THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

DEFENSE CHALLENGES AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

THE 21ST CENTURY DEFENSE INITIATIVE'S SECOND ANNUAL MILITARY AND FEDERAL FELLOW RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Washington, D.C.
Wednesday, March 16, 2011

PANEL 4: THE U.S. AND REGIONAL PARTNERS

Moderator:

FIONA HILL
Senior Fellow and Director, Center on the United States and Europe
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

COLONEL JOHN ANGEVINE (USA)
Federal Executive Fellow, The Brookings Institution
"Self-Reliance Defence of Australia: Creating a Dependent Australian Defence Force"

JULIE BOLAND
Federal Executive Fellow, The Brookings Institution
"Ten Years of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization"

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BUTCH BRACKNELL (USMC)
Marine Corps Fellow, The Atlantic Council
"Naval Expeditionary Force Contributions Among Latin American Allies"

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. HILL: I'm Fiona Hill, the director of the Center on U.S. and Europe here at Brookings in the Foreign Policy Program. And I also have the privilege of sharing our corridor with our esteemed members of the Federal Executive Fellowship Program, so I see a lot of these guys on a daily basis.

I don't, however, see very often the gentleman here on my right, Butch Bracknell, who has joined us from the Atlantic Council. Although Butch and I find now that we have something rather strange in common that he just told me coming up to the stage. My first name is Fiona and apparently his nickname is Shrek. And any of you who have a small child in the audience, I have a four-year old who just -- I have immense street cred from the fact that there is a Princess Fiona out there. Although it is a little disappointing to know it's only in the form of an ogre. But anyway, never mind.

But anyway, I think that that gives a certain personal connection here on the panel. So, Butch, although this is the first time we've really met, delighted to have you here. And of course I'm just very pleased to be able to introduce to you our other Federal Executive Fellows. John Angevine and Julie Boland, who I see pretty often. And in fact, in one of my other positions as the National Intelligence Officer for Russia and Eurasia at the DNI's National Intelligence Council, I actually saw these two quite frequently there as well. And I'm very pleased that they're here at Brookings with us for the year.

You all have biographical information, or should you, on most of the people. John has had a very varied career that covers some of the areas that I'm interested in, Russia and Eurasia. Also, a sting, like many of the other people here in the room, in Iraq and elsewhere. But he has turned his attentions since he's been here at Brookings to the new special relationship that used to be with Britain, but now clearly seems to be with Australia. Not that I'm jealous of the former colonies.

But in any case, it's clear to the -- Australia is now the new UK for the U.S. and it's Asia perspective. And I was very pleased that John has decided to -- seems to be focusing

here on the new regional partners for the United States to focus on Australia and its reforms in defense, which obviously have a lot of implications to the United States in looking forward to the Asia Pacific region.

Julie Boland, who has been a senior analyst and manager in the intelligence community for many years is one of the few people who has paid particular attention to other developments elsewhere in Asia. Central Asia, which tends to get forgotten unless it's in relation to Afghanistan, getting back to the topic of this morning's panel. And has spent a good deal of time looking at the Shanghai Corporation Organization, which also raises a lot of questions about where this is going to be heading in the next decade, whether this will have the salience that it had in the last, for both Russia and China as well as the Central Asian states. And how this might also affect U.S. perspectives on longer-term dynamics in Asia.

And finally, Butch -- a.k.a. Shrek -- my new colleague will talk about something that also tends to be really neglected, but not here at Brookings, which is Latin America. And in fact, the whole point of your paper is, in fact, to point out the risks that we face, at the United States and elsewhere, by not taking due consideration of the strategic perspectives in Latin America. So we're very pleased that in fact, all of our three colleagues will be putting a spotlight on regions that tend to be ignored to some degree in the current preoccupations with the Middle East and elsewhere.

So, I'm turning over first to Colonel Angevine, then to Julie Boland, and then to Lieutenant Colonel Bracknell for your perspectives. And then we'll move straightaway to discussion with you. And we'll try to wrap up as close as we can to 4 o'clock, and I'll then turn the floor back to Peter Singer to make some final words.

So, John. Thank you.

COLONEL ANGEVINE: All right, thank you, Fiona. I really appreciate it.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to hear about our work at Brookings 21st Century Defense Initiative. It's a privilege for me to briefly discuss the research on Australia's defense policies, strategies, and capabilities articulated

in the Australian Defense white paper 2009, which I will refer to as "Defense 2009."

During the course of the past several years, I've had the honor to work with our Australian ally jointly addressing crisis around the world and collaborating on future plans for both U.S. and Australian defenses. My interest in this research began several years ago when I realized the Asia Pacific region would become more and more important to the United States. The U.S.-Australian alliance is quickly emerging as the cornerstone alliance for continued security and stability in the Asia Pacific region.

It's important for the United States to not take its defense relationship with Australia for granted, and to take time to understand the implications future Australian defense policies and planning will have on the alliance.

What my research determined is the current vector that the Australian Defense white paper -- Defense 2009, that is -- sets for the Australian defense forces modernization does not correspond with the realities of Australian's security situation. The policies and strategies set forth prepare the ADF for contingencies that are least likely to happen, and tie up limited resources on missions that exceed the ADF's capability to deal with alone.

Four key points of my argument include the following. First, the Australian Defense 2009 white paper reaffirms the defense of Australia's doctrine based on the perceived rise of China and raises questions over the reliability and utility of the U.S. alliance. From an American's perspective, the heart of Australia's defense debate centers on whether or not Southeast Asia and the Pacific region, including Australia, can continue to rely on the United States as a guaranteer and underwriter of the defense -- of the regional defense and security.

Second, the centerpiece of the proposed defense 2009 capability priorities, or acquisitions, are high-end maritime and air battle platforms. And in Canberra's effort to shift from today's predominant counterinsurgency and counterterrorism types of operations to the higher end of the continued military operations, Australian defense policymakers overcompensated, allocating the preponderance of their resources to capabilities least likely until 2030, and consequently generating gaps to the lower and center portion of the military

operations continuum.

Third, this focus on high-end maritime and air capabilities would leave the Australian defense force exposed to atrophying low-end expeditionary capabilities. Falling into the same intellectual trap as U.S. defense policymakers of the 1990s, Australian defense planners have erred in assuming defense 2009 capabilities that are exceptionally suited for operation of the higher end of the spectrum of war will suffice for lesser contingencies on the spectrum. Essentially, they've designed an Australian defense force for 2030 that will be designed to sit on the shelf until it's called on to conduct operations at the higher end of the spectrum. But that will also be too weak to support these higher-end operations on its own.

This will weaken the ADF's capability to serve as a credible means to build regional partnerships and create flexible options for the -- to secure Asia Pacific security and stability. In order to use the ADF for the low -- the more likely low-end contingencies, Australia defense planners will have to resort to expensive and time-consuming ad hoc restructuring.

And last, regarding the implications for the United States, the U.S.-Australian alliance, and the region, the white paper plan leaves Australia incapable of being self-reliant. As Australian defense policymakers strengthen the ADF's 2030 capabilities to become self-reliant at the higher end of the military operations continuum, they make the ADF 2030 more dependent on U.S. military assistance in order to perform the low- and mid-intensity operations.

