

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

**FINDING THE RIGHT GRAND
STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN:
THE PARAMETERS OF NEGOTIATION**

WELCOME AND MODERATOR:

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SPEAKER:

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JESSICA T. MATHEWS: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Jessica Mathews, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and it's my pleasure to welcome you to today's program on what is certainly the most pressing national security challenge that confronts the United States and the international community, namely achieving stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Today's program marks the publication of Carnegie's latest report on Afghanistan, authored by Ashley Tellis earlier this year. It continues a new series on Afghanistan, exploring a wide range of perspectives on how we and our allies should best approach the challenges facing this country and this region.

With an emboldened insurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan – and we're reminded of it even in this morning's news – drawing increasingly closer to Kabul and to Islamabad, the path toward military success and political stability looks increasingly difficult. Correcting past mistakes, especially when that list is a long one, is not the same as developing a plan that will really work, and that's, of course, where we are today.

How we manage relations with the Taliban and how we develop an effective strategy, if, in fact, there is one, is the subject of Ashley's report and is a matter of urgent concern and debate for all of us. A critical voice in that debate has to come from the country itself – from Afghanistan. And so it is a special pleasure to welcome our distinguished guest, His Excellency Said Jawad, Afghanistan's ambassador to the United States. Formerly chief of staff to President Karzai, the ambassador has been an articulate advocate of a strong U.S. commitment to Afghanistan and has worked incessantly in these past few years to build a better understanding in the United States of the stakes and current conditions on the ground.

Following Ambassador Jawad's remarks, we have a distinguished panel of experts who will discuss Ashley Tellis's report. And following that, Senator Joseph Lieberman, chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, will share his thoughts on reversing the Taliban's recent gains in Pakistan. So we have a full agenda ahead of us and let me not take any more time, but welcome, once again, Ambassador Jawad to the Carnegie Endowment. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

(Applause.)

AMBASSADOR SAID JAWAD: Thank you very much, Ms. Mathews, for your kind introduction. Dr. Tellis, General Barno, ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen, it is great being here. Thank you once again for providing me the opportunity to be with you and to discuss issues related to negotiating with Taliban and especially discuss the new and very valuable report by my friend, Dr. Tellis, on the reconciliation with the Taliban toward an alternative grand strategy in Afghanistan.

I think in light of the intense debates here in Washington and also intense political and diplomatic exchanges – particularly the one last week – this report is a timely addition to the discourse and policy choices for Afghanistan. Allow me, just briefly, to talk about the recent summit last week that took place in here before we go and discuss the report. As you know, the summit, with the participation of President Karzai, President Zardari and President Obama and high-level delegations from Afghanistan and Pakistan, was another important step forward in deepening our engagement and discussions with our friends in Pakistan to particularly confront some of the challenges that we both, in Afghanistan and Pakistan, are facing, and also to seek jointly better ways of implementing the new view or strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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One of the issues that were discussed in those forums was the issue of the Peace Jirga. And I can discuss this, if there is an interest, later. This was something that Afghanistan has been very much in favor of and had, in the past, full support of then-Senator Clinton and now Secretary Clinton. And this issue was discussed and there are also prospects of reconvening another jirga in Pakistan.

The meetings last week were very frank, very, very cordial and very focused on certain issues. But we have had, in the past, just on the military front, more than 28 trilateral meetings on a lower level in Afghanistan and Pakistan. So what is really expected is our results and deliveries on these meetings – not the formality of getting together. And we are hoping that the last set of the meetings do produce certain results. We are sure that they do produce results in the area of agricultural trade and others, but our main interest is to see a change of policy on the issue of the security.

The other important issue in the past two weeks were – as for Afghanistan – has been the issue of the surge of the U.S. troops and the civilian surge. We have welcomed the addition of the U.S. troops to Afghanistan – additional boots are needed – while the long-term solution in Afghanistan is to build the capacity of the Afghan security forces, especially the Afghan army and the police force.

We welcome the decision to increase the number of the Afghan national army to 134,000, while we emphasize that the real need of the country is to have an army of at least 250,000 in order to overcome the current security challenges in Afghanistan. And this is using any type of military formula in Afghanistan, we do need at least a 250,000-strong army. And if needed – I know there is an argument over the sustainability of that; we can discuss it if there is interest, and also to enable the Afghan police force to become more professional, more capable, better disciplined is an area that we are seeking further assistance alongside of the addition of the international troops.

