the answer to your question.

General McChrystal came in rather late to change where the troops were going this summer and what they were doing. In essence, those operations were prepared and were launched, and so we're only now seeing the reorientation of some of those Marines within Helmand Province and some of the forces to other important areas of the south

such as Kandahar which is vitally important to the insurgency. So that's the answer to your first question.

The second question you asked was about government and governance in Afghanistan. I wholeheartedly agree with Bruce, with Mike and with Tony that we must create legitimate government institutions in Afghanistan, that they are critical component to the long-term success of the state, that we have not really succeeded in doing that so far and that any CoIn operation, any counterinsurgency operation, really must have a governance focus as well as a focus on defeating the insurgent himself.

The issue is that as we said in Iraq sometimes Coalition Forces need to fill in when the indigenous government is not ready to perform all of the functions of building the state. Again, what we're talking about or what we should be talking about is a gap as the government of Afghanistan increasingly becomes capable. If it should not do that, if we do not focus on that or if somehow the government that is chosen is not recognized as legitimate for other reasons, then we do have a problem, a very major strategic problem in Afghanistan.

MR. INDYK: Thank you.

Bruce, I said that any plan that you develop for a situation like this only lasts as long as it meets reality. You chaired the overall strategy review. How has reality impacted on your sense of the possibility for the strategy to actually succeed?

MR. RIEDEL: I don't see anything in what we've heard today or what we've seen over the last six months that is substantially different than what I saw during the period of the strategic review in February and March. To put it shortly and concisely, President Obama inherited a disaster, a war which had been under-resourced horribly for at least six of the last seven and a half years and which had suffered as a consequence, and trying to turn that around overnight is an illusion. It's not going to be turned around overnight.

I think the optimistic hope, and I think we've heard this from both Kim and Mike and Tony, is that with sufficient forces, whatever General McChrystal thinks that means, we may be able to stabilize the situation 12 to 18 months from now and show that the theory of the case, the strategy of counterinsurgency, offers the promise of getting to a better outcome. Anyone who thinks that in 12 to 18 months we're going to be anywhere near victory is living in a fantasyland.

This situation has deteriorated so far that there are really only two questions now: Can it be stabilized with any amount of resources? Or, is it just too little too late? We're not going to know the answer to those questions in any serious way for at least 12 to 18 months.

MR. INDYK: Well, now we go to you, the audience, for questions. We have 20 minutes. I'm going to take three at a time, and we'll let the panel go for them.

I need you, please, to keep your questions short. That is to say they should have a question mark at the end of the sentence. And, I also need you to identify yourselves, please.

Yes, over here. Just wait for the microphone, please.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. Paolo von Schirach, Shirach Report.

Given the rather grim picture you have painted, if we make it even a little worse, how do you view the ability of the United States to sustain this effort, given the overall environment in which we're living with the federal budget deficit approaching one trillion and a half plus and the projections that have been made?

In other words, given what it's going to take to sustain a counterinsurgency strategy for the long haul, which is going to be years even in a conservative, very, very optimistic scenario and given the conflicting claims on exhausted federal finances, do you think that there is politically the staying power to do whatever it takes, assuming that your advice is followed, that indeed the resources are going to be requested? Do you think that we have the staying power to see this thing through?

Thanks.

MR. INDYK: Yes, please, over here.

QUESTIONER: Thank you, Martin. Edward Joseph, Helsinki Commission.

If I had to sum up this excellent presentation, I would say the theme in two words was time and resources. The key overriding question, I think

everyone would agree, in making the case for that time that Bruce was just referring to that's necessary and the resources that Mike and Kim and Tony were talking about as well is this question: Does it matter? How much does it matter?

Now, of the speakers, Bruce alluded to one of the key factors there, which is Pakistan and the fear of a vacuum, an incipient vacuum that would deter the Pakistanis from going after Al Qaeda and the Taliban. This key question of does it matter seems to me is at the core of making that case. Many people say it's not worth it or we can deal with the Al Qaeda threat in other ways without this time and resources. So I appreciate the views of the panel on that.

