THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

TAKING ACTION:
IMPLEMENTING EDUCATION REFORM IN PAKISTAN

Washington, D.C.
Thursday, November 4, 2010

PARTICIPANTS:

Introduction and Moderator:

STEVE INSKEEP
Host, *Morning Edition*
NPR

Featured Speaker:

SIR MICHAEL BARBER
Co-Chair
Pakistan Education Task Force

Panelists:

TERESITA SCHAFFER
Director, South Asia Program
Center for Strategic and International Studies

REBECCA WINTHROP
Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Universal Education
The Brookings Institution

* * * * *

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. WINTHROP: Good morning. Welcome, everybody. Thank you so much for coming. We are really pleased to have you all here. The strong and the hearty made it through the rain this morning.

I'm Rebecca Winthrop. I'm a senior fellow and director of the Center for Universal Education here at Brookings. I'm really pleased to have you here. Our center focuses on education in the developing world broadly. And we've, over the last year or so, been especially interested in exploring educational issues in Pakistan, not least because in addition to Nigeria, Pakistan is the country in the world with the largest number of out of school children. But also because of the geopolitical concerns around Pakistan and questions around what's the role of education and global security in relation to the country.

First, we're going to have a presentation from Sir Michael Barber, who I'm really pleased can join us. He is head of McKenzie's Global Education Practice. And more importantly for us, he is co-chair of the Pakistan Education Task Force. You have his full bio in the program, and needless to say, he has oodles of experience. That's a technical term, Sir Michael, on doing education reform around the globe, certainly most notably including as a chief advisor for Tony Blair.

He's fresh off from a recent trip in Pakistan and has been working very closely with the government there on education reform through his task force work, and he'll tell us about it and talk about what's going on. And then we'll have wonderful guests who I'm so pleased can join us, come to the stage and have a lively discussion.

At that point, Steve Inskeep, who I'm sure all of you listened to this

morning and every other morning when you wake up, I know I do, will moderate the discussion. Again, bio's in the program. Probably needs no introduction to this crowd. But Steve Inskeep, co-host of *Morning Edition*, veteran correspondent, and interestingly, has quite an interest in Pakistan. Has not only spent a great deal of time there, but is doing a book that is coming out soon called *Instant City* which is centered around Karachi.

And then, of course, Ambassador Teresita Schaffer, who we're very pleased to have join us, who also has oodles of experience, particularly around South Asia, and is the director of the South Asia program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. And of course, former deputy assistant secretary of state and ambassador to Sri Lanka.

So wonderful guests, and we're looking forward to a rich discussion. And with that I think, Sir Michael, we invite you to the stage.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Well, first of all, Rebecca, thank you very much for that kind introduction. And thank you all for coming, and thank you to Brookings for organizing this event.

I'm going to be 15 minutes, so at 5 to 11:00, if I'm still talking, you just applaud anyway. (Laughter) And what I want to do is give you -- obviously in 15 minutes I can only give you a quick overview of the Pakistan Education Task Force agenda as it's emerging.

Just a word of background, as Rebecca says, I've been working on the problems of education system reform in a number of countries over a number of years, including originally for a good while in the Blair Administration. But I only got involved in Pakistan about a year and a bit ago, August of 2009, when the British government said --

David Miliband, then the foreign secretary, said that the British were very keen to -- obviously it says Pakistan with its immediate pressures -- security, all the other things that are immediate pressures. But in the end what mattered was building significant, successful state institutions, including fundamentally the education system and would I be interested in co-chairing a task force. And I said I'd go once to see if there was a job to be done, which I did in August, and I've now been nine times. And I go pretty much every month.

But I know in the audience there are many people who know a lot about Pakistan. I'm learning as fast as I can, but I'm looking forward to learning from you as well as talking to you about what I'm doing.

Just one word about the task force. It's a mixture of people. There's an American representative called Mike Smith, who many of you will be familiar with, that's co-chair by myself and Shahnaz Wazir Ali, who is the prime minister, social policy advisor. And then we have a range of representatives from the public education sector in the provinces from business and civil society. And we meet every couple of months. So that's the task force.

And we made a decision that we're not going to write a report. There will never be a report of the Pakistan Education Task Force. Pakistan, over the 63 years of history, is not short of reports on education. What it's short of is implementation of the reports on education. So you get reports and then nothing happens. Well, we're dealing with the nothing happens bit and not the report bit. So we're focusing on making things happen. Hence, my title. So that's by way of background.

I'm going to take you through a presentation, hopefully quite quickly, and then in the debate that will ensue, please feel free to ask anything, challenge anything,

debate with me, educate me. I'm very, very keen to learn from you, as well as to talk to you.

Let's begin at the beginning. If you go to 2050, there will be 340 million people, give or take, in Pakistan. It's quite possible -- by the way, the population of Pakistan will still be growing at mid-century, whereas India's will flatten out and be turning down. China's will already have turned down. So you can imagine it's possible to imagine a Pakistan that is 340 million people, well educated, low unemployment, booming economy, a model Islamic state, driving change, not just in the region but the world because it will be the fourth biggest country in population terms on the planet. So it could be a powerhouse of the mid-21st century.

Or it could be the other option, which I'm not going to go through, but we all know the implications of that, not just for people in Pakistan and their liberation and fulfillment, but for the region and the world. And that would be a bad outcome. And to me there are a number of things that will make one or other of these possible, but education is absolutely fundamental to that choice. A well educated Pakistani population could make a massive difference to -- not just to Pakistan and the fulfillment of the people who live there, but to the region and the world. So I see education as absolutely a fundamental building block of the potential of a productive, fulfilled Pakistan.

The founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, he knew that. He knew that education was fundamental. This is what he said right back at the beginning not long before his tragic death shortly after the foundation of Pakistan. He knew that education was fundamental. Everybody periodically through Pakistanis -- Pakistani history says education is fundamental. There are reports. There are five-year plans that say education is fundamental. The problem is it hasn't got done. So it's really time to fulfill

the founder's aspirations for Pakistan.

And if you look at the data -- I'm not going to put lots of data in front of you, but if you just look at this data, they're not on track remotely to meet the millennium development goals. Rebecca says they've got more children out of school than any other country. And there's no reason why that should be the case. There's no -- Pakistan has had a number of existential crises during its 63 years of history, but there's no reason why they shouldn't be doing a good deal better than this. And we know from other countries around the region and around the world that doing better than that is very much possible.

Part of the reason is that they don't spend very much money on education in Pakistan. Here's the regional benchmarks on percentage of GDP. There's lots of issues to do with that. One is a lack of prioritization. One is a failure to collect enough tax revenue. All kinds of things contribute to that. But this is not good enough. The government is committed to increasing that to 4 percent, but it needs to happen steadily over time. And as I'll come to later, what money is spent needs to be spent much better and more effectively than it already is. But if you see this as a signal of the prioritization education is actually being given as opposed to what's been said in speeches, this is a challenging statistic.

When you go into schools, as many of you have done and I try and do, and have done in three of the four major provinces, you see very poor teaching. If I turn up at a school with a kind a circus of people arriving with me, of course the teachers are all there on that day, but they're not there on every day when I'm not there. If I send, as I have done, some of my Pakistani task force secretariat on mystery shopping visits, they find schools with teachers absent, with children not learning much, with teachers in the

staff room and children sitting outside or whatever it is. So one is just teacher commitment. But then there's a very poor quality of education in many cases. So it's not just about the access in 2050, it's about the quality of what children are experiencing. Both those things need to be fixed if you want the more positive version of Pakistan in 2050.

You see lots of terrible school situations like the one labeled despair here. The green gates on the left of the picture are a school gate and that's the street outside. But you also see heroic teachers, heroic principals, and some fantastic programs like the Citizens Foundation, like the Children's Global Network, like the Ghazali Foundation in Punjab. So there are lots of positive things, lots of littered around. Bu the overall system is really not functioning.

Now is the time to fix this. There's lots of reasons why now is the time to fix this. The floods were kind of an existential crisis, another one for Pakistan. But they've receded, both psychologically and in terms of the water going back into the riverbeds. And now is the time to seize the moment.

Secondly, there are lots of people around Pakistan, including political leaders at the provincial and national level who recognize they really do need to do this. They recognize that they can't go on as they've been doing in the past.

