

**CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE**

**FINDING THE RIGHT GRAND STRATEGY  
IN AFGHANISTAN  
SUCCESS IN AFGHANISTAN:  
SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT FORMULA**

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## *Transcript Not Checked Against Delivery*

JACKSON DIEHL: Good morning, everybody. I'm Jackson Diehl of the Washington Post, and we're going to get started with our panel discussion. Our topic today is reconciling with the Taliban and whether or not it's possible, based on the paper that's just been completed here by Ashley Tellis. But I'm sure our discussion will be far more – also be very quite far ranging on the subject of Afghanistan.

We've got an excellent panel here with a lot of varied views about the situation there, in addition to Ashley, who of course is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment and who has been – was at the Department of State and the National Security Council working on these issues for many years. We have Gilles Dorronsoro, who's a visiting scholar at Carnegie, whose research focuses on exactly these issues, security and political development in Afghanistan; and who was previously a professor at the Sorbonne. We have professor Ali Jalali, who is a distinguished professor at the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at National Defense University, and was the interior minister of Afghanistan from January 2003 to October 2005; and among other things, oversaw security for the Loya Jirga there that created Afghanistan's first government.

We have Frederick Kagan, who is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute; one of the intellectual authors of the surge in Iraq; and of course, has traveled extensively in Afghanistan this year and has done a lot of very interesting writing about it. And we also have Alexander Thier, who is the senior advisor in the Rule of Law Center of Innovation at the U.S. Institute of Peace and director of the project on constitution making, peace building and national reconciliation there.

So what we're going to do is Ashley Tellis is going to begin by summarizing his new report on whether or not it's possible to reconcile with the Taliban. And then I'm going to ask each of our other panelists to speak briefly in response, just three or four minutes. And then we'll open it up to discussion. And I invite you to throw all of your brickbats up this way and let's have a good discussion about what's really happening there. So, Ashley, let's start with you.

ASHLEY J. TELLIS: Thank you, Jackson. Let me just start by thanking Jackson for his willingness to moderate this panel and to all my colleagues at the panel for taking the time out to be with us this morning. I must confess that when I started writing the paper on reconciling with the Taliban, I quickly discovered that the issue of reconciliation was really just one tiny piece of a much larger set of issues relating to our own strategy in Afghanistan. And so the report in some sense uses reconciliation as a point of entry to raise a set of questions that go well beyond the issue of reconciliation itself. I'm going to try and speak, if I can, for just about 10 minutes, to lay out what the key themes of the report are before my colleagues take the opportunity to respond to it.

I start out with the assumption that the situation in Afghanistan today is grave, but that success in Afghanistan is nonetheless possible. And success in the report is explicitly defined as the objective of marginalizing the Taliban as an organized opposition in Afghan politics. So I'm not looking for strategic outcome that involves destroying the Taliban or physically eliminating them; simply marginalizing them as an armed – or as a coherent opposition in Afghan politics.

I believe the failures that we have seen in Afghanistan so far are a function of three realities that have come together in viciously interacting with. The first reality, which is painful to admit after eight years, is the fact of U.S. under-commitment. We have simply not taken this theater of operations as seriously as we should have, and we have not resourced this fight with the

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commitment that we should have. The consequence of that is that we have confronted our soldiers in Afghanistan with an unfavorable strategic situation where they've had to make very difficult choices.

And the difficult choices they have ended up making is the emphasis on kinetic attacks over classic counterinsurgency; which has, at its core, the protection of populations, through what General Barno – who is sitting in this audience – pioneered through a notion of area ownership. And the military was confronted with the necessity for such kinetic attacks literally as a means of self-defense, because they did not have the resources, either financial, in technology, and in terms of people, to do classic counterinsurgency as it should have been done from the beginning.

The second I mention that has contributed to failure has been inadequacies in governance, particularly on the part of the government of Afghanistan; and in particular I would flag the absence of order, the absence of probity – which is applied to talking about the pervasiveness of corruption – and the failure to deliver services to the Afghan people. In other words, the failure to increase the legitimacy of the Afghan state amidst the population that it serves.

Now, to be fair to President Karzai, although the government of Afghanistan bears significant portion of the blame, I also flag the inadequacies of the international community. The international community has pledged a great deal of money, but it has committed, in fact, only very small fractions of what has been pledged. And so at the end of the day, we have tried to build the successful experiment in Afghanistan on a shoestring. And so there is plenty of blame to go around.

The third dimension which has contributed to failure – and this is an issue that Ambassador Jawad also flagged this morning – is Pakistan's own diffidence in erasing the Taliban sanctuaries which exist on its territory. These are the realities that have contributed to the outcomes that we are now trying to undo. In this context, I want to summarize my report, to the degree that I can, by deducing seven propositions for your consideration.

And the first proposition is the proposition that both Jessica Mathews and Ambassador Jawad touched on today. And that is it is my view that the Afghan people writ large do not seek a return to Taliban rule today; even if a narrow segment of that population does support the Taliban out of choice, and a somewhat larger but still small segment supports the Taliban out of necessity. But the bottom line, when you weigh all these choices, is that the Afghan people writ large do not want a return to Taliban rule. I think that's a very important point that we need to keep in mind when we think about the prospects for success in the future.

The second point – the second proposition I want to argue for is that the Afghan population – again, in the main – is not opposed to the presence of the international coalition in the country. But it is chagrined by the coalition's performance in Afghanistan. And this is again a very important point because it goes to the heart of the question of whether the troubles in Afghanistan today are precipitated by the presence of the international coalition, or whether they are drawn from roots that are more or less apart from the presence of that coalition.

My argument throughout the report is that the Afghan people are comfortable with the presence of the international population, if the issue is presence. But they are disenchanted by the coalition's failures to deliver what they expected the coalition to deliver. And they are certainly

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peevied at the way in which the coalition conducts military operations, which of course ends up victimizing Afghans more than is necessary.

The third proposition is that the Afghan population, after three decades of war in balance, is actually desperate for the fruits of success. They want security and order; they want economic development; they want good governance and the delivery of services. But it is my very strong argument throughout the report is that this cannot be produced through a narrow counterterrorism or a narrow counterinsurgency strategy. It does require a thoroughgoing commitment to building an effective and responsive Afghan state.

And so for the United States, if we are looking for quick and easy ways out, which are focused on simply redressing problems that matter to us but not to the Afghans, then this effort is likely to fail. In other words, I want to make the point that is often lost in the debate in Washington; that success in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism and success in state and nation-building are not antithetical propositions. In order to achieve success in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, we have to build an effective Afghan state. One is a prerequisite for the other.

The fourth proposition is that building an effective Afghan state, which means increasing state penetration and increasing state legitimacy, is going to require two things. It's going to require transformation in the government of Afghanistan's performance on a variety of issues, primarily governance. And this is not as easy as it sounds, because it's not simply a question of getting people to change their behaviors. It is also fundamentally an issue of whether there are structures in Afghanistan today that actually put an incentive on people having the right behaviors. And so this requires us to look at a variety of issues, including the state and political institutions, the nature of checks and balances, the relationship between the center and the provinces, the structural factors that affect corruption, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera; all the gory details are in the report.

There's a second dimension to this question of building an effective Afghan state. We need to go back to doing counterinsurgency in the way that it was done in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2005. And we have General Barno in the audience. He invested a lot of time and energy in putting into place the kind of response mechanisms that focused on doing counterinsurgency in the right way. The point I want to make, though, in this regard is that our challenge is not simply doing counterinsurgency in the right way; but it's doing counterinsurgency in the right way amidst a great diversity of challenges.

When we talk of the Taliban, we often tend to think of the Taliban as a homogenized, unified opposition force. It's actually an umbrella of different kinds of opposing forces with different kinds of motivations. So even though the leitmotif of successful counterinsurgency will be protecting populations and improving population security, we have to recognize that the context in which population security will be implemented will be very different depending on which parts of Afghanistan one is actually looking at. And it is in this context that the whole discussion about reconciliation with the Taliban in the report takes place.

The next proposition I want to emphasize is that we need to work with Pakistan so that Pakistan can do what is necessary to interdict the Taliban shuras and their sanctuaries. But I believe we cannot make success in Afghanistan hostage to Pakistan delivering its end of the bargain. I think the geopolitics of Pakistani performance is extremely complex, and it lies beyond the capacity of the United States to change in the near term. And I fear that if we end up making our investments in

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Afghanistan hostage to the kinds of changes that need to be made in Pakistan, we may end up losing Afghanistan without anything to show with regards to success in Pakistan either.

The sixth point – the sixth proposition I want to advance is that U.S. choices and U.S. strategy are critical for success in Afghanistan. And I think the United States has to make transparent three very critical commitments if we have to succeed. The first is a commitment to victory. There are many within Afghanistan and in the region who believe that the United States is not really committed to seeing this to completion. We have to very clearly demonstrate through action and through words that we are going to stay until we can generate success. The second is a commitment to resource this campaign in a way that we have not done for the last eight years.

And the third is a commitment to actually stay in Afghanistan for the long term. And I think this is very important for three reasons. First, the most trivial reason: Successful counterinsurgency takes time. You can't do it overnight. You certainly can't do it in an election schedule. Second, there are critical constituencies in Afghanistan that do not support the Taliban but do not support the government of Afghanistan and the coalition, either. And they do not support the government of Afghanistan and the coalition because they have made the calculation that this government and this coalition may not be around for the long term. And so they don't want to be betting on people they think are going to exit. And so if you want to move these constituencies to support the effort, you have to be willing to show a commitment to staying the course for the long term.

