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WEBINAR

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P R O C E E D I N G S

GENERAL ALLEN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It's wonderful to have you with us today. My name is John Allen, and I'm the president of the Brookings Institution. It is a pleasure to welcome you to this event, "Resilience and Risk in the U.S. Foreign Service."

We are proud to be hosting this event today alongside the American Academy of Diplomacy. Their new report entitled, "Changing the risk paradigm for U.S. diplomats," is a relevant and pertinent work, especially as the new Secretary of State Tony Blinken, begins his tenure at Foggy Bottom.

Indeed, as the Biden administration seeks to usher in a new era of American leadership, U.S. foreign policy, and global engagement, now is in fact the perfect time to reconsider the posture of our frontline diplomats and engaging directly with the communities in which they are deployed. I'll speak to this more in our panel, but for now I'll simply reiterate that it's a very important discussion we're having today.

And now before I turn the floor over to him for his remarks and to moderate the panel, I'd like to introduce Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann, the president of the American Academy of Diplomacy, who will be moderating today's discussion. Now, prior to his tenure as the president, Ambassador Neumann had a long and distinguished career on behalf of America as a career foreign service officer, a senior foreign service officer, in fact. Formerly a deputy assistant secretary of state, Ambassador Neumann also has served three times as an ambassador to Algeria, to Bahrain, and Afghanistan.

It's worth noting that in the whole long history of the American foreign service, only three father and son teams have served at the same diplomatic post, and in fact, Ambassador Neumann and his father were both ambassadors in Kabul in Afghanistan. And I was very fortunate, before I took command of the war in Afghanistan in 2011, to meet him for the first time. He gave me very valuable advice on how to operate in that very complex environment.

Ambassador Neumann is also an accomplished author. He's written two memoirs, the first entitled, "Three Embassies, Four Wars," and the second entitled, "The Other War: Winning and Losing in Afghanistan." And you also may not know this but he's also a former U.S. Army infantry officer

who served in Vietnam and for his courage there was presented the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and very importantly, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, which on American battlefield really talks to courage in battle.

So Ambassador Neumann, Ron, it is great to have you with us. It's an honor to welcome you to Brookings. And I want to thank you for your many years of service, as well as those of the other panelists who you'll introduce very shortly.

Before I begin, a brief reminder that we're live and we're very much on the record. And should viewers like to submit questions, they're welcome to send them along to events@brookings.edu. That's events@brookings.edu.

And with that, let me pass the floor over to my good friend, Ambassador Ronald Neumann. Ambassador, the floor is yours, sir.

MR. NEUMANN: Well, John, thank you for that extremely warm and perhaps flattering introduction. I appreciate it, nonetheless.

It's a great pleasure to partner with you and with Brookings. I remember visiting you in Afghanistan as well, but it's nice to be here.

And I want to give some thanks, by the way, to a number of people who are not going to be on the screen, and my team, Destiny Clements, and on your team, Adrianna Pita and Corey, Emily, and Anna, all of whom have helped put this together and make us look good. And I appreciate all their help.

I thought I should just say a word or two about the American Academy of Diplomacy, which is not necessarily a household word. Although it's been around for some 34, going on 35 years and performed by people like Henry Kissinger and George Kennan, names to counter with, it's an organization of former practitioners at the senior level, people who have actually made diplomacy work or tried to make it work. It's a nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization dedicated to strengthening American diplomacy, and we do that through studies, through public programs, also through two podcasts we have, the General and the Ambassador, American Diplomat, both of which can be found on our

website.

So one of our studies, and I think one of the most important ones we've done is the one we're looking at today. And it basically starts from the proposition that when you look at what diplomats have to do, which is to influence people, to get people to do things our way, to tell our own government what is working, what's not working, all of this requires extensive contact work with people and that cannot all be done electronically or behind the walls of a sheltered embassy. And as things have moved over recent days, years, it is getting harder to carry out that function. And that led us to this project with some really excellent people who have all been out where the real work is done and a recognition that diplomacy has to be done ultimately by diplomats. That it cannot be subcontracted to the military which has its own full-time job to do. That's true of intelligence officers as well. And it's true for various reasons to academics and journalists.

So the diplomats have to get out. They're not soldiers but risk does come with the work of diplomacy in the current world. And the need is now to balance risk and national purpose and not to be so tilted that one is lost to the other. So we believe that change is needed. It's needed in practice, in culture, and in legislation. And that's what this report is about.

So now I'd like to tell you who we've got on the panel here. First of all, Greg Starr, a former assistant secretary for diplomatic security, a long career in diplomatic security. Also, one offed to the U.N. and worked on their diplomatic security.

Anne Patterson, a friend for many years, who has been ambassador in Columbia and in Egypt and in Pakistan and assistant secretary for INL which we subtitled "drugs and thugs" but it's really about criminal drug suppression and all of our relations with law enforcement.

And Alonzo Fulgham. Alonzo, at the end of his career, was the acting administrator, that is the head of USAID for a considerable period of time but we began our relationship when he was the AID director working with me in Afghanistan.

