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100 DAYS OF IMRAN KHAN

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Introduction:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. SACHS: Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you very much for joining this afternoon here at the Brookings Institution. My name is Natan Sachs. I'm the director of the Center for Middle East Policy. And it's my distinct pleasure to welcome you all on behalf of the Foreign Policy program at Brookings for what should be a very important discussion of a very important country that does not get enough attention and when it does it's solely security.

We have a stellar panel to speak about the first 100 days of Imran Khan's government. And with us today are a nonresident fellow here with the Foreign Policy program and the program on global development at Brookings, Madiha Afzal over here in the center. She is an expert on Pakistan and the author in just 2018 of "Pakistan Under Siege: Extremism, Society, and the State," published by Brookings Institution Press.

And with her, Bruce Riedel, senior fellow in the Foreign Policy program, both in the security and strategy teams and in the Center for Middle East Policy. He's written many books with Brookings Institution Press, including "JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA, and the Sino-Indian War," which is extremely relevant for our topic today.

And to moderate and give context and content to all this, our best moderator and a senior fellow in the Foreign Policy program, director of research for the Foreign Policy program, an expert on absolutely everything to do with security writ large, Mike O'Hanlon. Thank you so much for moderating, and I'll turn it over to you.

MR. O'HANLON: Natan, thank you. Thank you all for being here. I'm thrilled to be up with two amazing colleagues who have done so much on this topic.

Let me just add a brief word of bio introduction about each of them so you know, if you haven't already learned how much of a treat you're in for in terms of their perspectives. They have remarkable perspectives on the question of Pakistan, its future,

and its relations with its neighbors and the United States.

If I would start with Madiha, who, as Natan said, is a scholar here at Brookings, a nonresident senior fellow, and the author of this fantastic recent book on Pakistan based on a lot of field survey research that she did. She is Pakistani American. She went to graduate school at Yale, but before she fell backward in her education there, she had done extremely important college work in Pakistan. So she is really a product of both countries. And again, the book that she wrote is largely based on field research and her detailed and nuanced feel for the country that is so important in her background, as well as in her professional career.

Bruce Riedel is a guy who was present inside the NSC at moments like the Kargil crisis of 1999. And so he has seen it all up close and personal from the point of view of American foreign policymaking. As you all know, he spent 30 years in the CIA, often being seconded off to the NSC or in support of the peace and diplomacy efforts in broader Middle East and South Asia, as well.

And he's now been at Brookings at 11 years, but you wouldn't know it's been so short by the number of books he's written. In addition to the one that Natan just mentioned, he wrote a book called "Deadly Embrace," which was about the U.S.-Pakistan relationship and still one of my favorites in the whole field. So we could not do better.

And one last word of introduction and then I'm going to turn to Bruce for a question, to Madiha for a question or two about the internal workings of Pakistan, and then we'll go back to a broader discussion about U.S. foreign policy and how this matters for the region and the world before coming to your questions.

But I wanted to add that, as I think many of you know, Pakistan could not be more central to many U.S. foreign policy matters today. We talk a lot about Korea, but I think Korea and South Asia compete for the place where it's most likely that we could see nuclear war in our lifetimes if you were going to rate the probabilities. And I hope by

saying that I've just jinxed them so that it won't happen in either place, but certainly the Indo-Pakistani conflict is not over, at least formally and at least in terms of ongoing challenges, like the fact that there's still a fundamental dispute over Kashmir; that with the glaciers melting there may be disputes over water of a severity that we haven't seen before, which make Kashmir even more important; and, of course, by the fact that the founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba remains a free man walking the streets of Lahore.

So whether or not Pakistani intelligence is still egging him on, he may in a best case sort of be the Frankenstein's monster they have chosen not to control. And let's hope we don't have any more Mumbais like we did in 2008.

By the same token, from an American point of view, on policy towards Afghanistan we know there is, again, a sense of building gloom in Washington about whether there's any light at the end of the tunnel in Afghanistan. And certainly, taking the temperature of how the policy world feels about our mission there, right now people are against souring. And whatever hopefulness they might have had a year ago when Secretary Mattis and others and President Trump announced a new policy of increasing U.S. commitment to Afghanistan, we don't have any evidence that's particularly producing great results 15 months later, and we know the President is ambivalent at best about the mission.

So in that context, Pakistan's role in sometimes aiding and abetting and certainly tolerating the Afghan Taliban on its own territory is crucial from the point of view of our prospects in Afghan, as well.

So thank you for listening to my introduction, but Bruce is going to do a much better job, I know, of sort of presenting and describing the stakes here for American foreign policy and maybe giving a little bit of historical perspective. So with your permission, I'll now give the floor to him. Thank you, Bruce.

MR. RIEDEL: Thank you, Mike. I'll just take a footnote. *Deadly*

Embrace I think is the only Brookings book ever published that's often put in the romantic novel section part of the bookstore. (Laughter) It is not a romantic novel despite the title.

Pakistan is an incredibly important country for the world and for the United States for so many reasons it's hard to think of all of them. You've hit on many of them, but let me just hit on a few.

First of all, nuclear weapons. We spend a lot of time in this country talking about Iran. Iran is a nuclear weapon wannabe. We spend a lot of time talking about North Korea having nuclear weapons, and they do, but two dozen, three dozen at the most.

Pakistan has the fastest growing nuclear arsenal in the world, somewhere in excess of 300 nuclear weapons. It has a nuclear arsenal larger than the United Kingdom's. It has the delivery mechanisms to deliver by missile, by aircraft, it's working on submarine delivery systems. And it alone in the world, at least as far as we know, is in the process of developing tactical nuclear weapons, a decision that the United States and the Soviet Union a long time ago said we're not going to do that because it's too easy for tactical nuclear weapons to be used in combat with the National Command Authority being involved, and Pakistan is developing tactical nuclear weapons.

It is also, as Mike alluded to, been a sponsor of various terrorist organizations, most notably Lashkar-e-Taiba, which just 10 years ago carried out the attack on Mumbai, which included killing five Americans. Those organizations change their names in Pakistan, almost bewildering frequency of name-changing, but they don't fundamentally change their relationship with the Pakistani state and particularly with the Pakistani intelligence services, known as the ISI, or the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate

The ISI has a new director general. He just came into office in October. He is a devout Muslim. He is said to be one of those people who can recite the entire

Quran from memory. I'd be lucky if I could recite the Gettysburg Address from memory, let alone something much, much longer than that.

There are other reasons, though, that we tend to misunderstand or don't give enough importance to this country. It's the second largest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia being the largest. It's also a country that has a very large Shia minority. Exactly how many Shias there are in Pakistan versus Sunnis, you can spend a lot of time researching that and you will, in the end, not know what the real answer is because there is no Census figures on it. But it's very important for the Sunni-Shia community sectarian violence that it be as minimized as possible in Pakistan because if it really burns in Pakistan, it's going to be burning in the heart of the Islamic world.

It's a country that's often overlooked, I say, because it's between the two I's: Iran and India. It's important for both of those. Pakistan's relationship with Iran scarcely gets any attention in the United States, but it's a very, very important relationship. They share Baluchestan together, which is one of the resource-rich parts of South Asia.

And, of course, it's relationship with India is very important. These are two nuclear weapons states. They have gone to war as recently as 1999 over Kargil. It's not hard to imagine a scenario in which they go to war again.

In 1999, we thought that there was a risk that the conflict would escalate to nuclear conflict. In fact, we knew there was a risk that it could escalate to nuclear conflict. And that risk continues to be out there today.

It is also an important country because its number one allies are very important. China, Pakistan is the most important ally of China I would say in the world. Forty percent of China's military exports go to Pakistan.

And its other important ally, Saudi Arabia. The Saudis and Pakistanis have been partners going back to the 1970s. There is longstanding military cooperation

between the two of them. And there are longstanding rumors that there is some kind of nuclear cooperation between the two of them, as well.

And then, of course, there's that other neighbor of Pakistan, Afghanistan, which is, unfortunately, the prism through which American policy too often looks at Pakistan. Afghanistan is important. It is now the longest war in American history. The United States Army is now inducting volunteers into the Army who were born after this war began. Think about that for a minute. There are young men and women going into the Army who have never known a day when we were not at war in Afghanistan in their entire life.

