



RECONCILIATION AND REGIONAL COOPERATION IN AFGHANISTAN'S COMING SECURITY TRANSITION

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ASHLEY J. TELLIS: Well, good morning everyone. Welcome to the Carnegie Endowment. I am Ashley Tellis, I'm a senior associate here at the Endowment. And it's a pleasure to welcome all of you once again to the Endowment for what will be a conversation on a very topical subject of importance not only to Afghanistan and Pakistan, of course, but very importantly to the United States.

We have two very distinguished guests with us today: Ambassador Aziz Ahmed Khan, who has been in the senior foreign service of Pakistan for many years, now retired. Had a series of very distinguished appointments – he was at one point Pakistan's ambassador to Afghanistan at the high tide of Taliban rule. So many of the characters who now grace the front pages of our newspapers were individuals that Aziz had had to work with.

He subsequently became Pakistan's ambassador to New Delhi and happened to be there at a very pivotal moment, actually, in India-Pakistan relations and since retiring has been deeply involved in the two-track process that is trying to rebuild bridges between the two countries. Aziz is one of those rare individuals who has a great and very affectionate following in both countries. And so it's particularly wonderful to have him here with us this morning talking about what I think will be a very challenging and a very difficult subject, which I will say a little more about.

I want to also take the opportunity to welcome Dr. Davood Moradian, who, until recently, was a senior policy adviser in the Afghan ministry of foreign affairs and is still there as a senior adviser to the Afghan government. Davood has had an academic career – he's been, actually, one of us. He's been an exile from a think tank, now who finds himself in government service. Did his PhD, actually, at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland on a very interesting subject – he studied the concept of punishment in classical Greece and Islam, and after teaching for a few years, actually went back to Afghanistan and now is deeply involved in Afghan governmental decision-making on the issues that we are going to discuss this morning.

Now, we all know that we are at a very pivotal moment in our own country's engagement with Afghanistan. The president has announced a transition which is scheduled to begin in 2014 and we also happen to have a theory of what this transition is supposed to look like. Starting in July 2014, the United States will gradually cede responsibility for security to the Afghan government. And the theory behind this transition is that this process will stand a chance of success if we can engineer two transformation simultaneously: first, a transformation that involves a reconciliation among the Afghans themselves – because what we have right now is clearly an Afghan civil war – and a second transformation which involves a reconciliation among Afghanistan's neighbors.

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And the key players, of course, on the second reconciliation will be first, Afghanistan and Pakistan and then in the second tier, you have countries like India and Iran. And I hope at some point in the months ahead, we will be able to have conversations with a wider range of actors. But today, we have these two very distinguished guests of ours to talk about both dimensions of reconciliation – the challenges of reconciliation within and the challenges of reconciliation that involve both Afghanistan and Pakistan as independent countries.

What I have asked them to do is to speak for about 15 minutes, to give us their thoughts on their national perspective. So it's less a Martian view of the problem – I think we have plenty of those views in this city. But

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since we are graced by people who are both (attentively ?) Afghan and Pakistani, I thought it would be useful to hear from them about their own national perspectives. So I'm going to start by inviting Aziz and then follow up with Davood and then we basically will open it to the floor and conduct a conversation. So welcome both of you and welcome all of you. Thank you very much for coming.

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AZIZ AHMED KHAN: Good morning, and thank you Ashley for your kind remarks which – Ashley and I go back to '92 or '93 – I can't quite remember the exact date. And we have been friends since. And you could have easily detected the elements of nepotism in those remarks that you just heard from him. But I'm extremely grateful to him for that.

The subject that we have chosen today is really topical – really important. But before I start on that or give some few observations, I would like to clarify that I left the government about four years ago. I left Afghanistan about eight years – I haven't dealt with Afghanistan for about eight years, so what I speak would be purely my personal observations tinged by my personal prejudices about the region. And I have had very close and very fond association with both the countries – both India and Afghanistan so the subjectivity element would also be there, so I may be forgiven for that.

