CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

FINDING THE RIGHT GRAND STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN
PREVENTING THE UNTHINKABLE IN PAKISTAN: REVERSING AL-QAEDA'S GAINS IN SOUTH ASIA

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ASHLEY TELLIS: Well, good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for surviving the morning and coming back. I've had no more pleasurable duty today than the task of welcoming Senator Lieberman and introducing him this afternoon to speak on the subject of managing the challenges that we have in South Asia, particularly the threat posed by the Taliban.

Normally, when I do an event like this, I'm supposed to recite for you the senator's many achievements over his legislative career. Those actually have been detailed in the sheet of paper which is in his biography. And I don't want to do that because if I tried, I would be telling you very much of what you already know, because he is a national figure who certainly does not need an introduction of the kind that I can provide.

But I do want to say something about Senator Lieberman and the role that he has played, particularly in nudging our country to take seriously the challenges or our responsibilities, first in Iraq and now in Afghanistan. Senator Lieberman has been one of those rare individuals in the legislative branch of government who has not shied away from supporting the president when he believed the president was right, and dissenting both from the administration and his own party when he believed that they were wrong.

He has always taken seriously the commitments that we have made as a country to others in the process of this long war, and that was shown right from the beginning in the stance that he took on Iraq and the stance that he held onto even when the original possession became unpopular in the United States. And that, I think, is a tribute of courage to someone who is principled and who stands the course based on his conviction, irrespective of what the political vicissitudes permit.

On Afghanistan, at a time when public opinion in this country was drifting dangerously in the direction of looking for a hasty exit, Senator Lieberman took time out several months ago to make the most persuasive and articulate case for a standing American commitment to Afghanistan, a commitment that, he argued, was rooted as much in our own self-interest, in our obligations to the Afghan people, and in a fundamental moral commitment that the struggle against violent extremist terror embodies.

And over the summer, starting from last year, Senator Lieberman has made a series of speeches where he has essentially summoned the American people and the U.S. government to take seriously these obligations. And the presentation he is going to make today is going to be part of that ongoing conversation with the American people. It is truly my privilege and a pleasure to have Senator Lieberman with us this afternoon to share his views on what we all agreed this morning was a very pressing national security challenge: rising extremism in South Asia and the challenges that that poses for the United States. Thank you, Senator.

(Applause.)

SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN (ID-CT): Thank you. Well, thank you, Ashley, for that extremely kind introduction. I appreciate it when you – forgive me; I apologize if anyone here has heard me say this before, but when you said I needed no introduction it reminded me, I'd been at a speech a few years ago, a program where Henry Kissinger was the main speaker, and the moderator said that Dr. Kissinger needs no introduction, so I give you Henry Kissinger. And Kissinger got up and said, you know, I suppose it's true that I don't need an introduction, but I like a good introduction. (Laughter.)

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You have given me a very good introduction. I thank you very, very much for that. The truth is it would be a good introduction coming from anybody. It particularly means a lot to me coming from you. I think there are very few people in Washington today who are as broadly and deservedly respected for their expertise as Ashley Tellis. He has really served our country, both in government and out. He's a brilliant scholar and strategist whose knowledge and understanding of a critical part of the world at a critical moment in its history and ours is, in my opinion, unsurpassed.

I'm delighted to be here today at Carnegie to mark the release of the important and insightful report he has written, titled "Reconciling with the Taliban: Toward an Alternative Grand Strategy in Afghanistan," and it's to that subject generally, and the Afghan-Pakistan region of the world, that I want to speak today. Ashley's report and the broader discussion I know it's inspired here today could not be timelier. Recent events have clearly reinforced why Afghanistan and Pakistan are now the central front of the worldwide fight against Islamist extremism, a fight that is occurring within the Muslim world but has engaged much of the rest of the world as well.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are two unique countries, now, in one theater of conflict, but the conflict in each country is different, and I want to stress today how each must be understood on its own terms. In Pakistan, the world has watched with alarm over the past month or so as the Taliban has gone on the offensive, first consolidating control over the Swat Valley and then striking into the neighboring districts of Dir and Buner, just 60 miles from Islamabad. The spread of the Taliban from the FATA into the settled areas of the Northwest Frontier Province has been described by others as a wakeup call. I certainly hope so, and I hope so for several different groups of people.