It's a war that most Americans very much want to get out of. Whether we're winning or losing, one thing is for sure, we're tired of it. We would like to find a way to get out. There is no way for the United States to get out of Afghanistan in an honorable and orderly way unless Pakistan is part of that equation. And the Trump administration has belatedly come around to recognizing that.

And the irony is that the reason they belatedly came around to recognizing that is the man we're here to talk about, Imran Khan. There is a hope, we can debate how serious it is, that Imran Khan is going to be our ticket to finding an orderly and honorable way to get out of Afghanistan. It remains to see whether that will work out.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic. Thank you for setting the stage.

And now, Madiha, I'd like to ask you to start to tell us a little bit about what Imran Khan has been up to, who he is. And we'll start with maybe him and then I'd like to ask subsequently a little bit about Pakistan's economy. Your Ph.D. from Yale is in economics. There's a lot of economics in your book. Also a lot of survey data you might want to discuss, as well, but I realize today we're talking more about Khan, setting the stage for the policy conversation that will follow. And after we go through Khan and the

economy, we'll also talk a little about internal Pakistani politics before going back to the broader policy discussion.

Again, before I just ask you to take the floor and tell us a little about him, I want to commend your book, *Pakistan Under Siege*. It's really a great book and it's both reassuring and scary. I'll just give you one quick takeaway that I really remember well from this book.

The scary part is that there are a lot of Pakistani youth, including those educated at least through grade school, sometimes at madrassas, sometimes in public school, who have a fairly strong proclivity to support extremism, not necessarily themselves to conduct violent actions, but to be open to political extremism of one kind or another that could affect their views on thinking towards India or the United States or the world writ large.

On the other hand, in Pakistan broadly defined there's less tolerance for terrorism than there used to be, partly because of their own experience in dealing with their own Pakistani Taliban, which is distinct from the Afghan Taliban, as many of you, most of you probably know. And if you don't, that's one more good thing you'll get out of Madiha's book because she goes through a nice primer on these different extremist groups in South Asia.

So than you for the book. Thanks for being here today. And the floor is yours.

MS. AFZAL: Hi, everyone. So many of you may know a little bit about Imran Khan as a cricketer turned politician, but I want to sort of start from there. He was the captain of the Pakistan cricket team in cricket-crazy Pakistan in 1992 and led Pakistan to a legendary and never-again victory, that Pakistan has never seen again, in 1992. So many Pakistanis feel very fondly about him because of that. But that was his starting point.

Then he went on to become sort of a fundraiser and philanthropist and created a cancer hospital which is in the name of his mother, which is very, very well regarded. And during this time he was sort of known as a very Westernized man.

Before turning his eye toward politics in the mid to late '90s, and he himself calls this his struggle, he struggled for decades to attain his goal. And his primary goal was to become prime minister of Pakistan at one stage. Through at least a decade and a half of some degree of ridicule from the Pakistani population, who did not quite think that Khan had political acumen, they thought he was sort of politically naïve. There was a column in the Friday *Times*, a journal, sort of a satirical journal written by him called "In the Dim."

So he was sort of not treated with particular respect politically until 2011, when he sort of changed political strategies. And essentially he became sort of a very strong opposition politician, leading protests, enternas they're called in Pakistan, and really played a little bit of a dirty politics sort of game to enter the political limelight.

His party became the third largest party in Pakistan in 2013, and won this election some say with the help of the military. Certainly behind the scenes there was some sort of pre-election engineering to discredit the incumbent political party, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz. In any case, Mr. Imran Khan is now prime minister of Pakistan as of August 18th.

But one thing that I think should be mentioned about him is where his support comes from. He ran on an anti-corruption platform. Very important in Pakistan where corruption in seen as a huge problem. And he also ran on a platform of providing social services to Pakistan's sort of downtrodden: education and health. So this is a man who came -- when his party won the general election in July, he came and gave a speech on TV the next day and he talked about maternal health, child malnutrition in terms showing so much empathy that Pakistan has not really seen leaders talk about in

those terms. So no matter how he got to where he's gotten, there are sort of -- there's real support for him if he is able to implement this agenda of sort of anti-corruption, as well as providing social services.

And his coalition that he has amassed politically in terms of voters are sort of perhaps the old guard who many of them, Pakistan's liberals, are sort of pro-establishment menfolk who like him from his early days of the cricketer turned philanthropist to sort of this new, young, and conservative population, which also likes him, partly because they want change. So there is this conundrum there. He has pro-establishment supporters as well as those who want change more than than anything else. So that is his support base and really he poses himself as sort of this anti-corruption reformer, if you will.

He has had a tough almost 100 days in power so far in the sense that he has had to deal with a lot. Before coming into power he put out this huge 100 days agenda, which really promises the sun and the moon and beyond. You know, it's a kitchen sink of six agenda points ranging from transforming governance to ensuring national security to revitalizing economic growth. It has everything in there.

And had made so many campaign promises that he would usher in this neo Pakistan, this new Pakistan, that he really felt that he had to hit the ground running. So he tried to tackle too many things at one time. And in the end, all he ended up really doing was doing things like austerity measures that are easy to take, so, for instance, auctioning off buffalos in the prime minister's secretariat, auctioning off cars. And he earned a lot of ridicule for that because those things may look good -- you know, they make for good optics, but they're not going to transform an economy which was reeling under a debt crisis that he had inherited from the previous government.

So his first order of business and now it seems that over literally the last two and a half months the government has matured enough to realize that its first order

of business is really to stabilize Pakistan's economy, which was dealing with this debt crisis. And this is Pakistan deals with recurrent debt crises because it's an economy that is financed through debt. The growth is financed through debt. So every few years, they come due.

There in particular was some mismanagement on the part of the PMLN in the previous, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz that had just gone out of power. And the China-Pakistan economic corridor have increased the amount of debt that became due in 2018.

So the first order of business that he has really now set out to do is try to figure out ways to come out of this debt crisis. He needs $12 billion and he is loath to go to the IMF for most of it because his whole agenda in the kind of sovereign nationalist vein of his views towards America is not to depend on America for any aid.

MR. O'HANLON: So can I ask you a question there?

MS. AFZAL: Yes.

MR. O'HANLON: And I know that he just went to Saudi Arabia and asked for some help, right?

MS. AFZAL: Yes.

MR. O'HANLON: We'll get back to that.

MS. AFZAL: Yes.

MR. O'HANLON: But thank you for that great survey of Khan and his 100 days. I know you want to talk now about the economy. Let me just put a specific question to you that I hope you'll be able to address in terms of whatever else you want to say about the economy.

Because I want to think as sort of a generalist about the fundamentals here and whether Pakistan has a potentially healthy economic prognostication if it can survive these immediate crises. I know it used to be in some ways the industrial

powerhouse of South Asia, right, in the earlier decades of independence, and that's fallen off. And India's had the much more successful 21st century than Pakistan. It's got this burgeoning population, which means a growing workforce, but also a lot of jobs have to be created. Headed towards 400 million people by mid-century, equal to the United States expected population in mid-century, on a tiny piece of land. So there are a lot of foreboding trend lines or fundamentals.

Also, because it is a relatively dangerous place to operate, certainly for Westerners, it's not necessarily attracting a huge amount of European and North American business, I don't think. You can correct me if I'm wrong.

So when I put all these pieces together, I'm a little bit down in the mouth about my expectations of Pakistan's economy. So I hope you could sort of not only talk about the immediate crisis at hand, but the more foundational fundamental situation and how it can get itself onto a healthier long-term growth path.

MS. AFZAL: Sure. So exactly. So I think Pakistan's economic crisis really has two components. One is to deal with the short term, but the second is to not have the short-term crises keep recurring, to actually set on to a healthier path, which basically means that it's no longer a debt -- it's no longer an economy whose growth is financed through debt.

So on the first end, Prime Minister Khan, and I'm sure Bruce will want to talk a little bit about this because he has a very nice piece out in *The Daily Beast* just recently on the fact that Prime Minister Khan secured $6 billion in aid from Mohammed bin Salman as he was weakened after the Khashoggi crisis. So he has done that.