The likely result will be an inadequate, ad hoc, and weak multilateral response which would necessitate a direct U.S. involvement in stabilizing a crisis with more resources than if the issue had been addressed early on with the right mix of capabilities and cooperative security unity.

The consequences for the United States would either be to accept the increased U.S. burden for the operations on the lower and middle continuum of military continuum within the Asia Pacific region, or to retrench from the region if the United States does not

accept the added burden.

To maintain the alliance with the United States offers maritime and air contributions that are significant to the ADF's order of battle. However, they remain only token when compared to the United States' contributions. And Australia misses the opportunity to support regional cooperative security arrangements, which both Australia and the United States needs to manage China and other security threats.

While pressing for constructive and -- they're missing this -- excuse me for a moment here. Ah, I stand corrected. Third, the focus on high-end military -- maritime, air capabilities would leave the Australian defense force exposed to these weakened capabilities. However, the -- in order to use the ADF -- the more likely low-end contingencies, the Australian defense planners will have to resort to expensive, time consuming ad hoc structuring. And regarding the implications for the U.S., the Australian -- and in the region -- the United States will have to provide that added support at that lower and mid-intensity operation level.

The likely -- in summary, the -- or correction. To maintain an alliance with the United States, Australia offers that maritime issue. And again, to address the China and other threats. To make the U.S.-Australian alliance more effective in providing both nations' security needs, the United States Defense Department should support, one, publicly discarding the Guam Doctrine in conjunction with the establishment of a U.S.-Australian defense industry committee. Establishing -- two, establishing joint basing for submarine repair, maintenance, and training facilities. Three, endorsing a Southeast Asia and South Pacific regional multilateral cooperative security arrangement to address regional security and stability challenges while pressing for constructive and a transparent China participation in regional security matters. And last, urging the U.S. Department of State to draft defense trade cooperation treaty rules to publicly create a seamless U.S.-Australian defense industrial community. And DOD shepherding this concept in support of the future joint U.S.-Australian operational activities.

Australian policymakers, for their part, must tie the Defense 2009 and future white

papers' objectives into the Australian foreign policy in the Asia Pacific region as part of a broader hemispheric system. Clearly establishing a framework approach for multilateral and cooperative security mechanisms to deal with such regional issues as disputed island claims in the South China Sea, maritime resource claims, mass migration, conflict resolution, and conflict prevention with corresponding confidence-building measures.

A capacity-building and defense modernization transparency. Australian policymakers should recapitalize unaffordable and excess air and sea capabilities into the ground and amphibious capabilities to deal with the more likely middle to lower-intensity regional scenarios in the continued military operation. A shift in Australia's defense capabilities toward greater utility in the most likely regional contingencies would significantly contribute to stability and security in Australia's primary operational environment, as well as making a valuable contribution to the U.S.-Australian alliance.

Since 1918, the United States and Australia have fought side by side, and the alliance has developed into one of the fundamental building blocks for continued stability in the Asia Pacific region. And consequently, the health of this alliance cannot be taken for granted. To do so would put the alliance at risk.

A greater understanding of one another's defense security needs will lead to mutually supporting capabilities to collectively manage the regional challenges at hand. By complementing one another's strengths, the U.S.-Australian alliance will remain vibrant, adaptable, and capable, acting in concert with other allies in the region of jointly facing any future challenges.

Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thank you, John. Before we move on to Julie here -- perhaps to give us a little bit of a segue into looking into Central Asia. I mean, you mentioned Australia fighting side by side with the United States in 1918. And of course, that means that some of the most famous operations of World War I -- you know, Gallipoli springs immediately to mind -- we saw Australia operating far out of its region. I mean, you couldn't get much further away from Australia's primary area of operations that you've been stressing now.

But it seems that about your description from the Australian Defense white paper that Australia's focus has been much more narrowly defined in spite of, obviously, Australia's larger security interest and much broader foreign policy perspective in areas far outside the South China seas or the South Pacific. Is this one of the problems that you see as the most sever? Because it certainly sounds from the recommendations and the issues that you were highlighting that this is a very much more narrow focus in the immediate Pacific area around Australia.

COLONEL ANGEVINE: Yes. Australia has a tendency to, between peacetime and wartime, having to decide where they're going to do a forward defense or a continental defense, defense of Australia. And they are vacillating whether they should have an expeditionary operations or not. And -- or a combination of those three.

And in peacetime they have a tendency to fall back onto the continent itself and then in wartime, they become very expeditionary and will send forces to and fro. And have fought with the United States since 1918 in every major conflict.

So in that sense, their defense policy is a little bit schizophrenic in terms of wanting to participate and have equities, particularly in the interdependent globalized world where they're partnering with a great power that has global interest. At the same time, they're trying to contribute to that alliance maintenance.

The issue that I see Australia running into is that they are -- there's a number of fears driving them, and one of those is where the U.S. is going to stay or not in the region. At the same time, they've got to deal with their economic model that they've created with China and their defense security model that they have with the United States. And sometimes they think they have -- the pundits think they have to choose between one of the two, and they're not necessarily mutually exclusive.

So, in the event that the U.S. would get distracted to another issue in the region or with retrench, then the acquisitions of their current portfolio -- acquisition portfolio -- is such that they can do this high-end operation with their equipment that doesn't necessarily -- is fungible to the middle-, lower-end, where the issues are more likely to occur. Be it

peacekeeping, building, mass migrations. And so they leave that gap in their capabilities while they try to build this deterrent in the event that the U.S. would part the shores of Australia.

MS. HILL: How has Afghanistan played into this?

COLONEL ANGEVINE: Well, first of all, the Australians are absolutely committed to Afghanistan, based on their public statements and, more importantly, based on their actions both in terms of blood and treasure. They see the war and terrorism directly affecting their security in Australia and their interest around the world. And it's a UN-sanctioned operation, which of course has been endorsed by Australia itself.

So, they are -- the Australians are fighters. And if you mess with them, they'll body slam you. Not to take anything from the viral video that's been going out. But they're most certainly are very capable of protecting their interests around the world. And so -- but that's the here and now. The question is, how do they posture their force and their means in the future to allow them to either keep being able to contribute to some of these global security issues, which they almost have concentric rings -- although my understanding is that they don't -- some of the policymakers don't like that description. You know, the continent, then they work out toward their -- near or broad and then to the Asia Pacific region at large, and then the global security. If their interests are threatened, then they most certainly are going to look for a way to protect those.

MS. HILL: Thank you very much, John. I mean, that does actually provide a good segue into what Julie's going to talk about, because the Shanghai Cooperation Organization also faces these same sets of dilemmas. Here and now challenges, which was actually not a military one at all, but was in fact about how to resolve border disputes among all the regional states. And then has turned into a long-term prospect. And how does this organization that was set up for other purposes deal with long-term security challenges in a similar manner to the dilemma that the Australians face.

So, Julie, we'll turn over to you now. Thank you.

MS. BOLAND: Thank you, Fiona.

As Fiona said, I chose to concentrate my research here at Brookings at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. I call it the SCO. Some people have never heard of it that way, they refer it as the S-C-O. But it's a multilateral group focusing on the Eurasian region.

And just out of curiosity, because I get a lot of, you know, empty stares when I mention the SCO, a show of hands just of the audience here. Who has even ever heard of the SCO? That's a very informed audience. I wouldn't expect anything else at Brookings.

