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Intersections

Preventing violent extremism in fragile states
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(MUSIC)

PITA: Welcome to Intersections, the podcast where two experts explore and explain the important policy issues of the day. We're part of the Brookings Podcast Network and I'm your host, Adrianna Pita.

Since 9-11, the U.S. has spent nearly \$6 trillion on efforts to counter terrorism and extremism. And while there has been no mass casualty foreign terrorist attacks on U.S. soil since 2001, worldwide annual terrorist attacks have increased fivefold.

In 2017, Congress authorized the U.S. Institute of Peace to assemble a task force to develop a comprehensive plan to prevent the underlying causes of extremism in fragile states in order to help redirect U.S. Government priorities to being preventive rather than reactive. So here with us today to discuss the task force recommendations and next steps are Nancy Lindborg, the President of the U.S. Institute of Peace, and George Ingram, a Senior Fellow here at Brookings, who was one of the senior advisors to the task force.

Nancy and George, thank you for being here.

INGRAM: Thank you.

LINDBORG: Great to be here.

PITA: Nancy, I'm wondering if you can start us off, please, with an overview of the task force's mandate and how this came to be? Most notably, this was a bipartisan priority from Congress, so if you could talk about that a little bit, please.

LINDBORG: Sure. As you said, this was a bipartisan priority and it was part of legislation directing the U.S. Institute of Peace to create a bipartisan task force, to create a comprehensive plan for preventing extremism in fragile states in the Horn, the

Sahel, and the Middle East. So, it's very specific and very sweeping. And it was based on a recognition that since 9-11, we have spent nearly \$6 trillion and over that -- on combating extremism overseas. And during that same period, the number of attacks and organizations conducting extremist attacks have greatly increased.

So, we created a task force of people who had served in a variety of former administrations, Republican and Democrat, and most importantly from a variety of perspectives -- from security, intelligence, development, diplomacy, private sector -- so we could really think through what was a different and better way to address this prevention agenda.

PITA: Sure. There were three primary recommendations that the task force wound up setting forth. Can you walk us through those pieces?

LINDBORG: Sure. And let me also add that the task force was co-chaired by Governor Kean and Congressman Hamilton. And for those who remember, they co-chaired the 9-11 Commission Report. And both of them were very, very passionate about the fact that of the recommendations of that 9-11 report, two of the main recommendations were followed through and that led to protection of the homeland, which has been successful; reorganization of the intelligence agencies. But what was less unpursued was the recommendation to create a preventive strategy.

So, there were three major recommendations that the task force put together and the first is really requiring all U.S. departments and agencies with national security responsibilities to adopt a shared understanding of how to stop the spread of extremism. And that speaks to the fact that often our Department of Defense may be pursuing one line of effort that is contradictory to, in fact, what the State Department or

AID might be doing, you know, so that we have to all just get on the same page to be more effective.

Secondly, was to create the incentives and remove some of the bureaucratic impediments to having the kind of flexibility needed to tackle this more effectively, so that we get rid of the barnacles on our system so that our development, security, and diplomatic professionals can do this work more effectively.

And third is to work internationally with our development partners to create a joint fund that will have the greater flexibility and, most importantly, the ability to sustain action over time; working in partnership with those fragile states' governments and their citizens to create a compact approach similar to the Millennium Development Corporation where there's a shared understanding with accountability, et cetera, to really get at these underlying conditions that exist in fragile states that enable the rise of violent extremism.

INGRAM: Let me add to what Nancy said because I think what's really important to understand is the nature of the membership of the task force and where they came out. Because the nature was, as Nancy said, it was a diverse group, but a number of the members have lived and worked mainly in the security side of U.S. policy. And the task force unanimously came to the conclusion that security is not the answer to dealing with extremism and violence and fragility; that it's really the fundamental problems are economic, social, and political. And you've got to deal with that sort of soft side of development if you're going to have a long-term solution to moving countries beyond fragility and violence.