He has also gone to China. So in the last few days he was in China for five days and he has been less successful there from all accounts. It's unclear what has truly transpired there, but he has not come back with billions of dollars getting him out of the crisis. So there will need to be some negotiation with the IMF, but Prime Minister

Khan and his government has said that they would like this to be Pakistan's last bailout from the IMF.

So how can that happen? Long term Pakistan needs to do a few things. And Mr. Khan says that he wants to create -- you know, he's very good at sort of slogans. Right? So 10 million jobs, 5 million houses, those are all a central part of his economic agenda. But what Pakistan really, really needs to do is widen and deepen its tax base so that it can generate revenue internally. And for that, it really needs sort of institutional structural reforms.

So he has put in place multiple committees. You know, he has this Economic Advisory Committee, which Pakistan has a lot of talent, but it has some folks who have written books on institutional reform, as it were, but they are sort of pro-establishment technocrats who have been in those positions before. We will have to wait and see whether they will be the ones to bring about and to advise Prime Minister Khan on how to actually engage in tax reform, for instance.

He got a few very prominent economics professors from Harvard, Princeton, and so on, to sign on to his Economic Advisory Council, but because of political reasons, because one of those professors was a minority in Pakistan that is quite reviled, the Ahmadi minority, he was asked to resign. And so the Economic Advisory Council that he had lost of much of its star power very early on. So it is unclear that those folks that he has entrusted to do these tasks will be able to engage in this whole-scale reform that Pakistan really needs, sort of tax reform, increase in domestic productivity, to get onto this cycle.

MR. O'HANLON: And then last question for you and then we'll go to Bruce. And Bruce, I hope you'll comment on any of these topics before we launch into discussion of U.S. foreign policy options toward Pakistan, as well. But we wanted to talk a little bit about internal Pakistani politics, and not politics just in the electoral sense

because the election's temporarily over, but more in terms of competing institutions and Khan's efforts to deal with the ISI, with the army and the whole notion of strengthening civilian control within that democracy. So any other topics you want to broach, but how do you gauge the health of Pakistan's democracy right now and specifically the prime minister's ability to corral if he chooses the security forces and the intelligence agencies?

MS. AFZAL: Sure. There are three aspects to Pakistani politics, and you've identified all of them that would be -- are useful to just briefly touch upon.

So the civilian-military relationship, I think there has been a deal struck between the civilians and the military in this government. And the deal is that the civilians and Imran Khan and his government will control the domestic situation and the economy. And the military will control both sort of -- will control national security and foreign policy. And they sort of have this dividing line.

And I think there is -- they seem to be on the same page more or less on that. And there's also this sense that the civilian-military balance question is now moot because the civilians have sort of accepted in some ways the dominance or the supremacy of the military in that it will be in charge of foreign policy and national security. That's the sense I get.

It's not that they are the face of the government in the country because Imran Khan is very much the all-powerful face of the government. But on security and foreign policy, it's the military that's in charge.

MR. O'HANLON: So does that mean that Khan can't do a peace deal with India over Kashmir even if he wanted to? That he can't choose the size of the defense budget even if he wanted to? That he can't shut down the Afghan Taliban sanctuaries on Pakistani soil even if he so chooses? Is that what it means? Or maybe not so much on the defense budget, but on all the other crisis management issues? How do you read that?

MS. AFZAL: I mean, I think his power -- her certainly came out and had very reasonable stances on peace with India or a good relationship with India when he came out and gave his speech post-election. India rebuffed his efforts at reaching out, though, so that's another matter and we can get into more of that.

My sense is that he is not really going to push the military beyond what it would let him do, at least for now, because he is much more focused domestically. He cares much more about domestic politics. And for him, success will be defined -- his success is based on him delivering on domestic reforms that he has promised.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic.

MS. AFZAL: But just very briefly on the emboldened fundamentalists that are currently -- you know, even as of last weekend that were on Pakistan's streets, there's a new threat that Pakistan faces, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, but it has largely been decimated by a military operation. But Pakistan faces this new threat that is a political party, not necessarily a militant group per se right now, but a fundamentalist party called the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, which is running on a single issue, and that is upholding Pakistan's blasphemy laws.

And after a verdict last week, a Supreme Court verdict last week, in which a Christian woman who had been on death row for blasphemy was acquitted in, again, a very brave decision by the Supreme Court, Khan came out and defended the decision. Again, good news for Pakistan's liberals and all those who want a more progressive Pakistan, and these hardliners then in the thousands took to the streets and they threatened Pakistan's judiciary, Pakistan's government, and the chief of army staff, as well.

And Khan briefly had to appease them by saying that he would put in place steps to make sure that this Christian woman who had been acquitted would not be able to leave the country, which was a key demand of these protesters, before now

beginning some sort of crackdown against these protesters. So, again, I think this is -- it's a mixed situation and it's a very volatile situation. We'll have to wait and see where it goes. But domestically, other than the opposition parties, which don't really love him, that is sort of a big threat that he faces.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Fantastic briefing.

Bruce, any comments on all of the above that we just touched on with Madiha?

MR. RIEDEL: Sure. Let me start with the democracy issue. It's easy to be critical of Pakistan's democracy and it has its shortcomings. But you ought to really put it in context. This is one of the few countries of the Muslim world that has a democracy, that has elections. It now had two governments voted out of office and replaced by another government in a mostly non-violent, orderly way. I can't off the top of my head, with the possible exception of Indonesia, think of another Muslim government that fits into those categories, certainly not in the Middle East; certainly not in Iran; certainly not in modern Turkey that we're dealing with today.

It also has a free press. I won't say a responsible press. You can publish some really irresponsible things in Pakistan, but you can publish them.

Now, you also have to be careful. If you publish something that's critical of the army, it may be the last thing you ever publish. Journalists being killed is a routine event in Pakistan usually if they take on the military. But nonetheless, it is a free press.

And lastly, as you just pointed out, on the case of the blasphemy, the Supreme Court, which is not always perfect by any means -- Nawaz Sharif would be the first to tell you that -- nonetheless did do the right thing and that's pretty unprecedented, as well. Those institutions of Parliament, a free press, and a judiciary are usually not seen in most of the greater Middle East, so it's impressive to see them even if they're struggling in Pakistan today.

Let me turn to the U.S. side of this. The United States, every American president since John F. Kennedy -- this is where I plug my book -- has had a difficult time dealing with Pakistan. John F. Kennedy recognized the importance of Pakistan. His first state visit was the Pakistani then dictator brought to Mount Vernon. But every president has realized that Pakistan is a challenging problem.

The Trump administration came in and it had a pretty set view. It went through a lengthy policy review process, but that was more about Afghanistan. It wasn't really about Pakistan. And it endorsed what it had run on, to the extent that Donald Trump ran on any foreign policy issue, it endorsed the notion that Pakistan had been an unsavory partner of the United States. Trump famously Tweeted that his two predecessors had spent $33 billion on supporting Pakistan. Like almost any other figure the President names, it's hard to figure out where the $33 billion comes from. But the point was being very critical of Pakistan, especially because of its support for the Afghan Taliban.

But behind the rhetoric there really wasn't anything. They didn't do anything to Pakistan. Now, they stopped the military assistance to Pakistan. Big deal. The Congress wasn't going to let any of it go through. There was no chance that you could give military assistance to Pakistan anymore. So that was a hollow gesture.

They've only recently started to take some serious actions that appear to be small potatoes, but it's not. We have a program called IMET in the United States, which is training in the United States of officers from foreign countries. Pakistan was the biggest participant in the IMET program up until this year. They've now been cut off. That's in the long term a really stupid thing to do because IMET allows us to have some influence on the thinking of future Pakistani generals and some thinking on how they view the world, and they're not going to get any of that benefit. So that's a serious move against Pakistan and one which I think in the long term will be self-defeating more than it

is anything else.