Thirdly, there's a real opportunity for the major donors, and the three biggest are the British, the World Bank, and the Americans, to get together united behind a single agenda. That in itself will be major step forward. And as I say, there are many people and donors -- sorry, and organizations across Pakistan who demonstrate that good education in Pakistan is perfectly possible over a period of time. Those positive models need to be scaled up as fast as possible as part of an overall system

transformation. So this is the moment, and it would be fatal to miss the chance.

When I look at our agenda, it just simplifies in terms of rising to the challenge of four things. And I want to briefly touch on each of those before I finish in a few minutes time. The first thing is we can only do this with sustained political will. There's only so much you can do from outside to transform a country's education system. In the end, the leadership of the country has got to take the bull by the horns or whatever the right metaphor is and sustaining political will will be absolutely fundamental.

Secondly, those people who are driving the reform, whether a provincial school district or national level, need a clear narrative of reform. Why are we doing this? What's it going to do? And what's the purpose of it?

Thirdly, the need a clear strategy. How are we going to get it done?

And finally then, the capacity to implement. So that is effectively the task force agenda in four bullet points.

Let me just briefly touch on each of those. Political will. You need a group of people in Pakistan that span the political parties at national and federal -- provincial level, but also the business community, the not-for-profit sector, to build a guiding coalition. A number of people around the country who are absolutely committed to getting this done, they need to prioritize it. They need to persist with it. They need not to be distracted every time a crisis comes up, and there will be because we know that's the case. More crises. They've got to keep persisting, they've got to invest, and they've got to give it time and attention. So sustained political will is a key part of this. And the international community can help to bring that about.

Then we need a clear narrative. Why does universal education matter? It's going to drive economic progress. It's going to improve social cohesion. It's part of

the contribution as the wonderful Brookings report that Rebecca and others published a few months ago shows. It's part of the contribution to making Pakistan's security better and helping to contribute to solve those very challenging problems. And then it's an issue of national identity. So all of that needs to be taken forward and turned into a story. And in the paper that you can pick up outside I explain each of those points in substantially more detail.

The task force has stripped the national education policy that was published in August of 2009 down into seven things so that people can tell the story of what's in there. It's a very honest document. It says what's wrong with Pakistan's education system. It has long, long lists of what they're going to do, but essentially it's about seven things. The first three are about putting pressure on the system, setting standards, monitoring progress, and empowering citizens and parents to put pressure on the public school system. And the bottom three are about building the capacity, improving the quality of teaching, extending public-private partnerships, building the capacity of administrators at every level to do implementation, and then fixing the dire problems with facilities.

I'm not going to go through the 20 subpoints in this, but I want to show you that every 3 months the task force, we're monitoring progress on each of those 7 things and the 20 subheadings province by province. And we'll update that again for the task force meeting in three weeks' time. So this is a way of driving progress, getting some picture of what's actually happening province by province. So these are the June ratings.

There are two in addition to that, and that's the thing that people need to persist with. In addition to that there are two major initiatives. One is building a fund to

extend learning opportunities in urban Sindh, which we can discuss more over questions. And secondly, to get that third bullet point in the list of seven going, a major public advocacy campaign worked up with the media, with leaders of Pakistan's music and arts and sports industries to generate pressure on the system to deliver the basic standards that parents and communities should expect.

And then they need the capacity to implement. And I won't go through the details of this, but just the basics of what are you trying to do, how are you planning to do it, how are you going to monitor it, what capacity do you need, and then making that transparent.

The biggest problem in Pakistan, and I'm finishing with this, is there is a real failure of basic management at every level in the system. At the provincial -- federal level, provincial level, especially at the district level, and right out through the system. It's time we put these problems squarely on the agenda. Performance management doesn't happen. Too many political appointments, far too high a turnover of key people at every level in the system. Teacher absenteeism, poor quality, dysfunctional facilities even when they are available.

Look at this. This was my mystery shopping team. Children without facilities in one school and then nearby a new school, lots of facilities, no children. This is absolutely crazy. This is a failure of basic management.

Look at this. Provinces, and donors by the way. USAID is about to spend a lot of money in Punjab. The Department of Education in -- I think this is Sindh, actually, is spending 2,800 rupees per chair, but on the open market you can buy the same chair for $600 or $700. This is crazy use of the scarce resources that are available. Again, it's a basic management problem.

So we've got to get to a situation where the Pakistani government makes a deal. What Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart call a double compact, a deal with we, the international community on how -- we're going to integrate the aid money behind their strategy and they're going to deal with their strategy. They're going to promise the same strategy to their people and then the people are going to hold them to account. So there should be pressure from the international community integrated around the seven point strategy to get the government to do that. The government should make that transparent to the people and the public advocacy campaign should put pressure from the bottom up to deliver that strategy. Conceptually it's really simple. The difficult bit is making it happen.

Ultimately, this is about a shift of mindset. Everybody I meet in Pakistan is battered by decades of failure. They don't really expect -- in that they've defeated themselves in their own heads before they start, they don't expect this initiative to make anything different. I use this quote from the Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, who resigned in 1995 after a year as prime minister and said we tried to do better, but everything turned out as usual.

That's what people in Pakistan think when the task force -- oh, yeah, we'll try and do better, but actually it won't really make any difference. We have to convince people and we have to find more and more people in Pakistan who believe this, that this time it really could be different. Unless we start fixing this education system right now, then the positive version of Pakistan in 2050 will be extremely difficult to achieve. But if we do fix it, and if this time it really is different, we can make a difference and Pakistan could be a fantastic part of the global community within a relatively short space historically speaking of time.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. (Applause)

MR. INSKEEP: I'm glad you all could join us. And we'll be working you into the discussion shortly. I'll throw a few questions at these folks and then I'm going to throw it open to you.

Thanks for coming out this morning. I really appreciate it. It's really exciting that everybody made it through the rain.

Can everyone hear me okay? Okay. That's good. And, of course, we've got a fine technician here dealing with the microphones, but if you can't hear anyone once they begin speaking, of course, just speak up and start shouting and throw things would also be appropriate in this situation.

Thanks very much for the presentation. I really enjoyed it. I want to begin this discussion by asking about what may be to some people a really shocking number. By 2050 I believe you said, Pakistan will -- is projected to have a population of 340 million people. Larger than the United States right now and something in the neighborhood of double what it is right now?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Yeah, roughly. It's 180 million roughly. Not near quite half, but it's about 180 million now.

MR. INSKEEP: And you have a situation where there already are not enough schools and already many millions of children who are not in school. I'm just curious, if you do the numbers of how many schools you would need to build just to have enough schools for all or most of the children that there are going to be in a few decades, how many schools would that be? And is it even remotely possible?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Of course it's remotely possible. There are Indian provinces that have had a lot of population -- Indian states that have had a lot of

population growth in the last two decades so they're getting close to meeting the millennium development goals. So we know it's doable. And the other thing to remember is there are a lot of schools. Probably today in Sindh province there are 4,000 schools that have been built, but nobody is there because the teacher didn't show up and the children have given up.

MR. INSKEEP: That photograph you showed, you multiple that by 4,000 in one province?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Right. Right. Right. So, of course you will need to build more schools, but we should never think that building schools on its own is the answer. You've got to get -- you've got to build schools, but you've also got to have a system that manages the people who work in it. So they will actually turn up and deliver a decent lesson day after day for the children. And you see heartbreaking pictures of children turning up at school and nobody comes.

MR. INSKEEP: Let me open this up to or other folks here because I'm interested. When you show the photographs and when you hear stories of the kind of education that people are receiving, it is tempting to ask the question that even with the children who are going to school, are some of the schools so bad that it would be better if kids didn't go to them? (Laughter)

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: I don't think so.

MR. INSKEEP: We'll get more optimistic later.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: I don't think so. But what -- they become quite irrelevant to the problem when they're really nonfunctional.

This discussion is overwhelmingly about primary education and I take it that that's the mandate of the task force.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Yes. Yes. That's right. That's true. And there are other big problems as well. That's true.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: But what I found when I was doing research on women's issues in Bangladesh, was that you have a very high percentage of kids there, and I suspect the same is true in Pakistan, who go to first grade and who drop out of first grade. That's one of the side effects of really bad schools, really crowded, non-functioning teachers. Basically, parents conclude that their six-year-old would be better employed babysitting or stirring the pot for lunch or tending the sheep.

MR. INSKEEP: Or working a job.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: It tends to be that kind of jobs if they're six.