On the issue of the civilian surge, we have submitted to the U.S. administration our own Afghan national civilian surge plan to make the best use of these ideas of increasing the civilian surge in Afghanistan. What we emphasize for the civilian surge is that it has to be demand-driven. It should be in the form of technical assistance and they need to recognize the priorities of the Afghan government and to build the capacity of the Afghan institutions at every level – from the national to sub-national level, from the ministries to the districts and provinces – because the challenges that we do face in Afghanistan is shortage of human capital, especially in the ministries in the Kabul and other institutions in Afghanistan.

The overall purpose of the civilian surge should be to further enable the Afghan government to deliver services and to provide protection and service. Again, here we can discuss it if there is interest in more detail. But now, let's get to the report that is the main subject for our discussion today. I think the report is very insightful and I personally clearly agree with the two fundamental arguments that are being made in the report.

One is really the clarity of the objectives for our common fight in Afghanistan and then it's the consistency of the message. It's extremely – we all have different constituencies, but it's very important for all of us to synchronize our partisan messages in order to provide a clear – in order to define the objective clearly and also make sure that the public and the people are not confused.

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For instance, while the main theme – the main strategy of the Taliban, the terrorists in Afghanistan is continuously to question the staying power of the United States and NATO. Would it be prudent to overemphasize an exit strategy? Of course, there is always – any strategy needs to have an exit part to it. And there is a need for it – there is a constituency to emphasize that, but we should be mindful that the main argument of the enemy – of the Taliban and the terrorists are that the U.S. – to question the U.S. staying power in Afghanistan.

Therefore, to synchronize these messages, while communicating with a larger audience – and today we are communicating with a larger audience every time that we speak. Through the radio, Internet and others, people are really connected – they pick up the messages very, very quickly. So the experience that Ms. Tellis has – both from the academia and the practical experience on developing strategies provide really clear policy option in the report.

And there are a number of very valid arguments in the report being made that I would like to highlight and indicate that this has been something that we have been also, in the past, arguing for and are being in favor of. First, the idea of the reconciliation. I will talk about this word, reconciliation also later. Let's use it for now, or I prefer using engagement, with the Taliban as truly premature and a weak policy option under the current security threat.

Negotiating with Taliban will only succeed if we talk with them from the position of strength. As long as the Taliban perceive that they are successful, there is no need for them to talk to any of us. And the definition of success or victory for Taliban is a lot simpler than the definition of success or victory for you and me. Success for us means delivering services, building roads, hospitals, clinics, schools. Success for you means the same thing – it's a joint effort.

For Taliban, success means beheading a teacher, putting a mine on the road. So as long as the Taliban are able to destroy and disrupt, they are successful. There is not need for them to talk. It is very important to change this mechanism. And in a counterinsurgency context, you can never negotiate or talk from a position of weakness, because as I mentioned, they have defined what success means for them, and it looks like they are succeeding in that.

An example is today, a large number of the Taliban and terrorists will be killed in Khost, certainly. And they have done it in the past. They have similar attacks – they are losing all the peace. But for them, this is a success. By just having 30 or 40 either foreign service or a few brainwashed Afghans to attack, actually, a city of civilians, people who are delivering services. In the end of the day when they are killed, they also – they claim to be successful.

So it's very important to make sure that we are speaking from the position of strength. Equally important is that that negotiation, that talk should be conducted through the Afghan government. Why? Do we insist because we want to be significant? The reason is that these kinds of talks have taken place in the past in Afghanistan by different commanders, by different countries who have presence in Afghanistan, and have created a complete confusion.

One of the things that the terrorists are very successful in is creating these kind of conspiracy theories. You will be amazed what kind of theories are going around there – that who is supporting whom and what is the intention of the United States or the Afghan government or the U.K. or the German – incredible. They are very good at this. And we have seen it even here,

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people claim that in the 9/11 the buildings were empty or some ridiculous things. And there were a few who believed that this was true.

He also – if there is a contact between, say, a military commander in a province in Afghanistan with the Taliban, they right away actually claim that we have been supporting, by this and that country; we are receiving weapons from them even. So in that it creates a lot of confusion among the population. Therefore, the contact of the engagement with the Taliban should be the Afghan government if that – and again, and from the example in the past, in the military commanders go sit down with a Taliban commander and then our governor finds out about that issue, he feels actually pushed aside, he feels being marginalized.