Thank you, Martin.

MR. INDYK: Okay, and one last question before we go to the panel. Yes, please.

QUESTIONER: My name is Dmitry Novik. I represent myself.

So my question is very simple. Do you think that the strategy which is supported right now is the right one, because it seems to me without any innovation in strategy you cannot win the war?

MR. INDYK: Okay.

QUESTIONER: I remember. I remember -- one second, not one, ten seconds more.

MR. INDYK: We have the question.

QUESTIONER: It was here with General Schwartz in spring time, and it was the same problem, maybe five months from now. Without smart strategy, you cannot win asymmetric war.

MR. INDYK: Okay, thank you.

How much does it matter?

MR. O'HANLON: Bruce is better at that question than I, so I pass.

MR. INDYK: We'll ask Bruce.

MR. RIEDEL: Which one do you want to answer?

MR. O'HANLON: Whichever one he doesn't.

MR. RIEDEL: I'll take the does it matter. I think the past is prologue here. We abandoned Afghanistan twice before. We know what happens. The first time, we got September 11th and the Al Qaeda base in Afghanistan. The second time, we got the mess we're in here.

I put it in larger perspective, though. Without a base, a NATO base in Afghanistan, there will be no drone attacks on Al Qaeda in the tribal areas. Unless we're in there, what pressure we have on Al Qaeda today, which is entirely from drone attacks, is gone. So not only do they get the opportunity to move into Afghanistan, their old haunting place, but their new haunting place, their new safe haven in Pakistan will be even less under threat than it is now.

It's even larger than that. The triumph of jihadism or the jihadism of Al Qaeda and the Taliban in driving NATO out of Afghanistan would resonate throughout the Islamic World. This would be a victory on par

with the destruction of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. And, those moderates in the Islamic World who would say, no, we have to be moderate, we have to engage, would find themselves facing a real example. No, we just need to kill them, and we will drive them out.

So I think the stakes are enormous.

MR. INDYK: Is it sustainable?

MR. O'HANLON: I was hoping you'd ask me that one. And, Kim is so good on the strategy question. That will be a good one to leave to her.

Yes, I think so for the following reasons:

First of all, the President has declared the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater is his top national security priority, and therefore he chose Bruce Riedel to chair his strategy review. So we're very happy about that, and that proves his point, that he treats this as such.

The idea that a Democratic Congress would pull out the rug from underneath a President of their own party on what he has declared to be his top national security priority before the mid-term elections, to me, is unthinkable. So we'll hear complaints from Congress, and we'll hear legitimate questions, but we will not see Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Reid and the Chairman of the Appropriations and Armed Services Committees actually deny the President money for a war that he has said is his top priority until there is much more evidence that the strategy is failing.

If nothing else, it would be political suicide to do that in the runup to a mid-term election in my judgment. But, more importantly, these are serious Americans, and I think they recognize it takes time.

We need a greater dialogue on this, and McChrystal and Eikenberry do need to come back and explain the strategy more than we've heard so far, but they will.

Secondly, I would simply say that the money problems you mention are obviously serious. But you know when you talk about the money problems of the health care debate, as we're hearing quite a bit about now, the problem is not so much what happens this year or next year or even the year after. It's what happens in 5 or 10 or 15 years, and that's where our real fundamental economic problems lie.

I mean our deficit now is so ridiculous that the cost of the Afghanistan war(?) is almost a rounding error. You know, $1.7 trillion, and then the Afghanistan war is $100 billion. Even if we execute this strategy and even if we add troops, we're not going to be substantially increasing a $1.7 trillion deficit.

With this war, Bruce says it will take a while, and he's right, but within a couple of years I think we'll know if we're making progress or not. And, within four or five years, we'll be able to substantially downsize, I believe, if we are making progress.