MR. INSKEEP: Okay.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: Once they hit the big time at eight or nine there may be other jobs available.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Just to make it real before you come -- in third grade, something like 35 percent of children when tested a couple of years ago couldn't do single digit subtraction. So that's the children that do go.

MS. WINTHROP: Yeah, I would just -- I would definitely second Michael's point here that just, you know, the question about numbers of schools is important, but the real fundamental problem is that learning is really not happening on a consistent basis in the education system in Pakistan. And it's not because it's not possible. There is great schools and great learning happening for a lot of people, primarily the really wealthy. And that just is not extended and expanded to the rest of the population. There's a horrible statistic -- well, I think it's horrible -- of, you know, basically

the millennium development goals have been achieved and there's high quality learning happening for the fifth of the population that's the wealthiest. So only -- there's this metric called education poverty, which some of the U.N. agencies use, which is basically between 17 and 22 year olds, you know, how many of that population have less than 4 years of school. And for the wealthiest fifth of the population, virtually nobody. Only 9 percent live in education poverty.

But for the poorest fifth of the population, about 70 percent live in education poverty. So it's possible. Pakistanis know how to do it. They just don't prioritize. And I would also say that I addition to sort of years in school, your point about learning, you know, the kids who actually do make it into school, the poor kids are not learning very well. On average, they're at least sort of a quarter or a half standard deviation behind their wealthier students on test scores.

MR. INSKEEP: What are the possibilities for Pakistan of that education elite that you describe? That you do have an elite that's extremely well educated, that has in many cases traveled the world. Does that create opportunities for the country?

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: Of course it does. It creates tremendous opportunities, some of which are being realized. Now, for reasons that have nothing to do with today's discussion, a growing number of those people are moving abroad temporarily, but temporarily can continue.

The real question is: is this a force that can be mobilized to energize educational reform that reaches down? And the answer is that there are people, I mean, many of them I think are working with Sir Michael on the task force, who have taken this as a mission. There aren't enough of them and Pakistan is a country which has civil society talent, but has very few organizations, nongovernmental organizations that

operate on any kind of scale. Besides the Aga Khan Foundation, it's hard for me to think of another one that has large-scale operations. So that while you have people that are doing marvelous work, too often it tends to be retail, bit by bit by bit.

MR. INSKEEP: You want an education Wal-Mart is what you want basically.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Yes, well.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: But let me give you one other interesting example from Pakistan of a system that might have some seeds of lessons that can be learned. The Pakistan Army requires that anyone who enlists -- and I'm talking about privates, not lieutenants -- have what's called matric, which is the equivalent of high school. That's an astonishing educational standard in a country where literacy is still under 50 percent and that's kind of a cheap grade for literacy.

I suspect that no army brat goes uneducated. So the power of education continues into the next generation. But they also have a system of army schools, which theoretically are sometimes open to some people who will pay tuition. There have got to be some lessons there about how you can organize a school that actually serves the population, and this is a homegrown lesson that arguably could be used to find homegrown solutions.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: I agree with that. And to make another point, the other big change which I didn't have enough time to go into in my presentation is over the last 10 years, the low-cost private sector has expanded dramatically. By "low cost" I mean like 250 rupees a month.

MR. INSKEEP: Private schools you're saying?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Yes, really cheap. Like 2- to $4 a month for

each child. So in Punjab, there are 70,000 roughly public schools and there are 35,000 low-cost private schools. And when you do the research on the ground -- I had a team research this in a particular location in Karachi as it happens. So find the low-cost private schools. Some of them are registered; some of them aren't. But you go and find them. Find out the costs. And then you find out how much the children are learning.

First of all, every one of those schools has the facilities which the public schools don't, even though much less has been invested in them because there's no corruption and there is proper management and there is an incentive to make sure the children come.

Second, the teachers pretty much all show up pretty much every day.

And thirdly, the children learn more.

And fourthly, the cost is about a quarter of the cost of running a public school. So the productivity is 12 times because you've got 3 times better performance for a quarter of the cost.

So when we think about the Sindh education fund, we're talking about having something that would use public money to expand that low cost private sector because there are a million children currently in Karachi, who aren't in school at all.

MR. INSKEEP: You're talking about in a place like Karachi, the storefront schools. You see them in neighborhoods everywhere in a little shop space. It might even be a misspelled sign over the door.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Right. Right.

MR. INSKEEP: But you're saying those are making a measurable difference in people's education.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Right. I'm saying that -- yes, exactly. So

they're not good schools, but they're better than the public schools. That's what I'm saying. And if you could get –- if you could get -- expand those and set some minimum standards for them, that will be much better than pouring money into the corrupt, ineffective government systems.

MR. INSKEEP: Are they generally subsidized or are they self-sustaining on those low tuition costs?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: They're self-sustaining. And generally speaking the parents are paying 200- to $300 -- rupees a month. And in most of them about 20 percent of the children go free because of some family connection or they're an orphan or whatever.

MS. SHAFFER: There's an interesting point behind this story though. The first is that there is demand for education. That's not something you can assume. It's not universal. There are parts of the country where that demand is either weak or suppressed. There certainly are areas, particularly areas of very large landholdings and traditional futile relationships between the landholders and the peasants where not all the landholders are that keen to see the peasants' kids get educated and uppity.

But there is a lot of demand. If you drive on the road between the Lahore Airport and town, you can't go a block without seeing two or three -- these are mostly English medium secondary schools. I can't vouch for the quality of anything, but there is demand for people to get more education, whether it's private storefront or moving up the food chain and going into English.

MR. INSKEEP: I want to ask two or three more questions and then I'm going to be inviting questions from the audience.

One that I want to follow up on though, Sir Michael, has to do with

funding. You talked about international donors. Some people in this country are wondering what I'm about to ask here. Some people may take offense at this question, as a matter of fact. I hope there are Pakistanis in the audience who will tell me if you do. But the question is asked why should the international community be funding Pakistani services when Pakistanis do not, when so many Pakistanis seem not to be paying taxes, for example, those who have the means to pay? What's the answer to that?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Yeah, that's a question I get all the time at home in England. So it's not just here in this country, particularly at a time when the British government is taking 20 percent out of its total budget. But it's protecting the international development budget. That is a major public issue in England right now. And I understand people asking the question.

The answer I give is first of all, in the year of globalization, us investing -- us, the international community, investing in the education of children in other countries is an investment in our success economically.

Secondly, in the case of Pakistan as Rebecca's wonderful report shows, it's an investment in global security down the line.

Thirdly, if we spend that money well, we can get Pakistan and its government and the provincial governments to transform what they do and to bring investment in behind it. So we can spend it well and incentivize the big money which has got to come from the Pakistani government to come in.

But that involves taking a generous view of the world. So if you go to a narrow self interest view you wouldn't do it. If you wake a generous interpretation of self-interest, as for example the United States did in the immediate post-war era when setting up Bretton Woods and rebuilding Germany, and Europe, and Japan, and all of those

things. If you take that view you would invest in this because our economic success, our future security, actually depend on bringing about the positive version of Pakistan in 2050, not the negative version. That's not just bad for Pakistan; it's really bad for all of us.

MR. INSKEEP: Rebecca Winthrop, since he referred to your report, let me put the same question to you because there may very well be people in the new Congress who are asking the question, why invest when Pakistanis don't invest, even those with the means?

MS. WINTHROP: I mean, I'm sure they will. I'm sure plenty already are. And, you know, I think I would agree. I think I would agree with Sir Michael, with the understanding that, you know, it is that dual compact. You do have to have the Pakistani government do something in return.

One of the things that I worry about and one of the reasons that I'm so excited about the Pakistan education task force and the work that it's doing is the idea of just pouring sort of good money after bad. If you don't reform the management of the education system, you might just sort of be getting, you know, more of a bad system, which is not going to help anybody. And certainly, I don't think there's been a great legacy of ensuring that the education system is equitable, reaches the most marginalized, has good quality learning for the poor, which is, you know, the type of benefits we want to see for the, you know, good outcome that Sir Michael showed at the beginning.

The other thing that I think I would argue back to people, U.S. policymakers who have the question, many of them are perfectly eager to focus on religious education, Islamic education. And particularly, are worked about security. And Pakistan sort of as a hotbed for militancy that has regional complications as well as

implications for our own national security. And they are very concerned, you know, about madrassas. And I think what I would say is that's concerned to be concerned about that. There is clearly a small number of militant madrassas. Not all Islamic education is producing militants by any stretch of the means. And, you know, concentrate on the ones that are perhaps. But if you're just going to focus on educational policy in terms of Pakistan and security links on those small minority of schools, you're missing, you know, to me what's the elephant in the room, which is how are you educating your population much more broadly.