After about a year of this what I call “nasty notes” policy, writing nasty things about Pakistan, something changed in the administration. I’m kind of guessing here. I think at some point early spring this year, summer of this year, Donald Trump told General Mattis and Secretary Pompeo I was right, I should have gone with my gut, let’s get out of Afghanistan. Whether you think that’s the right thing or not, that is definitely always been where Donald Trump was on this war. And I think that that impelled Secretary Mattis and Secretary Pompeo to start thinking hard about how you would manage an orderly, honorable withdrawal from Afghanistan that left behind something that is not either civil war or the Afghan Taliban taking over. And pretty quickly, if you do that, the address has got to be Pakistan.

And at the same time, of course, Imran Khan comes along. So you can justify a shift in your policy by saying, well, it’s a different government than they had before, leave along the fact that Imran Khan is a significantly more anti-American politician than any other serious politician in Pakistan.

So we’ve seen the beginnings of a reaching out and engagement policy. Pompeo’s been there. The foreign minister, Shah Qureshi, who’s an excellent diplomat and really does know what he’s doing and has experience, has been here. And a little bit of a dialogue has begun.

It’s unclear to me, though, on what basis all of this is going to go forward. The Afghan Taliban have not changed their position. Their position is closely entwined with that of the Pakistani army and the intelligence services, and that is more or less unconditional and complete foreign withdrawal from Afghanistan. And that’s a position the President may endorse, but it’s a position that I think his Secretary of Defense in particular, but also his Secretary of State will find very hard to accommodate themselves to.

But at least we're talking, which is an improvement than just sending nasty notes, which is where we were a year ago.

And lastly, I'll just say one other thing about Imran Khan's foreign policy. He went to Saudi Arabia twice. The first time was right after he was inaugurated. And we know from the Pakistani press that he asked for $4 billion from the Saudis. He got nothing, zero.

Then we have the Jamal Khashoggi affair, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is now desperate to find people who will stand in the same room with him, let alone sit on the dais with him like here, and he'd gotten back with $6 billion. So he actually got more money than he had originally gone in for. And he did it at a time when Saudi-Pakistani relations are not particularly good. Pakistan refused to join the war in Yemen, launched by Mohammed bin Salman three and a half years ago. Pakistan was crucial to that war. To the extent that the Saudis had any strategy at all it involved a Pakistani armor unit advancing on Sana'a. There is no Pakistani armor unit, so there's never been any advance on Sana'a.

And not only did Pakistan turn the Saudis down. Then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had the very clever idea of taking the whole issue to the Pakistani Parliament and they voted unanimously against sending troops to Pakistan -- sorry, to Saudi Arabia. When you think about that, that the entire Pakistani political spectrum voted against it, the only people in Pakistan who strongly wanted to send troops was Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hafiz Saeed, the head of the -- and it's not hard, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out why they would want to send troops. Because that's where their money comes from, it's from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.

So he has very successfully engineered half the bailout he needs, $6 billion out of the Saudis, without giving them anything, at least as far as we know, on Yemen. I have to say that was a more creative and skillful diplomacy than I had had in

my mind how Imran Khan would perform on the world stage.

The trip to China is much more ambiguous. We don't really know what came out of that. Qureshi has said we're "out of the woods." I haven't been able to figure out what that meant. As far as I know, Pakistan is not known for large forests, so. (Laughter) But I wouldn't be surprised if they got something because the Chinese also need the Pakistanis as well as the other way around.

So give him credit, first 100 days on foreign policy he has at least one coup already, maybe another one or part of another one. And he's got the Americans knocking on his door.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic. Madiha, any comments from you? And then I have one last question before we go to the audience.

MS. AFZAL: Sure. Just brief comments on each of those points, the U.S., China, and Saudi Arabia.

Pakistan sort of wants to really -- the government in particular and the population, you know, the military's a different question, wants to see itself differently from the lens that the U.S. has been looking at it, the Afghanistan-Pakistan lens. So for the last 10 years, when Pakistan was sort of struggling with terrorism, it had no choice but to look at itself through that lens.

Since it has overcome much of that violence of the last decade and a half, let's say, now it is really sort of wanting to look at how it can sort of grow domestically. So that is -- it wants to think of itself as sort of -- it wants to think of itself, I should say that, you know, it's not there yet, but as sort of a growing democracy and not be looked at through the Afghanistan lens.

The Pakistani population, Imran Khan, I think they would all like for the conflict in Afghanistan to sort of come to an end. And I completely agree with you, I mean, I think Imran Khan would be on the same page as the Afghan Taliban basically,

wanting complete withdrawal of the U.S. from Afghanistan, so there's that.

But Pakistan has been flouting the conditions in some ways that the Trump administration has been putting on it by not really taking actions that the Trump administration wants it to. For instance, it's been gray listed on the Financial Action Task Force for supporting militant groups. You yourself wrote about how it's taken some of the organizations that Hafiz Saeed leads under different names, under the -- off its proscribed list of organizations. So it's sort of flouting some of these conditions.

On Saudi Arabia, the opposition has been pressuring Khan to divulge what conditions he really has -- what conditions, if any, led to his deal with the Saudi Arabian crown prince. So Khan has said that he will help resolve the Saudi-Yemen conflict. I don't know how, but he has actually said this. And so the opposition has been wary that there is more to that deal than Khan is divulging right now.

And finally, on China, Pakistan is being sort of uncharacteristically mum about this more recent trip, even though you're absolutely right, you know, Shah Mehmood Qureshi has also talked about the friendship with China being higher than the highest mountain, similar to Nawaz Sharif. But I do feel that in that relationship China continues very much to have the upper hand.

So any time Khan's ministers have talked about renegotiating the China-Pakistan -- the deals underlying the China-Pakistan economic corridor, they're sort of made to apologize from the Chinese side for the statements that they're making. So that relationship is sort of the toughest in some ways, a relationship that he is dealing with right now.

MR. O'HANLON: So I wanted to ask you both a question, starting with you, Bruce, and then go to all of you for your thoughts and questions. And I wanted to bear down on, there are a lot of key issues, as we know, but bear down on the Afghanistan problem even more because it's so central for American foreign

policymaking. And basically ask, just to push the logic further, Bruce, where you left off, to ask if we do have any good options in terms of how we can persuade Pakistan to help us more in terms of ending the conflict, perhaps by bringing the Afghan Taliban to the point of doing a deal, but also perhaps by just putting pressure on the Afghan Taliban, denying them the sanctuaries they have with the Quetta and Peshawar Shuras, the headquarters in effect, on Pakistani soil, not to mention the occasional or maybe even frequent logistical support for some of what the Afghan Taliban does.

Unfortunately, the Afghan Taliban has enough control of chunks of Afghanistan it doesn't necessarily need to keep its soldiers on Pakistani soil. But I think it still depends for its Shuras, for its leadership largely being there, having that as sanctuary, having access to resources there, access to weapons there perhaps.

And so the question arises, and you wrote about this, Bruce, with Lisa Curtis, who's now in the NSC, and others on a Hudson task force in early 2017. You and I wrote about this with others on an Afghanistan task force in 2016, thinking through all the options, carrots and sticks, that we might have. We've played some of the sticks. We've cut back on the aid quite a bit from the peak of the early Obama administration, for example. But we haven't played all the sticks we could and we certainly haven't offered a prospect of particular carrots, like a free trade deal that could somehow be considered perhaps if cooperation really was provided.

Are there any carrots or sticks that could work in getting Pakistan to stop being our frenemy and to actually be our ally in the war in Afghanistan?

MR. RIEDEL: There's things worth exploring. Whether they'll work I'm kind of a skeptic. We've tried almost everything with Pakistan since 1962, from threats -- we've done a lot of threats -- to sanctioning them. On September 11th, when the attack occurred on the United States, the U.S. had so many sanctions on Pakistan that a generation of lawyers could have been employed just trying to explain how each of the

sanctions interacted with them. We had sanctions on them for things serious, like democracy, nuclear weapons, missile testings, and some that were just plain silly, like treatment of animals and things like that. Why are we sanctioning Pakistan on these things?

So the sanctioning, the hard route, I'm skeptical that that's going to produce very much. It'll drive the Pakistanis further into the arms of the Chinese and the Saudis and others.