First, it should be a wakeup call to the Pakistani people and their leaders about the nature and intention of the Taliban, the intolerant, totalitarian vision they seek to impose over this great country and the danger of affording them sanctuary or safe haven anywhere on Pakistani territory, whether in the FATA or Baluchistan or the NWFP. Indeed, I suspect that the brutal and fanatical behavior of the Taliban during their occupation of Swat has done more to discredit their cause and galvanize Pakistani society against them than anything we or anybody else outside of Pakistan could say or do.

Second, the events of the last few weeks in Pakistan should be a wake-up call to the rest of the world, including us, that there really is a moderate majority in Pakistan that reflects the violent – excuse me, that rejects the violent extremism of the Taliban and that is waiting to be mobilized. We see graphic proof of this in the angry denunciations of the Taliban's brutality by the refugees who are fleeing their oppressive rule in Swat right now, and who are desperately looking to their government in Islamabad for help and protection.

In fact, every time the Pakistani people vote, they reject the Islamist extremists, as they did in Swat just last year. The Taliban offensive therefore, I think must be seen as what it is, which is an attack by an extremist minority against the Pakistani majority. Unfortunately, our enemies in Pakistan seem to have been more adept at mobilizing that extremist minority than our allies have proven adept at mobilizing and protecting the moderate majority. But there is reason, finally, to have hope that that is now changing.

Reversing the previous negative dynamic will require a sustained and robust counterinsurgency effort on the part of the entire Pakistani government, both civilian and military,

and it will also require a sustained and robust strategic commitment on our part to help the democratically elected Pakistani government develop the new capabilities it needs in this critical cause. This must include increased support for the reform and refocusing of Pakistan security forces, including not just the army but the police, so that they can defeat the militants and protect the surrounding civilian population.

It must also include greater support for Pakistan's civilian institutions of governance so that they can provide basic services, uphold the rule of law, and create a climate of economic opportunity for Pakistan's people. It is clearly failures and shortcomings in precisely these areas that has created a gap between the Pakistani citizenry and their government that the insurgents now seek to exploit. Ultimately, however, American aid and foreign aid generally will only be meaningful if it is matched by genuine Pakistani political will and determination to decisively defeat all of the militant groups that have settled on their territory.

For this reason, the events of the last weeks must be a wake-up call to the Pakistani security establishment. It's past time that the Pakistani army and its intelligence service, the ISI, recognize that it is regional Islamist extremist groups that pose the real existential threat to the survival of their country. Over the last 30 years, unfortunately, elements of the Pakistani security establishment have grown accustomed to seeing these extremist groups not as enemies of the state that must be decisively defeated, but as potential instruments of the state that can be managed and controlled.

That strategic view is a terrible mistake and must be rejected, not as a favor to the United States, but because tolerating or maintaining linkages to these extremist groups simply does not reflect Pakistan's values or advance Pakistan's vital national interests. On the contrary, it jeopardizes them. Far from helping Pakistan to protect itself or secure a strategic depth beyond its borders, they are instead making the country less safe and eroding the Pakistani government's control of its own territory.

Some people say that – I know – that the ISI has been reluctant to break its historic ties with regional extremist groups like the Afghan Taliban because it doubts America's staying power in Afghanistan, and consequently believes that Pakistan will one day need the Taliban as a proxy force to pursue its interests there the day after America leaves. I want to say as clearly as I possibly can that this is not only wrong; it is a losing strategy, for several reasons.

The first is that the United States is not going to leave Pakistan. The second is that we and our allies are going to win in Afghanistan – excuse me. The first is the U.S. isn't going to leave Afghanistan; the second is that we and our Afghan allies are going to win there. The Taliban syndicates, including the Quetta Shura and the Haqqani network, are going to be defeated. Betting on them and against our Afghan allies, particularly the Afghan army and security forces, is neither a wise nor principled long-term strategy to defend Pakistan's legitimate interest in the region.

In the interim, moreover, linkages with Afghan insurgent groups, rather than helping Pakistan and Afghanistan, are actually undermining its position there. A recent nationwide poll found that 91 percent of Afghans have an unfavorable opinion of Pakistan. In fact, only 5 percent of Afghans think that Pakistan is playing a positive role in their country. By contrast, according to this same poll, India enjoys a 74 percent approval rating in Afghanistan.