And then his degree of cooperation with that country who has presence in a province will be further reduced. So in order to prevent any kind of mistrust, that has to be – the engagement has to be conducted with the Afghan – through the Afghan government. Another important issue that the Taliban are extremely unpopular in Afghanistan. The recent poll indicated that more than 80 percent of the people, actually, dislike the Taliban and their ideas. And they do not represent any ethnic group in Afghanistan. That's one – let's be very clear about that. They never provide an alternative as far as job, which is a big priority for the Afghan people, except for hiring to kill or be killed.

They do not provide an alternative for development in Afghanistan. But the reason – the reason that they have been tolerated in Afghanistan on the countryside is because you and I are not present there to protect the people. It is not that they provide a better alternative than the international community – U.S., NATO, or Afghan government. It's the fact that we are not able to provide services to protect the people on the countryside. That's why people are tiring.

The way they operate is force people into submission by killing them, by beheading them, by creating a complete environment of fear and uncertainty. And then they are not a mystery so that the people give them a chance. They want a government in Afghanistan. The isolation, the terror, the tyranny, the poverty that they brought during their rule in Afghanistan is known to every Afghan. There is no need to – to let's give them a chance – say in Iraq, let's give a chance to like Muqtada al-Sadr and see what he's going to do for us. There is no need for the Afghans to even think about that line. They know exactly what the Taliban rule will bring to them. The reason that – as I mentioned – if we are there on the countryside and if you are with us on the countryside to protect the Afghan people, there is no comparison for the Afghan people on which way to choose.

And the third significant point that the report makes, and I completely agree with this, is the importance of building the security institutions, especially the security forces, the justice system and, once again, emphasize working with the Afghan government to expand its capacity to deliver services to be present on the countryside. There will be no sustainable security unless we do actually provide security and justice to the Afghan people. Some of it has to be delivered through the institutions.

Some others could be delivered through traditional means, but once again, one should not romanticize about using some tribal or traditional means of delivering services, because those institutions have been undermined, have been destroyed in the past 30 years in Afghanistan. The option is truly to build effective state institution in Afghanistan. And as Dr. Tellis mentioned, the very problem is to build Afghanistan from inside out. That is really an important argument – that's

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an important sentence in order to prevail and prevent lawlessness and provide security in Afghanistan.

And the fourth point about some of the argument that's being made in here about de-linking Taliban and al Qaeda and going after al Qaeda and negotiating with Taliban, once again, the reports make a very valid point. And I would give you a further perspective on that. Contrary to Iraq, where the marriage between the Sunni extremists and al Qaeda came as a matter of convenience and it was something very, very new and short-lived, in Afghanistan, the association and the affiliation of some of the armed groups with the al Qaeda goes at least – it's at least 30 years old. It goes from the days of the resistance against the Soviets and this – to de-link these two is extremely difficult, particularly in the light of intermarriages, sharing training camps, financial resources and others between the two groups.

And then finally, another idea that's been discussed in here, and it's the idea of the Afghanistan being the graveyard of empires. Afghans are proud individuals. Afghans love their freedoms. But Afghans are also very pragmatic. Afghans know that they live in a predatory region and environment. They know that the isolation from the international community – especially from the U.S. after the Cold War – has brought extreme poverty and misery to them. So this whole issue of the graveyard is an outdated argument that – it was created by some author who fantasized and romanticized the second – the First or Second Afghan-Anglo war and then later also – if you look at the history of the Afghan-Soviet engagement, there has been a lot of misunderstanding on who was fighting whom in that fight.

As I mentioned, we know exactly that under the current situation, every Afghan knows exactly that to be able to stand on our own feet is not feasible without the presence and the assistance of the international community. The country's economy and infrastructure is so destroyed that we will not be able to sustain ourselves unless we do receive actually the support and engagement of the international community.

Two minor issues that I would like to be re-examined in this report – the first is the argument that President Karzai may be using, this issue of talking with Taliban or negotiating with Taliban as an election tool or as an election ploy. That's an argument – this argument is hard to sell – because, as you know, as I mentioned engaging with Taliban, talking with Taliban is not a popular issue. Eighty percent of the Afghan people have spoken clearly against the Taliban.

And, second, half of the population of Afghans are women. A significant part of the Afghans who would be able to vote are organized Afghans, we may have, actually challenges – and I'm getting everyone in the countryside to participate – our plan is to make sure that that happens, and I hope that it happens. But certainly, in big cities, people will be voting: Kabul, Kandahar, Herat and other cities.

So how could President Karzai hope to get some vote from someone who may sympathize with Taliban who is antagonizing the Afghan woman and the Afghan organized population in big cities? In addition to that, it's been six years that some type of engagement with Taliban has taken place at lower level.