We even tried the inducement approach. Whether it was $33 billion or $25 billion or whatever, we gave Pakistan an awful lot of money after 9-11 to fight terrorism. It didn't really accomplish much. When the moment of truth came and we actually determined that Osama bin Laden was in Abbottabad, nobody in the Obama administration said, oh, the first thing we should do is go to the chief of army staff and tell them that Osama bin Laden is actually a mile away from his military academy. No one thought that would make any sense and it wouldn't have made any sense.

This administration, as I said, came in with a policy that was going to be we're going to get tough on Pakistan. One thing they didn't do, though, was actually carry out any military operations against the sanctuaries across the border.

Previous administration, the Obama administration, and I'll take credit for this, carried out a very aggressive drone war against al Qaeda's sanctuaries, and it worked. Not only did we get rid of Osama bin Laden, we all but decimated al Qaeda in South Asia. It's a hollow shell of itself today.

Now, equating that with doing the same thing to the Taliban doesn't work out. The Taliban has a much more deep logistical infrastructure in the country. But they didn't even try. Not even a single mission. I don't know why. It's rare that the Trump administration has refrained from something like this. In most other counterterrorism arenas they've been very quick to use drones and special forces. They haven't done it

here.

I think the best approach given where we are today is trying to embrace Pakistan not through the lens of Afghanistan, but through a much broader lens and say that we want a relationship with Pakistan, which is commensurate with Pakistan's importance in the world. It doesn't mean you're going to treat Pakistan and India identically. They shouldn't be treated identically. But Pakistan should be treated as the very, very important country that it is, not just because of the bad things it can do, that's obvious, but also because of the good things that it can do. The fact that it is a democracy, that it does have a free press, those are things we should be supporting.

Now, to some extent that is, of course, always going to mean for Pakistani politicians bringing back the K word. Let's do something about Kashmir. It wouldn't be beyond the realm of the foolish to think about doing something about Kashmir. The Kashmiri people certainly deserve a better situation than the one they live in. It wouldn't hurt India in the long run for her to make some compromises on Kashmir.

I don't think that's very likely in a Modi government. He's certainly had plenty of time to show he's the guy who can be the Nixon of India and got to Islamabad. I don't think that's going to happen. But it wouldn't be irresponsible for the United States to say some declaratory policy about how it's in the interest of all the parties to resolve India-Pakistan differences, and that has to include Kashmir in it.

This is a long shot, you know. Pakistan is a really, really hard problem. This is the head scratcher of head scratchers when it comes to foreign policy, which is why many administrations, including the Obama administration basically give up at a certain point. Obama didn't have a Pakistan policy for his second term. He basically said this is too hard, forget it, I'll go do something easy like Iraq. (Laughter)

But a sustained effort to engage Pakistan not through simply the eyes of Kabul, but as Pakistan in its own right I think has some chance. I think it would appeal to

Imran Khan's own sense of his role and his place in the world. It'd be flattering in that sense. It's worth a try.

One thing I know for sure is that nasty Tweets are not going to turn around Pakistani foreign policy.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Bruce. Madiha, any thoughts there? And then we'll go for Q&A.

MS. AFZAL: I think Bruce is exactly right. You know, the sticks don't work, so some kind of embracing Pakistan as a partner on some level is the way to go. And Imran Khan talked about how he really desires the relationship between the U.S. and Pakistan to be one of mutual benefits and not one in which Pakistan depends on the U.S. for aid. So that's certainly I think the right way to go.

My sense, especially in the near future, is that you're absolutely right, Pakistan would love for the U.S. to say that the U.S. can do something about Kashmir. India would hate that, and so it's a no-go. Imran Khan wrote this nice letter to Prime Minister Modi and just a few days afterwards, from the Indian side there was sort of a response that bewildered Pakistan.

There was a meeting scheduled between the two foreign ministers at the U.N. General Assembly in September, and India called out Pakistan's evil agenda and said Imran Khan has shown his true face. And so that relationship went south very, very quickly. And I think it is because this is for political reasons. Just as Pakistan plays up anti-India sentiment when it needs to, India now plays up anti-Pakistan sentiment when it needs to. And so, unfortunately, I don't see that improving anytime soon.

MR. O'HANLON: Well, let's go to you. Please wait for me to call on you. And then when you get a microphone, mention your name and pose a question, please.

We'll start over here. I'll take about three at a time in one round. So both on the far side here.

MS. KHALID: Thank you. My name is Alfa Khalid. I have been a member of the Parliament of Pakistan for the past 10 years. This time I didn't run.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you for joining us.

MS. KHALID: So thank you very much for this. It's very enlightening for me.

I think what I understood is that there are some misconceptions, too, because I think Pakistan, basically all pillars of a state, they try to help their country. So the sovereignty obviously for the military is very important always, for every country, here, India, Pakistan, everywhere. So putting the blame all the time on the military I think Is not very fair, even for foreign policy.

And I was in the government of (inaudible), so I am not really from this government, but still I would say that any prime minister would only take care of the serenity of the country and then automatically the whole institutions, they work together. So I think you have just seen that even in blasphemy and anything, there has never been one incident that a court took a decision against anyone. So it was always, even for the minorities, it was always taken care of.

Basically Pakistan to me, I've lived there for 10 years, I walked from one place to the other all the time. I found it peaceful in many ways. The impression is to be corrected in the West, I think, it is not fair to have a very hostile impression of the country. The country has suffered a lot and the Cold War before that. And still what I felt for all these 10 years they have a lot of respect for USA and they want the relationships with USA. And for that, and even with India, with Afghanistan, but it cannot be one-sided. There has to be mutual respect and respect for the sovereignty of the country. Then automatically things, they fall into place.

So it's a very simple thing I want to mention. And you can comment on it as you feel, I mean, the way you see it. But I think to go there and see it and feel it and

live there in the Parliament, it's totally different view. That's my ideas. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, ma'am. We appreciate it. The gentleman here on the third row.

MR. MAUNIE: Thank you very much, (inaudible). It's nice to see all of you, especially Mr. Bruce Riedel. I'm Rollos Maunie with Asian Development Bank in Washington, and also visiting scholar with Johns Hopkins SAIS.

You mentioned a South Asia strategy, a new South Asia strategy announced last year. There's a big component of India's involvement and solution in Afghanistan (inaudible) Pakistan-India, Afghanistan-Pakistan, but India-Afghanistan-Pakistan aspect was not discussed that much as it was boldly mentioned in the new U.S. strategy. How do you see that will impact, whether negatively or positively? Will it provoke more Pakistanis to support us (inaudible) like Afghanistan?

There's one more original player that I think no one mentioned. That's Russia. As we speak, there is a peace conference going on in Russia on Afghanistan. Every party, including the Taliban, participate there except the Afghan government and the U.S. How do you see now the role of Russia in this overall stabilization of Afghanistan?

And the last one --

MR. O'HANLON: We --

MR. MAUNIE: Just one last thing on this election, U.S. election on that region, if any reflection.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay, thank you. And then we'll do one more here and then we'll go back to the panel. Thank you, sir.

MR. BUTT: My name is Kami Butt. I'm with the Pakistani Spectator. My question is to Mr. Riedel about his being the most anti-American. Don't you think he's kind of posing? Because he is the most Westernized Pakistani leader after (inaudible).

You know, he spent a lot of years in England, he played for an English team. He is educated there and his wife is British basically.

MR. O'HANLON: His former wife.

MR. BUTT: So maybe it's very difficult for him to be -- you know, to kind of mitigate his image. He kind of comes across as anti-American. I spent some time there and he is not anti-American.

And my question is, how can, you know -- he has a lot in common with Trump. How can he use those strengths? I mean, Pakistan is lucky in the sense that this is the first time we have a leader that doesn't have any baggage. He is not a crook like most of the Pakistani politicians. So how can he use this strength to bring Pakistan closer to America and not -- it's in the good interest for America now to push, as you said, in the arms of Russia and China and Saudi Arabia. Thanks.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. So why don't we do this. I'm going to give a quick response to the first one and then we'll work down the aisle. And then, Bruce, a number of the questions were for you, so you can bat clean-up.