The third is that Pakistan will not eschew its commitment to supporting the Taliban if the United States is seen to be exiting the region. If the United States exits the region, it leaves Pakistan with a very difficult security environment. And it induces Pakistan to basically buy other forms of insurance; the most prominent of which are its continued investment in the Taliban. And so if you want Pakistan to change its own calculus, it becomes absolutely imperative that the U.S. commitment to Afghanistan is unwavering.

The last point – and I'm going to end on this note – is the issue relating to President Obama's most recent articulation of his AFPAK strategy. My bottom line is a very simple one: the strategy is courageous and correct. But as of today I think it is incomplete. It needs two things, which are implicit but not stated clearly, and I think it is worth stating clearly. The first is that the United States will commit itself to the task of building a successful Afghan state. The president has said it in so many different ways but this, and I think at some point we need to tell the Congress, we need to tell the constituencies whose support we need for this endeavor, that even though our goals are going to be eliminating terrorism, defeating al Qaeda and defeating the Taliban, we are going to do this through the means of building an effective Afghan state.

The second, which we have been very ginger and shy about articulating, is the commitment to staying there for the long term. In other words, the important point that President Obama ought to make very clear is that we are going to be in Afghanistan not simply to improve the situation in order to exit; but rather, that we're going to be in Afghanistan because we are committed to investing and enduring for the long term. As Senator McCain said about a month ago, somewhat cutely, that the fastest way to exit Afghanistan is to insist that you're going to be there permanently. I think there's an element of profound truth to that, and it's something that we ought to consider as move forward in our deliberations. Thank you, Jackson. Thank you.

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MR. DIEHL: Thank you. I'd like to start – we're going to go through each panelist in turn. I wonder if I could start with you, Gilles Dorransoro. I know in your writings on this subject you've taken some very different positions from what we've just heard. And in particular I'd love to hear you respond to this question of whether or not coalition forces in Afghanistan are resented by the population, accepted by the population – as Ashley Tellis says – or are something that is causing the growth of the Taliban, as you have argued in your papers.

GILLES DORRONSORO: Okay. Thanks. I think Ashley's paper is welcome because it's a proposition of a strategy. And as you know, there is no U.S. strategy for Afghanistan right now, and that's a problem. There is a Taliban strategy but not U.S. strategy. Let's explain that.

The first point may be about this paper is – I'm going to go through the report about two or three things, and one of the questions what you mentioned – is first, the perception of the Taliban as some kind of loose network of affiliated individuals and groups, you know. And that's page 17 of the report. I think this proposition – Ashley's proposition – is extremely misleading for two reasons. First, it's not current with the facts. That's a problem, truly.

How do you explain that there is this kind of loosely affiliated groups when in every district in Afghanistan, especially where they are strong enough, you have a guy appointed by the Taliban who is in charge. In a lot of places, more and more places, you have a judge. They are taking taxes from the people. And what we are seeing is a movement with a logistical network coming from Pakistan to the north of Afghanistan and so on and so on. We could utter lots of facts. So I think that's a real problem.

If you don't understand the Taliban, I don't see how you can build a strategy to fight them. And basically when it is written that opium revenues are indispensable for the Taliban, it's just not true. There is no proof of that. On the contrary, I would say, we know very well who's in control of the opium trade in the South. It's not the Taliban. So the second point, now, is about the so-called Afghan support for the international coalition. Here, we have to be extremely careful. First, there are different polls and they're also polled in what you quoted – the one you quoted, and they are not going in the sense of a strong support of the international coalition.

Second thing: We have to be extremely careful because most of the time people are giving to you the result at the national level. Now, what is important, of course, is not the support of the international coalition in Azarhjad (ph), where there is nobody. The problem is do the Pashtun people south and east, mostly, are supporting the international coalition? Do they support the international coalition?

And the answer is clearly no. Sorry to get you the bad news, but there is no popular support for the international coalition. The international coalition is deeply rejected by the Afghan. We went from the status of guest, if you want, to the status of enemy – dushman. We are dushman in the South and East. It's very clear. Every local expert, every guy working from AMA, every NGO director or whatever, responsible in the field will tell you the same thing. So let's face the reality. There is no popular support for the international coalition in the south and east of Afghanistan. That's a fact and that's of course extremely important for the rest of it.

My third point will be about – or maybe I go too quickly, that – but page 47, you know. Ashley, when you're speaking about the success through late 2003 through 2005 – the success of the

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counterinsurgency operations – I'm sorry. It was a failure. It was a major failure. Actually, if the Afghan war was lost, it's between 2003 and 2005. In 2005, I remind you, Ghazni was lost, Zornat was lost, Logar was lost. The Taliban were making strong progress in the west part. And of course, all the South was totally lost.

So I don't understand exactly. And please, the fact, of course, that this period you have more and more men to search. You know, every year there is a search – so there was a search, and more and more casualties. So I don't know how you can describe that as a success. And it's important because in the rest of your demonstration, you are explaining that the area ownership is working. I don't see that in the fact.

And it goes to next step. You're thinking that the Taliban are strong; are fighting in 50 percent of the districts. That's a wrong perception, because from that you're inferring that they are strong politically in 50 percent of the district. No. In plenty of places in Afghanistan, the Taliban don't fight. Just because they are in control, they have nobody to fight with, you know. Go south of Ghazni; there is no fight because there are just Taliban, you know. Although in places north of Ghazni and other places, or in Khost right now, except in the city. But outside Khost you don't have much fight, you know? From time to time, but the Taliban are totally in control.

So the confusion between the political and the military map is a huge problem, intellectual problem. What does it mean? Clearly, if you focus your troops in this 50 percent districts, the Taliban are going to fight just in another place, you know? They have done that already. You put pressure in Helmand, they go to fight in Farah; or again, go to fight in Badghis. You're not going to stop the insurgency fighting in 50 percent of the district. And then, of course, if you want just to have control of the district and move on, where are the resources? That's missing in the paper? How many thousand men? I can tell you. Considering the state of the Afghan army, you need hundreds of thousands of troops to do that, what you're suggesting. Just to seal the border – who wants to seal the border with Pakistan?

So for these different reasons, you know, I think what – what's worrying me, actually, is that we are losing knowledge. We have the knowledge of what – where the Taliban and what are the Taliban. How is that the knowledge you can find in Afghanistan is not here, not in Washington? How is that possible? This disconnection between what is said in Kabul, what is said in Mazar-e-Sharif, in Gardez, is not coming in Washington. So I'm very surprised, you know. So I think we must go back to the basic thing, facts, how's it working with the Taliban. And I'm sorry. I think this proposition is dangerous because it's going outside – I think it's a consensus on people working in Afghanistan on what the structure of the insurgency is. So that's why I think we have probably some things to discuss more.

MR. DIEHL: Thank you very much. I think what we'll we do is go back to Ashley Tellis at the end of this and have him respond to all of the comments. But first I want to move on to Professor Jalili and get your – I'm sorry, Jalali – and get your response to the report. You know, one thing I'd be interested in hearing is I know that President Karzai is still interested in conducting negotiations with the Taliban. He said so last week in Washington. He still thinks some kind of deal can be made. So I'm just wondering a little bit about where do you think he's coming from and does he know something we don't?

ALI JALALI: Well, there's a lot of misperceptions about talking with Taliban.

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(Cross talk.)

MR. JALALI: There are two types of developments with regards to talking to Taliban, national reconciliation, whatever. One is that's moves without substance. The other one, which actually creates an environment where this reconciliation or talks will be conducive to a kind of stability and peace, is not happening.

The first measures, talking to Taliban from the situation that Afghans find themselves – the Afghan governments with the international community find itself – is, I think, is not going to bring some kind of substantial results. Usually, the two sides in a conflict agree to talks when they believe that they can get something out of these talks which they cannot get out of conflict or fighting. That situation is not there. The Taliban believe that they are winning.

You go to – outside major cities, you see Taliban setting up checkpoints, doing body search of people, and even in some areas – go to Farah. Taliban are moving in 10 or 12 pickup trucks just in the front of government checkpoints, and they do not want to interfere with them. So that kind of a situation that you have in Afghanistan – I don't think the Taliban have the incentives now to get engaged in serious talks that will lead to peace and stability or kind of an agreement.

I was talking to a person last week in Kabul. He was a person I know for a long time; he's from my hometown. He is working with an NGO. But he dared to go to his village in Ghazni. I said, how he can go to Ghazni? He said, well, like all these other people, they send a son or nephew or a brother to Taliban in order to secure their presence and their ability. That's the kind of a Taliban that you are talking today. It is not the people who are motivated by ideology or even those tribes who are aggrieved or mistreated. This is the people who are – just want to survive. So therefore, unless you have control of your territory, it will be very difficult for Taliban to have the incentive to talk to you seriously.

Then you take that there's a commission in Afghanistan working for the past six years under a very respectable mujahedeen leader, Mr. Mojaddedi. The Program Tahkim-e-Solh, they call it – PTS, they call it. They claimed that they have reconciled 7,000 Taliban commanders and fighters. But you see, what difference does it make in Afghanistan? The situation is worse than that. So therefore, I think talks with Saudi Arabia – talks in Saudi Arabia, talks with Taliban I think is not going to bring effective or fruitful results unless you change the environment. I think you have to change the environment in order to create a situation where Taliban or others will be able to talk in a serious way. And the legitimate ones that they can deliver, those people.

There are talks that, okay, there is a loose organization of Taliban. It is a loose – but it's always led by certain groups. Therefore, I think as long as Afghanistan does not – or the Afghan government or the international community fails to control the territory and win the trust of people, I don't think the Taliban will have the incentive to get engaged seriously in any kind of peace talks.