Now, those numbers should not just wake up Pakistan's leaders and strategists and security and intelligence officers; they should jolt them from their chairs. The implications for policy should be clear. The fact that most Afghans are convinced that Pakistan is waging a proxy war against their country is weakening, not strengthening Pakistan's position there. Now, I'm optimistic that there is a rising tide in Pakistan that recognizes that the use of Islamist extremists as regional proxies has reached a strategic dead end, and that these groups now pose an existential threat to Pakistan itself.

Every day – I want to emphasize – countless Pakistanis risk their lives to oppose the terrorists in their territories, from the soldiers fighting in Swat and elsewhere, in the NWFP and the FATA, to the civil servants who go to work despite Taliban intimidation, to the democratically elected leaders, journalists and members of civil society who publicly denounce the militants and are demanding a sustained campaign to defeat them. In all of these people, we see the moderate majority that I believe is Pakistan, and that we must do everything in our power to strengthen, to protect and to support.

This also carries important implications for those here in the United States and in Europe who are pressing for deadlines for withdrawal from Pakistan, are calling instantaneous reconciliation with the leaders of the Taliban. Put simply, the more we hedge our bets in Pakistan – excuse me – the more we hedge our bets in Afghanistan, the more we can expect the Pakistanis will hedge their bets there too, in ways that will make our broader fight against extremism in both countries monumentally more difficult.

Conversely, the more likely it appears that the United States and our allies are going to stay and prevail in Afghanistan, the weaker the case of those in Pakistan who argue for maintaining ties to the Taliban. That's why I so strongly agree with the recommendations about Afghanistan that are contained in Ashley Tellis's report. As he puts it, and I quote, "Only serious, long-term commitment to building an effective Afghan state, and invest and endure strategy, will work," end of quote. I think that's absolutely right.

The good news here is that the Obama administration certainly seems to understand that and agree as well. It has begun to increase both the military and non-military resources that are required for a robust and comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan, a strategy that is focused on protecting the Afghan people, empowering the Afghan government, developing the Afghan economy, and decisively defeating the insurgents.

During the trilateral summit here in Washington last week, President Obama spoke eloquently and strongly, I thought, about what he called our, quote, "lasting commitment to support the democratically elected, sovereign governments of both Pakistan and Afghanistan," end quote. And he rightly promised, quote, "That commitment will not waver and that support will be sustained," end of quote.

The foremost challenge now in Pakistan – the foremost challenge now in Afghanistan – I've really bought into the Af-Pak idea. (Laughter.) The foremost challenge now in Afghanistan is to match words with deeds and to ensure that President Obama's declared strategy is implemented effectively. First, this means we need to have in place a joint civil-military campaign plan for Afghanistan that ties together all of the elements of our national power and theirs to defeat the insurgency – we don't really have one yet – and then we must have the people and resources in Afghanistan to implement that plan successfully.

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Yesterday, Secretary Gates announced, as you know, that General Stan McChrystal will become the new four-star commander of Coalition Forces in Afghanistan and Lieutenant General David Rodriguez will become his three-star deputy. Both General McChrystal and General Rodriguez are innovative, impressive officers with significant counterinsurgency experience. I have great confidence in this new leadership team and the ideas and energy and spirit that they will bring to the war effort in Afghanistan.

To begin with, I hope that they will carry out a top-to-bottom joint strategic assessment of our counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan, working together with our new ambassador there, Karl Eikenberry, just as General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker did when they took charge in Iraq in the spring of 2007. I also hope they will immediately carry out an overhaul of the military command structure they've inherited, which is inadequate to the challenge there. General Rodriguez should be supported by a full three-star core headquarters in Kabul, to serve as an operational command for the nationwide war effort.

This would replicate the successful structure we have in Iraq, in which there is both a four-star headquarters responsible for overall strategy and a three-star core headquarters beneath it responsible for running the day-to-day war. There is also an urgent need for us to commit to expand the end strength of the Afghan national security forces, both the army and the police, which operate under the strong and effective leadership of two impressive Afghan leaders, Minister of Defense Wardak and Minister of the Interior Atmar.

A total Afghan national security force of 425,000 to 450,000 is, in my opinion, required. That's the army and the police. And the longer we put off this decision, the longer we put off the day that this war can be brought to a successful end – in fact, this is a decision that should have been made long ago and there's really no excuse for further delay. The path ahead in Afghanistan will be hard and it will be costly, but it is the right path for the United States to take in pursuit of our national security and in protection of our national values.