So the last point I'll make is simply this, and this is a counterintuitive point: President Obama is actually doing better now on national security

issues in terms of maintaining broad public support than on his core domestic priorities. In an ironic way, he actually has the ability to pull the country together when he is clear and emphatic about what we need to do to protect our security. And, I think in a way the Afghanistan issue, as hard as it is, provides him an opportunity to do that, not that he should send more troops or more resources just to win Republican affection, but ironically he's actually done better on these issues with the Republican Party than on the core Democratic issues that he's focused on now.

So, for all those reasons, if they explain the strategy and it sounds convincing, then I think that it's sustainable for the couple of years we need to see if it's workable.

MR. INDYK: Is it the right strategy?

MS. KAGAN: I think largely it is the right strategy, and I think that we really have to evaluate a strategy on the basis of whether or not it has the potential to succeed in securing the interests of the United States. And so, we really can't ask this as a partisan question.

It is, as Mike said, a national question for us, and it is undoubtedly critical to be in the interest of the United States that Afghanistan be a stable country, that it be a stable country free of terrorist organizations, that it no longer serve as a place where the great nuclear powers surrounding it can conduct proxy conflicts with one another, that in fact it gives us as a nation an advantage vis-à-vis the regional and global

insurgent groups based in Pakistan that are trying to destabilize the entire region of Southeast Asia.

I do believe that we can win in Afghanistan without winning in Pakistan. I think that we have a huge amount that we can do within Afghanistan that will give us greater leverage, as Bruce said, within Pakistan against enemies such as Al Qaeda or such as the Pakistani Taliban who actually threaten to destabilize the region.

And so, what we need to do now is pursue aggressively a counterinsurgency campaign within Afghanistan designed to create a legitimate government within Afghanistan, remove the enemies' safe havens, allow the population actually to support the government and create the conditions whereby the United States can actually have an enduring relationship with Afghanistan that rebalances to its relationship with Pakistan, with Iran and with the other countries of the region. So it is the right strategy. It is, in some respects, the only strategy, and so we need to make it succeed.

MR. INDYK: Thank you.

We have time for three more questions if you keep the questions short. So we'll go to the front and then to the back.

QUESTIONER: Bill Ocade, George Washington University.

How will the situation in Iran, if it deteriorates especially, impact Afghanistan?

MR. INDYK: I'm sorry. I didn't get that.

QUESTIONER: How will the situation in Iran, if it deteriorates, a fight over the election, will impact Afghanistan?

Thanks.

MR. INDYK: Okay. Right at the back, next to the television camera.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. Claus Laurus, Library of Congress.

My question: How can the transatlantic allies contribute to stabilizing the situation, and in all likelihood will they actually do that?

Thank you.

MR. INDYK: And do we have over in this area? No.

Yes, please.

QUESTIONER: Jessica Lehman, I'm leaving in two weeks for Afghanistan to be a cultural advisor to a brigade commander in the south or eastern part of the country on the part of the human train system.

My question involves the aid. Dr. Cordesman said that the U.S. Military is doing about 80 percent of the aid and civilian work. Does the military have the ability to do this aid work, and, if not, how can they obtain it?

MR. INDYK: Bruce, do you want to take a go at Iran?

MR. RIEDEL: Sure. I think it's less what happens inside Iran and more what happens between Iran and the United States and Iran and the West. If we see a situation in which the relationship between Iran and the United States is steadily deteriorating and the Iranians either correctly or

because of their own politics come to the conclusion that the United States is trying to overthrow the regime or subvert the regime or prevent it from doing what it wants, one of the easiest ways for the Iranians to fight back is in Afghanistan. Iran has significant influence in the western part of the country and in the central Hazari region which is Shia. If it stirs up trouble in those parts of the country, which have been by and large relatively quiet for the last several years, that will introduce a new front. As we've already discussed, we've got enough fronts in Afghanistan that we're dealing with now, and we don't need another front.