But I'll just give a few observations which I – and my knowledge about Afghanistan at the moment doesn't emanate from any interaction with the policymaking circles in Pakistan but by my own policymaking mind that I think about Afghanistan and how things should be resolved and so on, because Afghanistan, I think, has suffered deeply for over three decades. And I think the Afghans deserve of our attention and they deserve of our combined effort so that finally peace can be brought to that country.

I think it has suffered far too much and if you really want to have an idea of that suffering, you should have visited Afghanistan in the '90s as I did. I got posted there in late '96 and you could not have seen a more devastated country. And it was devastated several times over by all the factional fighting and all the various things that have been happening there. And it is good to see that the international community now finally it has realized that it was time to do something about Afghanistan, went in there, cleared the area of terrorists and so on and have now finally come around to focus attention towards a process of peace building.

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I personally feel that it was about time that this process all got started. In fact, in my own view, I had thought soon after the military action in Afghanistan and the Bonn process and after President Karzai took over as president after the Bonn process, I thought that that was the time to start the reconciliation process. And if you recall, President Karzai, at that particular time, did announce amnesty to everyone and did think about starting that process, but I think the circumstances were such that he was, I think, impeded into doing that. And that probably would have been a moment where a lot of Taliban and foot soldiers could have been weaned away and reintegrated into society. But nonetheless, it's a good thing that the process has started now and the aspect – as Ashley pointed out – involves reintegration and reconciliation as well as reconciliation among the regional countries.

First, I would like to make a few personal observations about the reconciliation process in Afghanistan. I feel that it was long overdue, as I have already explained. This reconciliation process in Afghanistan should essentially be Afghan-led. And I think it is good to see that President Karzai has embarked on that process. He has formed a high peace council, which again – although some people might say that it is a very large group of people who have

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been put together for this particular thing – but I think that considering the different divisions and factions and so on, it is good that he has got a large body of people involved in that peace process.

While the peace council would be doing whatever they need to do, I think basically it will have to be the government of Afghanistan who have to negotiate with all the opposition parties. And these comprise – number one is the Taliban along with the group led by Jalaluddin Haqqani or his son, Sirajuddin Haqqani, which is closely associated with the Taliban. They were part of the Taliban when Taliban were ruling the area. They are very influential in the particular area of Khost and so on. They've always been right from the day when jihad started against the Soviet Union; Julaluddin was one of the major commanders who cleared the area and in fact helped in the process of that particular jihad to put the Soviets out of the place.

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Apart from that, I do not know the situation on the ground, but there must be some other insurgent groups as well who have evolved during this time and there will be need to talk to those as well, but that would not be difficult. The basic talks will have to be held with the Taliban and the Haqqani group. I personally feel that the negotiations are not going to be easy. Taliban are not going to talk of reconciliation that easily. And particularly, if they feel that there is a timetable already set in motion that forces are going to be withdrawn and so on, they would be encouraged to wait it out.

And that is where it is important that the military action that is going on against the Taliban should also be continued with firmness so that they know that the government of Afghanistan means business. And the more this process is led by the Afghan security forces, the better the chances of success are going to be. The Afghan government should take the responsibility of fighting these factions themselves. There were initial difficulties, but by now I think with the initial cooperation they have 180,000, I think is the figure of the Afghan National Army – there's a large police force also.

So the more they are visible in doing this process of establishing law and order in the country, the better it would be, in two ways: one, that the insurgents would know that these are also local people – they are not foreigners who will get tired and leave. They are there to stay, they are there – they are part of the society; number two, the people will come and support – come forward and help the government in fighting the insurgency.