The bipartisan consensus that now exists in support of our efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan will undoubtedly be tested in the months ahead, in particular as the number of American troops in Afghanistan and therefore the number of American casualties rise. But I remain confident that we can and will sustain the long-term domestic political commitment that is necessary to turn the tide against the Islamist extremists who attacked us on September 11th,and with whom we have, ever since, necessarily been at war.

We also have genuine allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan, beginning with Hamid Karzai and Asif Ali Zardari, two well-intentioned and democratically elected presidents. They are our friends on the frontlines of the fight against terrorism. Rather than throwing constant public barbs at them, I think we need to build relationships of mutual trust that will help these two elected presidents become the transformational and historic national leaders I know they want to be.

As President Obama put it last week, and I quote, "We have learned time and again that our security; that is, the security of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States, is shared. It is a lesson that we learned most painfully on 9/11 and it is a lesson that we will not forget," end of quote from the president. In that sense, I would say in conclusion that in many respects, Afghanistan and

Pakistan are where the war on terror really began, but they are also where we and our allies can bring this war to a successful end. Thank you very, very much.

(Applause.)

MR. TELLIS: Thank you, Senator Lieberman. We have about 20 minutes of time for questions, and I'll be happy to recognize people as you raise your hands. Just identify yourself and then direct your question to the senator. And I think we have microphones around the room. Okay.

SEN. LIEBERMAN: There's one in back.

Q: Thank you, Senator. That was excellent. I'm Sadat Rajah (ph) from the World Bank. I'm curious what your views might be on the potential role for Iran and India to play in an Af-Pak situation. I do know that Iran had a tremendous role to play initially in the 2001 phase, setting up the Karzai government. India has made over a billion dollars available in aid. There was some talk just a few minutes ago at the previous session about some money that Pakistan might have if India gets too far into Afghanistan and so on and so forth. So certainly, there needs to be a lot of communication and dialogue and so on, but from your perspective, what role do you think these countries might be able to play in a solution? Thank you.

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Thank you – a very good question. These are both complicated but let me start with Iran, which is more complicated because we are confronting Iran in so many different places – we Americans – as it not just develops nuclear weapons against the clear dictate or expressed intention of U.N. resolutions, but more to the point, has supported proxy terrorist groups throughout the Middle East and now, more recently, even given some aid to the Taliban, with which it has not had a natural alliance.

But, as you know, Secretary Clinton certainly reached out recently to the Iranians to try to involve them in a conference that was held for aid to Afghanistan, including to do something about the drug problem there because as, again, probably this audience knows, it's not much talked about, but there is a serious drug abuse problem in Iran, and the Iranian government is certainly aware of it, and a lot of it is coming from Afghanistan.

So far I don't see that there's been great – there has been a very affirmative response to that. So I'd say that this is another area in which we should test the Iranians to see the extent to which they want to really become members of the broader civilized community of nations and also improve their relations with us. In the meantime, as you also know, there are relations between Iran and the Afghan government, so this is – this is a nuanced situation.

I think the Indian situation is not uncomplicated because of the historic rivalry and conflicts between India and Pakistan and the fear that Pakistan naturally has of, I suppose stated at its worst or most extreme, that Afghanistan will somehow become a kind of subsidiary of India – ridiculous, really. But the Indians have been very generous in foreign aid to the Afghans. As I mentioned in that poll, they're quite popular. And I think we can hope, if we can get to a point where – which seems to be coming closer – where both the leadership of Pakistan and the people realize that their most significant enemies today are the Islamist extremists, the Taliban, not India.

And of course our role hopefully will be to encourage the Indian government with which we have relations that are better than I think we've ever had to encourage the Indian government to take steps to try to reduce any anxiety of the Pakistanis. But I think the Indians have been very effective in providing support to governmental development and economic development at a local level, and I think they're prepared to help even more with both civilian and military assistance, and I think that's a very hopeful course to follow.

MR. TELLIS: The question right here, please. Thank you.

Q: Thank you to Senator Lieberman. My name is John Glenn. I'm with the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Sir, you're not the astronaut?

Q: I'm not the astronaut.

(Laughter.)

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Oh, he's looking very youthful but not quite that –

(Laughter.)

Q: The war in Afghanistan is often seen as central to NATO – its future and its identity. In that respect, how do you respond to concerns perhaps that what we may be doing in Afghanistan is Americanizing the effort there?