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And the second issue is this word of reconciliation with Taliban. As I mentioned, I would rather use engagement with Taliban. And what type of engagement do we need? Here I would like to give you a definition of who the Taliban are and how we should engage the Taliban.

I would divide the Taliban in three distinct group. These are not political groups as I mentioned, you know about the Quetta Shura or the Miran Shah Shura, the Hakani network, the Hekmatyar group and the Mullah Omar and the Quetta Shura. That's less significant – the three distinct groups that I divide the Taliban to are first the ideological Taliban: the Taliban with the capital T. These are the groups that have organized for instance the Khost attack today that we will see on the news.

These are the leadership of the Taliban that are affiliated and associated with al Qaeda for a long time. It include the Hakani network too, it include Hekmatyar work with them. And some element of the Quetta Shura. These group are conducting an ideological battle. They dislike – they have a mission of jihad against the West and every value that it stands for – including us as part of the Afghan government.

For this small group of the hardcore Taliban, the ideological Taliban, the type of the engagement that is needed is military. We have to engage them, we have to take them out – there is no other options. That's what their mission is too.

The second group of the Taliban, which I call the mercenary, and the report rightfully calls the “rent-a-Taliban” group. These are the type of the Taliban that are either being recruited by the narco-traffickers, by the intelligence agency of a neighboring country or antagonized because of the misconduct of our government or the misconduct of the military forces in Afghanistan. They have complaints about the way things are going down there.

Some of these complaints are legitimate. With this group of Taliban, the type of engagement that is needed is both political and financial. Some of them, we should listen to them – to their grievances. We should bring them back to the main political fold. Others, as I mentioned, are mercenaries, they are getting paid, they are being recruited. And if it's a fight, we should pay them off – we should bring them over by paying them more than what the intelligence agency or a narco-trafficker is paying.

The third and the largest groups are the foot-soldier Taliban, those who have been misled with the prospect of paradise or financial reward, who are fighting for the \$300 that they are being paid by the Taliban leadership. The engagement that we need here is fully social and economic. We need to give them a hope; we need to give them a job. We need to give them a prospect of better living in Afghanistan. Therefore, I would prefer the word “engagement” than “reconciliation” in this prospect.

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And this engagement will have three different levels. To conclude, we will succeed in our engagement with Taliban only if they are denied sanctuaries – ideological, financial, and logistical support in Pakistan. And if we try to have, deal, on a tactical level, the way it's been done in Pakistan, for instance, we should learn from history. We should learn from the lessons taking place at North Waziristan and South Waziristan and now in Swat. Most all these deals have led to Talibanization of Pakistan, to brutalization of the population in these areas, in North Waziristan and South Waziristan, now in Swat; and also a more dangerous trend of the Pakistanization of al Qaeda.

Therefore, the issue of engaging with Taliban should be seen as a strategic option and we should deal with them at three different levels. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MS. MATHEWS: We now have some time for questions. If you'll introduce yourself when you are beginning that will be appreciated.

Q: Hi, I am Paolo Cotta-Ramusino, secretary general of Pugwash. Last time I was in Kabul was in November. I would say that the perception there was that almost everybody with exclusion of our Hazara leader was saying that they should kind of find a way to talk the Taliban or to address the issue, the reconciliation, the difference between the reconciliation and engagement was – I agree with you that it's a better a term.

So there is the sense that they should reach out. So the question is: What do you think is the basis of the popular support, if there is any for the Taliban? What are they gaining, since they are controlling a good part of a territory after all?

Another point is that about Western strategy. One of the biggest complaints that I heard was that foreign forces are not coordinated – that was the key word – there was no coordination among foreign forces. And people were complaining about that.

The third issue is the tactics and the attack on with drones and the population. There was a very strong resentment of that and there was a sense that this kind of technique will alienate further the public opinion from the West. And if you want a fourth question –

MS. MATHEWS: No, no, I think three is enough.

(Laughter.)

AMB. JAWAD: Very good points on the issue of tolerance of the population of the Taliban activities, the way I put it instead of support for them, as I mentioned it is that people are not assured of our capability to deliver services to them – or the long-term staying power of the international community. So if we were there, as I mentioned, there is no comparison for people.

But if they have to, if they are not certain, if they are there during the day and at night the Taliban will come in – and as I mentioned they will behead the teacher, or destroy the clinic – intimidate people than they are a lot more cautious about expressing their support or tolerating the Taliban.