The example of that – we have witnessed in Swat, for example, when the insurgency got – you know, Swat was practically surrender – in Pakistan – surrendered to the Taliban-like elements. And the government was not really imposing the law and order as was required. But ultimately, when the army moved in and put its foot down, the people got encouraged and then there was a massive support from the local people and that was the reason why the Pakistani army was successful in driving out the terrorists and getting rid of the place and now peace prevails in the entire area of Swat.

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The same phenomenon, I think, will happen in Afghanistan because in Afghanistan, if the government is firm, if the government gives the impression loud and clear that it intends to establish law and order, that it would not tolerate activities like these, it would encourage the population to help the government because such insurgencies or such groups only thrive because they get support from the population. And the population is obliged to support them – some out of terror, some out of fear, some out of disgust with the government – whatever the reasons may be – because they think that nobody is doing anything for them.

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So an important element would be that it should be led by the Afghan army and the Afghan police, fully supported by the international forces that are there because the Afghan army still doesn't have all the wherewithal that is required and with the technology available with the foreign forces, et cetera. But they should remain in the background as much as is possible to stay in the background. But this has to be – and at the same time, continue offering amnesty, continue doing a good propaganda campaign or public diplomacy or whatever you may call it – sending out a message to the insurgents that, all right, those who are willing to lay down arms, those who are willing to integrate with society – that there will be no vindictiveness against them, that they would be accommodated, that they would be helped, get reintegrated in society.

So a process of reconciliation and reintegration will have to go side-by-side. As far as reconciliation is concerned, again, as I said, it will have to be very quietly done. It will be a very tough process, I think. Mullah Omar and the likes would – again, these are very personal views. Knowing the man – and I have known him fairly well during my stay in Afghanistan – I've met him several times – knowing the man, he would be a difficult customer. It would not be easy to talk to him; it would not be easy for him to agree to reintegration.

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But if he sees that there is firmness as far as the government of Afghanistan is concerned and support from the international community, even if he doesn't reintegrate, he might be discouraged to just disappear into the sunset and disappear somewhere. But this combination of a firm resolve to establish law and order as well as a generous offer that, all right, if you give up your bad habits, we are still willing to take you – is the combination that needs to work.

Combined with this process, I think what we would need is an intensive effort at economic development in the areas which are particularly under the influence of the Taliban and these groups. These areas are extremely backward, these areas are very poorly developed. And developmental work there would not require huge resources. From, again, personal experience, I can say that in these areas, the economic activity should revolve around providing the basic needs of the people.

And that should be done by approaching the people, going to them directly at the village council level, at the village level – the tribal society in Afghanistan is a very well-organized society as far as villages and so on in Afghanistan. There are village elders, you go to them, tell them that, all right, here is the money – what kind of projects do you want? Let them identify the projects. In most of the cases, the projects would be development of the waterways – water system, the – (inaudible) – that they have; development of agriculture which has been destroyed and orchards; some basic health unit; basic education element, the school et cetera. These are basic things. Ask them to run it themselves. They would be willing to come forward, they would be willing to do it. The money required for that would be very, very small – much less than probably one hour's worth of military action or something. And the villagers would benefit.

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And if you tell them that, all right look, we are ready to help you – you have to decide what do you want for yourself. We'll be able to help you only if you allow the government to establish its reach here, if you stop supporting the Taliban. I'm sure the population will be willing to do that because the Taliban would neither provide those resources nor the wherewithal – even at the time when they were ruling the place, since they had ostracized themselves from the entire international community and because of their habits and because of their worldview, they were not willing to accommodate anything.

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There was hardly any assistance coming to Afghanistan, they were frustrated, they couldn't provide anything to the population. And the population, after initially welcoming them because of the establishment of law and order, finally was getting fed up, said look, we need something to live also. So the economic aspect of that would also be important. And that should go side-by-side with the process of reintegration and reconciliation.

Now, the second aspect, very briefly, is about relations with the other countries – Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan is the most – for me, I will just concentrate on that for the moment and Afghanistan's relations with Iran and other neighbors. I divided it into two parts – neighbors that share borders with Afghanistan and then countries around in the region which are important and which have interests – countries like Turkey, countries like India, which have natural interest also in Afghanistan.