But there are several reasons I wanted to look at this group right now. Like my federal fellow fellows, it's an interesting cast of characters in the SCO. But they're all countries important to the U.S. And it's also, like my federal fellows, got an agenda of important topics, also topics of concern to the U.S.

And so, surprisingly, to me at least, the U.S. has not really interacted with the SCO very much at all over the last 10 years, despite this important cast of characters and despite the important agenda. And despite a push by this administration, in particular, to work with regional groups.

And finally, I think it's a timely topic because the SCO is marking a milestone event this year. In June, they'll be celebrating their 10th anniversary in ASEAN at their heads of state summit.

So some key questions I've been looking at in my research here are, first, has the SCO used this past decade to make any progress as an effective organization? Some of the critics that engage in the SCO in the past 10 years have asserted that the group hasn't really done anything. You know, it's just a talk shop so, you know, why should the U.S. make the effort to engage?

And secondly, are the reasons why the U.S. might now consider the opportunities as well ask the risks of better engagement with this organization? And then lastly, are there some steps the U.S. could take to begin to take a move towards a relationship and move it forward if it chooses to do so?

So, I know you're a well-informed group. But just a little background on the origins

of the group. As Fiona said, the SCO -- it began as the Shanghai 5 in 1996, and it really was focused purely on defining China's borders and deepening military trust with those post-Soviet states. But then by June 2001, just a few months before 9-11, the Shanghai 5 welcomed in Uzbekistan, which doesn't border China. And then they institutionalized this new group as the SCO.

And its philosophy is the so-called "Shanghai Spirit," which is harmony, working via consensus, respect for other cultures, non-interference in others' domestic affairs -- which becomes important -- and non-alignment. Meaning, they didn't see NATO as their foe, or they didn't want to be considered a block.

The SCO's comment focuses working cooperatively against the three evils, they call it. And those three evils are terrorism, separatism, and extremism. So, the SCO -- this is their interesting cast that includes China, Russia, and then four of the five "Stans"; that's Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Those are all the full members. So that includes about a quarter of the world's population, three-fifths of the Eurasian landmass, two key UN security council members, a fledgling democracy in Kyrgyzstan. States who border Afghanistan or who actively enable the coalition's effort there through things like the Manas Transit Center in Kyrgyzstan, or the Northern Distribution Network effort. So those are your full members.

And then in Mongolia in 2004, joined as an observer. As well as the next year, India, Iran, and Pakistan. Again, a set of challenging or at least challenged countries critical to stability in Eurasia.

Afghanistan has been participating since 2005 in activities with this group through a contact group, and it was just reported this week that Russia has invited Kabul to apply for observer status. So we'll see what happens at this year's summit.

And then rounding out this cast of characters are Belarus and Sri Lanka. They were approved as the organization's first dialogue partners in 2009, and that's an interesting development in and of itself because it showed the organization developing a new level of association with the group to kind of manage aspirant countries who wanted to cooperate

with the group but who may not have been ready to actually do join or who the group actually was not ready to have them join.

So, quite a collection of countries. But, again, all are concerned about a tough subject in this Eurasian region, things that the United States is worried about, too: instability, terrorism, drug trafficking, infrastructure and economic development, resource management -- especially water, hydro management -- and so on. So, topics Washington is concerned about, too. Supporting the Afghanistan effort right now, of course, is our main priority. But all of those other issues I talked about fit squarely in the U.S. goals for this region, too.

So despite this confluence of interest, there's been little interaction between the U.S. and the SCO, at least to my understanding. And as I said, some of us asserted that part of this reason is because they've perceived the SCO to be just a talk shop, not worth the U.S. time and effort to engage.

But my research here, at least, suggests that in these last 10 years of existence -- and remember; only in the last 6 years has the SCO even had a functioning secretariat and counterterrorism group -- in these last 10 years, the SCO has developed its organizational structure. It has expanded its formal ties with other states and other multilateral institutions. It has taken steps that I think are concrete, although I admit, incremental, to try to broaden and cement its regional impact and influence. Not always have they been steps the U.S. prefers they would have taken, but action nonetheless.

So, to address the organizational development first and just briefly, the SCO developed from two standing bodies, the secretariat and the regional anti-terror structure, which carries the unfortunate acronym of RATS. So they moved from these two standing bodies and regular heads of government and defense and foreign affairs ministerial-level meetings to broaden out to department-level joint councils on topics ranging everything from agriculture and culture, education, health, judiciaries, and legislatures. Between the participating states and, in some respects, also beyond just the membership but including most recently the observer states. And all of these meetings culminate in an annual heads of state summit.

But while working on its own organizational structure, the SCO has also worked to establish relationships, as I said, with other multilateral organizations. And this provides further legitimacy to the group, recognition outside their own region, as well as opportunities for cooperative projects. And just increasing situational awareness for them of what, you know, global plans others might have.

So for example, the SCO has formal cooperative agreements with the UN and various UN bodies underneath it, like the Office on Drugs and Crime and the CIS, Commonwealth of Independent States; ASEAN, the Eurasian economic community; and the CSTO, among others. The SCO continues to develop links with the EU and with OSCE, also. For example, it attends EU and OSCE forums, particularly on Central Asian security issues.

And then on the security front, the SCO has moved from -- as Fiona had mentioned earlier -- the border agreements to actually conducting multilateral security exercises. And then developing its counterterrorism and counternarcotics coordination efforts. And putting forward, most recently, a cybersecurity agreement.

But in the interest of time, I'm just going to provide a little more detail on one of these, and that is the multilateral security exercises. Conducted since 2002, it's -- these attract the most attention of any of the SCO's activities. Largely because of the media coverage, you can actually find them on YouTube. So when you all get home or if you're bored there in the audience, you can check it out. Just, you know, put -- search on Shanghai Cooperation Organization and it will show you all kinds of action-adventure shots.

But it's also not just the media coverage, but the powerful participants involved. So for each exercise, you have either Russia or China and sometimes both participating. And in the scope of effort, it's not unusual to have thousands of troops participating, especially in the larger peace mission-type exercises.

And the focus of these exercises have broadened over the years, too, from just working together on the planning and logistics and the command and control, and the conventional and special-ops types of maneuvers, to working with corporate entities. For

example, in 2008 the SCO exercise was -- the scenario was to defend a Lukoil refinery in Russia.

And then also, involving WMD. In Tajikistan in 2009, they had an exercise focused on defending a chemical plant. And in Uzbekistan in 2006, there was a nuclear facility that they included in their scenarios. So you can see how that scenario has broadened, as well as their capabilities, or at least their thinking and planning to have those capabilities.

In addition to the security issues, the group has also devoted attention to economic issues. So it's not purely a security group.

And economic issues, particularly as it contributes to social stability. So, efforts to enhance trade, move forward on investment projects, enhance bank cooperation between participating states, and to improve transportation infrastructure and other infrastructure -- energy infrastructure, for example.