MR. INSKEEP: Ambassador Schaffer.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: But I think there is an important issue that -- it may not be an elephant in the room, but it's another large animal.

MS. WINTHROP: Giraffe.

MR. INSKEEP: Tiger.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: The interconnect -- it's something nobody likes to talk about, what is the interconnection between Islam and Pakistan's Islamic identities? And I'm deliberately putting it in the plural because different people have very different views of this and education.

First of all, there are, oversimplifying outrageously, three times of madrassas. Putting it in American terms, there are the ones that are like Sunday school, there are the ones that are like parochial school, and there are the ones that are like paramilitary training. It's the third category that is a political and security problem as perceived from the United States, and I think as perceived by a lot of Pakistanis.

The second really important point is that Islam has a great and distinguished tradition of intellectual output, respect for education. The spokespeople for

the Jamaat-e-Islami, which is one of the oldest of the religiously based parties in Pakistan, tell anyone who cares to listen that they are devoted to education. That they are devoted to education for women. Now, when you get down to the grassroots you may have some significant differences in what that education looks like, but I think I'm prepared to take what they say at face value.

The problem that arises though is that there are groups that have asserted their right to speak for Islam and Pakistan, which have a very different perspective. We've all read about the groups in Afghanistan that have thrown acid on girls who were going to school and said, well, you know, what do they need to go to school for? All they need is the Holy Quran. That philosophy certainly is -- I don't think it's close to being a majority view in Pakistan, but it's not unrepresented. And so then you get this fear of falling afoul of a group that refers to itself as Islamic in a rather fragile political system.

I think that's part of the landscape that we're working in -- that Sir Michael is working in, in particular, because I stay at a safe distance most of the year. But I think this is something that one needs to tuck in the back of one's brain.

I would make one other point in response to Sir Michael's very eloquent argument about how the private schools are performing better than the public schools. I have no argument with that, and in fact, there's a really interesting example in Bangladesh of village-based educational efforts, many of them sponsored by BRAC -- the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee -- which is an enormous NGO founded by a Bangladeshi, where the volunteers would go into a village and talk to the people and say, okay, who do you have that's about eight and never finished first grade? We would like to set up a school where they could get themselves up through fifth grade in the next two

years. What's the best time for them to go to school? What's the best place for them to meet? We can make a deal with you. We will make this happen if we can work out the details.

This happens to be a Bangladeshi example. I don't think there's anything inherent in the soil and water there that makes that unique to that place. This is the kind of thing that private schools can do and public schools cannot. But let us not give up on the public school system. Somehow it needs to be made to work.

MR. INSKEEP: Agreed.

MS. WINTHROP: Right. I would just tag on one thing to that, which is that to nuance a bit, actually, your comments, Sir Michael that, you know, the private schools are better than the public schools, and the public schools are bad. Well, statistically speaking that's probably true. But if you look at it a little more carefully and you splice it, there are some really, really good public schools in rural areas, in poor villages, who are doing great service to those young people.

MR. INSKEEP: You don't have to nod. You guys can come to fisticuffs or something if you would like.

MS. WINTHROP: That's right. Keep nodding. That's fine. (Laughter)

And, you know, to me what -- the problem is that there's probably, you know, about 25 percent of the public schools that are just absolutely terrible. And are much, you know, the variety of sort of high quality, low quality in the private school sector, this mom and pop -- not sort of the elite English medium private schools, but the sort of mom and pop national curriculum schools, there's much less variety. So they're kind of mediocre-ish and some are okay, some are good, hovering along. And then public schools you have some really good ones and, you know, have a lot of really poor ones.

So to me it's really interesting.

You bring up the question of BRAC, Ambassador Schaffer, and one of the distinguishing features that I think we should definitely look at between the private and the public system is the teacher. And the accountability of the teacher and who the teacher is and how they're related to the community. And a lot of it is because those private schools are run by teachers who belong to that community. They're not teachers who were posted to another district who don't live there, whose families live there. I mean, certainly there are a lot of very committed, hard-working public school teachers. They're just not very visible and they're not in a system that supports their efforts at all because there's such a lot of patronage in the public school system.

MR. INSKEEP: Go ahead.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Let me first of all agree with that and say it's not about either or. We've got to expand the low cost private sector in a subsidized way and fix the public sector. Both are absolutely essential and the strategy should definitely include both.

Just to -- prompted by your thought that you might want a bit of control. Let me say two other things.

MR. INSKEEP: Not that I want it. It's just you're welcome to it.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Well, okay. One is that the international community, the donor community, has been incredibly ineffective with uncoordinated, lots of short-term projects. Building facilities, but not worrying about the management. Setting off initiatives that run for a while and then when the money stops, they die. No coordination. I've been chairing donor people on the ground in Pakistan to get them to unify around a strategy for Balochistan, which we've made real progress with. But until

then you've just got lots of -- my friend Michael Fuller, the Canadian educator, talks about the helping hand striking again and again and again. And people have been beaten around the head by the helping hand. (Laughter) So that's a problem. And we really have to fix it. If we're going to expect people in Pakistan to step up and fix their education system, we've got to fix the way the donor community supports that.

The second thing to say, just answering your question about the skeptical senator or congressman, is one question I'd say to the most skeptical is in which country in the world do you think the place is most likely that nuclear weapons will fall into the hands of people we don't want them to fall into the hands of? And when you answer that question think then what are you going to do to preclude that happening. And there are some security things you're going to do. But in the end you're not going to solve that over time by firing drones alone. You're going to do it by fixing the institutions of the state.

MR. INSKEEP: Although you did twice use the word crazy when describing the management practices of -- I believe you were talking about public education at that time.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Absolutely. Well, no, I mean, if you, you know, there are completely irresponsible things that I've dealt with. I've been working there since pretty much going every month since December of last year. I've had three secretaries of education to deal with in Sindh province. So there have been three in nine months. The same is true in a couple of the other provinces.

MR. INSKEEP: Do I want to know what happened to the first two?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: They don't go under a bus; they just get moved to another job.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: These are senior civil servants.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Yes, the top official in a given department. And that turnover is replicated. So there are 36 districts in Punjab. The turnover is replicated. So the 36 districts in Punjab, the turnover of district administrators is -- makes it very difficult to fix basic management. Many of those appointments are made on a political basis rather than a competence basis. So fixing basic management means taking on some very fundamental flaws in the way Pakistan's education system is being governed.

MR. INSKEEP: I hope your questions are ready. We're going to have a microphone coming out in just a second.

We'll start with you in the back there, ma'am. While the microphone is going I'm going to ask you, though, Sir Michael, one last question before we get started.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Sure.

MR. INSKEEP: And let me also mention, Robin, who has the microphone. Would you wave to me when there's about five minutes left so that I don't get completely lost?

Would you just describe since you were just there how permanent the physical damage of the floods was to the educational infrastructure? Did the water recede and the schools were still there? Or is there a massive rebuilding to do?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: The floods affected an area the size of England. I don't know if that means anything to you, but it does to me. But England is --

MR. INSKEEP: Kind of big.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: It's smaller than Texas, but bigger than North Carolina. (Laughter) And so it covered a lot of territory. But compared to the number of

schools in Pakistan, we're talking about low numbers of thousands being damaged. Now, that's a lot of schools, but as I mentioned, there are 100,000 schools in Punjab alone. So there are about 200-and-something thousand public schools. So it's a relatively small portion. So it was damaging.

But the economic cost of the flood is much less than the economic cost of the failure of the education system annually. If you total up the total economic cost of the flood and then say what is the cost of a failing education system to Pakistan, the cost annually of the failure of the education system is three or four times the total cost of the flood. So let's get it in perspective.

So the flood needs to be fixed, but it's not, you know, it's not the end of everything. It was a terrible, traumatic event and it's in the past. But the education system is a slow moving traumatic event that needs to be fixed.

MR. INSKEEP: With that, let's throw it open to questions. Ma'am, if you would just stand so people can see you and also mention your name and where you're from so we know that.

SPEAKER: I'm Vanita and I work with Global Fund for Children.