PITA: Yes, I noticed the recommendations really emphasized local participation,

local buy-in, sort of working cooperatively with everybody on the ground in these particular countries. Can you talk, both of you, a little bit more about how that would happen?

You mentioned the compact basis and drawing lessons from the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Can you walk us through that?

INGRAM: Yeah, I would say that one thing that the development community has learned the last 10 years is that solutions designed in Washington or London aren't going to effectively deal with problems in Zimbabwe or Morocco or Syria, and that everything is situational-relative. It's context-specific. And the only way to develop solutions that deal with the real problems is to have them be driven by the people who are involved, who live there on a day-to-day basis, who have the connections, have the relationships, understand the dynamics in the country. And only when you have that knowledge can you develop solutions that deal with people's day-to-day problems.

And what's really the fundamental breakdown is the breakdown in the social compact between the citizens of a country and those who are leading it. And we from Washington can't recreate the social compact. It only can be done by the people involved. And I think Nancy has lot of real-world, on-the-ground experience in this area.

LINDBORG: I mean, George said it exactly right. And I would just add that that broken social compact, which is a fundamental description of a fragile state and leads to often societies that are deeply fragmented, and that actually is what gives rise to the possibility of extremists exploiting those grievances and a sense of injustice that you find in those kinds of countries. That's why that territory was selected, the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and the Sahel, you know, which is where you've had a rise of groups

like Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, you know, ISIS, et cetera.

And as George said, the development community has learned a lot of lessons and had some very interesting experiments that we've learned from, whether it's the Millennium Challenge Corporation or the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria, you know, and other of these kinds of mechanisms. But the lessons that George just articulated have not gone beyond the development community.

And so it is – to underscore the point George made, what's critical about the task force recommendations is that it recognizes that you can't tackle these conditions through development alone; and that that fragility, that broken social compact, is the common denominator for both creating conditions for violent extremism, but also for civil wars, famine, for extreme poverty.

And so being able to get very focused and bringing our development, security, and political capabilities together with the shared understanding of this is the problem that we need to focus on is a real breakthrough for how we might address these issues.

INGRAM: You know, you mentioned the MCC, the Millennium Challenge Corporation. And where that's relevant is that the fundamental design of the MCC is not to support programs that are designed in Washington, but programs that are designed in the host country, and not just by the government, but by the government working with the people in communities. And then the U.S. responding, the MCC responding to that and supporting programs that grow out of the needs and the priorities of people in the country. That's where the MCC model is so relevant for how we need to deal with fragility.

LINDBORG: And if I could just add, the critical difference with the proposed

Partnership Development Fund, which is what the task force has recommended, is that it's not just the U.S. contributing. You know, the MCC is a wholly a U.S. enterprise. But the Partnership Development Fund is meant to be an international effort. So, it's aligning not just across the U.S., but hopefully, with our key development partners, both so that you really get a focused effort, but also so that you minimize the cacophony that often happens in these fragile states with a lot of different development actors asking for the country to do different things or to do them differently. So, it's really seeking to create, you know, a big push all in the same direction on this core problem.

PITA: I want to come back the international piece, the international coordination piece, in just a moment. But George, you brought up another question that I had.

You're talking about, right, we're not working just with government agencies in these countries. Given the fundamental nature of that broken social compact that makes up these fragile states. It might be weak political institutions, you know, lack of a civil society, or lots of other difficulties. Who is it that you would seeking to partner with? Who would we be working with on the ground? How do you engage in a situation like that where there isn't a central coordination point?

INGRAM: It's going to vary with each country. And what has to happen and AID and a lot of AID'S development partners in DFID and other organizations have experience in is spending some time in a country and figuring out where the reform, the progressive, the moderate forces are. And they may be in a particular ministry. Maybe the minister of health is the right person to deal with. Maybe it's a local governor or mayor. Maybe it's the private sector. Maybe it's the civil society. You could find a country which it's the military.