China, predictably, is doing much of the heavy lifting on this economic cooperation within the SCO. Late last year, the Chinese proposed to provide $8 billion of the suggested $10 billion price tag that's going to be needed to help finance and move these SCO joint projects forward. And they've also granted billions of dollars worth of loan credits to members underneath that SCO umbrella, such as $900 million worth in 2004 and $10 billion worth in 2009, intended to help the members weather the global economic crisis. So besides security and economic steps, the SCO has, since 2005 in the Kyrgyzstani parliamentary elections, they've moved to impact the political scene in the region, too, by providing election observers to members' electoral contests.

And these monitors have been known to declare such elections as free and fair, even when other international monitors have not. So, this may be an example of where, you know, our values do not necessarily coincide. But again, at least it shows progress development on the SCO's organizational front.

So despite these steps on security and economic and political fronts, the SCO faces constant challenges as it moves forward, like any multilateral organization. It has divergent member goals; you heard the recitation of the cast of characters. There's bilateral

tensions within the ranks, just pick any two members and they've got some grievance against each other. And regional instability that really brings into question the SCO's policy of non-interference.

For example, some have painted as failures the SCO's lack of endorsement to Russia's military action in Georgia in 2008, and the subsequent recognition by Russia of the breakaway regions in Georgia, the South Ossetia, and the Kazan regions. Or they called it a failure when the SCO failed to intervene in response to the 2010 unrest in Kyrgyzstan, which resulted in violence and actually a changing government.

But these reactions really should not be surprising to anyone, not called a failure given the SCO's focus on the three evils. And really, the SCO's prime directive, I would call it, against interference and others' internal affairs, which is what they considered both of those incidents.

So despite these challenges, the last decade has, I would say, been a predictably slow, evolving time period of an institution that is building and an institution that is increasing its outreach in incremental steps forward. And as it looks now, the SCO's survival in the future, I think, likely will be aided by what I see as rising exceptions of regionalism as part of a solution to these global challenges, like Afghanistan.

And it will be aided with China and Russia's interest in utilizing the group to their own advantage. And other country's interest in understanding or deepening their relationship with it for their own benefit. I see most recently an article in a Turkish paper on -- advocating Turkey to become associated with the SCO for just one example.

Thus, the SCO's central focus on combating terrorism and separatism and extremism. It's geo-strategic siding in a region of the world where the United States has been fighting wars, along with its coalition partners, for the last several years. It's developing focus on economic issues to increase stability in the region. And its inclusion of countries with which this administration has sought to reset or reorient relations suggest there should be opportunities for cooperation between Washington and the SCO. But the U.S. has really had this cautious approach.

There was a nadir, I would call it, in relations around 2005 when the U.S. was viewed by countries in the region as promoting regime change through those so-called color revolutions. And then on the other hand, the SCO was seen as partly responsible for the closing of a U.S. airbase in Uzbekistan, Karshi Kanabad, which had been, up until then, supporting coalition efforts in Afghanistan.

And this is when the SCO issued a call for the coalition to set a deadline for the withdrawal of coalition troops from the theater. But you have to remember, 2005 was a different time period. Things were not as they are right now in Afghanistan, and of course the color revolutions heightened the SCO countries' concerns of regime change hitting them, too.

The Obama Administration efforts call for more regional input into and burden-sharing for complex problems like Afghanistan. And it agreed in 2009, for the first time, to U.S. participation at a SCO event. It was a SCO-sponsored international conference on Afghanistan. It was held in Moscow, and attended by a State Department official -- mid-level official. But from what I can tell, that appears to be it as far as interaction.

And I asked myself, why? Why is that? And all I can think of is that -- you know, several reasons. Washington, likely, is concerned that -- especially now, particularly in the post-Mubarak era -- you know, engagement with the SCO could be portrayed as legitimizing the SCO's authoritarian states and their actions.

The U.S. also could be concerned that, you know, if they had an overture for engagement it could be rejected publicly. Or, maybe, you know, the concern is that Washington could end up as a kind of in-name-only partner and really sidelined from any significant activity or input into the organization.

So given these kinds of concerns, I conclude that official membership in the SCO, probably, is neither preferred nor attainable by Washington. But going forward I see three options for a future relationship, at least. And that is, either the U.S. can choose to adopt a position of active opposition to it or benign neglect towards it, or begin to move towards a more active partnership based on common interests.

So, active opposition or benign neglect would seem to contradict at least this administration's support of regional groups, and its desire for regional solution in Afghanistan. And while the U.S. has bilateral relationships with each of the SCO's participants -- although, I admit, distant ones in the case of Iran -- senior officials in this administration appear to be open to engagement with this multilateral group to enhance -- to complement the bilateral relationships.

For example, just a -- some senior official statements that have gone out about the SCO in particular that U.S. participation in the March 2009 SCO-sponsored conference was highlighted in joint statements by the U.S. and Russia presidents, and anyone who has worked on those kinds of issues know how hard it is to get any kind of mention of items in a presidential statement. So, that's an achievement.

And Secretary of State Clinton publicly remarked last year that the U.S. hoped to be able to participate actively in many of the new regional organizations, including the SCO. And her deputy, James Steinberg, told a conference audience last year that he thought it was important that we continue to interact with the SCO and cited, you know, there are different ways in which non-members can engage.

So to end, if a decision is made by the U.S. to enhance engagement with the SCO, I think there are several bureaucratic and policy steps we could start within the administration, including establishing arrangements across bureaus in the State Department and across different agencies to better create opportunities to interact with the SCO. Because all of these countries, the way the silos go, the way we organize our State Department and Department of Defense, the countries fall within various and different bureaus. They are across several field commands and Pentagon desks, and as everyone knows, sometimes organization dictates policy. So these things complicate policy coordination and collaboration. So maybe what we really need is some kind of a working group that we can use to make sure that we have a coherent policy.

And secondly, creating specific action plans with tangible short- and long-term goals and deliverables. And I think particularly if we could start with something in

Afghanistan, which appears to be not only the most critical issue right now, but something of definite common interest. And this would help build trust and a productive relationship in this region where U.S. interests look to endure.

Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thank you very much, Julie. A couple of questions, again, to try to move us -- which may seem a bit difficult -- from here to Latin America.

But I mean, it really sounds from what you're describing here that the SCO is trying to take an even broader regional approach than certainly first envisaged in the Central Asian context. I mean, the fact that it has brought in at least as dialogue partners Sri Lanka and Belarus suggest that it may have broader regional aspirations. I mean, clearly Belarus technically still is in this purported union-state partnership with Russia. We'll see, of course, where that ends. And Sri Lanka, of course, has close proximity to India, although not any kind of subordinate political relationship by any means.

I mean, India, Iran, and Pakistan, given their proximity and the stress on Afghanistan, certainly made some sense. But these attempts to go further afield raises a lot of questions.

I mean, do you see the SCO hanging -- I call it S-C-O rather than SCO, but anyway, the -- whatever we want to call it, this grouping moving in a direction of trying to be something more like ASEAN or OSCE, where anyone theoretically can join? The OSCE which is focused on Europe, of course, has Canada and others in affiliated -- old relationships, the old idea of Europe going from Vancouver to Vladivostok, which almost brings it around to Latin America. But how do you see this shaping up from your perspective?

MS. BOLAND: Well, I do think they have aspirations to be something more like ASEAN, you know, the organizational structure. ASEAN has dialogue partners as well.