So all of our colleagues on this panel have, you know, been in the hard places and seen this work up close.

And I'm going to start with a question to Greg, Greg Starr, who is the author of the report.

Greg, you had a long career in security. And to start us off, I'd like you to walk us through three things -- how the current law on accountability review boards came to be, why it's become a problem, and how that problem needs to be addressed in changes in the legislation, as well as in the state department culture and practice.

So Greg, over to you.

MR. STARR: Thank you, Ron.

It's been a pleasure working on this project. It took, quite frankly, leaving the foreign service and being able to look back and reflect on some of the things that I've heard over the years from foreign service officers. And the idea that the department was becoming too risk adverse at our high-threat posts is not a new idea. Many of his have heard this, particularly over the last 20 years as we asked the foreign service to stand up and man very difficult positions and posts in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Yemen, in Somalia, and all sorts of different places.

What we've found when we looked closely at the problem was there were three parts of this but I'll address your questions in that order. And the first was we are hampered by a law, a portion of a law that was passed in 1985 as part of the Omnibus Diplomatic Security Act. This act came about after Bobby Inman's panel looked at security issues facing the Department of State going forward after things like the takeover in Tehran, the bombings of our embassy twice in Lebanon and building a U.S. embassy in Moscow that unfortunately the first time was riddled with listening devices.

Part of the Omnibus Diplomatic Security Act mandated something called the Accountability Review Board. And it mandated in the event of any serious security incident that occurred at a foreign service post overseas, one of our posts, either an embassy or a consulate or to our people that took somebody's life or ended up in serious injuries or caused substantial damage, essentially it said a blue ribbon panel, an Accountability Review Board must be established. It must look at the incident. It must put together a report on what happened. But in a sense, just by its name, the Accountability Review Board, what it was really doing was saying we'll find somebody to blame. Let's hold someone

accountable for what happened.

And perhaps in 1985 when this was first passed this was necessary. I happy to believe, and I think many of us in the foreign service know that back in the '80s, the department really was not taking security seriously enough and we had injuries and sustained bombings that we didn't really have to.

Over the years, what has happened is that this Accountability Review Board has become something or a sword of Damocles hanging over foreign service officers' heads particularly at high-threat missions around the world. When a young foreign service officer, say a political officer or a USAID officer comes in and requests I need to get out of the mission. I need to go and interview a foreign personality, somebody that's working for an opposition party or somebody in civil war cultural affairs, an RSL and a deputy chief of mission usually have to weigh the risks of that movement versus the gain.

And unlike moving to a government compound that's controlled and secure and too often really our only interaction was with the other government members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries, foreign service officers in order to do their job need to know the entire country and need a wide variety of contacts. But it's difficult to balance that request to get out of what we would call normal diplomacy against the risks when if a mistake is made, or even if a mistake isn't made, if you just run the normal risks if something happens if the entire foreign service things we're going to be held accountable.

And you can do your best. You can balance the risk. You can say this is important. But if you think at the end of the day that you are going to lose your position or lose your job over a decision that you rightly made then that starts a risk adverse pendency. And it has built. In the aftermath particularly of Benghazi and the politization of the entire process after that, I think the department has become much more risk adverse. And many of us that contributed to this report, senior officers from the department state, but we also circulated it to military officers that we worked with in the field in these countries and USAID officers all believe that we have become too risk adverse in these countries, particularly high-threat locations and we have to change something.

So that leads us to our first change. We'd like to change the Accountability Review

Board legislation and move to an internal process where we can adequately weigh what happened and understand that we need to take risks.

The second thing is that we need to engage leadership, congressional and department leadership, to take steps to change the growing culture towards risk avoidance. We believe that if we can change this law, that's a very good first step towards helping us change this culture. It'll take more steps than that and we're going to have to inculcate our new foreign service officers to the concepts that when they come on board, we expect them to take risks. This is not a risk-free profession. It's important that we do what we can to safeguard them and secure them but it is not without risk.

And the third issue is that we also need to train our officers better, particular officers that need to get out of high-threat posts much more than just language. But we need to identify the officers that need to get into the field. And we need to train them with essentially trade craft, not something that is hidden. Not something that is coercive but something that allows them the skill, to develop the skills to operate in a high-threat country without the concept of going out in a heavily armored motorcade or without going in helicopters and things like that, to get out and deal with individuals one on one. And these are the three essential points of our report.

MR. NEUMANN: Great. Thanks.

Before we turn to other panelists, I also just wanted to ask you, we focused particularly on the ARB with legislation. Are there other areas in legislation, although not, perhaps, part of our report, which are going to need attention in the security area?