So, in each country you are going to sort through the political dynamics in that country and figure out where the moderating forces are and begin on a fairly gradual basis to start to work with them, figure out what their priorities are, and see how the external community can support them and bolster what they're trying to do. But it's very much working at the national level and at the community and local level.

LINDBORG: And just to reinforce the underlying point there is it's less about having a prescription of what to do given the context-specific nature of the problem and more about the how you go about it.

INGRAM: And that's what the task force report was so strong on. It talked repeatedly about how provide assistance rather than what specific assistance you provide. You figure that out when you get involved in the situation in the communities and the context.

PITA: Are there criteria about, you know, which countries the U.S. would be targeting, you know, whether or how to go in or whether like, all right, that country's just too much of a mess for us to be trying to engage in this? How does it think about who to engage with and when?

LINDBORG: It's not spelled out in great detail and that is something that will have to happen as this fund is stood up and the idea tested. But it's divided between where you have a willing partner, you know, in a fuller level, not just in a ministry, but maybe government-wide commitment in a particular country versus where you're picking out elements with which you can work, as George described. And so, the criteria is more along that basis.

PITA: I want to come back to a little bit of the U.S. organizational side. You were

talking, Nancy, about needing to make sure that State and Defense and AID and all these different agency elements across the U.S. Government are on the same page. I'm wondering how you actually operationalize that.

One of the notable things about these recommendations is that we're not standing up a new Department of Homeland Security. Right. So, there's no here's one chief who's in charge of making sure that everybody gets on the same page.

Functionally, how do you hope to see that work or what are some of the ideas about making that happen?

LINDBORG: The good news is that some of the recommendations to address those bureaucratic and political obstacles have already been moving through the system, the interagency of the U.S. Government, with a process called the Strategic Assistance Review, where there's already been a process underway to try to get more clear about what are the roles and responsibilities of State, of AID, and DOD, and how to create both the incentives and the bureaucratic runways for those three actors to work in concert more effectively and with greater coordination.

There is a very specific recommendation to add a senior director at the National Security Council whose job and responsibility would be to coordinate policy around this fragility issue. And there's a whole political piece on this in that behind the need for this is the fact that we haven't become more and more reactive in addressing these issues. We have had rising amounts of funding for certainly military intervention, but also humanitarian and for peacekeeping forces as opposed to the kind of upstream prevention that is much harder to do.

So, it's working with Congress. And the good news is that we do so far have

really solid bipartisan support working with Congress to try and enable the bureaucracy to do that more upstream work and then to sustain it. Because we often do not sustain the efforts for what we know takes a long time to create progress and accomplishment.

INGRAM: Nancy, the other part of this that you should talk about it, because you know it so well, is it's not just a question of the various agencies working better together. It's also a question of each agency organizing itself better to deal with fragility. And as Nancy says, there is some progress entrain and particularly in AID. There is a reorganization plan of the elements of AID that Nancy was in the middle of in the Obama administration and I think she can talk to this significance of what's being proposed there.

LINDBORG: Feel free to go ahead, George. But what I would say is, you know, just as there are divides between agencies, between State and between DOD, for example, within each bureaucracy also is stove-piped. And these are very complex challenges that will not be successfully addressed through single sector interventions. And all the good work that you do in agriculture, education, health, et cetera, gets overturned when there's violent conflict.

So, it's enabling that more of a problem-solving approach that draws from across these various sectors and approaches so that you get a better understanding of really what is the problem that we need to solve. And the reorganization that George is talking about brings together specifically some of the capabilities within AID that are meant to address political transitions and conflicts which is a hallmark of a lot of these countries.

PITA: Speaking of USAID, there was the BUILD Act that was passed last year that sort of set up a new development agency, the U.S. International Development

Finance Corporation. What does this mean for USAID's relationship of this piece?
What's its relationship to USAID and OPIC and all these other development efforts?

INGRAM: Well, the BUILD Act would create a successor agency to the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, which has existed since 1971. And it is designed to support U.S. investment in developing countries that help those countries develop. And for I would say five or seven, eight years, a number of people have felt that OPIC was under-resourced and lacked the adequate authorities to really carry out, to meet the challenge that it's designed to meet.