First of all, I want to appreciate Sir Michael's comment on focusing more on action than reporting. In 25 years of my experience working at the grassroots and international level, seldom reports reflect reality. And sometimes they are even distracted from actual actions. So I appreciate that.

And my question is two-pronged. Girls' education is especially challenging in South Asia, most of South Asia. You mentioned Bangladesh, India, you know, Pakistan, more so rurally. So I'm wondering if the task force is focusing on rural areas. Most of the international efforts that I see are urban or semi-urban.

So in the same line, has the strategies -- you talked about educational strategies. Have you looked at the cultural issues that are complex for providing education to girls? And one example I want to share is dichotomy between women leaders who had countries in Pakistan and India both which is not even possible here yet.

And on the other hand, the education for women is so low, gender discrimination is so high, so have you looked at the strategies that would address cultural deep complex issues?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Please chip in because you two know possibly a lot more than I do on this.

But first of all, thank you very much for the acknowledgement. I agree with you about action. Obviously, that's important.

Secondly, yes, the task force is thinking about the rural parts of Pakistan. And as you were saying a few minutes ago, in the rural parts of Pakistan where you've got kind of feudalism still in action, this is a big challenge. And the floods interesting revealed -- kind of a lot of people fled from the flooded futile landlords into the cities, in Sindh province in particular and they're not going to go back. Why would you go back and be a bonded laborer when now you can get an education in Karachi or one of the other cities. So it's changing one difficult set of circumstances for another, but a lot of people won't go back and we can fix that.

But, yes, this is very much on the agenda. By the way, the World Bank person who has just started, Rashi Ben Massoud, who is running the World Bank program in Pakistan, is an excellent person. He is -- we have a great relationship and he has said his personal mission is girls' education in Pakistan. So that's going to go right to the top of the World Bank's agenda in Pakistan. So that's very much on the agenda.

And there are complex cultural issues. And there's a slight risk of getting sucked into the endless complexity. So I like to keep it simple. We're just going to make sure girls get an education. And when you ask parents, very large numbers of them, a very high proportion actually do want girls to be educated, but they need to know the school is -- has decent facilities and it's reasonably easy to get to and the girls are going to be thought about properly when they get there. So, yes, it's complex, but in the end we need to keep it simple.

MR. INSKEEP: Ambassador Schaffer.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: Let me just amplify that a bit. First of all, if they made me queen for a day, the first thing I'd do is educate the girls.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Absolutely.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: There are -- it's possible for a literate father to have illiterate children; it's practically impossible for a literate mother to put up with having illiterate children.

Secondly, when I was working again in Bangladesh, and I think that this is something that probably carries over, at least into parts of Pakistan, I came across some very interesting studies about attitudes towards educating girls. And those who had done research among families and had asked the mothers and fathers why it was that they wanted education for their girls if they said they did, they gave answers that one would never think of here. When she gets married she's going to go live in her husband's house. I want her to be able to write me a letter was a very common one. So there are things that really touch people's hearts that are going to make a difference to this.

Second, the final point, don't just stop your thinking at the fifth grade, even if -- you've got to get through the first five grades before you can think about

anything else. There are programs, and again my example is Bangladesh because that happens to be what I know, but I think that one could find other examples as well, that have had remarkable success keeping girls in school through the secondary level with rather modest scholarship funds. Typically in the schools all over South Asia, the school itself is free, but the parents have to pay for uniforms, which is, you know, it's not a big deal type of uniform, but it's a clear pair of shorts and shirt for the boys and either a skirt and blouse and tie for the girls or in the Muslim countries it'll be, you know, long pants and a dress to go over them and a shalwar kameez. And they've got to pay for books. So there is some financial outlay regardless.

MR. INSKEEP: Rebecca Winthrop.

MS. WINTHROP: You asked about strategies and I think, you know, just to highlight on that, one of I think the most effective strategies in Pakistan -- I think there's great examples of it, especially with civil society organizations, but also in Afghanistan and other countries in the region, is female teachers. Female teachers again who are local to that community. There's great success in Baluchistan with sort of girls' education through Pakistani NGOs. And to me, this is actually a question for you, Sir Michael Barber, you know, I think there's good evidence to say a woman who perhaps hasn't even finished her own secondary school, but if she's from that community she's committee, she gets some good training, she can provide a really good quality primary education to some of those really rural girls.

And I worry a little bit about standards for recruitment and payment of teachers. I think that woman should be paid equally and supported by the government as the person with the full sort of complement. I mean, granted she can't teach secondary school, but is that something that they're considering?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Well, the only reason that private schools can -- the low cost private schools can succeed is that their teachers are the kind of people you're talking about. I think one of the, I mean, getting inside the pay issue, one of the things you could do very quickly that would improve quality in both public and the low cost private sector is really well thought through, clear, simple teacher materials to go with the textbooks. So teaching guides. A lot of the teachers are very dependent on the textbook, but there's not much in the way of guidance to teachers. A woman with -- to use your example with real commitment, with success at primary education, but without higher levels of education, could be a good primary teacher because she'd have the commitment if she had that kind of practical support to do the job. Absolutely.

MR. INSKEEP: Let's see if we can go through several people here. Why don't we go to the gentleman in the suit there? If you'll stand up. And we'll probably go to the back of the room next, just so you know, Robin. Go ahead, sir. And if you'll introduce yourself.

MR. MOODY: I'm Jim Moody. I was out in both Pakistan and Bangladesh with the Peace Corps, and in latter years go back quite frequently. And I'm on the board of a group that puts schools in small villages where there otherwise is no school.

As you all know, the term "ghost schools" is used frequently in Pakistan and everybody knows what that term means. If you look at a map of the Department of Education, there's a school in this village, but if you go to the village there's no school. Someone is getting a non-ghost check sitting in Ralpenya or somewhere. So that gets back to the point about political will and getting serious about this.

I've gone to these little schools. They're sitting on dirt floors and there's

someone teaching who is very motivated in the ones that I've seen. That's why I would disagree maybe a little bit on the facility issue. In little villages, little villages, you don't need a facility; you just need a space with a roof over it, and in the summertime they sit outside, I've seen them. And that's a very important way to go. And there's a group that pays for that teacher that the government pays part of. There's a dual citizen called National Commission for Human Development where the government pays part of it and private groups pay part of it. It was parallel to the university -- to the educational system -- formal education system and it's quite effective. Girls.

In the small schools like the village schools, K through 6 is crucial in my experience because the parents won't let their little daughter walk at that age bracket. Walk four kilometers, five kilometers, to a school where there might be a school in another village. But they can get -- they can get up to six, five or six, that are then old enough to be allowed to walk that distance. So the crucial part for many girls' educations is getting those first few years in the littlest villages. And also parallel that doing literacy work with the mothers because once a mother learns to read, she's not going to allow her daughter not to learn to read.

And finally, one last point, USAID don't seem to recognize the problem this way as I've talked to them many times. They want to build big visible projects to win the hearts and minds -- water plants, big things like that -- and they're not focused is the last I heard on this issue, which I agree is absolutely crucial.

MR. INSKEEP: Thanks. Why don't you just hand the microphone to the young woman next to you there. Go ahead. Stand up. Introduce yourself.

MS. KINDER: Thanks. Hi, my name is Molly Kinder from the Center for Global Development across the street.

Sir Michael, it's a real honor to be with you today. I thought your paper that you wrote was outstanding and we've been following closely the work of the task force.

My question is on your recommendations for how the U.S. might invest its aid money in Pakistan. And as you're aware, the U.S. has its largest education program in the world in Pakistan: $330 million is allotted for this fiscal year. So there's really no shortage of money going to Pakistan. The question is how do you invest that money in such a way that it will have a transformative effect?

And I'm wondering if, in the U.S., for example, we have this Race for the Top Program, so there's a real financial incentive for states to actually do some of these reforms. When you're looking at these scorecards, is there a way that donors might actually put a carrot to some of these reforms at the provincial level, the district level, and also even going beyond that if there's a way to actually think about structuring aid to financially award outcomes. It's student learning.

And really quickly, my second question, is there a way that U.S. or British, or any other donor investment might be -- aid might be invested in such a way to actually empower parents to hold schools accountable and how might that work? Thanks.

MR. INSKEEP: Why don't you send the microphone back to the back of the room while we're answering these questions?

So basically, are there ways to make aid more efficient? I mean, if we are going to summarize.