And today in Afghanistan, several issues dominate the discourse in Kabul. One is the recent elections. People looked for this election probably that would bring change. On the other hand, the situation in Bala Buluk and Farah; the casualties of civilians – that is the issue people are talking about. And also, the situation in Pakistan. People discuss these issues because they think that probably there will be a way to change the situation. Here, earlier, there was talk whether the

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casualties – the Afghans tolerate the presence of the international community. I think the level of acceptance of Afghans of international forces depends on what impact it has on their lives.

You know, these casualties were there in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005. I had to deal with it. In Moghor, dozens of children were killed because of the bombing on a compound. In Helmand, the wedding was bombed. Even in 2002, I was in Kabul when a group were coming to participate in inauguration of President Karzai. They were bombed. But people at that time did not raise that kind of a ruse because they thought that this can bring some change – positive change to their lives.

After seven years, when they see there's no change in their lives, so they associate the presence of international forces with negative things. And therefore, I think it not because they do not tolerate it; that because they do not see changes in their lives and they associate their presence with negative things. And that will continue unless the change comes to the situation.

And I hope that the presence or the addition of new troops will lead to protection of population rather than going from compounds to bomb a target and come back to the compound. I think it is going to be more effective if the new – the surge protect populations. And there was also some proposition that the war was lost in 2002, 2005. In 2005, I went all over Afghanistan. In Ghazni I went to my own village to all places. In Helmand, I went all the way to Bahram Shar which is on the border with Pakistan, and the other side is – these areas are out of control.

I think the war was lost – or partially lost – after 2005. In 2006, with the surge in Iraq, actually, was not – the significance was psychological. In a time that everybody thought that, well, the U.S. is about to leave Iraq, it was psychological. No, that was a new commitment. Thirty thousand troops, the impact was non-military; psychological. In Afghanistan, when Afghanistan was making success in 2005 or 2004, there was a reduction, or a message that the troops will be reduced. That also had a psychological impact. Today there's new troops that are going to Afghanistan. I hope they will give new hopes to people in Afghanistan and in the neighborhood or in the neighboring countries that there's a new commitment. That will have that psychological impact.

So therefore, just three points I would like to emphasize, briefly. Afghanistan's transition from conflict to peace and stability is basically a state-building challenge. These others are all the results of the situation. Second, the state-building effort is strongly influenced by an array of destabilizing elements in the region. So therefore, you have to sequence things. First, we have to create the space for state-building, then build the state; good governance and development.

So in the second one or two years, I think the major challenge – how to secure, how to create that space. And third, which is very important, particularly in light of some suggestions to scale back or scale down the vision or the mission in Afghanistan – long-term stability in Afghanistan can be achieved only through efforts directed toward changing the divisive situation, rather than adopting solutions solely to accommodate the existing fragmentation based on temporary gains. Thank you.

MR. DIEHL: Thank you very much. I'd like to turn now to Frederick Kagan for his reaction. And among other things, Fred, I wonder – I'm sure our audience would love to hear your assessment of the change in command we've had since yesterday in Afghanistan and whether you think that will – why you think it happened and whether you think it will advance the U.S. strategy there.

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FRED KAGAN: Thank you, Jackson, and thank you, Ashley, for a terrific report and for inviting me on this panel. I will now offer you some comments from the extreme right wing of this table – (laughter) – where I see Carnegie has quite appropriately sat me. (Laughter.)

I'd like to start by saying I feel rather like Bill Murray in "Groundhog Day". The degree to which the conversation that we're having about Afghanistan recapitulates the conversations that we had about Iraq in 2006 and 2007 is remarkable and alarming. I'm hoping that the fact that it is, after all, a Democratic president with his selected team that is moving forward rather than a highly, shall we say, controversial Republican president with some years of demonstrable failure behind him, who is making this effort will lead to a different outcome.

But it is distressing to me that we are continuing to have the same sort of dispute about the situation on the ground that rarely references actual facts, which is the fundamental problem that we always had in Iraq, and frankly, that we have in Afghanistan as well; the same sort of vague, hand-waving rejections of the assumptions, and in some cases, evidentiary conclusions of those who have done a tremendous amount of work to produce strategies without offering either alternative demonstrable truths or alternative strategies that might actually have the hope of securing American national interests, which is what this is all about; and vague references to the requirement for hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops if we're going to succeed; despite the fact that, as it was evident in Iraq, it's evident in Afghanistan.

It is possible to do a real troop-to-task analysis and determine what the requirements are. It is not necessary nor would it be advisable to send hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops into Afghanistan. And this is something that we should – can and should be discussing in detail, rather than with the same sort of hand-waving discussions that have, as their purpose, demonstrating the impossibility of the entire task, and therefore, the folly of the strategy that is being proposed by President Obama.

So I think it's very important that we try to escape from this conversation and focus on what is really going on, which is very much more difficult in Afghanistan to establish ground truth than it was in Iraq, for a variety of reasons; starting with the fact that the ground truth is actually much more complicated than it was in Iraq, in my opinion. That doesn't make the war harder. It doesn't mean that the task of succeeding is harder. It does mean the task of comprehending is harder.

And I think that we've had a combination of the difficulty in comprehension and the fact that the media has not been paying a whole lot of attention to this war. I'm perfectly willing to take on – you know, I never take any blame on behalf of the Bush administration, in which I never served and which I spent most of my time attacking from the outside. But I'm happy to recognize that the Bush administration did not pay enough attention to Afghanistan.

But oddly enough, the New York Times was not exactly covering its front pages with stories about Afghanistan during all of this period when it was complaining about how the Bush administration was paying attention to the war. And one of the results of that is that we are now scrambling as we come to focus on this theater as a nation to try to understand a very complicated situation very quickly, where media outlets that were happy to complain about the Bush administration inattention, we're now paying for their inattention as well.

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So this is something that we're going to have to deal with. I think that we can, and I think that the first thing that we need to do as we do this is to take a big deep breath and avoid the danger to begin hyperventilating about how difficult it is as we re-engage with this situation and come to realize its complexity and its difficulties. Ashley's perfectly capable of defending himself, as I've seen him do on a number of occasions, and so I will not attempt to do that, other than to say that as laid out his main points in this terrific report, I found myself wondering what I could possibly add to them, since they seem to me to be very self-evidently correct. But as anyone who knows me knows, I will always have something to say. So I will make a few quick points and then briefly address Jackson's issue.

First of all, Afghanistan is not Pashtunistan. And it is not the case that the only thing that matters in Afghanistan is what the Pashtuns think about things. And I'm afraid that we've gotten ourselves into a situation where we are so – we are fighting the war within Pashtunistan, and so we're concerned about what Pashtuns think. But it actually matters a great deal that the rest of Afghanistan largely supports, or in many cases, overwhelmingly supports, the international effort. I must take issue with my French colleague on a couple of factual matters. It is not the case that there is no fighting north of Pashtunistan because the Taliban controls it. I can assure you that the Taliban does not control the Panjshir Valley. Perhaps I misunderstood what you were saying.

(Cross talk.)

MR. KAGAN: Okay. Very good. One point I'm not sure – I'm sure that I did not misunderstand is that it is not true that there is no fighting around Khost. I was in Khost recently. I was outside of Khost, in fact, at a village that had been struck by a Taliban suicide bomber not very many months before. I can assure you that there is quite a lot of conflict down there. Nor is it the case that it is entirely clear where the people stand on this issue or that issue or any other issue. In fact, as is often the case in counterinsurgency, the people are primarily waiting to see who is going to win. And this is an issue that is still on the table. And if we're going to succeed, it's an issue we need to take off the table.

But the fact that the non-Pashtun populations in Afghanistan largely or overwhelmingly support our effort is one of the things that makes our effort in Afghanistan fundamentally different from the Soviet war in Afghanistan. And we hear this comparison all the time. But you have to keep in mind that the Soviets were defeated primarily in the Panjshir, in the Tajik and the Uzbek areas. They were also defeated in Pashtunistan. We are not fighting in those areas; on the contrary, we have staunch allies there. The only thing that this war has in common with the Soviet war is that they're both being fought in Afghanistan, and insofar as we are fighting the same – some of the same Pashtun enemies, although not all of them. But the notion that because the Soviets lost, somehow we can't lose – somehow we can't win is laughable. And I'm happy to go into as much detail as you want about the Soviet war.

But enough. I think that we need to refocus on two things. And I think that to answer Jackson's question, I'm extremely pleased with the change in leadership that has been announced. Stan McChrystal did a phenomenal job in Afghanistan. And to those who are concerned about his focus as a special operator on the counterterrorism campaign in Iraq, of course, that was his job when he was commander of the special operations forces in Iraq. He ran a magnificent campaign against the terrorists in Iraq, which, until the surge began, was not succeeding. And it was not

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succeeding because of any flaw in his campaign. It was not succeeding because it was nested into an intelligent counterinsurgency strategy.

The remarkable thing about Stan McChrystal is that as soon as General Petraeus came in and began implementing the proper counterinsurgency strategy, General McChrystal immediately nested his counterterrorism efforts into that strategy brilliantly in a way that supported the counterinsurgency strategy and made it work. And what he did was a critical component of success, working alongside General Petraeus and General Odierno. I believe that General McChrystal understands counterinsurgency and I believe that he, better than many others, understands how the Special Forces component can play into a skillful counterinsurgency campaign. So for that reason, among others, I think that he's a terrific choice; and I think General Rodriguez, who's been there before, is also a terrific choice.

And it's time – it is time to have a fresh set of eyes look at this, as Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen said. And we now have a completely fresh set of eyes. We have General Petraeus at CENTCOM; we have General McChrystal and General Rodriguez at ISAF. We have Ambassador Eikenberry, who's now taken up his post. I think this team has an opportunity to conduct a thorough strategic review of the situation, review the campaign plan and fundamentally re-direct our strategy. And when they do, I think and hope that you will find it oriented on two fundamental objectives that have not previously been the focus of ISAF efforts.