MR. STARR: Short answer, yes. Although we're not addressing it in this report, there are difficulties that the department faces when trying to start operations in countries where we may not have been or where we have closed. We have specific legislations, and I'll just give one example. The requirement that every diplomatic facility have 100 feet of setback. Well, in some cases we can't do that or it's not financially smart to do that, and it also limits where we can put embassies. It can be replaced with a performance standard so that our embassy or our consulates would be built safely and securely rather than the straight standard, something like 100 feet must be maintained. There are things like that

that can be addressed as we move forward. And our whole idea of ameliorating some of the risk and tolerance that we have come up with is more than just the individual officers and how we change the risk paradigm as in our report. There are other things that need to be done and there will be other legislative fixes that need to come about as well.

MR. NEUMANN: Thanks very much.

I want to turn now to Anne Patterson.

Anne, as recently as the Senate confirmation hearings for Secretary Blinken, questions came up about does the United States really understand what's happening in Syria? Does it understand what's happening in Libya? Are we able to actually form policies that are based on reality? And I know that you had to deal with both of those situations when you were assistant secretary for the Middle East and I thought you could sort of link the past and present a bit and tell us how you see this issue.

MS. PATTERSON: Thanks Ron, and thanks, General Allen, to Brookings, for hosting this important event because for about the past 10 years I've seen a pretty significant erosion in our understanding of key countries. So we make mistakes. And this has strategic implications. And two, one backward-looking and another forward-looking example of this came up in Tony Blinken's hearing. And the first one was when Senator Johnson asked Tony Blinken why the Obama administration policy in Libya has failed. Secretary Blinken answered candidly that the U.S. did not understand a lot of what had taken place in Libya and what had been destroyed by Gadhafi. And I'd say we didn't understand because the U.S. embassy had been there only sporadically, and now, despite many efforts to reopen, it hasn't been there at all since 2014. And when we were there, security drove decisions like to staff the embassy with part-timers who couldn't leave the embassy to talk to people. Strong ambassadors weren't supported by experienced personnel and there were constant tussles on security. No one in Washington will sign off on the return of the embassy and travel by the ambassador was constantly debated and rejected. And now the embassy has about 20 people in Tunis. Well, why does it matter? Because the Russians are now there on NATO's southern flank, because there's a terrorist problem in Libya. And encouraging, there is a nascent peace process as well. So you need people inside the country who can

talk to Libyans and can support these efforts and combat our strategic and support our strategic interests.

The second one was also interesting. Senator Murphy asked Secretary Blinken why 18-year-old Marines were doing the work of diplomats in Kurdish-held parts of Syria even as American generals came through the committee and told them that there was no military solution. He asked Secretary Blinken if there were a question of State Department capacity. And while I think capacity has diminished, it's not about capacity. It's about the unwillingness to deploy the right people and why we need to do that.

Interestingly, General McKenzie of Central Command spoke about this eloquently a couple of weeks ago about the camp with 60,000 ISIS dependents, which was not only a humanitarian disaster but a breeding ground for future terrorists, and he sounded frustrated when he said that the problem wasn't going to get better by ignoring it. The single foreign service officer in this part of Northeast Syria for the past several years has been Bill Roebuck. He's 60 years old. He has vast experience in the Arab world. He adjudicated between Arabs and Kurds. He went into these camps. He went into these prisons. And he was experienced enough to make judgments and to propose solutions. If we don't have experienced people from AID and State there, we're going to look back in 20 years when these little kids are grown, resentful, and plotting terrorist attacks against us and our allies.

So what we need is experienced teams of people who have the background, and they need to train up younger people to go in these conflicting areas so we can solve these problems before they become virtually catastrophic. Academics do go into these areas, and I think our people should go into them as well. I was glad this came up with Secretary Blinken because I'm sure that he and his team are now reassessing these issues. Thank you.

MR. NEUMANN: Anne, thank you. I think that really roots this discussion in reality in a way that we need.

I want to turn now to General Allen because there's another reality and that is the cooperation of the diplomats and the military, and this has been highlighted now over most of 20 years with our virtual reconstruction teams in Iraq and Afghanistan.

So General Allen, you've seen this issue of whether or not we need diplomats in the field and how much they need to circulate from multiple command perspectives. And I'd appreciate it if you would give your views on our audience about why this matters to the military, why this isn't just a State Department issue. And you know, if there are specific incidents that you recall from your own career I'd be very interested in that.

GENERAL ALLEN: Well, first, it's difficult for me to overstate how wonderful it is to see such good friends. Anne Patters and I served together when she was in post in Islamabad and I was over the Hindu Kush in Kabul. And look, I have such enormous respect for the foreign service. And over the years lots of folks have thanked me for my service but I don't think Americans truly understand, that they ought to be thanking our foreign service officers and our development professionals for the incredible service that they have given to this country. And some might make the argument that 10 carrier strike groups represents the power of America. Okay, well, that's coercive power. But the real influence of America is defined by our diplomats and our development professionals who are out on the very edge of American influence. And I have to tell you, some of the bravest people I have known in my life, and I've known a lot of brave people in my life, some of the bravest are, in fact, our diplomats and our development professionals who get down in the dirt in very dangerous circumstances and make a difference, a huge difference.