MS. WINTHROP: I'll just say one thing because you made a very good point about USAID and sort of the hearts and minds and we want highly visible, but the

U.S. Government logo slapped over everything. And my experience, and we have some USAID colleagues in the room who work on Pakistan and Afghanistan so they can talk -- give you a straight from the horse's mouth. But my experience is talking with USAID education folks in Pakistan who are trying to design programs, they're quite aware of that -- of the strategy you outline and how successful it is and the evidence behind various interventions that show that's a really good way to go. And where it runs into problems is here in Washington where it's sort of like a development objective gets subverted to a very large sort of political hearts and minds objective.

I'm not sure where the problem lies, but I have some ideas.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: I'd like to argue with you. I think this is a false problem. We have a lot of money for aid in Pakistan. The Kerry-Luger bill provides something like a billion and a half dollars a year. There is enough money there to do some grassroots work which doesn't need to have logos all over the place. And some stuff that is big and can be photographed. We have a lot of interests in play in Pakistan, one of which is definitely seeing the country develop economically, seeing it lay the groundwork for a healthier political economy as well. But we have some other objectives as well. And with that kind of money we ought to be able to honor both.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: I agree. First of all, Jim, I agree with you and I agree with that refinement from Teresita. But I just want to -- on Molly's point, let me just make a few things. First of all, I've been closely involved with the Race to the Top fund here in the U.S. and I'm very, very impressed the way that's been managed. I think they've got a lot of change for what is a relatively small sum of money. All that is significant in federal department's history, but nevertheless significant. So I think that's a good thought.

Secondly, I think the donors have to combine. If each donor, you know, the British, the Americans, and the World Bank, and then the others who have smaller programs keep operating separately, we'll probably never get this fixed at the systemic level in any of the provinces or federally. So I think the donors come out. And there is some debate among the donors about having a lead country on each of the big themes. On education the talk is that it might be the British. That's not decided. And on other things it might be one of the other donors. And I think that is a really sensible way to go. And then combining the money around a clear strategy as I was trying to set out with the double compact. So I think that's important.

I was brought up a Quaker, so the word we use is plain speaking. I've started being pretty plain speaking with Shahbaz Sharif with the people in the federal government, and now with the donors. The donors can't go on the way they've been going or we're not going to fix this. You can't just pour money into facilities and not worry about the management. You can't pour money into programs because they look attractive, but they don't -- at least you can do it, but you're not going to change Pakistan if you do. We're part of the problem a lot of the time and so this is not just about USAID. I'm talking about all the donor community. We've really got to get integrated around a strategy.

And specifically on empower parents, I didn't have time to go into it, but we're working up with large media organizations and with the Pakistani popular music industry. There's lots of sort of huge stars that I'd never heard of before I got involved. We're working up a major public advocacy campaign for the second half of 2011. My vision of it is that there will be adverts on television, billboards where you go. I don't know if this works in American audience, but in Pakistan what they really care about is

cricket. And the television adverts during cricket matches, they're going to be about this and they'll say you should expect from your local school these five things. The school is open, the teachers are there, the facilities are there, the textbooks are there, your child learns something. If you're not getting that, call this number, free phone number.

We, the international donors, can't run the campaign, but we can fund the call center that answers those calls. We can analyze what those calls say. We can feed that out every 3 months saying we've had 25,000 calls, 10,000 about missing facilities. These are about missing teachers. And then we can feed the individual calls back to the individual bits of the failing bureaucracy and say what are you doing about this.

Now, that's quite a high-risk strategy, but that's -- until we empower the communities, however much pressure we put on, we're not going to change the system. But once the communities stand up -- now, the music industry loves this idea. The media industry loves this idea. We're just working it up. So I think a small amount of money from the donor community to fund the call center will have a massive impact if we pull it off.

MR. INSKEEP: Since you mention music stars, is there a music recommendation you want to make for us before we proceed?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Well, there's a guy called Shehzad Roy. There's a guy called Abrar-ul-Haq. These people -- one of them when I met him -- everybody has a laptop these days. He's got this whole sort of -- he played. He's fantastic. You know --

MR. INSKEEP: Something you want to sing for us?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: No, no, no. (Laughter) I can't even sing in

English. It's so early. It's well beyond me.

MR. INSKEEP: Well, let's go to the back of the room. Let me just ask, is there someone -- is there someone of Pakistani descent? Someone from Pakistan who is here? Several people. How about you, ma'am. Go ahead. Right there.

SPEAKER: The lady in the pink scarf.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much. And thank you for your insights into a rather daunting education scenario.

MR. INSKEEP: And go ahead and say your name and where you're from.

MS. KORISHI: Saba Korishi. I work as an independent consultant.

For those of us struggling with the education sector in Pakistan for the last several decades, I think we have to keep our optimism alive otherwise we're not going to get very far.

I'd like to pick on your point about management. Yes, it's crazy. I totally agree with your assessment. For the last three decades we've seen millions which would I guess combine into billions, poured into the education sector. We've seen huge initiatives, small initiatives, all size initiatives led by the World Bank, the SAP 1, 2. We just have not seen the impact that those programs should have had.

Now, you talk about management. Yes, it's been management, and I agree that it's one of the critical, critical dimensions that has not been able to have the desired impact. What would you -- if you had to just recommend two or three key management changes at the delivery level, what would you highlight -- something across provinces, across districts -- that we could pick on?

And my second question is about the public-private partnership that you

talked about. We know there are some very good, nongovernmental, not-for-profit initiatives starting to gain ground in Pakistan. We have examples like the Citizens Foundation, Developments in Literacy, CARE, and many others, several of which I'm a part of. Now, those private sector or nongovernmental initiatives have developed some brilliant models. They're working. They are low income community schools working very well.

What is it about the management and what is it about the implementation of these schools that has managed to do it which the government schools, public sector has not? And what do you see in terms of a partnership or some working relationship between these initiatives that could be taken to scale, that can help the government in cooperating some of the things that this whole initiative of the two working separately or in competition with each other is not going to work. We need to see the two work. We need to see an effective public sector because they're the only ones that have the outreach. But they haven't been able to do what these nongovernmental initiatives can. And, of course, BRAC is a case in point. But what is it that they were able to do that we cannot replicate in Pakistan?

Thank you.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: I'll be brief because there were so many hands showing. I don't want to take -- I completely agree with you. You asked a specific question about what management. The single -- if it was just one thing I would say to the provincial leading politician responsible for education, for each district appoint a really effective administrator. Put him in charge, or her, and make that person stay for three years. It's quite simple. And if I were one of the donors, and I'm trying to influence donors, I wouldn't give money for facilities until I had that commitment. I'd just say --

MR. INSKEEP: That the same person is going to be there for a while.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Yeah, so there are 36 districts in Punjab. Appoint somebody good to run each of those districts on education and require them to stay for three years. It's quite simple. It would make an enormous difference. There's more to it, but I'm just -- you asked for one thing. That would be the one.

And then on public-private partnerships, I think the Punjab Education Foundation is a really good example where government money is going through a foundation that government has helped to establish and it's then buying places that are free at the point of use to the child or the family, but their place is in the local private sector. And I think the government clearly has a responsibility to educate every child, but it doesn't have to be the provider of that education. It has to make the education possible. That's another parallel actually with the Race to the Top Fund because there's no reason why you can't have other providers of good state-funded education in Pakistan. I think that is one way to go. At the same time it's fixing the public sector.

MR. INSKEEP: Let's go way to the back. There's somebody with a hand way up in the back row. Go ahead, please. Stand up and tell us who you are.

MS. YUSEF: Hello. Thank you for this conversation. My name is Hama Yusef. I'm a Pakistan journalist and currently a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center.

I have two quick questions for you. The first is could you talk a little bit more about where the teachers are going to come from? Adult literacy rates are appalling in Pakistan right now and if you do the math, put together all the statistics you've put together, there just aren't going to be enough educated adults or people in their twenties to provide primary education for the thousands more children that are going to be borne by 2025.

And my other question is a little bit about -- it touches on what you spoke about, religious education. As a reporter, every time I've gone in to do a story about education reform in Pakistan, I have walked into an ideological battlefield, a minefield, whatever you want to call it. And the words education reform for many politicians have become synonymous with secular education versus religious education. It's become synonymous with this call for stripping anti-India sentiment out of the curriculums, about stripping sectarian sentiments out of the curriculum. And the conversations were stalled on these massive ideological issues. And I'm wondering if you've confronted any of that and if there's any plans to deal with that.