And fortunately, a year ago, the political forces came together, both in the Congress and with the administration, to move ahead with what people in civil society have been arguing for for a long time. And in the fall, the Congress enacted the BUILD to create this new Development Finance Corporation, which would have more resources, a much stronger development mandate, and authorities beyond what OPIC has had.

And in the past OPIC and USAID have cooperated sometimes but have not cooperated the way they needed to. And the design of the new agency is for the head of USAID to be vice chair of the board, for there to be a chief development officer who has a role in both agencies. So, the prospect is that AID and the new DFC will be able to work closer together in joining the role of the private sector and technical assistance in promoting development-related investments in developing countries. And there is a priority in the BUILD for the poorest countries and for fragile countries. So, it very much is related to the report of the task force.

PITA: And speaking about how the different agencies have to change their

internal functions to work on these priorities, you talked about the importance of adaptability and how the ideas about what will work need to come from the local USAID officer, local State officer, the people who are working in the country rather than coming from the home agencies here in Washington. But you also talk about how that's – reversal's too strong a word, but that is different from the way things currently work.

I guess what are your recommendations for making that happen? And sort of these are really large organizations. How do you make a culture change like that go forward?

INGRAM: Well, you make it through changing, through training. You make it through changing the incentives on how people are rewarded for their tasks. And you make it through shifting the authority for who's in control. So, you shift some of the basic not just day-to-day, but week-to-week and monthly authorities from Washington to the field, to the USAID missions in the field, to the embassies.

You make sure that the people who you send to fragile countries, not just from USAID, but in the State Department, have experience in those environments, so that they come with the proper background and training. And you make sure that the incentives are there for them to get a performance evaluation. They know how to deal in those situations, and they know how to get rewarded. And they get rewarded for, in some cases, I would say not being so risk-adverse and to being willing to try innovative solutions to problems.

LINDBORG: This is what's called getting rid of the 8,000-mile screwdriver. Because there is this tendency to sit in the Situation Room of the White House and plan out the best plan. It is shifting the habits and the incentives.

I think there is -- you know, certainly the planning process of AID is field-driven. And one of the challenges is that that then meets up with processes that are planned here in Washington. And hopefully, this will enable all of that to shift out there.

And just to underscore the point that George made about training. You know, it's often not a career enhancer to go to some of these fragile states, especially in the State Department. And so, having the kind of training and having that be a pathway to, you know, your next better place is going to be key.

INGRAM: And I think, Nancy, we saw that in relationship to senior USAID people who took difficult positions of being the AID director in Iraq. Because I think some of those people that I know of went into those positions as sort of senior mid-level but came out of a year in Iraq getting a more senior position and getting rewarded for having undertaken that difficult task.

Is that right, Nancy?

LINDBORG: Yeah, I think we saw that at both State and AID for going to both Iraq and Afghanistan.

INGRAM: Right.

LINDBORG: I would say the problem that persists is what I've heard called as the annual lobotomy that happens, where every year all of our people switch out and you get a new group of people who have another steep learning curve. So, it's easy to understand because it's a terrible place to live and you can't bring your families and there are security challenges. But those really fast rotations do a disservice to having the kind of relationships and knowledge of the local environment that help a more nuanced, long-term plan to be successful.

INGRAM: And just to put a fine point on what Nancy was saying is most overseas appointments by USAID or the State Department are two years or three years. Sometimes they can even be five years. But in these really fragile, violent situations the appointments are for a year. Well, it takes somebody three months, four months to figure out how to get around the country. And maybe that person has six months of effectiveness and then they're gone. So, it's not a way to run a program that really deals with the local problems and develops relationships with those key local, national, and subnational leaders that you want to support and deal with.