So you will not be surprised that I feel very, very strongly that the team that creates opportunity in conflict-ridden areas, whether it's actually in the conflict zone itself or in the immediate aftermath of the fighting, is best served by the proper mix of a military security environment with diplomats on the scene who are capable of creating diplomatic outcomes and development professionals who can ensure that the stabilization of the outcome through the application of development creates the kind of persistent outcome that we desire.

I'll give you two quick examples, both of them from Iraq in this case.

I was in the Anbar province in '07, which was the most violent province in the most violent year in Iraq. And there was a very long time in that province when the provincial reconstruction team

really couldn't leave Fallujah, Camp Fallujah where we were because it was just so violent. 60 or so firefights a day across the entire province. Pretty hairy. But after we had conducted extensive military operations, I was always in contact with the embassy, and always in contact with the USAID mission because for our perspective, the Marines and the soldiers out at Anbar, while we could conduct military operations, the solution was never going to be how we shot our way out of this problem. The solution was going to come from diplomats helping to create the power-sharing relationship between the tribes and the civil government and how the proper application of development assistance and AID could stabilize the situation for ultimately peace and governance to take root.

And we had a major push, a major military operation. We called it Anbar Dawn. And Ron, you'll understand this as an infantry officer, the initial phase was for a massive military counterinsurgency operation across the entire province. Go after al-Qaida where we could find it. And then phase two is typically a breakthrough operation, a military breakthrough operation, but here was really important. Anbar Dawn, the breakthrough operation, was because we had changed the security environment, now our diplomats and development professionals could get out. The breakthrough operation was the establishment of three smaller provincial reconstruction teams across the Anbar province in Fallujah and Ramadi and in the west where foreign service officers and development professionals, they were the decisive activity in this operation. They stabilized the environment. And eventually, Anbar became one of the safest areas in the entire war. Not because solely of military operations but because we actually could bring the foreign service officers and the development professionals into the environment. And it changed everything. Anbar Dawn changed everything because the exploitation came from our diplomats and our AID professionals.

And I'll never forget, I was in an MRAP. It was still pretty dangerous but I was in an MRAP and I looked back -- and the MRAP, of course, is the armored vehicle that we had which helped us with mines and IEDs. And in that vehicle was a young foreign service officer, helmet and body armor; a young development professional of the USAID mission, helmet and body armor; a young Army lieutenant; and a young CIA officer. And I thought to myself, this is American influence at its very best. And what

changed was we had 60 firefights a day when we started. When we got our foreign service players and development professionals into the game, by the fall of 2007 we would go weeks without a shot being fired in that province because we stabilized the environment. That combination you can't pay enough for. We are not diplomats. And 18-year-old Marines can do an awful lot but they're not diplomats, they're not AID professionals. And they'll do their very best but without that kind of backup it's just a military solution. That doesn't get you anywhere.

And the final story, very quickly, I'm sorry to go on so long but I'm very inspired by this opportunity. We were having real problems connecting the Anbar province, which was one-third of Iraq, back into the central government in Baghdad. New ambassador shows up, a fellow that many people will recognize, Ryan Crocker, and we decide to have a summit where we're going to bring the governors -- the governor out of Anbar, the tribal sheiks out of Anbar, and sit down with the government. We all sat down and Ryan began the negotiations, the brokerage of power between the province and the central government and did it in fluent Arabic. As it turns out, I was the only guy in the room that couldn't participate because I didn't change the language. That changed everything. The presence of that foreign service officer, that professional with a USAID mission director sitting at the table, that changed everything.

So the military will get you to a point, but without our foreign service with us, without our USAID professionals with us, in a risk-managed environment, we can't finish the job and it's very clear. And I want to thank you all for the great work you've done. It's unsung and you're the bravest people I know.

NR. NEUMANN: John, thank you for that extremely eloquent but also fact-filled explanation of why this is so important. And you mentioned several times development professionals, and now I'm going to turn to Alonzo Fulgham who was, as I mentioned, AID director with me in Afghanistan. I think it's important that people remember that USAID officers are diplomats just like foreign service officers. They are commissioned diplomatic officers and they're part of our family.

I want to turn to Alonzo and ask you, Alonzo, to talk about why the effective operation of

AID officers are constrained by the same rules we've been talking about for the diplomatic officer, for the foreign service officers, and talk to us about the effect of these rules on AID officers being able to do their job and fulfill their part of the diplomatic mission.

MR. FULGHAM: Ron, thank you. General Allen, thank you for that soliloquy about our contribution to the mission at large.

First of all, I want to thank Brookings, as well, for inviting me today. It's quite an honor to be here and also represent the third leg of the national security stool.

I think I want to violently agree with everything that's basically been said here today so far because of the fact that without these changes in the rules that are affecting our ability to do our work on the ground, to be able to astutely analyze political and social and economic development issues on the ground, it becomes very hard for us to really understand how to identify resources and decide how they're going to be implemented in country. And I agree working behind the wall on a telephone or a Zoom call would have a catastrophic effect on our ability to be more accountable to our taxpayers and even more importantly, how to accurately assess our resource requirements and needs with real conversations with our host country nationals in the capitals. But also in the secondary cities and rural areas where the ungovernable space continues to be a sanctuary for breeding of bad actors in numerous regions around the world.