MR. INSKEEP: Just to be clear, you're talking about education in Pakistan, not education in the United States. Right?

MS. YUSEF: No, no.

MR. INSKEEP: Just checking. Just checking. Just checking. Please, go ahead.

MS. WINTHROP: I'd love to hear. What is the task force doing on this?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Well, I mean, if you read the paper that I wrote out there which is about 7,000 words, but I hope you enjoy it nevertheless, the -- I haven't mentioned the madrassas because that is a -- that is one potential distraction from the system reform. That's why I read the main message from the Brookings Institution Report. It wasn't that they don't matter; it's that there's a big task to fix the public education system. And then I agree with you. There's a lot of ideological issues.

Now, if you come in even within the public system and the textbooks, if you come in from outside and particularly if you're British, given the history of Pakistan, actually I'm trying not to get involved too much in that. I'm just saying let's fix some basic

things. Let's have a teacher in every classroom, schools that are open, kids that learn to read and write, kids that learn math to basic standards. But I'm not about to plunge into the debate about how to interpret Pakistani history. I do touch on the paper that I think Pakistan has a real challenge that the education system is a key part of sorting out national identity. And to me there are three elements of that that need to be picked at.

One is the history of Pakistan, the political entity that began in 1947. It's an interesting, fascinating history, well worth telling, preferably in a balanced way. Secondly, there's the history of the land where Pakistan is. The history of the Indus River just to give one part of that awesome history. What a story that is going right back to before Alexander the Great. And then thirdly, there's the history of Islam, which came to that part of the world way back and now has become central to the political entity that is there.

Out of those three strands you should be able to -- I'm an outside, ignorant person at risk of plunging into a major cultural battle here, but out of those three fantastic strands you should be able to weave a wonderful story of national identity. But somehow, because Pakistan has staggered from crisis to crisis going back to 1947, it never quite gets its -- gets on the front foot what is Pakistan all about. And too often it's about being not India. And that -- survival isn't enough for a national story.

And that leads into your second point, which is about teachers. What -- the way to recruit teachers in the next two decades is to say this is -- this is the future of Pakistan. This is our national identity. The teachers -- the people are building the successful Pakistan of 2050 teaching -- and lots of countries have done this. They've done it in Singapore and Korea, in Poland, recently, since the fall of the Iron Curtain. They've done it in Estonia. They've done it in Finland. So you have to build teaching as

a cadre of people building the future of Pakistan. It's partly about paying conditions, but it's really about the story. It's about what is your task.

MR. INSKEEP: Is it also, Rebecca Winthrop, as you have suggested, about being a little more flexible about how qualifies as a teacher?

MS. WINTHROP: I think there's a real quest of where are we going to get these teachers? I think a very important point was made. You don't need a facility to have a school. It could be a range of spaces. But if the Pakistan government or the ministry itself could be a little bit flexible, and perhaps you can tier your payment system and your professional development and your support, but ensure that people who have basic skills who have gone through at least sixth grade themselves or whatever it is and really care and are really dedicated and have the support of their community, you give them professional development and they can be fabulous teachers at those early grades. I mean, already we know for every 100 kids who enter first grade only one makes it to grade 12. So really the point was made much earlier by Ambassador Schaffer that we really need to support sort of heavily at those early years if we're going to ramp up access.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: And about 50 make it to grade 2.

MS. WINTHROP: Right. That's the transition.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: That's the initial plug in you have to make.

MS. WINTHROP: Right. And just one quick comment on your curriculum question because that is a really important issue that people don't like to dive into. Or I think actually people dive into it all the time within Pakistan, but it's harder for folks on the outside. And there's a number of Pakistani academics who you probably know them much better than I do, but that I've certainly bee following who have a big

critique of the curriculum.

And the one point I would make is that there's been such huge investment in curriculum reform, and I don't follow it, you know, to every last bit, but the latest curriculum that I know of is much more pedagogical, et cetera. I don't think it strips out a lot of the sort of militarization and glorification of violence that a lot of Pakistani academics have critiqued.

But that curriculum does absolutely nothing. If it sits on a shelf in a government office in Islamabad, which basically it has. So all that investment in curriculum reform, you know, I think we should pause and just get whatever that new curriculum is out and into the schools as a first step. And then, you know, think about what are better ways for promoting social cohesion through national education processes.

MR. INSKEEP: Let me inquire, how many minutes do we have left? What time is it? About eight minutes left? Okay. Well, let's try to get three or four more questions. If I can just ask people to limit yourself to a single question if that's okay. Why don't you go ahead here in front, sir?

MR. PHELPS: I want to ask a different question. I'm Malcolm Phelps, education advisor for Pakistan at USAID. And I want to ask you a very different question that I haven't heard come up at all today and that has to do with the higher education system. We've talked a lot about the basic education system and the problems thereof, but what do you see as the importance of the higher education system in solving some of the problems that we've talked about?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: I agree with the ambassador that in the end it's not just about primary and basic education, but that is where I've been focused over the

last year so I don't claim even the remotest expertise on that question. I can make a couple of observations. One is Pakistan needs -- it needs business leaders, it needs administrative leaders, it needs provincial leader who have that knowledge. It needs to be plugged into the global developments in a range of fields. And then in various sectors of the economy it needs people with deep expertise, whether it's energy where there's big problems or whatever it might be. So there's lots of reasons why higher education would be important and should be focused on -- it's just not at the moment part of my role.

MR. PHELPS: Well, let me ask something that relates to primary education. I think -- I went to college in Eastern Kentucky, a very poor region, which had and may still have very poor public schools. The university where I went ended up opening its own elementary school basically for the children of professors, otherwise they couldn't recruit professors. That's how bad the public schools were.

I think of that example because I'm interested if Pakistan is using the resources and the energy of universities and well-educated university kids to reach out in some way to elementary education.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: I can think of at least one example of exactly that and it's Forman Christian College in Lahore, whose Christian identity is pretty much limited to the current president of the college. But they have started an adult literacy program for the -- particularly for the spouses of staff. So there are examples of this. This is a -- Pakistan has a very long and honorable tradition of charitable work. It doesn't always translate into institutional commitments. It tends to be a much more personal affair. It could be given added energy by getting some more institutional backing.

MR. INSKEEP: Let me go to the young woman in the middle of the room right here. Go ahead, please. The microphone is coming up behind you. Sneaking up behind you now.

Please, stand up.

SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Miriam and I'm from the International Research and Exchanges Board. This question is very short and I don't think your task force has done work on it, but I just wanted to know your thoughts. What do you have to say about that top 5 percent? I mean, we've seen that the public education system in Pakistan, the quality has declined as the quality of the private sector has improved. And one of my former colleagues made an interesting point that one of the major reasons that public schools don't work in Pakistan is because the rich people that top 5 percent, none of their children go to those public schools. So I just wanted to see your thoughts on that.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: I mean, the observation you make is, I'm sure, true. Actually, the same debate occurs in the United Kingdom where about 8 percent of kids go to public, sorry, what we call public schools, independent schools, private schools. And then 92 percent go to the public school system that we call a state school system. And when I was working for the Blair Administration there was some pressures, particular in the Labor Party, to, you know, the radical end, abolish the private sector. We didn't do that. I don't think in the end you're going to win this argument by trying to level things down. That's -- so you need to find a way of unlocking the commitment of that elite to a wider vision of the future of Pakistan that isn't about just threatening the good education. So that's the way I'd go about it.

But you do hear different arguments made, but I think actually it would be completely disastrous to attack that high-quality private sector because you'd drive

people out of Pakistan. You'd weaken the society. So the question for me is how do you unlock the commitment of the elite to the wider vision of the future of Pakistan.

MR. INSKEEP: Go ahead.

MS. NEVIWALA: My name is Nadia Neviwala. I recently graduated from Harvard Kennedy School and did about four months of research in Pakistan on this area and worked with the Citizens Foundation.

The most compelling analysis that I've seen is that the reason that education has failed in Pakistan is because the majority of its education budget is used for teacher salaries for teachers who don't show up to work. And this is the least discussed aspect and probably the most difficult one for us to tackle because, I mean, the decision has to be made at the highest political level by the president and, you know, the political machines running that country that they're not going to use the budget as political favors for teachers and people in Pakistan.