One is the effort to help re-establish or in some cases establish the legitimacy of the Afghan government, which is the center of gravity of success in this endeavor, and it is something that we have not been focused on, unfortunately. And when I say "we", I don't just mean the U.S. military, although I usually speak from that perspective. I also mean the development community. And it is not – although Ashley's quite right, that the development community has talked a much better game than it has walked in terms of delivering cash, we have to recognize that a great deal of the cash that the development community has delivered to Afghanistan has undermined the legitimacy of the Afghan government. Because a large amount of that cash has been sent – in fact, the overwhelming proportion of that cash – has been delivered by NGOs and international organizations to the Afghan people, bypassing the Afghan government; which is, by the way, the opposite of what we did in Iraq.

And as you do that, then it becomes the NGOs and the international organizations that are delivering services to the Afghan people, which actively undermines the government of Afghanistan. And that's one of the key problems that we have, and it comes from a mindset within the development community, among other things and organizational problems. That has to be changed. And obviously, military operations have to be calculated entirely based on the question, does this or does this not help enhance the legitimacy of the Afghan government? And if it doesn't, we have to be not doing it.

And the other thing that we need to focus on, which has unfortunately received very little attention, is rule of law. The rule of law program in Afghanistan has been a catastrophe. There is functioning court system in Afghanistan. Insofar as we've been focused on this, we've been focused on it from the perspective of being able to arraign terrorists or go after narco-traffickers; which is fine, but is not what the Afghan population requires. If you ask what is the principal service that the Taliban provides to the Afghan people, the answer is Sharia courts. Why? Because the Afghan population requires arbitration. It requires dispute resolution in a situation where very few people can

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actually show clear title to land. And the absence of a functioning court system opens space for the Taliban to offer something which would not otherwise be attractive.

Villagers in Afghanistan do not need Sharia courts to come in and stone women for adultery. If they want to do that, they're perfectly capable of doing that. That's not something that is attractive to them, in particular. What they do need is someone who can come in and make decisions about land and property disputes and enforce them. And the failure to develop a rule of law system that addresses that problem has opened – has created one of the openings that allows the Taliban to function. We have to focus on this.

And the other aspect of rule of law, of course, is the issue of corruption in the Afghan government, which goes directly to the issue of legitimacy of the Afghan government. I would trade all of the hectares of poppy that have been or ever will be eradicated for the prosecution by the government of Afghanistan of two key leading individuals – pick any two, and one of them does not have to be Karzai's brother – for narcotics-related charges. And I frankly think that that would have a much better, much more significant impact on this effort than all of the poppies that we could possibly kill. I hope and expect that our new strategy will focus on establishing legitimacy and rule of law in Afghanistan as part of a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy that is aimed at creating a functional Afghan state, as Ashley said.

And lastly, I'll make one brief comment before Jackson kills me. I think that we do not entirely understand the Pakistan problem in Afghanistan; and I think that it's important just to focus on one aspect of it. I disagree a little bit with Ashley – and very nervously because he's much more of an expert on this than I am – that the whole problem in Pakistan is that the Pakistanis are afraid that we will leave, and the situation will collapse, and therefore they need to support the Taliban and Haqqani as insurance.

I think that the elements in Pakistan that are supporting the Quetta Shura and Haqqani are in fact afraid that we will succeed. And the reason why they're afraid is because they see us as a Trojan horse that is injecting India into Afghanistan. And they watch with dismay, Indian companies coming in to build roads, and they note that India is our strategic partner, and they see this as a trap. And so I believe that a lot of the elements that are supporting our enemies are doing so, not because they're afraid we're going to leave, but because they're afraid we're going to win.

The solution is similar. The solution is – but it's a matter of communication. We don't need to convey to the Pakistanis only, we're going to stay here until we succeed, so you don't need to worry. We need to convey to the Pakistanis, if you continue to support the Haqqani network and the Quetta Shura and our enemies, we will defeat them. They will lose, and you will then have no influence in this country. The only way that Pakistan is going to have influence in Afghanistan in the future, we have to make clear, is by dealing with the people that we support, which is to say, the legitimate government of Afghanistan. And I think that's the message that we need to get over to the Pakistanis not in fear. Jackson, thank you for your patience with me.

MR. DIEHL: Thank you, Fred. And now I'd like to turn to Alexander Thier. And since I've had a question for everyone, I'd like to ask you to address one thing that Ashley talked about, which is the question of nation-building and the ambiguity he sees in the Obama administration's approach to this, in which they seem to be embracing elements of nation-building in their strategy

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but they haven't come out and said that that's what they intend to do. And I wonder if you see the same problem and what should be done about it.

ALEXANDER THIER: Thanks to Ashley and the rest of the terrific panel and the audience for having me – with one exception, and that is Ali Jalali. (Laughter.) And I'm disappointed that Ali's here, not because he didn't have good things to say, but because his presence here means that he did not run for president, something that many of us were hoping he would do. I think it's important, as you've heard some of these different narratives about Afghanistan and Pakistan – I think one important way to square the circle is in fact that narratives on the ground are very fluid, as the situation is fluid.

The opinion of Pashtuns and Hazaras and Waziris is not monolithic. People have been dealing with an extremely fluid environment over the last 15 years. When I think, for instance, that I sat for most of 2004 – rather, most of 1994, in the Hazarajat, in what was one of six or seven principalities in what had become the quintessential failed state on earth, Afghanistan, from 1992 to 1996 or '7; where the country was divided up completely. You had to have visas to get into different parts of the country. Different people were printing money. It was almost impossible to get from one part of the country to another – like that joke in Vermont, that you can't get there from here. It was almost impossible to get to one part of Afghanistan from another part of Afghanistan.

And then I think about jumping 10 years ahead to the experience that I had at the end of 2003 and beginning of 2004, where all of these people who had divided up the country, who had ethnicized what had previously not been an ethnic conflict, sat together under the same tent, talking about whether it was going to be a presidential or parliamentary system; the extent to which national languages would be incorporated. Some of it was a show. It certainly didn't necessarily run deep.

But there you have, in this 10-year period of time, a narrative of complete division going to a narrative of, in some ways, what went overboard in being complete unity. When you look at the Afghan constitution, it's one of the most highly centralized constitutions in the world; agreed to largely by the different parties, even though on the ground, Afghanistan does remain one of the most highly decentralized polities in the world. And so I think it's important to realize that these are extremely fluid narratives, and in a fluid environment.

The good news, however, about that fact is that it does actually mean in the most important way that we can influence what is happening on the ground in Afghanistan. You know, the number one principle of counterinsurgency is that it's not about killing the insurgents, right? It's about how to influence the rest of the population to present to them some other idea. So I think it brings me to the three points I want to make quickly – and also addressing Jackson's question about the role of nation-building or state-building in the current dynamic within Afghanistan.

So the two questions I ask myself are first of all, can Afghans successfully govern themselves? Something that we need to fundamentally know about the outcome of this narrative. And the second is, can the international community successfully support the process of Afghan self-governance? Well, on the face, an honest assessment of the last seven years would indicate that both of the answers to that question is no; at least not so far. Afghan self-government has not succeeded well, and the international community's ability to seed – that is s-e-e-d – Afghan self-governance has also been terrible. And I put that burden particularly on the United States, although some of our European partners are certainly to blame.

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But the outcome of that question – and I think the major, major challenge to, I think, Gilles' perspective on this environment – is what is the alternative? And so it's like Churchill's formulation about democracy: is there – given all of the bad outcomes, what is the least worst outcome? And clearly, the least worst outcome in this situation is effective Afghan self-governance that is reasonably democratic but certainly competent, with the support of the international community. Because the alternative is far, far worse.

In fact, we have seen that film before. That was 1992, 1991 in Afghanistan. We made that choice. We made the choice to leave Afghanistan to regional competition, to Islamic extremism, to proxyism. And we learned the story – the end of that story – all too well. Those of you who were paying attention, it was a horrifically painful story long before September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. But that's what brought it home to the entire world and what makes all of those other options continuing, untenable.

So three points about that, I think largely support Ashley's central thesis. And that if I have a criticism, it's to make one point that I don't think comes out strongly enough in his report; although I think logically follows from it. The first is this question of legitimacy and ownership. You know, there has been this false dichotomy between counterterrorism and the state-building or the nation-building debate. And I think that it's largely been eradicated. It still exists in the administration strategy only to the extent that I think politically there's a strong need to emphasize the counterterrorism. But when you really read the strategy, it's a state-building strategy. Point one makes the counterterrorism point, and then points, basically, two through six are basically all about state-building and responsible governance, both in Afghanistan and in Pakistan.

But there is a false dichotomy between these things because the only way that you get to the counterterrorism strategy effectively is through state-building. And again, that's the point of looking at the '90s in Afghanistan. Can we manage the threat in Afghanistan and Pakistan by predator? The answer is no. The only way that we manage the threat in Afghanistan is through some degree of Afghan self-governance that can maintain Afghanistan not being a safe haven. And so then people say, but the al Qaeda is predominantly in Pakistan; they're not in Afghanistan. Well, if we fail in Afghanistan, they will go right back. So it's a fairly hollow argument, I think.

But the conclusion – and this is where we have really gotten things wrong – is not to somehow build some great top-down Afghan state that is going to be able to suddenly become competent for security and governance and economic development. It is in fact making the Afghan population the fundamental engine of progress, rather than the unwilling subjects of rapid change. Because what you see in Afghanistan is a dynamic that has been repeated over and over in the last century of Afghanistan's history; this dynamic of rapid modernization led by an elite in Kabul that doesn't take account often of the realities on the ground, and doesn't bring along the Afghan population sufficiently to reduce the tensions and to make sure that this is truly a national project and one that actually takes cognizance of the potential of Afghans; not only in Kabul, which is great, but also throughout the countryside. And that has been our – I think our most significant failing.