And, I'll just take a moment on that. This particularly matters for the transatlantic allies because many of them have their forces deployed in the western part of the country. The Italians, for example, who are deployed in Herat right now feel that they are on the front line with Iran. Now what they've done over the last several years is quietly make a deal that they will live and let live there. If that deal falls apart, then the Italians are going to be in a very serious and difficult situation.

MR. INDYK: Do you want to comment on the transatlantic allies, the NATO allies in the war?

MR. O'HANLON: I'll say a brief word on that which is, and I hope you will feel free to comment because you worked with the allies in this part of the world too. So take that as an invitation at least from me. I'll be brief to leave you time.

I think that we're starting to realize reality. You know for a few years we complained that while we were busy in Iraq the allies weren't helping much in Afghanistan, and they certainly should and could, and that remains true. But some of them are doing quite a bit -- the British and Canadians and the French and the Dutch and the Danes, among others. As Bruce mentions, even the Italians and Germans and Norwegians are in dangerous parts of the country now even if they weren't before. Our allies have suffered a combined 500 fatalities in Afghanistan. So I think we need to acknowledge that contribution.

It would be nice if they would do more. They probably won't. Therefore, I think the American debate this fall about more NATO resources will realistically focus on potential need for American resources.

It's unfortunate, but that's as much as we can do and what we'll have to do. But, at least, we're realistic, and we know that there's only so much we can get in the way of additional allied support. So there's an element of pragmatism in this debate even if at some level we're not getting as much help as we really would like.

MR. INDYK: So would you like to answer the question about civilian resourcing guarantees?

MS. KAGAN: I certainly would.

First, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for serving in Afghanistan and wish you the best of luck on your travels, and I think that you'll have a very interesting time seeing some of the differences between

what civilian organizations do and what military organizations do in a counterinsurgency fight.

The first thing I'd like to remind you of, though, is that there is a difference between economic support to counterinsurgency and development, and we mustn't really confuse one for the other. When we're involved in a counterinsurgency fight, it is essential to provide the kinds of economic support to a community that will help win the community away from the insurgents and toward the government. Whether that is providing jobs or whether that is providing a certain baseline of a marketplace in an area that has not been able to sustain a market for some time, those are al a variety of activities that our military forces can be involved in and do very well and that have an impact quite quickly on who's fighting against U.S., Coalition and Afghan Forces.

Quite frankly, so far, a lot of the economic support that we have provided in Afghanistan has not been focused on counterinsurgency. It has been focused on long-term development and therefore is not having a quick impact or an immediate impact.

So we really need to think about how to use the military resources in order to create the immediate conditions for defeating the insurgency and set the stage whereby the longer-term development projects that are handled by the civilian organizations and the NGOs out in Afghanistan can actually have an opportunity to succeed because if there is an insurgency in Afghanistan what we have seen is that the development projects can't

turn off the insurgency. We can't develop our way out of this insurgency. It is not possible simply to build a dam and reduce the insurgency. We actually need to undertake the projects that are aimed at reducing the insurgency while creating the conditions for Afghanistan to have a sustainable economy over the next 10, 15 or 20 years.

So that's the challenge that you face, and I think you will see both sides of it out in the field. Good luck.

MR. INDYK: Well, time has come to close. So I'm going to have a closeout question that brings us back to the question of the Afghanistan elections, and it's very simple. When the results are finally counted, who is going to win?

This is for all three of you, by the way. And, it just has a one-word answer, Mike.

MR. O'HANLON: Karzai.

MR. INDYK: Karzai.

MS. KAGAN: I do not know.

MR. INDYK: Ah, that's three words, four.

MR. RIEDEL: Since I couldn't predict the outcome of the Democratic primary in the state that I live in, I don't think my prediction about something on the other side of the world is worth anything, but I'll say Karzai.

MR. INDYK: Karzai. And, I'll say Karzai.

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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

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

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