Very quickly, ma'am, in regard to your very powerful statement, and Bruce knows this relationship and so does Madiha better than I, but I'm just going to say one thing there, which is I once heard Ambassador Teresita Schaffer describe the U.S.-Pakistan relationship as a relationship where we had had three marriages and two divorces and maybe headed for a third divorce or maybe just separation or maybe it's just a period of cooling it off, but staying together. And of course, what she meant is that we had a treaty. We were formal treaty allies in the 1950s. And Pakistan always felt that we should have come more to its aid in its struggles with India, partly as a result. So there was the first marriage and then sort of the first divorce.

And then after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, of course the Pakistanis bore a lot of the price of winning the Cold War for the Western world, doing the

dirty work and living in the neighborhood where the dirty work occurred, that we depended on as Americans to achieve our strategic goals of defeating the Soviet Union's ambitions in the Cold War. And that really was the last major chapter of the Cold War. And we owe a tremendous debt to Pakistan and to Afghanistan that we rarely acknowledge in the United States and have often forgotten. So that was both the second marriage with the U.S.-Pakistani collaboration and then the divorce when, to I think our shame, we essentially deserted South Asia in the late 1980s and 1990s.

And then, of course, the third marriage was the effort to work together after 9-11. And now who knows where we're headed, if it's for yet another divorce or if we're already there?

So what I'm trying to say is not necessarily to agree with everything that you said. We don't have to agree. But to acknowledge that Pakistanis view this through a complicated history where America hasn't always done right by Pakistan. I wish that Pakistan could let some of that go and try to be more genuinely supportive of what we're trying to do in Afghanistan. I really think they should, but I think when I put my historical perspective in place like this, I have to appreciate why it can be so difficult for Pakistanis, even though I don't accept their view of India as a rival they have to counter in Afghanistan, which I think is a fundamentally misguided perspective.

But I accept your point that the history is complicated and both sides need to understand the other's perspective. So I'll just say that and pass it to you.

MS. AFZAL: I think I'll start off with you, as well. I mean, I know it bothers Pakistanis that they have an image problem in the West. Because what you see in newspapers and on TV screens is anytime something goes wrong, you see the TLP hardliners chanting on the streets, you know. It's the truth, it is happening. Of course there's another side to the story. There's a multidimensionality, right?

So Islamist fundamentalists exist on Pakistan streets and they have

support from many in the population. I mean, if you look at some of the data that I cited in my book, it's not surprising to see how so many of them are able to come out on the streets, let's say, in support of -- or against -- no, not in support of, but in opposition to the Supreme Court judgment of last week. Because 75 percent of people that Pew polled a few years ago said that they believe that the blasphemy laws are necessary to protect Islam in Pakistan. Seventy-five percent also say that apostasy should be punishable by death. Right? So they've internalized so many of these things.

So part of the image is real. And of course, there's a whole other side to Pakistan that certainly gets short shrift in the West. Right? So the many talented Pakistanis, a lot of the work that is happening in Pakistan, the work in terms of education, in terms of health, in terms of social services, entrepreneurship, there's a whole other side of Pakistan that I completely agree with you does not get seen. So I completely sympathize with that.

Very quickly on your comment. I know your question was directed to Bruce. First of all, Jemima Khan was his first wife. He has had -- you know, he's on his third wife right now. She was British, but his third wife, Imran Khan's third wife is not.

Imran Khan certainly was Westernized for much of his adult life. But when he came into politics, he either opportunistically or truly sort of internally had a change of heart and became much more conservative and adopted this sort of nationalist view of -- a sort of sovereign nationalist view of Pakistan in which he basically talks about not depending on the United States.

So the anti-Americanism that comes into that, you know, we saw when, for instance, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan was striking Pakistanis in the northwest in the 2012/2014 timeframe along with U.S. drone strikes, you know, being -- a lot of drone strikes at that time. He said that the Pakistan Taliban was only striking Pakistan because of U.S. drone strikes. So he deflected the blame of the Taliban insurgency onto the U.S.

So that's where he has earned his reputation of being anti-American to some degree.

But now he has let go of much of that sort of more strident rhetoric. And I think as he has become prime minister, become a little bit more statesman-like in his approach to the U.S.

MR. RIEDEL: I think you've answered his question better than I can. The only thing I would add to that is certainly some of the people in his cabinet, and I'm thinking here particularly the human rights minister, are pretty blatantly and stridently anti-American. She is referred to as "Lady Taliban," which is kind of almost a contradiction in terms, but it gets to the point of where her political beliefs are. And she's an important figure in this government.

I want to turn to the question of Afghanistan and the outside players. India could be a very productive and helpful partner in all of this except that it immediately gets you to the other "I" country, which is Iran because most of what India wants to do with Afghanistan is help build highways and ports that would allow Afghanistan to not depend upon Pakistani ports, but use Iranian ports. And, of course, for this administration that's a no-go area. And if India does decide to invest more in construction projects in Iran, it's going to lead to big problems in U.S.-India relations.

I think that's foolish. I think we should regard Iran as part of the regional environment that has to be brought into any solution of Afghanistan. But I don't think that's going to happen between now and at least two years from now.

The Russians can also be a partner here, too. In fact, our goal should be to outsource the Afghan problem to as many other governments as possible so that we are not solely responsible for the future of that country. Pakistan obviously is a place to pull. Russia, China, Iran, the Stans, anyone else who wants to take up part of this, we should be happy to encourage them to do that. And Saudi Arabia is another very good example.

MR. O'HANLON: Great. Another round of questions. We'll stay on this side of the room and then I'll go over to this side for round three. But we'll start with the woman in the green shirt and then the two other hands towards the back.

QUESTIONER: Hi. This was an insightful talk. Thanks for (inaudible).

MR. O'HANLON: A little louder, please. And please identify yourself, too.

QUESTIONER: Oh, my name is Homa. I'm a student at SAIS, just coming directly from class. But this was an insightful talk. Thank you so much.

So about the human rights minister, I think she had actually wanted the cabinet position on foreign ministry, so that kind of reflects well on why they didn't take her on that position and human rights position was probably well-suited for her. But, I mean, she has a political science degree from Columbia, so if she taken up the foreign ministry position, it might have not been reflected well in terms of what is their stance towards foreign policy.

But other than that, I am also interested maybe a reflection on this, so when Imran Khan took the trip to Saudi Arabia, he also mentioned partnering with them as part of a CPEC. And I feel like the quiet from China might be coming from that, too. So Pakistan taking up like a more forward role in terms of decision-making for CPEC in terms of like, hey, can we have this as a partner, also?

I know they took back their statement. I think for a couple of days in the media they're like, oh, Saudi Arabia is now an official partner of CPEC projects in Pakistan. And now that they've been back on their word and they've said, oh, it's not anymore, or that was a mistake, we didn't really confirm it yet, apparently there were some signings or not that I'm not sure of. But China being quiet with Pakistan or showing some sort of cold shoulder might be reflective Pakistan's forwardness in terms of like decision-making itself.

MR. O'HANLON: Great, thank you.

QUESTIONER: Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: The gentleman in the row behind and then all the way to the back row. And then we'll come up here for a fourth question in this round. It doesn't matter which order, but I was going to start with him. That's okay, we'll go over here next. Please.

QUESTIONER: My name is Utsub and I'm with the World Labor Council. My question is that given the fact that Taliban is now being looked at much more favorable or at least adjusting opinion in the U.S., do you see Pakistan being asked to act more seriously upon the other terrorist groups that are operating from Islamabad and all those areas, like Hafiz Saeed? Do you see U.S. actually doing something? Because they are terrorists, too, according to U.S.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. The gentleman here in the row right in front. Yes.

MR. JAMAL: Hi. My name is Mustafa Jamal. Two questions.

One, what do you make of the murder last week of Mullah Sami-ul-Haq, the man that some called the Father of the Taliban?

And two, can you help me understand what happened with Atif Mian, the economist? Because that was early on in Imran Khan's tenure. He was riding a very strong wave. He had a lot of political capital. And he nominated someone and then he backed off when a lot of people thought and I know certainly Pakistani liberals were very hopeful that he would say, you know, no, this is a qualified person. I don't care if he's a religious minority. I want it done.

And the same thing happened with Asia Bibi, the Christian woman last week. Imran Khan came out with very strong statements and then when the pressure mounted from the Labbaik group, he backed off, the army backed off, you know, didn't

show a lot of support for him. What exactly is going on? Is he just trying to walk a very fine line, not seriously offend anyone? What is going on there?