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But essentially, the first and foremost is the countries that share the border. In that, Iran shares a very long border – although that area is not as populated as the areas that are with Pakistan. And there, Pakistan and Afghanistan need to talk to each other and need to come to terms and accommodation. I'm very pleased to see that when Prime Minister Gillani visited recently and recently the talks that have been going at the summit level have been quite successful. There is a resolve and determination that a new chapter should be opened in relations, that a start should be made and that start has been made.

Pakistan's basic concerns are one, an unstable Afghanistan creates difficulty and problems for Pakistan – both economically, as well as otherwise socially. We have a very large body of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan. There are still about 3 million Afghans living in Pakistan – about 1.7 million registered refugees and about the same number as unregistered. And these poor people have to go back to their own country. But at the same time, they are a drain on Pakistan's economy because they are living off Pakistan's economy. Pakistan is not a labor-short – you know, it's a labor-surplus country. So every Afghan employed in Pakistan means one Pakistani unemployed because he has replaced his job.

So that creates social problems in Pakistan and this problem should be resolved. Any turmoil in Afghanistan would mean – it is natural for Afghans to start moving towards Pakistan if conditions are not good there. And to be very honest with you, despite all the problems we have had with Afghanistan, there is no Pakistani who would not welcome an Afghan coming into Pakistan. He would just not be able to say, you cannot come here, please go back. He would be welcomed, he would be allowed, he would be almost like as if he was a national of that country. And this is the strength of Pakistan-Afghan relations. I used to say at one time that even if the governments try very hard to have bad relations, Afghans and Pakistan cannot have bad relations – they have to have good relations. So that aspect is very important.

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Another important cause of worry for Pakistan is the smuggling that goes on, particularly under the garb of the Transit Trade Agreement. There are unscrupulous elements on both sides – the business people who in Pakistani business, in order to avoid taxation and so on get things cheaper. Imports get sold; an Afghan counterpart imports products for Afghanistan. And that goes on irrespective of what form of government there is. When I was in Afghanistan during the Taliban regime, there was once I went to the Kandahar airport and there were mountains of televisions there. So I asked Mullah Rabbani, who was their head of government, and I said look, you have banned television, nobody can see television, so what the hell are these televisions doing there?

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So he was nonplussed for a moment and then he said, oh, they are for export to Central Asia. And the same way, I said, look, there is – the import of razor blades in Afghanistan is huge and you don't shave, I mean – you know. And I asked one of the Afghan leaders, you don't shave – but I must say, the fellow was very smart. He took his turban off and pointed to his head and said look, we shave our heads, so we need razor blades for that.

But anyway – so that smuggling under the garb of transit trade has to be – and that can only come to a stop when there is cooperation between the two governments. So these are broadly the concerns that the government of Pakistan has vis-à-vis relations with Afghanistan. I'm sure that with the intensive interaction that the two governments are having at the moment, we would be able to get over these problems.

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The other countries who have a natural interest in the area – Turkey. Turkey has been taking interest in Afghanistan and has now, in fact, demonstrated even more interest by even offering the Taliban to open an office in Turkey so that they can facilitate the reconciliation process. And we have to be mindful of that. India has given a large amount of assistance to Afghanistan as far as economic development is concerned. It should be welcomed and appreciated. At the same time, I personally feel India should be careful that what they do in Afghanistan does not alarm Pakistan – does not create worries for Pakistan.

It's in the nature of Pakistan-India bilateral relations – we have problems with each other – we have serious problems with each other. And here, I think for the sake of the region and more than that, for the sake of Afghanistan, India should be doubly cautious about what they do does not alarm Pakistan in any manner. I told my Indian colleagues and I would always tell them that look – they always ask me, what's the problem if we have gone to Afghanistan? I said, you have gone to Afghanistan with a swagger. You shouldn't have gone there with a swagger; you should have gone there quietly.