I think a lot of this is to not only manage, as I said, aspiring countries that maybe not all of the members are agreed upon, because they do work by consensus. So maybe they don't all agree to have these countries be observers or members, but they do fully

understand the global impact and the publicity involved when they admit certain countries.

For example, when they agreed upon Belarus, they made sure to include in their publicity about it that this was the first European nation to be so formally associated with the SCO. And of course, Turkey. That would be an interesting milestone for them, considering the EU's indecision about Turkey right now.

So, I think it's an interesting aspiration for them, and I think that it is definitely something they're going to continue.

MS. HILL: Thanks. I mean, if they are aspiring to ASEAN kind of starters, then of course it could bring in a lot of other states well outside the region in to observe the status that ASEAN has. And that does raise some questions about Latin America, so that we can move over to you, Lieutenant Colonel Bracknell. Because China and Russia, the key players in the SCO, clearly have very distinct interest now in Latin America.

We've seen the Russians, Mr. Putin in particular, reaching out to Chavez in Venezuela and creating at least a semblance of an alliance even if there's not a great deal of substance there, as most people are aware in the audience. And China increasing rather dramatically its economic footprint. And in critical investments in Latin America. So maybe Venezuela might be another candidate country -- Brazil, perhaps -- for the SCO.

But, I mean, you've had a very, yourself, distinguished career often in the legal field. So you know thing a two, perhaps, about the treaty negotiations and the kinds of legal steps that one takes in these regional settings. You've also served, as many others have, in Iraq and Afghanistan, which gives you a pretty distinct perspective.

But Latin America, of course the United States may be able to have benign neglect towards the SCO in the coming years, but we certainly cannot afford it at all in the Latin American case. So, how do you see things shaping up here? And clearly you want to put a spotlight on Latin America for some very important reasons.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRACKNELL: Very good, thanks. Benign neglect is a term that I actually incorporated into my paper, and I appreciate you using that because it's exactly sort of the paradigm that I think the United States has engaged in over the past

decade with regard to Latin America.

First, before I get started I want to thank Brookings for having us here. Thank Dr. Hill, Peter, for having us. And of course, you know, what we refer to the lance corporals in the Marine Corps. The lance corporals of Brookings for helping support this thing. We appreciate that a lot.

I also want to thank the prior panel for providing unsatisfactory answers, which is a precedent for my, by setting low expectations. I know that I'll never disappoint.

And the last thing is, I want to endeavor to end on time. I know that Jerry and Chris are both aiming on getting out of here and going to happy hour, which from looking at the crowd as a result of daylight savings time, apparently starts at 3:30 now instead of 4:30. (Laughter)

MS. HILL: Oh, it's already time. (Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRACKNELL: No, I was telling a friend over at the Atlantic Council, he said, what are you doing Wednesday? I said, well, I'm going over to Brookings. He said, what are you talking about? I said, Latin America. And he said, Latin America, but you're at the Atlantic Council. And I just didn't have the heart to break it to him that the Atlantic Ocean actually extends down past the equator. (Laughter) They're very Euro-centric there, I guess.

But anyway, the point of my paper is that since 2001 and the game-changing events of 9-11, virtually every combatant command except the U.S. central command has sort of gotten short shrift in terms of resources and strategic attention. And no combatant command has suffered that any more than U.S. Southern Command and no region more than Latin America.

Now, my contention is that Latin America has waited patiently, but as Iraq force commitment has reduced to very manageable levels -- and by manageable levels people say, oh, manageable levels in Iraq, now what does that mean? At our peak from 2003 to 2009 we averaged just over 25,000 Marines in Al Anbar, and in other places we had a handful of Marines in Baghdad or maybe we had a handful of Marines in (inaudible) as

liaisons. But the bulk were in Al Anbar and Multinational Forces West; just a hair over 25,000, down to 159 Marines in 2010. So we've gained some -- we have -- the Marine Corps, at least, has gained some force savings there.

Now as the conflict in Afghanistan starts to off-ramp to the next few years, more force even should be realized and it should be reinvested in renewing military-military relationships in some neglected regions. For example, in the news this week -- and it might have been even today -- I saw that the Marine Corps has 20,000 people, more or less, in RC Southwest and scattered throughout the country. But the bulk of the force offering in RC Southwest, of course. And that there were some predictions that the 98,000 combat forces that the President will use to off-ramp about 3,000 this coming July. Now, what mix of that will be Marines, I don't know. The most you could probably expect would be a battalion given a general one-third, two-thirds ratio of combat forces from Marine Corps to Army in Afghanistan.

But the point is, we're going to realize some force savings in the coming years, and we need to -- instead of sitting back on our laurels and catching our breath, the fact of the matter is we can't afford that anymore. People talk about reset, and there's going to be an opportunity for that. But we also need to reinvest.

Now, the Far East has gotten a lot of attention from the Obama Administration, but my contention is we ignore Latin America at our own peril. Now, why? Why, you ask? First, let's consider the relative merits of Latin America vis-à-vis other regions in terms of integration with the United States.

Two of the top 5 and 4 of the top 10 exporters of oil to the United States are in Latin America: Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, and Colombia. The region covers 16 million square miles, and that includes nautical miles, that are covered by U.S. Southern Command, of course. Sixteen million square miles in our backyard with a population of nearly 590 million people, or expressed differently, six-tenths of a billion. Do the math in terms of the world population from the Mexican border south: 590 million people.

Mexico is America's third largest trading partner and not by much. It doesn't give

up just a handful of percentage points in terms of trailing the number one and number two trading partners. Forty-eight million Americans have cultural roots in Latin America, based on the 2010 census. And Latin America has -- is home to the fastest-growing emerging world power, Brazil, which has become an economic powerhouse in its own right with an average GDP in the five years prior to 2008 -- sort of the market meltdown. But it's high watermark of growth of 7.5 percent GDP growth per year over the previous -- the 5 years prior to 2008. That's pretty tremendous. Eighteenth in the world in terms of real growth over the same period, but most of those 18 countries above them were really, quite frankly -- they're minor players in the world security environment. Brazil, in terms of overall GDP, is about eighth in the world. So we're talking about a fast-growing and major ascended power.

Now, my strategy for attacking this issue or analyzing this issue was to take a look at a comparative analysis of strategic capstone documents. I looked at the national security strategy from 2010 versus 2006. The QDR report from 2010 versus 2006, and the national military strategy of 2011 versus the national defense strategy of 2008 and the last before that, the national -- last national military strategy, which was published in 2004.

When you go through and you look at the language in there and sort of count the number of references, if nothing else, as a metric towards concentration on Latin America, there's a very clear trend in guidance from menial lateral action towards partner-based actions and a very clear trend in specific mentions of Latin America as a regional security partner of interest to the United States. In fact, the 2006 National Security Strategy doesn't even mention Latin America at all. The 2010 National Security Strategy mentions Latin America or a country component within Latin America five times.

So, you know, can you extrapolate meaning from that? Yes, probably. These guys -- the people who write these things don't just stick words into these things. They do them for a reason, and that is to express the strategic intent of the United States. You will also see a similar trend when you take a -- do a comparative analysis of the QDR reports and the national military strategy and national defense strategy. Okay. So, what?