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

MR. JAMAL: Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: And then we'll go up here for this last question in this round.

MR. RAHMAN: Thank you very much. My name is Mansood Rahman.

And, you know, since we are talking here today about the first 100 days of Imran Khan's government I'll say, yes, like you mentioned, that his agenda for 100 days and also then his speeches in the beginning, they were all very impressive and, you know, were giving a lot of hope. However, when it comes to doing, you know, it is really confusing us that whatever, like the other person pointed, that he backs off.

And this example, you know, that these religious groups, although they did not get any votes from the public, but he's still -- that he's so afraid or whatever, you know, that his own credibility, his picture as a leader is really being distorted. And I don't know if this is the way he's going that he's scared, he cannot govern, but only saying his words, you know. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Do you want to start this round again?

MS. AFZAL: Sure.

MR. O'HANLON: Great. Please, over to you.

MS. AFZAL: Sure. So I'll talk about the Atif Mian, Asia Bibi case first perhaps because two of the questions sort of address that and then go to the other questions.

So very quickly, I mean, I introduced this and you did a good job of talking about this. But Atif Mian is an (inaudible) Princeton professor that I mentioned, who the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan had threatened -- who Imran Khan had named to

his Economic Advisory Council, is very impressive. You know, he may be in line to win a Nobel Prize in the next couple of decades and he's a Pakistani and works on debt. He has a book out called *The House of Debt*, and so he was the right person in some ways to be on this Economic Advisory Council. Imran Khan appointed him with a lot of fanfare on the council and once the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan threatened protests he sort of preemptively asked him to resign. And so he earned a lot of ridicule from Pakistan's liberals for why he did that. And, you know, he sort of started earning this title of Mr. U-Turn, this sort of moniker of Mr. U-Turn.

With the Asia Bibi case I think things are a little bit different. And then I'll sort of draw a line between what I think he is doing. But the Asia Bibi case, after the Supreme Court judgment I think Imran Khan cane out very forcefully in defending the Supreme Court judgment and sort of warning the protesters that they could not threaten the writ of the state. He then, of course, promptly jetted off to China for this investment conference because he needed to do that, I guess.

But meanwhile, the protesters were out on the streets and his government within three days signed an agreement with the protesters basically saying that it would -- I mean, so I think there's a fine line here. It would initiate legal proceedings, not actually put Asia Bibi on the exit control list, but initiate legal proceedings to put her on the exit control list, which is appeasement for sure.

Why does it say that it did that? It says that it was trying to do that to get the protesters off the streets so as to avoid bloodshed. Why is the Pakistani government so scared of bloodshed? It keeps referring back to the Red Mosque incident of 2007, where Musharraf raised the Red Mosque madrassa, the Lal Masjid madrassa, that's in the heart of Islamabad. And in that raid 50 madrassa students were killed in response to which the Tehrik-i-Taliban insurgency in Pakistan really started. So they are fearful of both bloodshed, as well as fundamentalist backlash.

However, I think what they fail to -- so that's what they say. There are two things, though. I think they fail to realize that the TLP out on the streets is not the same as the Red Mosque. They can arrest these protesters without appeasing them. Right? So it's quite easy to arrest them without first signing an agreement and then arresting them, which is what they're doing now. So just to get them off the streets, which was their main goal, doesn't seem like it was important enough to actually engage in this agreement.

So I think it would have been much better to just arrest them. And Pakistan certainly has the police force and the army could have helped out there, as well.

However, there are two sort of caveats there. It is unclear that the police force would actually want to arrest them because many of them actually sympathize with the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan. Right? So we have to remember the statistic I cited to this, the lady who was a member of Parliament, that 75 percent of Pakistanis actually believe in the blasphemy law being necessary to protect Islam in the country. So that's sort of important.

Two, appeasement is sort of baked into Pakistan's politics. And why it is baked inti Pakistan's politics is that Islamist parties and opposition politicians all too often use these sort of notions to threaten the weak incumbent party. And that's how Pakistani politics rolls along.

So I think what Imran Khan accomplished, with the Atif Mian incident I think he did not think -- he thought it was too early on and that Atif Mian perhaps was not important enough to him to take a stand at that stage. Now he did take more of a stand, but still he's trying to walk this tightrope by not really engaging in bloodshed on the streets. I think they made a mistake, but a partial mistake, not a full mistake if that makes sense.

I'll turn it over to Bruce. Sami-ul-Haq, after just a couple of points, Sami-

ul-Haq, nobody really knows what happened there. It's a mystery. What we do know is that everybody in his house left for 15 minutes, which is odd in Pakistan, especially with a political figure who -- you know, security is a problem in Pakistan even for the general population. Right? So if you have a guard outside your house, you want your guard to stay outside your house 24/7. The fact that his guard, his driver, and everyone left and he was killed within those 15 minutes that they were away, in his bedroom, suggest foul play. We don't know. We don't know anything else yet.

On the Saudi Arabia involvement in CPEC, I think it's another -- I thought that was quite puzzling. I don't know where the lady is who asked that question.

MR. O'HANLON: Right there.

MS. AFZAL: Right, that's right. I thought it was quite puzzling. And the fact that the government reneged on that pretty quickly again shows how China is really driving the agenda here.

I also -- you know, one important point that's been mentioned in recent days is that the PMLN government was not very transparent with the terms of CPEC, so many of the loans may not actually be renegotiable. And so we'll have to sort of wait and see what happens. But I don't think CPEC is going to change very much.

MR. RIEDEL: Yeah, I would agree with that. I don't think it is either. I think if you read the 100 days program and other things, it talks about expanding CPEC out of infrastructure into agricultural and textiles and things. It's not very clear to me how any of that would actually happen. But it is a part of the constant effort to make the all-weather, higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the Indian Ocean, China-Pakistan relationship actually fulfill the lofty principles that they talk about.

I would just make one last note about the human rights minister. She came out the day after Bibi Netanyahu went to Oman and said this is a fundamental national security threat to Pakistan. It's pretty hard for me to see exactly how that could

be, but I think that gives you a taste of some of the really conspiracy theory mindset that operates in a lot of this new government. Fortunately, I think the prime minister's trying to put a little bit of a level on that. She's the only politician in the greater Middle East and even the world who criticizes Oman for the Israeli prime minister coming there.

The question about Hafiz Saeed, I would like to see the United States Government get more serious about this, but I don't see this as being very high on the priority list of the Trump administration. In fact, I suspect it's not even on the list of the Trump administration.

The Trump administration really is looking at Pakistan through the single focus of how do we get out of Afghanistan and can the Pakistanis help us? That's in my mind, as I've said already, too narrow a vision for dealing with it, but that's what is going on to the extent that the Trump administration even thinks about South Asia at all.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay. We've got time for one more round and we'll got to this side of the room. And with apologies because there are more hands than I have time for. I think we'll do the four in the first four rows, so we'll start over here and then weave diagonally finishing here.

MR. MacDONALD: Well, first of all, I want to say thank you for the panel. You guys have been excellent and very informative.

MR. O'HANLON: What's your name?

MR. MacDONALD: I'm Scott MacDonald. I'm with Smith's Research and Gradings. My question goes back to the economy.

We've talked about how Pakistan has had problems. It's got a debt crisis. It needs 12 billion roughly to make up the financing gap. It's got 6 billion from the Saudis. We'll see what they get from China and the IMF. But the question is, and you mentioned it in the very beginning, was Pakistan has periodic crises like this. Pakistan needs structural economic reforms to make a long-lasting impression to avoid this. Is

Imran Khan the person that's going to be able to do it? And have we seen nay motion in that direction so far in the first 100 days?

MR. O'HANLON: Great, thanks. You had your hand up, right, ma'am? Yes. Okay, second row, third row, fourth row.

QUESTIONER: I'm Mali from the embassy of Pakistan. And since we're talking about the lens of Afghanistan for Pakistan, so I'll stick by that.

And that is there are a lot of allegations, alleged allegations, of sanctuaries in Quetta and Peshawar Shuras from the U.S. and Afghanistan side. On the other side, from Pakistan, there are circumstantial evidence that for the last three, four years, all attacks inside Pakistan have originated, planned, and executed from Afghanistan side.