And that swagger has alarmed us a little bit. And that is there and India should be mindful of that because India, Pakistan have enough problems as it is. Afghanistan should not become another problem – it's bad for India, it's bad for Pakistan and more than anything else, it's bad for the poor Afghans who have already suffered at the hands of the different elements. So this India-Pakistan understanding and cooperation as far as Afghanistan is concerned is important.

The international community – the U.S. will have to play a very important role there. They have invested a lot in Afghanistan. They would probably be required to invest some more – there's no easy getting away for the United States from Afghanistan. They may start drawdown of the forces. I personally feel that U.S. would be required to stay there with a smaller presence for a much longer time in order to help Afghanistan or help Afghanistan security forces to develop and get training – in order to give them the support that they need – and also for the economic development of Pakistan.

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But the time has come when this process of reconciliation should be seriously addressed and the international community should start cooperating with each other to seriously help Afghanistan develop and find the peace which has long evaded the two countries. I think I'll stop here and then we can take questions also. Thank you very much.

MR. TELLIS: Thank you, Aziz. Davood, please.

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DAVOOD MORADIAN: Thank you very much. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It's a great pleasure for me to be here – back again. I was in Washington, D.C., in March and April and that was our New Year – the Persian New Year. And I was celebrating the New Year here in Washington, D.C. And the second time, I'm here for a more relaxed Washington – particularly after you went and – in Pakistan, the killing of Osama bin Laden, which we also – we had a small celebration in Kabul with a number of my American friends. So I came back for a more relaxed and a more joyful Washington, D.C. So it's always a great pleasure for me to be here.

As my presentation here – I think I have two disadvantages here. One disadvantage is that compared with the ambassador, who is extremely well-experienced and seasoned diplomat, and someone who has four or five years of work experience at the ministry of foreign affairs, it is a rather – disadvantage. The other disadvantage is that I really am not a diplomat in a conventional sense because I was in an academic world and I was advising the minister and I was working at a think tank. So this duality of being formal official of a government that expected to follow the official line – which I'm not good at it – and on the other hand, to be an academic, and it has caused me a lot of problems with my bosses.

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And often people say, you are in the wrong job – particularly at the ministry of foreign affairs. So forgive me if you detect a kind of duality in my presentation. And if you see some differences with the official line, it is because of my background here. So don't attribute a senior Afghan official saying that or this because that senior Afghan official happens to have a dual life and approach to the world here.

In talking about Afghanistan, I find a similarity between Afghanistan and the fashion industry. And that is, each year there is a new trend in the fashion industry – a new color, the color of the year here. And in the case of Afghanistan, if I can, remember that each year I have seen a new concept, new approach, new magic word. The fashion of this year is political settlement – political solution. Last year the fashion was Kabul Process. The previous year was – at Paris – Afghanistan national development. Another year was Afghanistan Compact. So each year, it seems that we are, I think, competing with the fashion industry to produce a new concept, a new trend, a new buzzword, new sexy word here.

And certainly this political settlement – that is the new latest fashion that, in this particular case, it was, I think, born in London. And I think that our British colleagues have been very committed to this latest fashion – latest trend in promoting and advocating a political settlement, which is a good thing. But I think that the fashion or the trend at which we want from Afghanistan is an enduring conflict resolution for Afghanistan – an enduring conflict resolution which includes all aspects of the conflict – both the domestic aspect – the driver of the Afghan conflict – the regional dimension of the Afghan conflict and also the international dimension of the Afghan conflict. And we warn our international partners and ourself of the danger of pursuing a partial conflict resolution because a partial conflict resolution has not worked in Afghanistan. And I hope next fashion trend when it comes to Afghanistan become a more and enduring conflict resolution for Afghanistan rather than some partial one.