The second key point is creating a culture of accountability. And I think that this point has been made several times. You know, the reason that we have been talking about rule of law – some of us; a small minority of people talking about Afghanistan have been talking about rule of law since

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2001 – is not just because we feel bad about past abuses. It is because fundamentally, impunity undermines stability.

If you look at the game plan of the Taliban in 1994, they were not leading with an Islamist foot. They were not bringing Islam to Afghanistan. The mujahedeen were certainly capable of that. What they were bringing was law and order. And the terrific response that the Taliban received in 1994 – which is to an extent, although a much lesser extent, being mirrored again in some of the southern provinces and the eastern provinces of the country – is because they again represent law and order where the government and the international community have failed to represent that fundamental face of legitimacy to the Afghan population.

And I still believe fundamentally that it is not the Afghan – that is not the Taliban insurgency that is strong, that is allowing them to make inroads. It is the fact that the Afghan government and the international community supporting it have been weak in showing a face of competent, legitimate, non-corrupt government in the country. And so the single most important thing we can do as far as changing this narrative, of changing people's perception of the government and the likelihood of long-term success is changing people's perception of the accountability of the Afghan government.

And finally – this final point, which I think does need to be developed more and is often missing in the strategies that are generated in Washington – is this fundamental notion of developing local existing Afghan competence. We need a strategy in Afghanistan that certainly focuses on the development of national institutions. We need to keep focusing very hard on the development of the Afghan national army; some of the finance mechanisms are extremely important to development; and rule of law, represented by the courts primarily in urban areas. There's a tremendous amount that we can do in the near term.

But at the same time, Afghanistan does remain a decentralized and even atomized society. But that doesn't mean that it doesn't have capabilities that continue to exist at the local level. In 1994, when I was walking from village to village, people are able to solve their problems; people are able to determine how water is distributed within a community. Not only because the Afghan government wasn't there to do it before them, but fundamentally these capacities have always existed. Afghanistan's state penetration has always been relatively light. And when it got stronger, it was largely a security focus, which should continue to be the security focus.

And so we need to think about pulling apart those things which can be done most effectively at the local level and those things that can be done at the national level, and creating a plan that actually works for the existing capacities in Afghanistan. And so the final point that I'll make about that is looking at one of the strategies that has been so successful in Afghanistan: the national solidarity program. And why has this strategy worked in Afghanistan? You have the capacity of the international community, which frankly is primarily money and some good ideas.

You have the strength – or the capacity of the Afghan national government, which is also planning and actually providing a conduit for resources. You have the strength of the Afghan community, which is fundamentally that they know best and can contribute best to development at the local level. There is evidence out there, for instance, that schools that are built by random USAID contractors are burned at a much higher rate than schools that are built through the national solidarity program. And why is that? It's simple. The community invested in it. The community

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put their labor and their materials; they put their decision making into it. And so they have some ownership from it. I mean, it's really 101 of development around the world. And yet this hasn't been the primary approach.

But when the national solidarity program has taken that approach – and then the final capacity is the NGOs. You know, there was not a service delivered in Afghanistan for most of the last 20 years that wasn't actually delivered by an NGO. And those programs like the national solidarity program and the national health program have taken cognizance of that and have been able to deliver services by tying together all four of these capacities that actually exist on the ground in Afghanistan, because none of them alone can succeed. So the lesson there is that not only do we need to reinvigorate the state-building agenda in Afghanistan, but we need to do so in a way that takes cognizance of local realities and local capacities in the country. Thank you.

MR. DIEHL: Thanks very much. Ashley Tellis, would you like to respond to some of the comments so far?

MR. TELLIS: Maybe touch on three or four themes. I think the argument that Gilles had about the Taliban and the nature of the Taliban as being unified movement as opposed to my characterization, which is a collection of groups which are in some kind of a loose coalition – I think our difference on this is really semantic, because both are true. There is an umbrella called the Taliban which consists of different components, of which the Afghan Taliban are one element. There is a Haqqani network. There are different groups that play under this umbrella of the Taliban. And so when I think of them as a loose coalition, I'm looking at the constituents synoptically.

Now this doesn't mean within the Afghan Taliban itself, that there is no hierarchy, organization or structure. If you look at any of these groups and in a sense drill down, it's quite obvious that there's a hierarchic structure; that there is a campaign plan. And if you look at the way the Taliban has managed its presence in Afghanistan, it's very clear that there are shadow governors, there are shadow district governors, there are shadow commanders. So to say there is a hierarchy within one particular element in the combination, and to say that the Taliban is a conglomeration of many such elements, I don't see it as a contradiction. I see this as just something that we probably semantically disagree.

I think the core of Gilles' disagreement with my paper and with the argument that I'm making in the paper, I think hinges fundamentally on one or two issues. The first issue is whether the presence of the international community, and particularly the United States, by itself is precipitating the forces of nationalist reaction. And because I believe that it is not the presence of our forces that is the problem, but the performance of our forces that is the problem, that I can logically then argue that we ought to have more forces if more are required; but more importantly, focus on issues of performance. Because to the degree that these forces do what many of my fellow panelists have argued, which is make population security central, help the state rebuild its presence at the sub-national level, focus on creating conditions for an effective delivery of services, et cetera, et cetera, the conditions of services can be met.

If, however, you take the position that it is not performance, but the very presence, in a sense, of a foreign body in Afghanistan that is stimulating the forces of reaction, then obviously everything that I propose in the strategy is misconceived. And I think that is a fundamental difference. The other issues with respect to, you know, what is the role of opium revenues relative

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to other revenues of the Taliban, I think this is open to discussion. I have no strong views on whether opium is indispensable or not. I looked at my own formulation in the text while Gilles was speaking, and the point that I made was that opium – Taliban operations can continue even if opium production was not an issue. But that opium is not – is a non-trivial source of revenue, and I think that's the difference. It's non-trivial, meaning it is significant. But if opium disappeared, it doesn't mean that the Taliban's operations would disappear.

On the fundamental question of whether we enjoyed successful operations from 2003 to 2005, I think this is a simple empirical question. My own view is that if you look at the record, whether it is in terms of IED attacks, whether you look at the question of suicide bombings, the extent of control; and if you map it, say, from 2002 onwards, I think the inflection points are all post-2005. And to my mind, the inflection points – this inflection point occurs for two or three reasons.

One, after 2005, the bulk of our energies were increasingly sucked up by Iraq. We simply didn't have the resources to support Afghanistan. Two, we sent all the wrong signals post-2005 about the relative importance of Afghanistan compared to Iraq. And whether we frightened the Pakistanis – and there are really two views on this, and I think Fred is absolutely right – there is one view that says we're fighting the Pakistanis, and that's why they upped the ante by increasing their support for the Taliban.

There's another view that says, no, what we did was create an opportunistic moment for the Pakistanis to, in a sense, do what they were hoping we would do anyway, which is exit. And that's why they upped the ante and increased Taliban support. But the bottom line is I see the inflection point really as being a post-2005 inflection point. And if you look at DOD slides that basically track things like casualties, loss of terrain, IED attacks, et cetera, et cetera, I think it at least supports a simple reading of this fact.

The point about – the last point that Gilles made which I think is very important and is something that we need to collectively think about is this whole question of whether there is a collective loss of knowledge about Afghanistan. If this is true, then I think we, as a country, then we are in serious trouble. I mean, if there is a fundamental disconnect between what Gilles is seeing in Afghanistan on the ground, which takes his recommendations in the direction that seems to run, at least to a substantial degree offset from what the national direction is – and I presume that the national direction is based on a certain understanding of these realities on the ground – then I think we need to have a serious conversation about why we reached such divergently – such divergent recommendations.

Now, part of it may simply be politics. You know, people have different appetites for different courses of action, et cetera, et cetera, and that is understandable. But if the divergence is caused not because there are differences in political preference or differences in risk aversion, but because we really have different understandings of what the realities are, then I think we do need to engage in a serious conversation about this.

I'm going to make just two or three other points which others have made which I think are worth restating. The point that Ali Jalali made about the issue of reconciliation at this point as being at least untimely because of the reverses of the coalition are supporting, I think is absolutely fundamental. And the core of my report basically argues that – it's not reconciliation is a bad idea in

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principle. It's just that it is likely to be unsuccessful if the people you want to reconcile with think they have the upper hand. It's a very rational calculus. If the Taliban thinks they have the upper hand, they don't need to be reconciling with the government of Afghanistan. If anything, the government of Afghanistan ought to be reconciling with them.

And so if you want to reach out to the Taliban with any kind of reconciliation strategy, you have to do it after, in a sense, putting the building blocks – putting the building blocks in place. I have no difficulty whatsoever with what Fred said, except that I would flag what I think is the contested nature of the issue of Pakistani support. And honestly, if you ask me on Monday I'd give you exactly the argument you gave; if you ask me on Tuesday, I'd give you the opposite. It's something that when I was in government I looked at very closely, and I must confess that there is a profound ambiguity in the evidence. There's a profound ambiguity in the evidence. And it supports both points of view. And you need to have a prior theory about the character of the Pakistani state and what the Pakistani states objectives are for you to draw the conclusions you want to on the question of Pakistani support. But it is not transparent and obvious.

The point that Alex made at the end, which I think is absolutely important and I wish I had emphasized that more, is the question of local capacity. I talk about it in passing when I raised the questions about powers of the center versus powers of the sub-national level. But you're absolutely right in that if we attempt to build this project, in a sense, from Kabul outwards, we are going to run into all kinds of difficulties. And one of the reasons why in the report I emphasize that the unit of action for the Obama administration subsequently should be the district; and the reason why I focus on the district is because I see that as being first a manageable unit of analysis.