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Yeah. Well, look, this is – let me put this as briefly as I can in a historic context. In the aftermath of the Cold War, there were quite reasonable questions about how long NATO – which we always refer to as the most successful military alliance in history, probably was in many ways; secured victory without firing a shot, you know, in the Cold War – how long that alliance would remain vital so long as the enemy, the threat that engendered it, was gone – the Soviet Union. And, you know, we're testing that.

Obviously we still have extraordinarily good and close relations with our European allies, but NATO is a military alliance. This is a significant test for NATO and Afghanistan. It's the first real out-of-theater, out-of-European-theater – traditional NATO theater – involvement. You remember that remarkable willingness of NATO to exercise its authority under, I guess it's Article 5 of the charter: "An attack on one is an attack on all." After we were attacked on 9/11, unfortunately and I think mistakenly, the previous administration rejected that offer, but eventually NATO has come in to help us.

It's been very complicated and very difficult, the extent to which different countries that are members of the NATO forces have different mandates that they follow, different restrictions, caveats on their involvement. It has been difficult to coordinate. On the other hand, some of the countries there – and I don't want to single people out really, but some of them have fought with great valor, great effect, and at great loss of life, or at least life and limb. So there is no question that we are increasing our involvement.

This administration is also trying to get NATO to increase its involvement, so far not too successfully. At some point, this will get – the warmth of the European reaction to President Obama will be tested by whether they really begin to respond to some of the requests he's made: a very small increase in NATO forces from some of the countries has been offered, some money to help put into a trust fund for the Afghan national army.

So, bottom line, this is a necessity for all of us to increase our commitment. I think that we just feel the urgency of this moment, and quite correctly, and I applaud what the president has done to better resource with an additional 21,000 troops, and probably more to follow – American troops to Afghanistan. I certainly wouldn't want to make it America's war totally. I think it's critically important for NATO to hang in there with us with the Afghans and to prove that they can, as a unit, not just individual countries, be effective in meeting this threat.

Look, there is a point here – forgive the length of this but this is an important question. What is really troubling about this is not just the kind of command structure of conflict between many countries involved and how do we coordinate that? And we've made improvements in it, but it's the fact that in most every European country, if you read public opinion polls, there is very little support for NATO to be in Afghanistan – there are couple of exceptions – so that it actually is, in that context, an act of some political courage that the elected leaders of the European countries are sticking with this commitment. But, you know, I wish that they would really stand up and try to make a better case for why it matters to Europe.

I mean, you know, when you think about the terrorist attacks on Madrid and London, and the cells that have been arrested and captured major German cities – you could go on and on – Europe is directly in the line of fire from this world force of Islamist extremism and terrorism. And there is great public anxiety about that in Europe – I know that – but they haven't linked it to what's happening in Afghanistan.

Sometimes my European friends say, well, unfortunately, you suffered 9/11, so the link between Afghanistan and terrorism is clear to Americans. But that ought not to be necessary, and I hope we – I hope President Obama can help turn that around. He tried on the first trip. Unfortunately, I think they all really loved him but didn't increase their support of his policy in Afghanistan. (Laughter). And I hope that will change soon. Yes?

Q: Jim Hirsch (sp). Senator –

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Here is the mike coming to you.

Q: Oh. Senator, Jim Hirsch. How do we keep popular support – well, everything we've said is a good idea. We're a bunch of scholars sitting around here in a room.

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Right.

Q: We think this is a great idea – you know, stay the course, put in more forces – then how do we keep the American people behind us? And, two, how do we convince two countries that we've turned our back on, twice in one case –

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Right.

Q: – and once in the second case, that we're here to stay this time?

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Yeah, that's a very good point, which I did not make in my prepared remarks. This concern – I guess I alluded to it briefly – this concern among the Afghans and the Pakistanis that we're going to leave is not a hallucination out of total air. They've had it happen before. And that's why I think one of the most important things we can do, as Ashley Tellis says in his report, is in every way possible state to the leadership and people of both countries, we're there with you to stay. I suggested a while ago – I didn't repeat it today – that we ought to really be agreeing on five and 10-year plans with both countries.

In fact, if the now-known-as-Kerry-Lugar legislation in the Senate, which would provide $1.5 billion of non-military assistance to Pakistan per year for the next five years, passes – which I think it will – that's the beginning of that kind of commitment. Now, how do we sustain it at home? There is no substitute for leadership and the willingness to go out and make the case. Right now there is a bipartisan consensus in support of what we're doing in Afghanistan. There is a lot of alarm about Pakistan, but of course we don't have troop presence on the ground, so it's a different kind of anxiety.