Now, you can't forget the fact that there's a war ongoing in Mexico, which so far

has claimed between 22,000 and 50,000 casualties. 50,000 casualties in the war on drugs in Mexico. That's a number approaching our war losses in Vietnam, which was kind of an emotional event for the United States.

Here in Washington, it sort of gets drowned in the noise of Afghanistan and some of the other high-end stuff, and you know, NATO conference -- I mean, the NATO Lisbon summit and missile defense and everything else. But the closer you get down to the Southwestern border -- and, you know, it's admittedly not a very scientific example. But I was in Tucson a week and a half ago. The closer you get to the Southwestern border, the more important it is to those folks. And they -- it's more towards front page above the fold news for people in the Southwestern United States. And in fact, the *Los Angeles Times*, in all my research, it's pretty clear the *LA Times* leads the nation in terms of the reporting. It's a salient issue to the folks who live in the Southwest.

I was talking to the moderator from the prior panel about sea blindness. We also need to make sure that Washington isn't Mexico blind in terms of the strategic importance of what's going on on the other side of that border.

The criminal cartels threaten government authority and civilian populations, Mexico, and threaten to overwhelm the government's claim to the monopoly on violence. Mexico is politically stable, but the war against cartels is a volatile issue for the Calderon government. And so is Mexican sovereignty, which poses a real obstacle to outside assistance, particularly by foreign armory soldiers on Mexican soil.

Now, I don't want to sell this issue short. It's a big deal for foreign soldiers to be on Mexican territory. I don’t know how to stack them up in terms of sensitivity to foreign soldiers on their soil, but it's apparent to me that it is a major issue. We need to examine ways where we can cooperate on the margins without offending notions of Mexican sovereignty and upsetting the political apple cart in Mexico.

Today's *New York Times* -- I believe it is the *Times* or the *Post* -- had a story about drone attacks. I mean, you know, not attacks but drone ISR over Mexico, which has actually resulted in some major tactical successes for the Mexican army and the Mexican security

forces. You know, did anybody really think we weren't -- didn't have drone activity going on over in Mexico? But there it is in the front page of the -- I think it was the *New York Times*. Peter, you're nodding, is that right? Was it the *Times*? Yes.

I think this environment provides an opportunity for Naval expeditionary forces to assist in a turning of Mexican security forces, and several locales as an add-on to the Merida Initiative, which one commentator labels Mexico's Plan Colombia, which is not a popular term as in Mexico City, of course, for some obvious reasons that are -- if you know anything about Plan Colombia, there's some baggage there.

Being seaborne, Naval forces are seen as less permanent than foreign Army units. And moreover, they're sufficiently flexible. They will be able to move from place to place to conduct training at several places, including third country hosts such as Colombia, which has actually offered -- other countries has been thrown into the mix as possible sites for training Mexican soldiers. For example, El Salvador, which is probably sufficiently stable and has the infrastructure to assist with that.

The training needs to be done competently and quietly. It has sort of always seemed to me that two thirds of the activities we do with foreign states, particularly in terms of security cooperation, are done so that we can crow about it as Americans. It think that this is an initiative that we should downplay a little bit and do passively.

The press coverage is going to result. It's not like we're going to do it in a clandestine training mission of the Mexican forces, but we just need to manage the way it's perceived in the international press. And not -- sort of control the public affairs officers and have them not generate press releases on this stuff at a rapid rate.

But the fact that no matter how we manage the public communication piece, there's an inherent need for us to get more involved in the training to bring Mexican security forces up to and increase the level of competence. That's not to suggest that they're particularly incompetent now, but the fact of the matter is we spent 10 years and a whole bunch of lives and money developing a pretty good expertise in Iraq and Afghanistan which, I got it. They're different and it isn't Latin America. But we have spent a lot of time, money,

and lives and political capital and emotional capital in developing some niche expertise in counterinsurgency, and it would be a shame to see it die on the vine without being able to contribute some of that expertise to Mexico.

Now, third, naval expeditionary forces. Which, quite frankly, I'm using as code for Marine Corps. But I chose this term deliberately to ensure that we get, you know -- so we get Navy pregnant with the problem and facing the fact and committing some resources to this thing. Because the fact of the matter is that the reason the Marine Corps is special is that we're seaborne. I chose the word "naval," not "Navy" because, as any Marine officer will tell you, we are naval officers with a small "n" and not referencing the middle part of your body, but naval as in seaborne, from the sea.

By the way, this is -- that being in mind, we are not part of the Navy, okay? (Laughter) I get so tired of people coming up and going, well, the Marine Corps is part of the Navy because we share a common secretary. That's not -- doesn't -- we're not part of the Navy. They're a separate service. Yes, exactly. You know, we have an equal seat on the joint chiefs as they do. So, we're not part of the Navy, but naval officers nonetheless. (Laughter)

MS. HILL: I think we've got it.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRACKNELL: So, naval expeditionary forces such as the Marine Corps security cooperation, Marine air/ground task force, or security operation MAGTF, are uniquely positioned to South comm. and reestablishing a meaningful exercise and engagement program aimed at strategic ends, more than just placing random events on a calendar to keep the access program alive.

As naval expeditionary forces are realized, more force savings over the next three or four years, we are practically morally obligated to let hard-won counterinsurgency and regular warfare expertise languish. Rather, engaging SOUTHCOM with an aggressive security cooperation, security forces, system plan as an economical way to keep our forces close by yet shipboard, returning to our naval roots, and while investing in partners we have not paid much attention to for a while. And you have some pretty important strategic

concerns.

Finally, outside the realm of purely naval expeditionary forces, I believe U.S. force planning should consider the merits of warm basing in Latin America on the task force East model in Romania and Bulgaria.

Warm basing represents an extraordinary compromise between the fiscal and political expense of constant forward deployment of forces, and the requirement to have well-developed and ready equipment and supplies for exploitation as demands arise. The sort of model I had worked out in my head, without a whole lot of rigor to it, was to have three: one based in the Andean Ridge that would be focused on counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and regular warfare requirements; another based somewhere in Central America, maybe in -- one of our more reliable partners, maybe El Salvador or some other sufficiently stable democratic republic that could probably use the money and attention that this thing would bring, that would have a similar regular warfare but also humanitarian assistance equipment set; and then a third base in the Caribbean, perhaps in Jamaica or the Bahamas, or even Puerto Rico, which would have an almost exclusively humanitarian assistance and disaster relief bent there. So, just a thought that could be shaped in a bunch of different ways.

But in some, Mexico begs for attention in terms of training their forces to deal with the drug war and their borders. And naval expeditionary forces provide flexibility and economy in assisting with this training imperative and mitigate political risk to make, you know, leaders.

The entire region is ripe for naval expeditionary forces, engagement in security cooperation, and security force assistance missions. Thanks.

MS. HILL: Thank you very much, Lieutenant Colonel Bracknell.

I just -- before we turn over to the audience and before everyone rushes off for happy hour -- look, they're already leaving. Maybe they're going to get a coffee.

I'd like to ask you a couple of questions. And we actually here at Brookings, including in 21st Century Defense Initiative that's been hosting the fellows here, we have a number of fellows who are looking very closely at the problems that we face in Latin

America. Vanda Felbab-Brown, one of our permanent fellows in the initiative, is one of the top U.S. experts on the narco trade across the world.