And that's where to my mind this campaign is going to be won or lost. It's not going to be won or lost in Kabul. It's going to be won or lost district by district. And so you're absolutely right. It's implicit, but I wish I had the presence of mind to make that more explicit. But I want to thank all my panelists for very thoughtful responses. And if I survive to write a second edition of the report, you will see your fingerprints more closely. Thank you.

MR. DIEHL: Thank you. We're going to go to discussion now. And I just want to begin by throwing out one question for our panelists which interests me. Several of them have talked about the fact that the Taliban is sort of a label that applies to various different elements now; and a couple of those elements, particularly the Haqqani group and the Hekmatyar group very much have identities of their own that pre-date the Taliban, that go back to the fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Those fellows, Haqqani and Hekmatyar, were allies of the United States, in fact, at one time or another; were supported by the CIA.

And one thing I think that gets asked here in Washington is are those groups that are not part of the Quetta Shura but seem to have fallen under their wing or allied with them in recent years more amenable to some kind of negotiation at this point than is the Quetta Shura? And should we be focusing on them? And I've heard the argument made that had the Loya Jirga – the original Loya Jirga of 2002 – been conducted in a different way and those groups had been more included at that time, they would be on our side now and not on the side of the Taliban. So I'd love the response of our panelists. So maybe starting with Ashley.

MR. TELLIS: My view is that certainly at the time of the Loya Jirga, the representation that we had was less than perfect. But I think that Loya Jirga could, in the aftermath of a very traumatic

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event where the United States and its coalition partners saw at least some factions of the Pashtun population as being adversaries because of their support for the Taliban. And so there were elements that ended up being outside the tent that inside the tent.

Having said that, I am not convinced that certainly someone like Hekmatyar is reconcilable, because he has a simple objective of local control. He wants to control certain areas where his followers come from. And at some point, that runs counter to the objective of the coalition, which is to build a state that at least in principle exercises the authority over its entire national boundaries. And so both Haqqani and Hekmatyar, in that sense, are unreconcilable because their local interests run counter to what are – the objectives in Kabul might be. Now whether there can be some sort of an arrangement between the government in Kabul and these two individuals is a slightly different question. But I'm not optimistic, at least in the near term, that that's possible. Jalali is probably a better judge of this question than I am.

MR. DIEHL: Well, I was about to turn to him. Professor Jalali, do you have a view?

MR. JALALI: I think the mistake was made in Bonn in 2001. At that time, the Taliban were removed from power; they were not defeated. And the majority of people who supported Taliban were not ideologically motivated. At that time, 80 percent of Taliban were ready to join this process. But at that time, every Taliban was a terrorist, linked with al Qaeda. Neither the Northern Alliance nor the international community would agree to accept the Taliban, even when Karzai in Shah Wali Kot, near Kandahar, was about to give protection to some Taliban leader, there was a message from Washington: if that happens, everything will go south.

And therefore, the mistake was made. In that round, 80 percent of Taliban were ready – they just wanted protection. They wanted to live in the country. But that was ignored. The second mistake or opportunity that was missed was in 2002, 2003, where the many leaders of Taliban were contacting the government. They contacted me. They contacted the minister of defense. They contacted President Karzai. They wanted to come back. And they just – they wanted protection.

At that time, the kind of protection they needed was a kind of protection that was agreed upon on all stakeholders. They were not convinced that only ministry of interior can give them protection. I offered that protection after talking to President Karzai. But they wanted a mechanism that everybody would buy into it; the international community, the United States, the ISAF; you have the UNAMA, ministry of defense, ministry of interior, and intelligence; all of them. But that didn't happen. We were not even able to draw a blacklist, that these people are not reconcilable and the rest can be accepted. That was the problem in that time.

Then they did not see any other alternative but to join the Taliban. With Hekmatyar today, 17 governments out of 34 governments of Afghanistan are former Hezb-e-Islami members. And in the cabinet you have several former Hezb-e-Islami members. So they are already there. Only Hekmatyar and some of extremist elements are fighting because they receive support from somebody else, from outside. I don't think Hekmatyar is in position to come back to the government because he has done so many things that were unacceptable for many Afghans. But many of the former Hezb-e-Islamis are reconcilable, and they are there in the government today. And I think more can come when they see that the government is actually in a position to succeed.

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With Haqqani, I think Haqqani has strong links with al Qaeda and ISI. And it depends on them; how they see the situation in Afghanistan. I think Haqqani, as former mujahedeen commander – the day he joined the Taliban, he was minister in the cabinet of Taliban. His son is totally linked with the Baitullah Mehsud and other extremist groups. I don't think they are currently in a position to be considered reconcilable.

With Taliban, I believe that they are in a position to see what happens in the country, as Ashley said, or Alex said. It is not because they are strong; because the government and the international community is losing. And in the Taliban, yes, there are hierarchies, but they are different hierarchies. In Afghanistan, the insurgency is composed of Taliban, and also aggrieved tribes and unemployed youth and people who just want to survive there.

So if the government and the – missed the opportunity to have a grand deal with Taliban in 2001, 2002, or 2003, today that grand deal is not possible. I think today, the deal should be8 focused – local deals. As the government establishes its influence, control the territory, many of these Taliban – which we do not have to talk to them – they will come to your side. Then you will – it will leave the most extremist groups that eventually you have to deal with them differently. And just the bottom line is, you have to prepare the environment to reconciliation. Unless you have that environment, you will not have very substantial change in the situation.

MR. DIEHL: Other views on this point?

MR. KAGAN: Yeah. I'd like to comment on it. First of all, I think everything that Minister Jalali said is right. Jalaluddin Haqqani's relations with Bin Laden go back to the 1980s. They have a very strong friendship relation. And Haqqani – Jalaluddin seems to be a relatively conservative traditionalist Islamist, but who is very focused on Loya Paktika; on the provinces of Khost, Paktia and Paktika, which is his heartland, particularly the Zadran tribal area in that area, which is his core base of support. There are reports that the ISI approached him after 9/11 and tried to get him to reconcile with us because they saw him even then as a core asset that they had invested a lot and did not want to have him at war with us. He refused, subsequent to which the ISI re-settled him into Miramshah, which is now his headquarters.

But that's not his homeland. His homeland is Loya Paktia. And I think that even Jalaluddin would not – is not reconcilable at this point, and I don't think he ever really was reconcilable. Siraj his son, is very clearly moving in the orbit of the global jihadist movement. And I think, as you have seen, the rise of suicide attacks and mass casualty attacks attributable to the Haqqani network, I think what you've seen is the shift in effective control over that movement from Jalaluddin – who I think on the whole did not countenance attacks like that – to Siraj, who is much more willing to do it. All of which is to simply agree with Minister Jalali, that I don't think that the Haqqani network is reconcilable any more than the Quetta Shura is.

As for Hekmatyar, I would say – and I don't mean to be too flip about this – but who cares? The fact is, Hekmatyar has always been a more effective self-promoter than he has been an actual actor on the scene. And at this point, I think that his – even if we could reconcile with him, the effect on the situation overall would be fairly trivial. And of course, reconciling with someone who is as completely irresponsible, unreliable and so forth as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is a waste of time, anyway.

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And I think that the point – the key point that Minister Jalali made, I would like to emphasize. We shouldn't be talking about reconciliation in terms of bringing these guys into the fold. This is not the point. We are not going – we shouldn't be talking about negotiating with Osama Bin Laden, either. And I don't mean that to be in a flip way, either. You have to recognize that in a terrorist or insurgent movement, you have a hardcore leadership that has to be killed, captured or driven off. That is, the core of the movement – in part, that is the case because it has so far run afoul of any law that we can accept that it's impossible to imagine the terms on which you could bring these guys back into the tent.

So you have to recognize that, which is not most of the movement. Most of the movement is going to be comprised of foot soldiers who are engaged in operations for a variety of reasons. Many of them can be brought over. And I agree entirely with everything that's been said about how to do that. But I would add one point that I think hasn't been addressed enough. There has to be a legal framework for doing this.

And to my knowledge, that legal framework does not exist in Afghanistan. Because if you're really going to talk about reconciliation, people – terrorists and insurgents who are going to reconcile to the government need to know, as Minister Jalali said, not just that the particular Afghan leader or American leader that they're talking to is going to amnesty them, in effect, for their previous actions; but that they will, in fact, have legal amnesty and that the state will protect them against reprisals by its own people and also by the other citizens of the country.

If that doesn't happen – if there isn't some kind of guarantee of some sort of amnesty, then you can't have long-term reconciliation. And I think this is more – I think this is a huge problem. Because once you start to talk about the issue of having an amnesty law in Afghanistan, you have to recognize that the four violent changes in leadership that we've seen in Afghanistan over the past 30-some-odd years have led to a desire for a tremendous amount of vengeance on the part of elements of Afghans – Afghan society against other elements of Afghan society.

Are we going to amnesty people for actions after the signing of the Afghan constitution; after 2001; after the rise of the Taliban; after the rise of the warlords; after the fall of the Soviet Union; after the Soviet invasion? Each one of those blocks presents a different group of individuals. And some people will want to do a truth and reconciliation commission of the South Africa model. If we get into that business, we can blow Afghanistan into tiny little pieces very quickly, in my view. So this is a very, very thorny issue, and it goes to the – our failure to focus adequately on rule of law all along and understand that even beyond setting up courthouses to get at some of these very fundamental constitutional issues, this is going to have to be addressed, I think, even before we can have a serious conversation about reconciliation of any variety.

MR. DIEHL: Gilles wanted to respond.