And, as I said, once you send 21,000 more Americans there, maybe more to follow – probably, I hope, more to follow, you're going to have more casualties, and we just have to keep explaining why this is so critically important. The consensus is there now. It's going to be under – it will be tested, and I think beginning with President Obama and the rest of us we've just got to make the case to the American people.

The good thing to say – and I hope there is some sense to this among the American people – we've learned in Iraq again how to fight a counterinsurgency successfully. We haven't been doing it fully in Afghanistan. And that's why – that's the basis for my expression of confidence, as I stated in my remarks, that we're going to be successful in Afghanistan because we know how to do this and we've got some extraordinarily committed, patriotic, able people in the Afghan security forces who will work with us on that. That story is not finished, as you well know.

MR. TELLIS: Yes?

Q: I'm Dana Galperin (sp) from the Carnegie Endowment.

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Yes.

Q: We hosted Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov here recently, and he mentioned that Russia was willing to cooperate with the U.S. in sharing its lessons from Afghanistan, and I was wondering if there are any formal plans in the works for America to talk with the Russians and share notes, I guess. Thank you.

SEN. LIEBERMAN: There's a good joke here somewhere – (laughter) – but I'm not going to make it. Well, look, I think, generally speaking – generally speaking, the more we can cooperate with the Russian government throughout the region, which of course is closer to Russia than it is to us, but in which we have vital national interests, the better it is for both countries. I mean, I suppose it would make a fascinating conversation, but the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan didn't

actually end happily. I suppose maybe they've learned some lessons that if they had it to do over again they could teach us.

I think we know how to do it, and now we just have to resource our effort in a way that makes it happen. It's never easy. We have all the problems everybody knows about, about building up the Afghan government about getting rid of the corruption, about taking out, as best we can as soon as we can, the narcotics and people who live off of those and also help to corrupt the government. But it's turning there, and so I think really we can do it. Is that it?

MR. TELLIS: If I may –

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Yes, sir, you're entitled to a question.

MR. TELLIS: – abuse the privilege of the chair. As we think about the next few years, are there things that we need to worry about that would upset this current equilibrium of support? Because you described a sort of a fragile equilibrium –

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Yeah.

MR. TELLIS: – domestically, in terms of support for the president's policy. What is it that could push us off the edge, push us in the direction of looking for an alternative like either retrenchment or exit?

SEN. LIEBERMAN: Yeah. (Chuckles.) I shouldn't articulate too many worst-case scenarios. Well, look, I suppose the one I've mentioned is one, which is increasing casualties, but another would be if the economy really doesn't improve and gets worse – which I don't think will happen. I think we're on our way back economically. I don't believe that we're going to go into robust growth again but I think we're going to, by the end of this year or early next year, have positive growth in the GDP. So that's one, I suppose, which would be a battle for dollars, you know: Can we really afford to do this?

The one that I worry about is partisanship. I worry about two things. I worry about people wanting to have this end too quickly, you know? I mean, let's set a deadline. And deadlines just don't work. You know, usually the out party wants to set a deadline. I hate to say it. It's part of the awful – if I can try to use this word – partinization (sic) of American foreign policy. I mean, the Republicans did it during the '90s in Bosnia, when Clinton was president: We've got to set a deadline to get out. And, mistakenly, kind of a deadline was set, which was totally counterproductive.

The Democrats did it with President Bush with Iraq. I mean, it's one thing to say, we've lost; let's get out there as soon as we can, but it's another to say, we are confident we will achieve the progress we want. By X date we're getting out. Tell your enemies what you're going to do. And so I worry that there will be impatience on both sides, and actually the worst could be at different ends of both political parties. Republicans, who stuck with the Iraq War – look, the Afghanistan War has now become President Obama's war, by his choice, which I greatly appreciate and salute him for.

But let us hope and pray that it doesn't get to a point where the party that's out, in this case the Republican Party – unfortunately, as I think some of my fellow Democrats did during the Bush

administration – oppose the war for reasons that are at least in part partisan. That's my worst fear. Right now I'm optimistic that's not going to happen but, you know, eternal vigilance is the price of our liberty, in this case as well as others. Ashley, thank you very much. Thank you all for your interest in attending.

MR. TELLIS: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

(END)