PITA: One other question on the U.S. sort of political aspect of things. This is a really long-term task, right? Shoring up fragile states, building their civic capabilities. I think the phrase out of the report was that it's on a generational timeline. Given that congressional budgets tend to be on a six-month Continuing Resolution levels, how do we maintain the funding out of Congress, maintaining the focus, and that this will continue to be a priority even we're talking, you know, a shift of politicians five years from now, six years from now, on down the road?

LINDBORG: I would answer that in two ways. The first is one of the goals of having this international fund is so that you have money coming from a variety of sources. And hopefully, we can put the kind of funding in that's less subject to the vicissitudes of our annual budgets.

And secondly, hopefully what we're seeing with this task force and when two related pieces of legislation that are, hopefully, going to be announced very soon is the beginning of an understanding that we absolutely need to do business differently. And it's really all about prevention and understanding that what we've been doing is very

expensive and it's not working. And there's some great study that the U.N. did that makes the case that every dollar spent on prevention saves \$16 of reaction.

So, the importance of the task force recommendations is that you have a group of people who come from very senior positions in former administrations, who have come together to seed the need for this fundamental change from across all of these different sectors and perspectives. And we hope that that is persuasive with Congress in a way that will help us get over those six-month, short-term timeframes.

INGRAM: You're not going to get the long-term support from the Congress that this needs unless enough members of Congress get seized with the importance of the task and with the fact that violence and extremism and fragility is a challenge to U.S. interests in the world; interests in the world not just our homeland security, but to civility around the world.

And Nancy was on the Hill when the report was released and she and some of the task force members I think briefed 20 members of Congress, bipartisan, some of them senior. There's got to be more than 20 members of Congress who understand this. This needs to get to a critical number of members in the House and the Senate, like when the Berlin Wall came down in the early '90s and the Congress passed first the SEED Act and then the Freedom Support Act for providing assistance to Eastern Europe and then the former Soviet Union. And they did it with legislation that was very flexible, and they stayed with it for 10 years. They needed to stay with it longer, but they at least stayed with it for 10 years.

It's happened with the HIV/AIDS, with President Bush's proposal for dealing with HIV/AIDS particularly in Africa, but around the world. That enthusiasm, that support has

been sustained now for almost 20 years, 15, 20 years.

There's got to be a broader based education of members of Congress to understand that fragility, and the violence and conflict and poverty that comes with that, is the existential threat to development and to U.S. interests in those countries today, and that we've got to have a 10- or 20- or 25-year program. And we're not going to find solutions in year one or two or three; that it's going to take five years of working in a country before we find the critical mass. And it's going to take another 10 or 15 years for that country to really progress out of the fragility into becoming a stable environment.

LINDBORG: Yeah, and I'm hopeful, George, that we are starting to get important traction. Knowledgeable, influential leaders in Congress do really get it: Senator Coons, Senator Graham, Congressman Engel, Congressman McCaul. And with the legislation that they're introducing it will spur a broader debate and an opportunity to really bring this forward.

And I think the examples you put on the table, George, of what happened after the fall of the Berlin Wall is a really good analogy that we are at a point where if we don't change something, if we don't galvanize action in a new direction, we will miss the opportunity to create a more positive trajectory. Because right now, it's going in the wrong direction. Six trillion dollars later, we have more extremist attacks, not less.

INGRAM: You know, to make the analogy with the BUILD Act, a year ago, in early 2018, everybody was scratching their heads. You know, how do we get the administration on board? Where's the support in the Congress? And within a couple of months it suddenly came together.

We're actually ahead of the game right now on fragility because we've got this

significant report from the task force. The Global Stability [*sic*] Act, which was introduced last year, actually passed the House last fall. So, there's really a solid base to move on and I see the Global Fragility Act as being the BUILD Act of 2019.

LINDBORG: And it's worth mentioning that there's a lot of other energy around this issue in the World Bank, for example, with a lot of the international development partners: DFID, the EU is seized with this. And not only the BUILD Act, but there's the new Global Women's Development and Prosperity Initiative.

INGRAM: Right.