We have a Latin American initiative with a number of senior experts, including some former Latin American officials who are, you know, looking at the region's long-term perspective. And of course, our former head of the Foreign Policy Studies program, Carlos Pasquale, is now the U.S. ambassador to Mexico and very much in the hot seat. So, we're paying particular attention to this.

And I guess --

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRACKNELL: He is in the hot seat.

MS. HILL: Yes, he very much is in the hot seat. Now actually, you know, I've read about him all the time in the hot seat, you know, following what he's doing. It does raise a lot of questions here, and, you know, many of the meetings that we've had on these topics here at Brookings about really the legitimacy of a U.S. role.

I mean, you're positing here really quite an ambitious agenda that's first -- focused, first of all, on Mexico. But clearly, the problem is well beyond Mexico, as you've sketched out in the end, with your proposal for, you know, different basings of various counterinsurgency humanitarian efforts. You mentioned the Andean Ridge, Central America, and the Caribbean.

We also know from a lot of the research that's being done and, obviously, the reporting in the press and even anecdotal experience from many of us here that this problem is reverberating well beyond Mexico. I mean, obviously Colombia has been battling with this for some time. The problem has been displacing itself for many of the states. The fact that Colombia has had such an effective series of programs to combat the insurgencies, the FARC, and the narco traffic is, in many respects, exacerbated some of the issues in Mexico.

The Caribbean, now, has been wracked by the displacement North of some of the drug violence. Jamaica is a case in point. We've all seen the various reports about the difficulties in the Jamaican police and law enforcement trying to tackle this.

Bermuda -- I was just in Bermuda in October, and was shocked to hear of

Jamaican gangs now and the sleepy idea of Bermuda is rapidly fading by their penetration there. And then when you talked about El Salvador and now there's a great deal of concern that as the Mexican government starts to get to grip with the struggle with the narco traffickers, it might displace further Honduras, El Salvador, much further down into Central and even Southern America. And of course, there's always the perpetual problem of Brazil dealing with the problems. And the future concerns of the security of the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games.

So, we've got a lot on our plate here. But the issues that we've seen very frequently -- the recent concerns that Calderon has had that came out of WikiLeaks, and many other issues. Questions about the role of the United States, the statements that have been purported to be made by Carlos Pasquale and various others raise a lot of questions as whether the U.S. can be seen as part of the solution to the problem, and not part of the problem. And we get a lot of concerns expressed in these auditoriums and others that, you know, one of the main drivers of this problem, of course, is domestic issues in the United States. Our own failures to come to grips with the role that drugs play in society.

So, how do you see this playing out? Because you've put together a very provocative presentation, I think, here. And the real question is, can the U.S. -- I mean, I have no doubt that the Marine Corps can actually tackle this issue. But can the U.S. itself be seen as a legitimate actor in solving these problems?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRACKNELL: That's a great question. I am disappointed to hear this is provocative. I was hoping I would lull everyone to sleep and you'd let me leave.

But -- no, but fair enough. And in fact, the President and Secretary of State have been out front lately, even admitting that the United States is part of the problem in terms of consumption and in terms of gun flow from North to South. And the Mexicans have been all over us about that, and yes. I mean, that's a powerful political dynamic there.

So, you know, by some measures the NRA is probably the most effective and the most powerful lobby in the United States. And they are very interested -- they're not as

concerned about the national security ramifications of guns moving over the border as they are whatever their personal agenda is, which is, you know, sportsmanship and shooting rights and so forth, and drawing a bright line in the sand. So, it's virtually an intractable problem in terms of that.

Nevertheless, it's hard to argue that even though the GAO has come out and sort of criticized Plan Colombia as not meeting its own goals and metrics, right? Yet, it's been enormously effective in terms of reducing drug supply and restoring some semblance of the rule of law there. Colombia is a very different place than it was 12 or 15 years ago. You know, I hadn't considered this issue about Bermuda, but, wow, there sounds like a pretty nifty research trip there, in October, huh?

MS. HILL: Yes, it was a good time to go.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRACKNELL: But Colombia is -- by any measure, regardless of whether Plan Colombia has reached its own internally driven metrics, the fact of the matter is they've achieved some measurable progress. Whether they met their own goals or not, that's unfortunate. You always want to meet the goals that you set for yourself. But the fact of the matter is, they have made progress. They have spent a lot of money. But more importantly, they've actually made measurable progress in Plan Colombia.

The utility of my proposal, I think, is the fact that you just described a swath of land where these problems exist that meets exactly what I was talking about: 16 million square miles and 589 million people. We're flexible. You know, we can go a lot of places, we can go where administration sets priorities year to year. We can stay there for a while. We can look -- unlike the Army, that when they come places they look like they're going to stay there for a while, when the Marine Corps comes ashore from naval shipping, we can stay a while or we can stay a long while and we can be self-sustaining. And we can stay for three weeks to do trading or we can stay for three months, whatever the political environment will entail.

So, that's the best answer for -- yes. U.S. boots on the ground almost anywhere, but particularly in Latin America, it's a pretty darn sensitive issue. As it is in Africa, as it is in South Asia, as it is in Southeast Asia. But that is one way to mitigate the risk, I believe, that

is posed by American presence there.

MS. HILL: Thank you very much. Now I'll turn over to others in the audience. Please, sir. And we have a microphone coming.

SPEAKER: (inaudible) topic. I'm a U.S. Army (inaudible) fellow at the DEA. And my question is, well -- or maybe it's more of a statement. The U.S. has really -- the troops along the border right now, the 1,200 National Guard troops are a drop in the bucket, literally. And they're hindered so much about what they can do, when they can do it -- they can't do anything, really. Posse Comitatus is ineffective, and they really can't do anything.

Anyway, my research is on that. And you're asking -- or you're proposing to send Marines to train a cartel that is 100 percent fed by the 93 percent of the drugs that come through a 1,900 mile border that we feed. And that's how they're fed.

I think your idea is great, but until we couple it with a fence along the border to stop them being fed from, you know, the money for the -- from the drugs and the money buys the guns, and yadda, yadda, yadda, I think that should be a two-pronged approach.

I do not see this administration making any kind of decision of a wall along the border. It has been talked about until it's blue in the face, and it's not going anywhere. But again, I never thought of taking Marines and training them. I think, good idea, because they need it. But if we can stop the money flow that is supporting the cartels, it would be a win-win and much more successful proposition. So, your comments on that.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRACKNELL: We don’t build walls -- no, but I'm just kidding. But yes, your point is well taken. I am only purporting to address a solution of -- a portion of the problem. But you're right, that is part of the intractability of the problem is, that it -- you know, money and guns going South and drugs going North, not just over land but by sea as well. You doubtless have seen the pictures of the disposable submarines. Jiminy Crickets, disposable submarines. I mean, you know. God bless the ingenuity but, you know, it's very difficult. So, thanks.

MS. HILL: We had a question at the back, and then Chris.

COMMANDER HIMES: Hi, Commander Himes from CSIS. If I may, a two part.

Ms. Boland, are you able to characterize the Iranian agenda within the SCO? Is there anything in your research that kind of pointed what they're looking to get out of that?

And then for my naval brother, had you looked at all about -- you touched on kind of the key issues there. Post-Castro Cuba contingency crisis planning initiatives that maybe part of what needs to be done down there as well?