From a USAID perspective, I very much agree effective diplomacy to meet the goals of our national interests requires demands that we engage more broadly in high-threat situations. Our officers right now are very rarely able to travel and meet resources and colleagues and counterparts outside of the embassy and we can't do unscheduled moves. Our U.S. military partners, as you mentioned in the report, are allowed to do those things unencumbered and don't have those types of restrictions. Requests by our foreign service officers, especially USAID officers to go out and meet indiscreetly with counterparts, design and develop programs are inhibited and that way you can't have the collaboration that is needed on the ground. And I firmly agree that effective diplomacy to meet the national interests requires a method to engage more broadly (inaudible) high-threat locations.

As the new administration moves forward to assess national security implications, just think about what we've talked about today already about Syria, Yemen, Iraq, South Sudan, Somalia as what those resource requirements are going to be and then how do we start to put all those pieces back together. Not nation building but create a stable society within those countries. Water, resource, and health issues are going to be nightmares in a normal mission, so if we don't have the capability and the assignments to address some of these issues, I think we're going to have a unique problem going forth.

As you remember, the field positions that we worked on in Afghanistan, they were not normal state department assignments, Ron. You know that very well. If we had not had the ability to get outside of the embassy walls and to implement those projects on the health side, the road building, the clinics, the schools, and reinvolving women within that society and dropping the health indicators by 50%, the worst in the world and we improved them by 50% in record time. West Bank Gaza, if you look at the programs that we've had in that part of the world being innovative where we couldn't get foreign service officers in, we used our FSNs to help implement those programs. Policy is written in Washington, D.C. but it has to be implemented in the field. And the AID officers play a major role with our diplomatic colleagues in trying to get those policies implemented in an effective way.

And as we move forward on climate change and all the other major issues, feeding 50% more people by 2050, the urbanization issues that are going to be affecting a lot of these major cities and countries around the world, it's going to be AID officers and diplomats on the ground who are able to get out and discuss how we're going to collaborate, not tell, but collaborate with these countries in order to build a safer and better nation.

So with that I would say I wholeheartedly agree with what's been said thus far this afternoon. We are foreign service officers, and at the end of the day we have a responsibility to serve and we do it willingly and openly. I'll stop there.

MR. NEUMANN: Alonzo, thank you very much. You remind me that it's all very good, well for people in Washington, be they academics or policy officials, to dream up a program. But unless somebody can go out in the field and actually observe how the program is working, you can't fine tune the

thing. You can't tell anybody it was a great idea, it doesn't work worth a damn. You can't avoid being manipulated also sometimes by host governments that are happy to take your money but don't necessarily want to implement your idea. So it's just crucial to be out. And this project is about how we do that. And I think we've certainly laid the groundwork for why we need to do it.

I'm going to pass off to General Allen now to handle the Q&As.

General, over to you.

GENERAL ALLEN: Thank you very much, Ron. And I want to thank the panel for some really terrific answers and expressed views.

I have several questions and they're coming in. You will not be surprised to learn that. And you will also not be surprised to hear that some of them are provocative, and I think it's useful because this is not an easy conversation. And there's no single answer. When people get into the business of risk management, while much of it can be understood, it is not a precise science and risk is what it is. It's risk. I think Greg raised some very important points in that regard.

So let me just -- I'll read the first question. I'd like to go to Greg first and then ask Anne in her experience, because she has been in some pretty high-risk posts, for her views. And so very quickly, it's a bit of a long question. But looking back on previous incidents with respect to risk of diplomacy -- we have the Beirut bombing in '83, we have the East African embassy bombings of '98, we've had other incidents, and of course, the Benghazi, terrible Benghazi tragedy in 2012 -- how has the U.S. government evolved in its assessment and tolerance of risk, recognizing that often this is a function of the administration as well? But is managing risk always cyclical in response to world events or has the government become better at these practices to allow modern diplomacy to continue?

And Greg, let me come to you first and then we'll go to Anne.

MR. STARR: Thank you, John.

The answer in my mind is unequivocally yes, we have become better at this since 1985, but particularly since the 1998 embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. Congress came forth with a tremendous amount of support that helped us replace very insecure diplomatic facilities around the

world. Now, this is not without controversy. Some places they are labeled as fortresses and they may be outside the city in different places but because we've been able to replace a lot of these insecure embassies, we run a much lower risk of losing an entire diplomatic platform like we did in Beirut twice as in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. And the risks of losing the entire diplomatic platform in a car bombing or a truck bombing are tremendous unless you take steps to ameliorate that. And we have actively.

Now, sometimes we don't exactly get it right. We're building fortresses in some places that perhaps we don't need them but, you know, the world does change. And Congress has been very generous giving us the responsibility and the funds to do this. Additionally, we've added security officers and we know how to make movements in highly secure motorcades, armored motorcades with helicopters and things like that. And much of that has resulted in almost zero casualties. I mean, we've had a few but very few casualties given the number of places that we've been serving in and the amount of danger in many of these places.