LINDBORG: That has a lot of synergies, as well, with this. And, you know, I think it's worth at least putting on the table that part of what has to happen in these places, in all of these fragile countries is much greater engagement of women and youth, and that there's all kinds of research data that shows how their engagement and their empowerment and particular in politics and economy creates a much more stable country.

INGRAM: And the task force report is strong on that, identifying women and youth as being critical to developing the solutions to instability.

PITA: Can you both talk a little bit more about that? What are some of the avenues of involving youth and women? Particularly when you're talking about women, a lot of times these countries, women aren't supposed to be part of the public life or have fewer opportunities for that sort of thing. How do you work with that angle?

LINDBORG: Well, it goes to the development of what is the plan in that country. And I think George noted it earlier on where it's not just working with the government. It's working with the government and its people because it's this fundamental broken

social contract and working with ways to bring women into the conversation, which will look different in every country, depending on what the situation is.

INGRAM: And the other thing I would say is one of the big blockages to the role of women at the community level and the national level are men. And you have to engage with men and explain to them and get them to understand the important role of women. And I saw that when I was with AID and the Aga Khan Foundation. We engaged with them to work on girls' education in Asia, in Central Asia. And they would go into a community and spend three months not doing anything but figuring out the lay of the land and talking to the religious leaders and finally convincing the religious leaders that the education of the girls was going to be very important to the economic development of that community. And then they would allow the girls to be educated in religious facilities.

LINDBORG: And on the youth angle, it's worth just remembering that the countries that are the most fragile also constitute countries with the youngest and fastest growing populations. Across much of the Middle East and Africa, youth under the age of 30 make up almost 70 percent of the population. And these are often youth without economic opportunities. They may feel a grave sense of injustice. They may not have an opportunity to see a pathway forward. And that's where you get the kinds of grievances that extremists can exploit.

So, part of what the task force recommendations are trying to say is that's what we need to be thinking about when we're working in partnership with countries and their people. It's not going to work just to invest in health, for example. You've got to be thinking about this broader context.

PITA: Sure. Nancy, can you talk a little bit about the international coordination aspects, about the Partnership Development Fund and how we bring in other actors besides the U.S. to make this happen?

LINDBORG: Well, what the task force recommends is that it be set up with State and USAID in charge of overseeing it and working with the international partners to put it together. So the task force itself didn't put a lot of specifics down, but envisioned it as a relatively light footprint, not to create another large bureaucracy, but rather a platform for international donors and, hopefully, private sector actors, as well, to put investment into this longer term, more flexible funding; so that it can go into a partnership agreement with a particular country or elements of that country, monitored and supported by our embassies and missions on the ground.

INGRAM: And just to emphasize one point is that platform is a platform in the country. So, it's specific to that country and its governance is an inclusive governance that is donors, is people from the host government, is people from civil society. So, it really tries to mimic what you're trying to do in the country: bring a diverse group of people together behind a comprehensive, coherent plan.

PITA: Nancy, you were just at the Munich Security Conference. Did these subjects come up there a great deal?

LINDBORG: We were not ready yet to launch the plan at the Munich Security Conference, but we certainly had lots of conversations with people, especially since there were a number of sessions looking at how to deal with the ongoing violence in the Sahel, how to tackle the fragility that's led to the terrible civil wars in the Middle East. So there were lots of opportunities to raise the issue that we really have to focus on

prevention.

And prevention is both for those place that have not yet erupted in violence, but it's also for places where there has already been an intervention. I mean, take Iraq, for example. They are at yet another place where there is the opportunity for them to find a pathway forward to more peace and prosperity.

And when I was in Iraq last spring, a tribal sheikh looks at me from the table and he says to me, you Americans, you have fought and won three wars in Iraq. When are you going to help us win the peace?

And it goes to the way that we deploy. We have this very reactive approach and then we don't stay the course. So, prevention is also following up after there has been a terrible outbreak of violence.