Thanks.

MS. BOLAND: Sure. Iran and Pakistan are the only two observers who, so far, have applied to be actual full members. So, you know, it's -- so it's obvious that Iran wants to be there to stay.

Just last year, the SCO actually made a decision about membership regulations. Actual member to be a member. And one of the conditions it put on it was that the country must not be under -- currently under UN Security Council sanctions. Ding. So, but even despite that, I mean, that kind of kick to the head, Iran still came out with statements saying they still wanted to be an observer and still wanted to -- still had aspirations to become a member some day.

So, I mean, just to put it very succinctly, I think their agenda within the SCO is access, influence, and legitimacy. They -- you know, between counterterrorism, counternarcotics, economic influence -- all of these things are of influence to them, for one reason or another. Perhaps again, not on our agenda and our value scale. But certainly they see it as an avenue for them to wield some kind of heft and get outside of the current system of sanctions and kind of persona non grata that they're currently in with the West, so.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRACKNELL: In the big paper, not just a précis that I sort of prepared here, I identified 14 U.S. strategic interests in the region. Number eight on my list is preparing for Cuban transition to post-communist governments. That's right, it's an issue. I didn't choose to address that as the most salient point because we've been waiting 52 years for post-communist transition. There's no telling whether it's going to happen in a year, 4 years, 10 years, or 40 years. They've managed, quite frankly, they've managed to transition to Castro's governance pretty effectively. And it could be seamless for another 20

years.

So, you know, we could plan until we're blue in the face on that, but there's -- as you know, you have to commit resources to the most likely and most dangerous courses of action and stuff. Well, that's not -- we don't know how likely that course of action is. We know damn well that Mexico is going to explode if we don't help. You know, with all the attendant problems; mass migration across the borders. I mean, violence in the United States, a dead DEA agent within the last -- I don't know, when was that?

SPEAKER: It was actually in the border patrol --

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRACKNELL: Border patrol. Yes, I am sorry.

SPEAKER: It was three weeks -- I was there when it happened. It was an absolute mess. They devastated the border patrol. But anyway, they -- and there's a lot of government of Mexico officials being shot at any -- we don't hear a lot about that. And we're going crazy when it's one of ours, but -- and I don't think -- and the comparison to Vietnam is excellent. And if that doesn't wake the American public up, I don't know what's going to. So. But we have to help, absolutely.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRACKNELL: Well, as I said, out West -- the Western part of the United States, it's hilarious -- it's not hilarious. It is striking to me that it could be such a big deal to the Western part of the United States, but somehow that bell doesn't ring all the way back to Washington as loudly as it does if you live in Tucson or Santa Fe or El Paso.

MS. HILL: Well, I hate to say that it will ring when it hits all the Caribbean resorts, which is where we're heading. In fact, people's spring breaks will be greatly curtailed -- and this isn't trivial -- because that's when you start to have the effect. It's when, you know, a bunch of U.S. students on spring break in Cancun end up like Mexican partygoers beheaded or, you know, other horrific things happen to them, just as is happening all the time right now in Mexico. I mean, you're absolutely right to point this out.

We've been trying to highlight this here at Brookings in our various initiatives. But it's going to take that kind of wakeup call. And unfortunately, it's those kind of high profile

but maybe smaller impact events that gets people's attention rather than the ongoing carnage that's happening right on the border.

Chris, you wanted to come in.

SPEAKER: Yes, I just wanted to ask Butch -- and I appreciate your question. Don't get me wrong. Good semper fi, you know, getting down there in Central and South America. But I would be interested if you'd looked at two particular maybe waypoints.

One, the approval of OEFCCA. So for those that may not be aware, there's 21 different OEF and OIF operations, and OEFCCA actually hit the above the line mark in 2007. So I'm interested, one, has that had any impact?

And second, if you maybe had looked at the impact of essentially the extraction, for lack of better terms, of taking the special forces group that is habitually aligned to Central and South America and now retooling them to Pashtun and Arabic and sending them to Iraq and Afghanistan. What that impact was in the exact same time period? Because when you timeline it out, the spike in atrocities, quite frankly, from 2001 to 2010 -- it almost lines up minute to minute, day by day, year to year to the extraction of these forces and retooling them to send them into the fight. I was just wondering if you had had a chance to look at any of that data.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRACKNELL: On OEFCCA, no. But I knew there was a reason I came here today, and I appreciate that. I will go take a look at that. Just -- it hadn't occurred to me.

On the second issue, yes. That -- what you're postulating about those BSF group, that's a fair point. But I think the problem is bigger than -- you know, that may have been coincidental timing in terms of -- rather than what you're suggesting, which could be a cause-and-effect relationship in terms of -- I just think the problem has gotten bigger than what an SF group would have been able to cure. And, you know, I'm talking about sending down security operation MAGTFs of a couple thousand Marines that can -- it's just a more robust capability than what an SF group is able to affect.

I'm not discounting it. I mean, God bless them. They've been doing yeoman's

work down there for a long, long time. And your point is well taken. That is, capacity that we've taken away rather than adding back. But so, no, I haven't analyzed it. I probably should. It just strikes me that that's just not a significant enough force offering than what we're talking about here.

MS. HILL: Well, unfortunately we have to wrap up now. And I would like to hand back over to Peter Singer. But I think that all of this discussion here and all the various questions just shows how critical these issues are for us to address in-depth.

And I just personally want to say that I'm really thrilled that we've had so much important research being done here by our Federal Executive Fellows. People have just got real, on-the-ground experience. And practical perspectives on this. So it's not just our fellows here who are looking at these issues.

So I want to thank all of you on the panel, and hand over to Peter, who has got quite the agenda himself for the future of the 21st Century Defense Initiative to think about.

MR. SINGER: Well, I'm going to be very brief in ending because it does seem that it's getting close to folks' happy hour.

First, a comment, and this actually connects back to our lunchtime speaker. Occasionally the value of these military fellowship programs are questioned. We have a force that's under stress, does it make sense to take out leaders -- accomplished leaders and move them into positions like this for the year?

There are two models of these fellowship programs. One is to treat them as free labor at the institution that they're at, to assign them to pre-existing projects, to treat them as staff assists for folks in those offices. I can't speak to the value of that approach.

You've seen the value of the other approach here today, which is to allow them to conduct independent research on issues of importance to the nation. And I think you've seen the value of that research, not only to understanding the topics themselves but raising the level of understanding in the D.C. policy community, raising the level of understanding among the research institutions, as well as among the public. And all of these papers that you're hearing talked about today are very soon going to be published either by Brookings or

by the journals of the services that folks are in. But I think today you've seen the value of this kind of research.

And the second thing I wanted to do is essentially do three levels of thanks. The first is to you, the hardy few who have stayed here throughout the day attending and listening to all of these sessions. We very much appreciate you coming out to this.

The second is to thank the staff that put this together, particularly Heather Messera, who -- you know, you gave her the field rank of lance corporal. And in our organization it's more like four-star general. So, very much appreciate all the work that she's put together.

And then finally, to the speakers themselves. Not only for the great job that they did here today, but really at the end of this, what we need to remember, the service that they've shown to our nation. Not only this year, but the years before that. So, please join me in a round of applause. (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