What has really suffered though is the more normal contact that foreign service officers, diplomats from the Department of State and USAID, foreign agricultural officers and others, the day-to-day contact that they need as Anne and Alonzo talked about with a wider variety of people that just are host country counterparts. This is more difficult. This is one of the things that we're trying to address in this report and it will require changing the Accountability Review Board law. It will require changing a culture. And it will require different types of training. We don't want our officers to be mistaken for covert officers trying to do something. It's got to be overt. It's open source information that we're seeking but we've got to be able to give them the tools to get out and interact with a much wider group of people than we have been at these other high security posts.

Foreign service work is incremental. And if you stop that ability to have those meetings over time it's almost impossible to do the job. And we can't continue to transfer the risk entirely to international organizations, INGOs or the United Nations or contractors or even our FSNs. It will always require the presence of the United States foreign service officers in the field.

GENERAL ALLEN: Greg, thanks.

And there are very few people who have served as ambassador to such high-risk posts. And I think history will reflect that your time on the ground in Colombia was essential to the outcome that we experienced there. You deserve an awful lot of credit for that. And I remember being with you in Islamabad during some very difficult times there, and then, of course, your time in Egypt which has a fraught environment as well.

On standing post, being an ambassador, what are your thoughts on this? Is it cyclical? Have we done the kind of due diligence at the governmental level that we need to go forward?

MS. PATTERSON: Thank you so much, John.

Yes, it's gotten vastly better in terms of physical security. Everything that Greg said about the physical embassies, it would be extraordinarily difficult to imagine a Saigon or a Beirut or a Tehran again. And I must give a shoutout for my colleagues from Diplomatic Security because they've become vastly more sophisticated. And now understand that foreign service officers need to get out there and do their jobs. And my experience has been they try to facilitate this. But all the physical security in the world doesn't matter if you don't know something about your environment. It's information that keeps you safe. And the more you know about a country, the more your security officers have contacts with the police and your political officers have contacts with politicians and your USAID officers have, let's be honest here, contact with warlords who might protect you under certain circumstances, you're going to be a lot, a lot safer.

And I've written about our experience in Egypt. And one of the reasons we were saved from what happened in other posts was that my political officers managed to reach out to the Salafi Party, the most extreme branch of Islam, and negotiate with them to basically leave the embassy alone. So it's information that makes you safe. It's not just physical security. And the more information you have, the more you're able to build on that. It's a cascade effect.

But yes, I think the security, the physical security has gotten vastly better. Benghazi has undermined a lot of this. People are now super, super apprehensive about the political fallout from Benghazi, so it's a question, I think, of turning back the clock in some respects. Thank you.

GENERAL ALLEN: Thank you, Anne.

For Alonzo, for you this question just came in. Will the proposals to rebalance risk accountability include programmatic risks? And what's the range of good practices and technical mixes other than military escorts that could provide for acceptable risk-taking for our assistance efforts?

MR. FULGHAM: I think it's a great question. I think there's going to have to be a mixture. I think that, as I mentioned previously, the work that we've done in the West Bank Gaza, they're not all Americans. We use our FSNs intermittently to implement programs. I think we just started a program up in northern Ghana in a Muslim area that basically is being staffed by FSNs to implement and design programs that are going to effectively help those communities.

But I think each country is going to be different. I mentioned a soliloquy of eight countries that are in current chaos right now. We potentially may have to go back into those countries and there's no one application to each country. I think we're going to have to be flexible and we're going to have to be innovative and use different techniques in order to be able to impellent programs in an effective way in those countries.

GENERAL ALLEN: Thank you.

A very interesting question has just come in. It says, do you think that the lack of personnel diversity at State contributed to the misreading of the situation or contributes to the misreading of the situation on the ground such as in places like Syria and Libya?

Let me ask Ron for his views and perhaps come back to Ann.

MR. NEUMANN: Well, that's an interesting question. It's awfully hard to prove negatives.

Certainly, having people from diverse backgrounds gives you diverse thinking. But, well, first of all, of course, if you have nobody on the ground, you don't have thinking of any kind because you have no reality check. So long before you've got to worry about diversity there, you know, you've got to worry about getting there in the first place.

I can't say but I've had, you know, certainly, I've had plenty of women, some ethnic

minorities, working for me in high-threat posts. I haven't seen any difference in how people accept risk and, you know, the quality of thoughts has been very high but it's individual. So, you know, I don't know how I can know better whether the two issues intersect. As a broad rule, you need, you know, diversity is an advantage we believe. It's also important to the nature of America that we are, you know, we're out talking about human rights and other issues with our host counterparts and the diversity of our missions is also a kind of unspoken reinforcement or not of that message. But directly in terms of security, I can't say that it makes a difference absolutely but I can say that I, you know, having had diverse people, I can't see any difference in how they respond to or manage the problem.