MR. DORRONSORO: Very quickly, I agree with most of – that has been said. Maybe one thing about Haqqani. I think it's probably – it's not – I think it's not right to put Haqqani and Hezb-e-Islami on the right – on the same foot, you know? Haqqani is just part of the Taliban. He's part from the beginning. He's coming from the Madrassa Afghanistania. He has the same background. He's totally in the organization. And he's not different. His politics are not different. On the ground, it's very clear to say this is the Haqqani network going where? Not even in Khost, it's very clear if it's Haqqani or just the Taliban.

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And by the way, the local commanders in Khost do not clearly refer to Mawlawi Haqqani the way – they're part of the Taliban movement. So to put the – Haqqani was just a big commander, and Hezb-e-Islami, which is unreserved political organization on the same foot, I think it's a mistake. And second thing, of course there is no possibility to talk to Haqqani right now. I mean, it's obvious it's going nowhere.

And the second point is about the tribes, you know – people are speaking about the tribes. But I think probably one thing worth to state again is that the Taliban are totally against the tribal system. They are undermining, systematically, the tribal system. And the failure of the U.S. PRT in Gardez-Khost area, you know – why is it such a failure, in the place that was the most tribalized in Afghanistan, where U.S. government gave a lot of money to the tribes? It didn't work.

Why? Because the Taliban were able to undermine the tribal system, to kill enough elders to organize their own networks, you know? And now they are building fighting groups with people from different tribes – tribes, which are, by the way, most of the time, historically, enemies. So that's why this kind of reconciliation is interesting. So the Taliban are not tribal. They are against the tribe.

The second thing I would say is about Hezb-e-Islami. Of course it's not possible to speak with Hekmatyar, and any attempt to speak with Hekmatyar is totally counterproductive. But at the same time, it's true that there are a lot of Hezb-e-Islami now in the governmental structure as a district leader, as the governors of provinces. And I think it's potentially dangerous, because we don't know to which extent these guys are really working with Karzai or if they have another agenda. And here we are in a very difficult situation. For example, in Jalalabad's province, all the district leader are coming from the Hezb-e-Islami. And I would say, what's the deal here? Is that reconciliation or is that just people working both with the government and the local insurgency?

And the very last point would be about the fact that even if the Hezb-e-Islami and the Taliban are separate groups, separate political parties again, they are working more and more together. And what we have seen in the East, where the Hezb-e-Islami's still relevant, Kunar, Laghman, places like that, is more and more fighters coming from both political party organized under the umbrella of the Taliban. So I don't know if it's just punctual – I mean, just a local thing or it's a more important trend. But that's also too important to say, I think.

MR. DIEHL: Alexander.

MR. THIER: Yeah. I want to make a pragmatic point, in part leading off of a comment that Fred made about the legal means for reconciliation. I think it's important to realize that over the past few years, there actually have been some things put in place that were meant to deal with that. There was an amnesty law, very controversial, that was passed sort of by the parliament which essentially gives anybody amnesty for doing anything. It was largely a self-amnesty bill for those in the parliament who didn't want things done to them. But it certainly would apply as well to insurgents who handed in their arms.

There was also – there's the Program Tahkim-e-Solh, which is basically the commission of peace and reconciliation, which was run by former President Mojaddedi, which has supposedly

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brought something like 5,000 insurgents off the battlefield, although many people are skeptical who've looked at this closely about whether most of those people were, in fact, insurgents.

But I think the really critical point to made here is that there is a question of the capacity to implement a reconciliation strategy, should there be one. One of the primary problems that we've seen – the amnesty law is a great example of this. Not only is the law potentially not enforced, there's this whole debate about whether it's actually a valid law or not. But in the very end, interestingly, the international community complained about the law – didn't have much effect – it was actually the Islamic Shura council members that stood up and said, wait a minute. It's actually not the power of the parliament to take away the rights of people to seek redress for past abuses.

And so this very unexpected sort of jab from the right, if you will, about the potential for doing reconciliation and what it actually means to undertake an amnesty is not settled within Afghan society. At the same time, you look at the PTS experience and you look at the talks in Saudi Arabia. I mean, President Karzai has just named Fahim to be his vice president. It would probably be difficult to draw two more distinctive views about reconciliation with the Taliban into one ticket.

Fahim represents a group that believes that the Taliban should be crushed, and President Karzai, obviously – although maybe the Ambassador's speech wasn't quite consistent with this – represents, I think, an almost reconciliation-at-any-opportunity strategy just based on his public statements over the last year-and-a-half. So there is a division within Afghan society at the highest levels of government that doesn't allow a strategy to be formed. And then, even when there is an effort to create something that might implement a strategy, it hasn't been effective or it hasn't been implemented. So there's very practical limitations on the potential to do this.

MR. DIEHL: Thank you. I finally want to get to questions now. There's roving microphones. I ask only that you please identify yourself before asking your question. Yes, sir, in the pink shirt.

Q: Jason Anderson (sp). My question was in regards to a comment Fred made about the Afghan people essentially waiting to see who wins. It strikes me as a bit of a circular logic because whoever they do support will win in the long run. So my question was how do we engage the Afghan people and get them to take ownership and start supporting the cause?

MR. KAGAN: Well, that's the key question, obviously, and that's what any strategy that we develop has to do, and it's something that we have succeeded in to some extent in some areas of the country, but we need to do a great deal more. The first thing – I'm going to go back to my key points of focusing on legitimacy and the rule of law, and also add to that the need to make sure that our commitment, both in terms of the size of the military presence that we send and in terms of what that military presence actually does is sufficient to persuade Afghans that we are going to win. That is to say that the side that we are backing, which is the government of Afghanistan, is going to prevail. And that will have the effect of moving people off the fence and in our direction. Generally, a small minority will move in the other direction as you force people to make this decision.

It's not a circular argument in the sense that you have people who are sort of – you have a lot of people who have a foot in both camps, as Minister Jalali and others have pointed out. People send one son to the army and one son to the Taliban and so forth. There's a certain Afghan

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tradition along those lines, but it's a normal phenomenon to see in an insurgency of this variety, frankly. And the key is to take the issue of victory off the table and make it clear that we are going to win. And that has almost as much to do with the information operations you conduct, in some respects, as it does with what you're actually doing on the ground. Although, at the end of the day, if you don't deliver – and this is our big problem – we have not been seen to be delivering. And that undermines our credibility and that puts the question of victory on the table again. That has to stop.

But I think the other problem that we have is that we have – since we haven't focused on the issue of rule of law, we haven't focused on corruption, accountability within GIROA, we have a situation wherein we can increasingly be seen as providing blind support to a government that is increasingly seen as illegitimate by its people. That's another fast way to lose an insurgency. And I think in this case this is something that we really have to focus our attention on because – and it goes to what we do and it also goes to how we message.

If you send U.S. forces or PRTs or NGOs into a village where everybody knows that the local police chief is a Talib – or that he's just a criminal – and you say, I'm here to support the local officials, then what the people hear is, I'm here to support the criminals. And you have to – you can't do that. And the first thing that you have to know in order to avoid that is you have to know very, very clearly who exactly it is that you're dealing with and what these guys' connections are and who is actually legitimately responsible and who is not. And that sounds like an overwhelming task, but the truth of the matter is, this is something that American and international forces on the ground do on a regular basis.

What we have had for a long time is a failure in the command structure and leadership in ISAF to use the data that is available even from the forces that we have to generate an overall picture of how the insurgency and criminal networks that are not directly related to the insurgency and narco-networks that are not directly related to either all interact with what we might call the government network. So that we know when you go into a village or district, whether you're dealing with someone who is going to be seen by the people one way or the other. If you don't have that, you're driving blind. And in too many places in Afghanistan, we've been driving blind. But this is something that I think, again, General McChrystal excels at precisely this sort of thing, and I think that you'll see a very fundamental shift in our approach to this over the coming months.

MR. DIEHL: Let somebody – urgently wants to respond. I want to some more questions in. Yes, sir?

Q: Thank you. Ashley, I'm Paulo – (inaudible). Ashley, I think your distinction between the troop being opposed to pay for the performance is a little bit illogical. I mean, after eight years, bad performance create – (inaudible) – which are total. So in that sense, if you change dramatically the performance than you can have a different report.

One problem I feel is a little bit unclear from the total debate is that it seems to me that we are pushing on one side reconciliation, and on the other side, military victory. I think the reality will be in between; will be a combination of victory in certain part, re-control of the territory and some kind of necessary adjustment. Which appears to me clear, and I would to ask Dr. Jalali if he agrees with me. You pointed out opportunity has been lost. Don't you think that maybe now they are not building new opportunities? There is not enough at work in order to build the new opportunities.

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Last question about Pakistan. I don't know whether it's anybody – I think that Pakistan is clearly a scapegoat for all the situation in Afghanistan. ISI is the universal scapegoat. When something goes wrong, you accuse ISI. I think the reality of the fact is that they have different perception and different priorities, and we cannot just arm-twist another country, another military structure to make the fight that for their interest is not top priority.

MR. DIEHL: Who wants to start? Professor Jalali, or —

MR. JALALI: Well, yes. As I said, opportunities were lost at a time that the price of reconciliation, the price of peace was much lower than today. Today, you have to pay a high price in order to convince the other side to agree with you. So therefore, you have two options. Either you pay a high price and then you get peace. Or you have to change that situation, the parameters. Then you pay a lower price.

Today, if you go and reach out to insurgents – different insurgents; even the most moderate ones – they will ask for a high price. That will not – probably will be the source of other problems. There are people in Afghanistan – as Fred said, Afghanistan is not Pashtunistan. There are people in Afghanistan who do not want to pay a high price for peace in the South. So therefore, the price that you are paying should bring peace, not to create more problems. That's why that opportunity is – you have to create that opportunity. But in order to create that opportunity, you have to start from a position of strength.