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But, again, as I mentioned, they know exactly what they will bring to them. They want a government there. Coordination – very, very important issue – it's been discussed, this is one of the major complaints of the Afghan people. Not only the Afghan people, even the international community – the issue is that in Afghanistan we have different partners, different stakeholders bringing different capabilities and commitment to the table.

For instance, just on the military front, we have United States with all its military might and power, then you have a small country that is contributing to this fight – say Lithuania – in a significant way for that country, by having a presence. If the expectation is for everyone to perform at the same level, it's not going to work. It's impossible. The coordination should be sought by creating a synergy, between the different degrees of the commitment and capabilities that the countries are bringing to the table, not pushing everyone to perform at the same model at the same level.

And, more importantly coordination will happen only if we all are ready to be coordinated. And again, if different people are bringing different degrees of capabilities, different degrees of resources, it's hard to make them be coordinated. But this is something that unless we do come up with a more coordinated effort – and I think the new Obama strategy is a step in the right direction to create this kind of coordination among the international stakeholders and the Afghan government.

There's lack of coordination at different level – international with each other, international with Afghans, Afghans at the national and sub-national level, all of which needs to be addressed. Some of the aggressive tactics on the part of the military front – that, yes, this is an issue that the Afghans are complaining. Instead of just complaining we should look why has this happening. Some of the heavy reliance on the airpower has to do with shortage of proper type of soldiers and equipments on the ground to carry out this kind of mission in a more surgical and a more targeted way.

Then we have to come up with these kind of equipment that are needed. President Karzai recently had spoken very clearly about the air raids. The reason is that we should not mix our strategic objectives and tactical moves; our strategic objective is to keep the Afghans on our side, and to defeat the terrorists and the Taliban. And the different tactics could be deployed including air power and others. The strategy is not to deploy all the types of air power.

We should seek actually a better way of conducting these operation, one of which is where we have been pushing for is to have more Afghans to conduct the military operations on the ground with the international forces, to be on the forefront. And the second is to really reduce or eliminate reliance on high altitude bombing, instead carry out more surgical operations.

And if it's needed, if the enemy enters into a village, and we know that it's there, just wait out – and encircle the village and wait there, instead of going into that. We know that their purpose there is hiding in the biggest house, or in a mosque, or somewhere – this is their tactic. Therefore we should operate from a different level of morality and not actually target them and then lose the population with us because, right away, they will use it as an extremely successful propaganda tool against us.

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MS. MATHEWS: If I may just follow up in a sense, there has been always two facts that I find hard to reconcile that maybe you can explain. You referred in your talk, and Ashley uses the same figure in his study, of the overwhelming public opposition to the Taliban that you find in polling data, greater than 80 percent. And yet – which suggests a population that recognizes what it is up against and feels strongly about a particular outcome.

And yet it's hard then to understand the degree of popular outrage against civilian deaths when those come in against an enemy that embeds itself in the civilian population as a tactic. I compare it to French civilian deaths in World War II; allied forces killed 75,000 Frenchmen. But there was never any question about support for what they were doing. So how does one reconcile these two questions?

AMB. JAWAD: Very good question. In the case of the Second World War or other wars between countries where there has been tolerance for these issues, it is a military operation; there are two armies, they are fighting each other. Here the Afghan people are seeing, are looking at you as their savior, as a force that came to help them out, to help them get out of this misery.

They expect us and you to operate in a very different level than the terrorist. They know that the enemy is a terrorist; the way they operate is by actually targeting the civilian. So the expectation of the population just by their nature of seeing United States and comparing them to the Taliban and terrorists is different. They do expect us to operate at a different level than the terrorist. That's the main difference.

I think in a war, in a situation of a war where the two armies are fighting, people have a better understanding that these things will happen. And, of course, the other issue is for the Afghan people expect that more actions should be taken to stop the infiltration, to stop actually the crossing the terrorist into the country before they reach the villages and the homes of Afghan people they should be dealt with instead of targeting them while they are hiding in a small home or a small village.

I have actually in the past have also argued that, yes, in order to defeat terrorism, this is the price that has to be paid and the population has to be ready for it. But every time that I go there, I see truly less tolerance by the population about that issue. It could be also that in this case we are also facing an enemy that is not only brutal but also very sophisticated in using propaganda. The moment that – if there are two civilian deaths – right away the report is there are 30 civilian are dead, and it takes them only two or three minutes to use their cell phones and post and send the pictures all over the globe. So it's a different mode of operating that they have chosen.