GENERAL ALLEN: Anne, any thoughts on that?

MS. PATTERSON: One issue, yes, one issue is language. And for instance, in Colombia it was hugely valuable to have so many Hispanics on the staff, one, because they had the language, and two, they could blend in in dangerous areas of the country. So I'm mall for recruiting people that are native speakers of languages we don't get. That has downsized because then minorities get stove piped into certain areas and that's not right either. But certainly, one of our huge problems, and this has gotten worse, too, is the erosion of our language ability and when people speak the language they know what's going on.

GENERAL ALLEN: This is another one of the provocative questions that we have. And I'll let Greg and perhaps Alonzo answer this, but anyone can come in.

Why is the onus being placed on individuals to accept more risk and not the institution to provide more protection?

MR. STARR: I think if this is going to work, if we're going to move away from an increasingly risk-adverse paradigm, the risk is going to have to be borne by both the individuals and the institutions. I think this goes to the issue of culture change as well in the department and in management and in leadership and in Congress. I believe that we have a cadre of officers that are chafing at the bit to be able to take more risk and get out and do the things. And we need to train them. We need to give them the backing to do these types of things, understanding that when you take risk, sometimes what

comes back at you is not a successful mission.

When you take enough risk there are bound to be some incidents that may involve casualties. We want to minimize that to the extent possible but we can't do our job unless we take those risks. We have a wide variety of people in the foreign service, and not everybody is exactly the same. So I think it will raise questions in terms of promotions or capabilities or things like that but I think we have the officers already who want to do the job and want to take risks. And there are those that may not have the same temperament. That may not do the same things. And this may raise issues. But if we're going to be serious about what our highest priority is, and that has got to be fulfilling the national security requirements of the United States government through our foreign service and not make security our highest priority, then we've got to take these risks. And as I say, ultimately, yes, there will be some risks, higher risks that individuals run. There's also risks to the institution. We need to learn to accept those and manage them.

GENERAL ALLEN: Let me just make a quick comment before I come out to Alonzo.

I don't think a lot of people understand the Diplomatic Security strata within the Department of State. It is an admirable community. And it has worked very, very hard, and there have been a lot of folks who have paid the ultimate price for providing security to our diplomatic posts and missions and our USAID activities out there. And Greg represents that community. It is also worthy of being thanked for their courage in protecting our diplomats and our AID professionals.

Alonzo, your thoughts, please?

MR. FULGHAM: Yeah, just quickly. I'm just going to say it again. Syria, Yemen, Iraq, South Sudan, Somalia, northern Nigeria. Those are places where we're going to continue to have major problems around the world, and we're going to try to provide stability there. And I think Greg's comment is a good one. We are going to have to continue to inculcate our new foreign service officers to understand this is a new foreign service in the 21st century. That everybody is not able to work in those particular areas. And we have officers in AID who work for the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. They know what we call them "crisis junkies," the members of OTI, the Office of Transition Initiative.

Crisis junkies, those people who join, they know they're going to be in harm's way. And the new foreign service officers also have to take a role in providing to support our national interests. And everybody can't go there. Some people who are good in Paris are not good in Kabul. People who are in Kabul probably aren't good in Paris. And I think we just have to figure out a way to prepare our foreign service to understand that the mission has become greater and broader and we're not asking you to take on any more responsibility than you should but you did join the foreign service.

GENERAL ALLEN: I have to applaud the efforts now that I hear all the time at the State Department that, you know, our foreign service took quite a beating over the last four years and the intent by the folks on this call to be a factor in rebuilding it and reenergizing it, it's very exciting for all of us to see that we're poised at this moment to see the foreign service be reenergized. It's just wonderful for us to see that.

Ron, I think you had a question to come in behind, or a comment to come in behind Alonzo?

MR. NEUMANN: Thanks, John. This reinforces some of what my colleagues just said but, you know, first of all, nobody wants to force officers to march forth on suicide missions. We're not ordering people, we're not suggesting people be ordered into situations they think are tremendously risky. By and large what we're suggesting is that people have the training, the support, to undertake that balance between risk and mission that they themselves know is necessary to make trips that they, themselves, believe are essential to performing their job.

Second point, the world is a risky place. Now, just as Greg said, some people are particularly suited for some of this work. Some are less suited for it. And to some extent, people can self-select in not volunteering for high-threat places. But sometimes risk comes to you. Quiet places can have a crisis. And then people have to carry out their mission. And they can't just, you know, they have to know and be trained so that they can mitigate risk just as they're not just the individual but the security officers, the post management, they all have to figure out how to work collectively to manage the risk and perform the mission. So it isn't just a matter of putting it on the officer but if people just really don't want

risk, they really need to find another profession.

GENERAL ALLEN: Well said.

Let me ask the final question and I'd like all four of the panelists, if you could answer. And I'm going to ask you to think back upon the earliest moments of your career. I've been present at a couple of occasions, really honored to be present when a U.S. ambassador comes on post and there's a swearing in ceremony, at least at the ones I've attended. And there's wonderful tradition of having the most junior foreign service officer in country help to swear in the new ambassador. It's a wonderful gesture to see that young foreign service officer there with the wisened, experienced foreign service officer, now the ambassador. It's so exciting to see that because it's so meaningful.