You know, once I was talking to a person on the fence, as Fred said. Many people are on the fence today, because they do not see any other options. I was talking to a person – I knew he was intellectual. He believed in modernity. But he was supporting Taliban. And I asked him two years ago, why you change your mind? He smiled and he recited an old, classic Arabic poem to me, which those who know Arabic, it says – (in Arabic) – “when you cannot achieve what you want, then go and find something else.” And that was his response. And he believed that what the Taliban want, what system they want, is not acceptable to him. But he thought that he has to survive.

You know, why who attacks – I know who attacked the tribe in Zabul. He was a moderate person, a tribal leader. Now he is with Taliban. The reason is because he was mistreated by a rival tribe who happened to be the governor – the person was governor – and they left. Why is Yitzhak Zayirs (ph) are now with Taliban? A Yitzhak Zayir was mistreated at Helmand because the governor was Ali Zayir (ph) and the police chief was Nour Zayir (ph). And Yitzhak Zai – the third part of that – (inaudible) – tribe were mistreated. So they went to Sangin and Musa Qala and joined the Taliban.

Even today, the governor of Musa Qala, who has a Talibani kin, he was talking to me. He said, I joined the government with my men and I was mistreated. Still, he is the governor of Musa Qala. But he said, my house was attacked by Taliban in Kajaki. And I had to go myself to defend it. Nobody came to my support. So this is the kind of dynamics in Afghanistan. You have to create that situation.

MR. DIEHL: Gilles and then Alexander.

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MR. DORRONSORO: Very quickly, about the idea that Afghanistan is not Pashtunistan, yes and no. Yes in the sense that one of the great advantage of the Taliban is that they are working with this alienation, this sense of alienation of the Pashtun. The Pashtun do not – mostly do not recognize themselves in the state as it is working today. So that was one thing.

But the second point is that first, Pashtun are not only in the South and the East. They are also in North. There are a lot of pockets of Pashtun in the North of the country. And there, what we have seen the last few years is that the Taliban are able to build a social support there. And second thing is that since a few months now, the Taliban more and more are trying to recruit non-Pashtun elements in the North, especially Turkmen and Uzbek. So for the moment, it's relatively limited, but the trend is very clear. And since the international coalition doesn't seem to be very conscious of that or doesn't want to intervene – for reasons I don't know – and the trend is going to be bigger next year, I think.

MR. DIEHL: Alexander?

MR. THIER: Yeah. I wanted to say, first of all, listening to Ali's description of the sojourn of the Kajaki tribal leadership I think underscores the point that even our brightest soldiers like General Barno or advisors like Ashley and the government are not going to get this right unless we transfer the capacity to deal with these problems to Afghans who live and understand these dynamics. Woe unto the person on a six-to-12 month rotation that tries to even understand what Ali just said, let alone be able to respond effectively to implement it.

But I wanted to respond to the Pakistan question, because I think that fundamentally – I was part of a group last year that had a lot of people who were not in the anti-Pakistan camp; wrote a report and essentially recommending a paradigm shift in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Because there are two fundamental points that I think you raise. The first is that Pakistan is fundamentally insecure about its nationhood, and has been since its accession. It has insecure borders to the east; it has insecure borders to the west. As people often repeat, Afghanistan was the only country to vote against Pakistan's vote or entry into the United Nations. So it's not just India; it is also Afghanistan. So there is this deep insecurity that defines how they think strategically.

And the more recent sort of 20 years is feeling deeply used by the United States in their relationship. There are much more uncouth ways to put it, but you can at least say that the Pakistanis feel as though it has been only a transactional relationship and not a friendship, not a strategic relationship. And so I think fundamentally you are right. We are not going to arm-twist the Pakistanis into seeing our worldview. What they are dealing with is a different situation and their interests are somewhat different.

So what we have to figure out how to do is to align our interests. And I think that that is possible. I think that the United States and Pakistan can align their interests. But our performance with their Pakistani relationship over the last 30 years, let alone the last seven, wouldn't lead the Pakistanis necessary to feel that they can trust essentially a long-term and strong U.S. presence in the region. And so they need to understand that we have their interests at heart and their security at heart and not just our own narrow short-term security interests.

MR. DIEHL: Ashley, did you have something?

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MR. TELLIS: Just – I would just make two points. Let me start on the Pakistan issue. I think it's dangerous to scapegoat Pakistan as the source of all ills in Afghanistan. And one of the things that I am very careful to do in the report is, in a sense, call attention to the government of Afghanistan's own failings in exacerbating the situation, which cannot be underestimated.

But as one tries to avoid scapegoating Pakistan, one also has to be careful not to kind of exonerate them entirely because there are two issues here. One is on the facts of what is happening on the ground. I don't think there is any doubt within the U.S. government and in NATO that there is substantial Pakistani support for Taliban elements and for different elements of the Shura. Where the debate is, is about two things. First, is this an unambiguous state policy, or is this a matter of people freelancing? And two, whether this is consistent or whether it is episodic. And it is from these two sets of questions that all the inferences that people draw in the public debate are drawn. So just keep those mind – of fact.

On the first question that he raised, presence versus performance. You don't want to emphasize the dichotomy, obviously, to an extreme, but I think it's important to understand what is at issue here. For those who say that it is presence itself that is the problem, the logical policy conclusion is exit is the solution to improving the situation in Afghanistan. The exit of foreign forces is the solution to improving the situation in Afghanistan. For those who say it is performance that's the problem, the solution is not the exit of foreign forces; but a better way of doing what we've attempted to do. So there are two different policy conclusions that flow from that. Although, I take your point, that at some point, the two come together.

MR. DIEHL: Got time for one more question. This lady in the back there.

Q: Thank you. Lorelei Kelly from the Progressive Caucus Foundation. I've been fielding phone calls this morning from frantic Hill staff about the supplemental, and I'd like to ask you a question about it. I feel very conflicted. There's only 8 percent civilian, and the rest of military. And the importance of it is that how this goes down on the Hill is going to frame the public.

You mentioned information operations, Mr. Kagan – how it's going to frame the public conversation about the strategic shift in the intentions not only in the defense budget, but in this Afghanistan-Pakistan change on the ground. The American public still doesn't, I think, thoroughly understand the significance of what's going on here. And I'd like to know if you were a member of Congress, especially – I'm working with the 80 members of the progressive caucus – how would you vote on this? And if you were going to vote with reservations, what would you say?

MR. DIEHL: Mr. Jalali, how would you vote?

(Laughter.)

MR. JALALI: Well, I don't know. There's always a complaint in Afghanistan that the proportion of non-military spending is far less than military. I think – there was a report recently I saw that only – even less than 3 percent of the money was invested in the area – in a sector which actually supports 80 percent of the Afghan populations. That's the agriculture.

The problem I think is that there was always a narrow focus on counterterrorism in Afghanistan. And instead of winning people in order to defeat terrorism, it was defeating terrorism

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to win people. That was the case I heard it from. I don't know what's going to happen now, but there is some suggestions that in the next five years there will be a reduction of troops in Iraq; probably I think will save dozens of billions of dollars. And out of this, I think 25 billion (dollars) will go to the cost of the additional troops in Afghanistan. And there is suggestion that 5 billion a year in the next five years should be allocated to Afghanistan. These are all suggestions. I hope something will happen this time.

MR. DIEHL: I want to go to Fred Kagan briefly, and then we'll have Ashley have the last word.

MR. KAGAN: I would beg your members of Congress to support the supplemental with reservation, because it is desperately needed. And the reservation is that we have dramatically underfunded the assistance and re-construction effort in Afghanistan, and we need to do more. Now, there are concrete limitations to rapidly it is possible to spend money in a newly reorganized re-construction effort and you will have to engage in a discussion with the administration and with the new ambassador and the incoming commanders about what reality on the ground will support.

You just don't want to throw money into a situation where people literally don't have the capacity to spend it. But this – I think you will see change. I think Ambassador Holbrooke is committed to increasing this effort and doing it right. I think that Ambassador Eikenberry is committed to it. I think you'll find General McChrystal is also committed to it. And it needs to be resourced. I don't think it's adequately resourced in the current budget. I don't think it's adequately resourced in the supplemental.

And I think this is an issue of being penny wise, pound foolish. Because the faster that we work to build up a legitimate, functional Afghan state, the faster we will be able to reduce – I say reduce because I think we will always have to support the fifth-poorest country in the world to some extent as long as we care about its well-being, which I hope will be a permanent thing. But we can reduce our presence and the cost of this. But the longer we wait, the higher the ultimate price will be and the more success is in doubt. So that would be the reservation that I would ask your members to put forward.

MR. DIEHL: Ashley Tellis, anything to wrap this up?

MR. TELLIS: Well, I would simply – I would echo what Fred just said, even though I'm sitting at the extreme left of the table – (laughter) – something that Carnegie has to explain. But the point I would make is this. We're at a stage in the sequence where we have to build up military capacity in Afghanistan in order to focus on the central issue of population security. I mean, the honest truth is we cannot insure population security, which is the apex on which all these elements hinge, if we do not have the right composition of troops in the ratios that are required. And so it doesn't surprise that our initial support and monies that we allocated – at least for the next several months – will be to make certain that we get these ratios.

The question that we have to ask ourselves is whether this will be sufficient by itself. And to that, the answer is of course no. So if all that the administration is proposing is endless supplementals for military operations, then of course it should give us pause. But we are just at the beginning of a strategy that will work itself out over the next two to three years. We shouldn't

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expect any transformation before that. And so I see this as essentially the down payment on something that we're going to be involved in for a long time to come.

MR. DIEHL: Great. Thank you very much. It's been a great discussion and thanks very much to our panelists.

(Applause.)

(END)