PITA: That sort of brings me to a slightly -- cantankerous might be too strong a word for it, but a question about we've know that this should be a priority for a while. As you mentioned, the 9-11 Commission talked about that we should have been taking more efforts on prevention. We've known about the security threat that fragile states can form.

I guess it's partially a question of like, all right, what finally came together in people's minds that made this a priority for them? And I guess why hasn't it happened now? Why has it taken 18 years after 9-11 for this to finally come into shape?

LINDBORG: I think because it's really hard. This is the hard problem and it doesn't happen fast, so it gets crosswise with our political system.

Why I think it's come into focus is it certainly captures your attention to realize that we're, you know, almost \$6 trillion into the problem set without a whole lot to show

for it. I mean, certainly we've kept the homeland safe, but have not made progress overseas.

And there have been, I think, really important lessons about how to help countries move out of conflict and how to help them not keep going into constant spin cycles of violence, but we haven't applied those lessons with all of our capabilities working in concert. You know, so we end up sometimes with separate lines of effort between diplomacy, defense, and development and actually undercutting each other.

So, I think a lot of those lessons have come forward. We've learned from where it has worked in various large and small applications. And we have a moment right now. We have a moment to grab. And it is going to hard, but, hopefully, we'll get a runway to apply what we think will be most effective.

INGRAM: Nancy is the diplomat. What she's saying is the failure. It's the failure of 15 or 20 years of trying to deal with extremism and violence in a violent manner and with security, and people finally understanding that violence and extremism is a symptom of something else. And now they're finally seeing enough analysis that there's something deeper than the violence and it's embedded in the breakdown of a social contract. And it's embedded in the political, social, economic dynamics in the country. And we've got to deal with that fundamental base before we can deal with the symptom.

LINDBORG: Well said, George. And a really good example is take Nigeria, where we're putting a lot of investment into supporting the Nigerian government fight Boko Haram. Sometimes you need to have force when you've got violent actors on the ground. But if we support the security services and support the government in a way that doesn't address how that government is seen as nonresponsive to the people in the

northeast where Boko Haram has taken root, this will not be a successful site and it will perpetuate itself.

There needs to be concurrent changes in how the government provides basic services to the people, provides opportunity, includes them in the political life of the state and the country. But we sometimes don't coordinate across our various actions. I mean, we provide security assistance in a way that perpetuates the repressive methods of the local security services. We've got to stop doing that.

PITA: Yeah. So, what happens next? You mentioned there's a couple pieces of legislation moving through Congress. Are there going to be some pilot programs stood up? What happens now that the recommendations have been made?

LINDBORG: I think there's the opportunity to work both with authorizing and appropriation legislation. We've timed the recommendations so that they can help inform this next cycle. The legislation that stood up the task force specifically requested or required that there be a pilot project. And so, the task force recommended that the pilot be taking the initial funds that were set aside for that to seed this global fund for a test case in a country yet to be determined.

INGRAM: Moving the Global Fragility Act is really the next step. What we don't know yet, and Nancy might have some indication, is how the administration's going to respond to the task force report. The administration's had its own reviews, national security review, a stability review, which seemed to go in the same direction, but I don't think we're absolutely sure. But there's got to be an effort to bring the Congress and the administration together now behind a legislative solution and the Global Stability Act would be the most appropriate vehicle for doing that and trying to get that moving fast.

LINDBORG: Right. And hopefully, there'll be a chance to have some hearings to further raise this issue. In the course of this task force there were extensive consultations. We had a really important senior experts group that George served on, as well as Homi Kharas at Brookings, and an incredible selection of very experienced people across different fields. But a lot of consultations, also, across the interagency with international development partners and with a number of both government and civil society actors from fragile states themselves.

So, I think we have a head of steam. Hopefully, we'll keep moving with it.

PITA: All right. Well, *inshallah* that that happens.

Thank you, George and Nancy, very much for walking us through all of this and we'll hope to see some movement on this front.

LINDBORG: Well, I'll be pushing for it. Thank you so much. Great to be with you.

PITA: Thanks for listening.

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