And so we have this question that has come in from a graduate student at Harvard, Harvard Kennedy School, who says, I'm an incoming FSO. Good on you. What do you wish you knew and were prepared for as a freshly minted junior officer?

Now, for me, I can't even remember that far back but I would ask my dear friends if you've got some thoughts for this brand new FSO because I think there's going to be a lot of Americans in this new era where we want to reestablish ourselves on the world stage as a nation of partnership for youngers to want to become foreign service officers, what are your memories on that?

So let me go first to Greg and then we'll go to Anne, then Alonzo, and Ron, we'll wrap it up with you.

MR. STARR: First, I'd say thank you because we need people that right off the bat are willing to put their country and something bigger than themselves and take those positions on.

Second, I would say if you're joining the foreign service, in some ways it's kind of like the military. You can be not challenged in sometimes for long periods of time and then have some utter terror very quickly. The foreign service is something that you need to learn your trade craft in and it takes a while. But ultimately, it's going to be an incredibly rewarding career. So be patient, be smart, be wise, and be willing to step out when your name is called to do the things that we've been talking about today, serve in some dangerous places.

GENERAL ALLEN: Thank you, Greg.

Anne, please.

MS. PATTERSON: So thank you to the questioner. And let me say that the vast majority of incoming foreign service officers are a hugely impressive bunch who want to get out there and advance their country's interests.

But what would I say is the most important thing? Our job is to convince foreigners to see it our way, and sometimes that's hard and sometimes that's easy. But fundamentally, what we've been talking about here, it's all about relationships. Most countries in the world are relationship-based societies. So you have to get out there and you have to talk to people and you have to speak their language and you have to develop a personal connection because when that emergency comes or you need that person to supply emergency fuel to the embassy surreptitiously, it's going to come down to the personal relationships. So that's a message I'd give. A lot of it is about personal relations.

GENERAL ALLEN: That is great, Anne. Thank you.

Alonzo, please.

MR. FULGHAM: I think the most important thing for me I think is to listen more and talk less. Take time to be mentored and try to find opportunities to have a safe learning environment. The four members on the screen that you have in front of you have had great careers not because they were smart; because they listened, they were mentored, and they took all of those skills when they were put into those senior positions and they were able to act on them with diligence and with fidelity and support this nation to its fullest. And as you come into the foreign service, it could be your oyster. It's going to be very challenging but the next 20 to 30 years we need you.

GENERAL ALLEN: It's an exciting time to come in, too. So thank you, Alonzo.

Ron, last word, please.

MR. SCHUMANN: Yeah, well, my colleagues have already I think captured a lot of what I wanted to say. When I was trying to think back, my first experience of the foreign service in some ways was weird because my actual first experience wasn't in the foreign service. It was spending three and a

half months in Afghanistan between college and the Army when my father was the ambassador. So I was seeing an embassy from the top down which mean that I arrived at my first post with a wholly different understanding of what made an embassy tick. But I also remember, it's one of the things my father said to me years ago and I certainly found out it was true when I was an ambassador. He said, "Often they ask why don't they, meaning the front office, do something about 'it'? Meaning whatever the problem is." And he said, "Often the problem is that they don't know about it." And so building that, you know, doesn't mean you want to run to the ambassador with every problem, but knowing what to report is important. My colleagues all talked about listening, and I think I've seen that before on a panel I was on when people asked what would you say to a young foreign service officer. It's the first thing that comes up, first or second with most of us, and the reason is that you have to not just listen. You have to empathize. Empathy doesn't mean you sympathize. It doesn't mean you have to agree with the other person but it means you have to understand them in order to figure out how to change them or how to get them to understand how to do what we want them to do. It's not about becoming their, you know, player. It's about understanding how to work with them. And my old mentor, Hal Saunders, who was really an expert at this, was part of the early Arab-Israeli solutions, had a saying. He's passed on now but he said, "Listen deeply enough to be changed by what you hear." It doesn't mean you have to be converted but you have to understand. And that's the real challenge. And I would say to the questioner, thank you for coming in. I echo what my colleagues have said. We need you and it is a fascinating profession. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

GENERAL ALLEN: Well, to all the panelists today, again, it's just so wonderful to see you all. And let me again pay my deepest respects to you and all of those whom you represent today.

And Ron, one final question to you. If someone wants to read this report, where would they find it?

MR. NEUMANN: The easiest thing, I think it may have a link at this program but in any event, if they go to simply Google American Academy of Diplomacy or www.academyofdiplomacy, which is our website, they can find it prominently there.

GENERAL ALLEN: Well, thank you all very much. I think this was a very productive panel. I learned a lot, again, by being in your presence, and Brookings was truly honored to host you today and to help to deploy this very important report going forward. I wish you all continued safety and good health and good luck. Thank you.

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