And right away you see a little boy being killed, and it could be from the same incident or other incident, but the ability of them to use – especially mobile phone – to get the reports, the pictures, right away all over the world is amazing. It takes very, very little time for them, and usually the first reports that come are exaggerated at least by five to 10 times. If there are two people dead, the first report is something like 25 to 30 people.

And that's what right away the population will pick up. And later on when you go back and correct it, it's too late. That's why we have asked and we very much appreciated the fact that lately the U.S. military is very agile. They act very quickly, they send a team right away there, and in most cases they will come out and say if it was a mistake we are sorry. That was the case previously in

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Eastern Afghanistan. It was a night operation and they made a mistake – actually they were targeting a home.

Before they reached this house, somebody else actually from their own house thought that they were thieves or robbers in the night. So they started shooting at the U.S. military and then they shoot back. And everybody was on the same page that it was clearly a misunderstanding – that the guy who shoot (sic) at the U.S. forces thought that they were thieves or robbers. The important thing is that when and if it happens to be quick; do not hesitate to say we are sorry, we regret the loss of life, and come up with the facts so that we can right away distinguish the propaganda from the real fact.

MS. MATHEWS: Are there other questions? Yes.

Q: James Morrison from the Washington Times. Mr. Ambassador could –

MS. MATHEWS: Would you use the mike, please?

Q: I'm sorry. Mr. Ambassador, could you describe the Obama administration's new strategy for Afghanistan, or is it still being developed? And is the change of U.S. commanders as you see a part of this?

AMB. JAWAD: The removal of General McKiernan today? Yes, I think there are three steps for the strategy. First is to formulate the new strategy – that's been done. Second, to really put up a capable team to implement it. On the foreign policy part, I think this step has been taken. By having General Jones and Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Holbrooke, you really have a capable team to look to diplomatic or political implementation of the part.

With the addition of a new ambassador in Afghanistan and General Rodriguez going back to Afghanistan – a very capable general that I know and I work with – they are trying to strengthen, actually, the military part of the presence in Afghanistan. I was surprised by the quick removal of General McKiernan. I know that there was issues or discussion about his performance, but it came about very, very sudden.

I knew about General Rodriguez going to Afghanistan. I think it's a new strategy, it's a new team, and I would be surprised if they bring new people to have a fresh set of ideas. Especially, General McChrystal has extensive counterinsurgency experience that will be extremely helpful from his experience in Iraq, so we are – as far as we are concerned, we are really looking forward to working with General McChrystal.

MS. MATHEWS: I think we have time for one more. Yeah?

Q: Steve Siegel (sp) with DAI. I had a question about the experimental – or what is being called the experimental approach to community empowerment, which is the social outreach program, which I guess has been piloted in Wardak, Kapisa, Logar, and whether this is sort of seen as the new – or a possible new strategy or viable approach for battling the insurgency, and if this is something that will continue to be expanded as the year goes on.

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AMB. JAWAD: The issue of involving the community and the – to supplement or complement the institutionalized security forces is not something new; it's a past, old discussion about supplement the police force or others and getting the community involved. And as always, it's an issue that there are pros and cons for it. On one hand, it does provide, actually, a quick fix – a quick solution. On the other hand, it undermines, actually, institution-building in a country, and especially in a place where we have a history of people abusing their power, which is mostly derived (sic) from gun and Kalashnikov.

The experiment in Wardak is different in a way that the community-protection forces are reporting to the Afghan ministry of interior. And they are building and selection is done through community councils that are a lot more formalized. So far, it's been working very well. And I think one reason that I have more hope for this concept to be successful is that there is extremely strong propaganda against it by the Taliban and others. That means that they are really worried that this concept may work. They are really taking a very strong stand, and where they can, they also are taking – they're killing, actually, some of the members of the shuras who are in charge of selecting these forces.

It has to be seen. I think if it's managed properly, if it is truly, actually built by the community and really reports to the ministry, it will be a very good addition. But if they start to have – change their loyalties and then become another source of insecurity, one has to reconsider it. These things – I think the wise option will be to look how its implemented. Most of these concepts, on paper, could be very, very contradictory. There are those who are very much in favor of it and the other groups sort of totally dislike it.

MS. MATHEWS: We're going to take a short break now while Dr. Tellis and his panel come up. But I hope, first, you will join me in thanking the ambassador for getting us off to such a good start.

AMB. JAWAD: Thank you, thank you.

(Applause.)

(END)