So for improving things do you think U.S. or Afghanistan support for instituting border management, which Pakistan is doing singlehandedly right now, and for improving that border, would that help? And would it also lead to friction reduction between Afghanistan and Pakistan and improvement in that particular context?

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. In the third row, please.

QUESTIONER: Hi, my name's Natasha. I'm a junior at Stanford and I'm interning at the World Bank for this semester. My question is also related to the issue of economic development.

Imran Khan has made it obviously very clear that his focus is promoting the domestic economy. And looking ahead to long-term growth I'm not sure how he can promote this increase in domestic productivity and the widening and deepening of the tax base if he still maintains these attitudes towards minorities and the inclusion of women and minorities in the economy. And the example of Atif Mian being excluded from the Economic Advisory Council is just one example of those broader attitudes.

But my question is how he can walk this tightrope, fine line between, you

know, promoting the liberal agenda and not offending some of the hardliners in government, and still manage to promote the economic development that's his primary objective.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. And then finally here.

MR. McCAUSLAND: Hi, I'm Jeff McCausland. I'm a retired Army officer and former dean of the United States Army War College, and currently involved in some Track Two efforts with Pakistan and India.

First I'd like to totally agree with Bruce's comment about the ending of IMET being tactically one of the stupidest things I've ever seen. And I'd even add to that not only is it tactically stupid in our ability to influence future officers, it actually is personally offensive to those who have come and passed. And this is a very proud group of military officers who find it personally offensive, which will shade their views into the future.

Two quick questions. Question number one, to be provocative, it seems to me the panel has portrayed a false dichotomy is that Imran Khan, you're going to take care of the domestic problems and the deal we're cutting is the military's going to take care of national security and foreign policy. But the reality in my dealing with senior Pakistani military officers, not unlike military officers in this country, they all want to modernize their force.

The Army is concerned about the cost it took in equipment and manpower in the Swat. The Navy wants submarines. The Air Force wants new airplanes. And of course, they have a fourth branch called the SPD that wants this continuing modernization of the nuclear force. And their tack nuclear effort is an effort they think will be cheaper than buying more people because they're being outspent by India, which is a false assumption to begin with.

So isn't this really a classic guns versus butter argument with a growing

population and economic flatness that they're going to be forced to make some hard choices on defense or basically they're going to drive the economy into the ground?

And then my final question, and Bruce, this is directly to you, historically, the U.S. administrations have all come into office going to solve the Palestinian question between the Israelis and the Palestinians, which now has been characterized as the first sign of group insanity. Now, that we've solved the problem of North Korea, wouldn't it make sense to have a policy on South Asia, a wider lens, that is not simply declaratory, but actually actively trying to solve the Kashmir question? Because historically, and you know from Kargil, when there are crises in South Asia, they come to the United States and others to try to get us to restrain them in crisis from things getting out of hand.

So why not take an active effort as opposed to trying to solve a crisis once it starts? Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: So one tiny intervention from me and then again down the panel for final thoughts. And my one thought combines responses to, Jeff, your last point and then our friend from the embassy.

If there's one thing we need to impress upon our Afghan friends and their relationship with Pakistan, it's to stop contesting the Durand Line. And I think that gets to both of your concerns. It's not the entirety of either of your questions. But for the most part, I have a lot of sympathy for Afghan friends. They've taken a lot of punishment and I think Pakistan needs to reassess how responsible it is for that punishment.

And for the most part, the concerns about India's supposedly nefarious roles inside of Afghanistan I think are exaggerated. However, Afghanistan needs to recognize that its border with Pakistan is as good as it's going to get. And maybe we can, as Secretary Rumsfeld and I think Dwight Eisenhower used to say, maybe we can solve one of these problems by enlarging it. And think about Kashmir and the Durand Line at the same time in the context of a South Asia border resolution conference. And

maybe that's a way to partially deal with your concern, as well, sir.

But that's my final point. Madiha, over to you for anything you want to add.

MS. AFZAL: Sure. On the economy, whether there's been any motion forward, I think in the first almost 100 days that this government has had so far, much of the work that it has been doing is trying to secure a loan while staying true to its rhetoric of not relying fully on the IMF. So, you know, going multiple times to Saudi Arabia, going to China, and that's been much of the work.

The other side of Imran Khan is that he has been a campaigner for so long, he does that well. He talks a lot, he communicates constantly with the Pakistani public. That means that he's been -- he's continued to do that in office. And I'm not sure that his government has actually sat down and done the work to go beyond the campaign mode and to actually put in a plan for the long-term modernizing of the economy that needs to take place.

I will say that the talk is correct. I mean, there's a lot in that 100 days agenda, but the fact that there is a Pakistani prime minister who's talking so much about education, so much about health, how's actually -- and has some successes to show when his government was -- the PTI government was in power and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, they were actually able to implement a health insurance scheme for the poorest of the poor. Again, something that has not happened in Pakistan before.

So there are some signs of hope that on social services -- and, you know, I'm going to be cautiously optimistic that the team that he has assembled can sit down and buckle down, sort of forget the campaign rhetoric, and actually put in place a reform agenda in terms of the economy, in terms of sort of productivity because they're, honestly, the only hope Pakistan has.

You know, the PMLN's focus on infrastructure was too much shiny

motorways and shiny highways, shiny metro buses, less sort of reform. And then the PPP that has been power is too focused on -- the PPP has not -- it's sort of mired in misgovernance through its term. So this is a third way, if you will, and perhaps Pakistan will see some results. We'll have to wait and see. We'll have to hold an event again.

MR. O'HANLON: I think we will. That's fair. Bruce, over to you for the last word.

MR. RIEDEL: Okay. I'll be brief. I think that we can think about problems between India and Pakistan, particularly in Kashmir, in creative ways. The very good role model for it is actually the Irish solution, where the Northern Ireland remained in Great Britain, but also began to develop links with the Republic of Ireland, so that certain issues, like tourism, which are really all-Irish issues, are dealt with between Ulster and the Republic of Ireland directly, leaving London out of it. That would require that the Indians think about Kashmir in a different way, but I think it's an interesting role model to look at.

The Musharraf government, after first trying terrorism, then trying the threat of nuclear war, finally came around to negotiations, indirect negotiations, along this line. You have to give Pervez Musharraf credit, he did seem to learn from his mistakes. Thankfully, they were not as catastrophic as they could have been along the way, but he did move in the right direction again, but then his sell-by date arrived and the whole thing was thrown away. I think the Indians missed an opportunity. I think the United States missed an opportunity in trying to push that along.

It might not lead to a dramatic signing ceremony. Nobody's going to get the Nobel Peace Prize out of this approach, but it could be a way of practically improving the lives of Kashmiris and, in the long run, diffusing the India-Pakistan problem. Because this gets to what I think is really one of the most important questions here today.

If it's guns versus butter, if Pakistan has to have a military the size that it

feels it has to have, can it ever really embark upon the kind of economic growth that it needs to? It seems to me unlikely. But you're not going to get a country to walk away from large military purchases when it feels it is threatened directly by a neighbor. And let's be candid, there is a threat from India to Pakistan just as there's a threat from Pakistan to India. This a border that is long overdue for some kind of resolution.

And there is also an unresolved border conflict with Afghanistan, as well. And I completely agree with Mike that the right step is to give the Durand Line recognized as an international border. The last thing I would say about that is, yes, we would like to see Afghans do more on border security, but right now I don't think the Afghan army can get anywhere near the border most of the time because that territory is de facto out of its control.

One last very small bit, the 6 billion from the Saudis is almost certainly going to be also met by a billion or two from the United Arab Emirates. And the way the Gulf works, that will then mean that Kuwait has to come up with a billion dollars, too. This is one of the great banks in the world. You go in, you put your ATM card in, and not only does that amount of money come out, but you suddenly find two other ATM machines dropping you money at the same time. I wish my ATM machine worked like that; it doesn't. It's another of the unique things about Pakistan and its relations with its Gulf neighbors.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Thanks for being here. Please join me in thanking the panel.

(Applause)

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