So, I mean, and I talked to a former minister of education who tried to publish the names of all non-appearing teachers in the newspaper and threatened to fire them, and she couldn't do it. So when a former minister of education can't do this, the responsibility is really a lot higher. And then what's happening to the ministries is that they're devolving their responsibilities. The social services sector in Pakistan of the government seems like it's given up by devolving to these public-private partnerships.

And then the civil society aspect, I think, needs to be much more engaged, including by the Education Task Force or whoever is working on this. School adoption is one of the most innovative approaches that I've seen where companies and NGOs are taking over public schools and running them.

So how do we attack the political dimension of this at the highest levels?

And then how do you engage civil society more, including these really innovative models and Pakistani solutions that have come up that sometimes we just don't hear because we're so far behind our walls and embassies and in different offices in Islamabad?

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: The problem isn't so much that a large percentage of the budget goes to recurrent cost teacher salaries. That's true for probably any education system. The problem is, as you point out, that at very high levels a number of teaching positions are used for political patronage. Not all. There's a number, you know, there's a lot of good teachers out there just trying to survive in the trenches who are probably very demoralized. So this is actually a question that I have for probably both of my fellow panels, but especially you, Michael, because you talk about, you know -- what did you call it? A coalition? What is that?

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: The Guiding Coalition.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: Guiding Coalition. I was going to say Coalition of the Willing and I got a little -- I said, oh, my God, no. Yes. (Laughter) Guiding Coalition. I mean, how -- to me this is the absolute crux of the problem in Pakistan. And how -- is it really, really going to be different? And is there really a guiding coalition? And how far up does it go? I mean, I guess that's the kernel of it.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Well, I agree completely with your analysis. There's just a fundamental problem not talked about enough about the large amounts of money that are going to teachers who never show up. In some cases you come cross where teachers are collecting one, or two, or even three salaries and never showing up. And let's put a name to it. This is political corruption on a completely unacceptable level. So to me the question is how do you tackle it? And I agree unless we -- the government's DFID in Pakistan is a very good guy called George Turkington. He says to

me regularly you'll never get this solved unless you deal with -- and this is his phrase -- the binding constraints. This is one of the binding constraints. I completely agree.

So I've started dealing with it in the sort of plain speaking -- I'm bringing my Quaker background. I'll tell it how it is. So this is what I'm going to say. You have to solve this. Unless -- and we -- there are two -- there are two pressures we can bring to bear. One is the international community and our aid money. We could say unless we see clear evidence that you're going to fix this, why would we spend another penny? How can we justify it to our public going back to the very first question unless you fix these fundamental problems of corruption.

And secondly, the public advocacy campaign that I described in answer to Molly's question is really important. There's a relatively small but quite good -- very good organization called the Sindh Education Foundation, which is funding low cost rural schools in the north of the Sindh Province in exactly the areas that the Ambassador was talking about. And Anita Ghulam Ali who runs a wonderful -- I don't know if you've met her, but she's a wonderful human being. On the Sindh Education Foundation Schools there's a board outside with a phone number, her phone number. And if the teacher doesn't turn up somebody calls Anita and she fixes it.

Now, if the vision of the public advocacy campaign I described a few minutes ago came to pass, lots of people would be saying this is unacceptable. She described to me a school where it's in the middle of nowhere in Sindh. There's an oldish man in the village who has taken it on himself to make sure that the teachers show up. So he waits outside the school when the school should open and then he calls the district office when they don't come. They all come now. So this is doable. But the international community can put pressure on them, but in the end the citizens of Pakistan have got to

take responsibility and address this.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: No, sometime before the end I have one more thing I wanted to say that's not related to this question.

MR. INSKEEP: Okay. Well, we have time for one more question. And is there one question out there that is like really deep and profound that will cause our guests to say something that makes you all tearful and go away feeling this is the most amazing panel discussion you've ever seen? Who's got it? Who's got it? You're already standing up, ma'am. You must have an amazing question. Okay.

MS. FINDLAY: It's positive. And I want to say that my friends who are teachers -- I'm Judy Findlay from George Washington University. I'm a teacher educator.

And my friends who are teachers in Pakistan have told me that the most positive thing to come from this flood is that these elite youth, many of them have gotten up off the sofas, turned off the televisions, sent out a call on Facebook and said nobody is doing this and so we better get busy. They have -- they've taken the lead in getting relief materials -- food, water, into villages. They have learned more about their country than I ever thought they could possibly learn. Because I'm always trying to shake these young women and say get up before two in the afternoon. I need for you to get out here and help mothers know that they have to read to their children or the older children who can read, read to the younger ones.

I think this is a very positive thing and, you know, I'm hopeful that we can build on this because now people in the countryside know these young people, and the young people, I think, have a new commitment to their own country. So I think that's -- I think that is perhaps the most positive thing I have seen.

MR. INSKEEP: Okay. That brings a tear to my eye. Thank you very

much. And I want to transform that into a bit of a question if I might. Can I ask each of you to leave us with one specific example of something that has inspired you about what you've seen as you've studied this problem? Go right ahead, Ambassador.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: This is a nice segue to the comment you made because about a year -- no, it was about five years ago I spent time in the living room of one of my friends who was a retired, very senior official, whose daughter came in wearing a slightly bedraggled shalwar kameez and tennis shoes, having been out all day doing earthquake relief in Azad Kashmir. This is not the sort of default occupation that I had been familiar with for Pakistani women in their mid-twenties of her social background and I was inspired by her example.

But I will give you specifically an education feel good story. What is the area in Pakistan that has the highest educational level on average? There are two of them. One is Azad Kashmir and the other is what's known as the northern territories. These are both areas whose political status has been under dispute for the past 60 years. Why? Now, that's a really interesting one. The northern areas, I think it's primarily the result of outreach by a very effective NGO. The Aga Khan Foundation, which has a religious affiliation with a particular group of people that live there. But in Aza Kashmir, the answer I got from people who had senior provincial-level positions was, well, you know, the present set up doesn't let people from this area have the most senior jobs in the government. So we decided we were going to show Pakistan that we could do something they can't. Now, that may not be an altogether comfortable story, but my answer is it can be done. You need to have somebody who is in a position to make stuff happen and who has whatever motivation is really going to turn them on.

MR. INSKEEP: Rebecca Winthrop, why don't you go next?

MS. WINTHROP: So one person, many, many people in Pakistan have inspired me, but a particular women by the name of Kurtalombak Tiari who works in Baluchistan. And anybody, if you ever get a chance to talk to her, definitely do. She set up some amazing schools for girls in rural areas in Baluchistan, and her whole vision, which is what I find inspiring, is that, you know, sort of young women can be social change agents in their communities by volunteering, teaching primary school, and a whole range of other issues that can be very transformative. So I think that's a less we should all take to heart.

MR. INSKEEP: And Sir Michael, you get to go last since you got first.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Thank you. Well, the first thing to say is I've learned that -- I thought I wouldn't get like it, but I've got completely obsessed with this problem. I really, really love Pakistan. I found the people incredibly welcoming, incredibly friendly and positive. Being a former professor, when I want to learn about something, in addition to going there I read books. I've understood to a level that's deeper for me than it ever was before, but obviously not as deep as many people about Islam and its potential to transform a society. And that's actually -- I found that quite inspiring for me, but that's just some knowledge that I should have had sooner.

But the one person that inspired me was a principal or head teacher we'd call them in English in the Karachi suburb of Gadap, who was running a perfectly ordinary public school where all the children turned up, all the teachers turned up. She'd been the principal for 17 years. You could see the children learning. She knew how much each child was learning and what was happening if they weren't learning. And nobody -- nobody in the system made her do that. She did that out of her commitment to the students in her classes, her school, and her community. And it was an act of -- it was a

monumental act of will.

And my finishing point is this. Among sufficient people in Pakistan, a similar monumental act of will is required. We can get all the systems working potentially, but in the end people have got to make a monumental act of will and they've got to believe that this time it could be different. And that woman shows every day that it really can be different.

AMBASSADOR SCHAFFER: Can I add one thought? If that happens, I can't think of anything that would have a greater and more positive impact, not only on the people of Pakistan, but also on the donors.

SIR MICHAEL BARBER: Absolutely.

MR. INSKEEP: Thanks very much to our panel and to everyone who asked a question. Thank you very much. (Applause)

* * * * *

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

Expires: November 30, 2012