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What I would like to speak with you today is a kind of providing you a general framework of the way we – and particularly myself – look at Afghanistan. And I begin with the question that, what is the end state for Afghanistan. If you ask me, as an Afghan, how would you envision your country in 10 years times. And I'd identify three important aspects that I would like to envisage that my country, Afghanistan, emerge in 10 years' time from now. And that three aspects are interrelated.

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One is that I would like to see Afghanistan become a functioning democratic state in 10 years' time – a democratic state having an inclusive political process. And a functioning state as a country, a state that is reasonably able to provide basic services to its citizen here. So we are not asking a Jeffersonian democracy or we do not want to become a Switzerland of Asia here, but a functioning state in Afghanistan in the time framework of next 10 years' time.

The second aspect of that end state for Afghanistan is the regional identity of Afghanistan – that is, that Afghanistan – we want to become a catalyst for regional cooperation, a land bridge between Central Asia, South Asia – between the east and the west, a regional hub. And again, it is not something that we want to create for ourself. Historically, Afghanistan has been a crossroad of different cultures. I think it was in 1960, UNESCO referred to Afghanistan as the Garden of Cultures. And really, we want to recreate that identity that has been damaged during the last 30 years of war and conflict.

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The third aspect of that end state is that we want to be a United States strategic partner in that part of the world. And the vocabulary that I use in engaging with my American colleagues is a kind of South Korea-United States relationship – that as with South Korea, which has a difficult past and a difficult neighborhood, but thanks to its relationship with the United States, South Korea managed to overcome many of its internal and regional challenges. And that is the vision that really many in Afghanistan envisage for Afghanistan – Afghanistan as a strategic partner of the United States and Western nation(s) in that part of the world.

So that his the end state for Afghanistan – an Afghanistan that has a reasonably functioning democratic states, a catalyst for regional cooperation and a strategic partner of the United States. And in order to actualize that end state, I think – as I said at the beginning – the importance of an enduring and comprehensive strategy which includes a different component. And one important component of that is reconciliation. But reconciliation needs to be defined in a broader and more inclusive sense and I identify five levels of reconciliation that we need in Afghanistan.

In my view, the most important level of reconciliation in Afghanistan is the reconciliation between the state and the people – the society. And that is the importance and the centrality of the governance in Afghanistan – that Afghan state institution needs to be more stronger, need to be more inclusive, need to be more responsive. And that is the state and the society reconciliation.

The second level of the reconciliation is the reconciliation between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which would be the focus of my later part of discussion – that there is an urgent need for Afghanistan's – I agree with you, Ambassador, we do not have any problem with each other at the level of the people but at the level of two states, there are some issues that need to be reconciled between Afghanistan and Islamabad.

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And the third level of the reconciliation is national reconciliation – that there are competing and conflicting vision for Afghanistan among the Afghan political community. Some of us want a kind of – advocating an ethnic type of Afghanistan, some of us want kind of a religious, fundamentalist Afghanistan. There are competing visions for Afghanistan among Afghan political community. And there is a huge need for us in Kabul, in Kandahar, in Herat, in Mazari Sharif to have that national reconciliation at the level of the political community.

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The fourth level of the reconciliation is integration of the armed opposition and mainstreaming the Taliban and other armed opposition into mainstream politics and the state of Afghanistan.

The fifth level of the reconciliation is regional cooperation. Unfortunately, our region is one of the least connected and most fragmented compared with many parts of the world and there is huge potential for further regional cooperation and reintegration.

So there are these five levels of reintegration that I think they are all important and need to be pursued. And one cannot ignore one at the expense of others. They are all important in order to attain our desired end state for Afghanistan. And now, I would like to focus on the state of our relationship with Pakistan.

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I mean, if – I want to kind of speak of three types of relationships – I think it – my view of understanding of our relationship with Pakistan is that our relationship manifests many factors of a negative strategic relationship. Negative strategic relationship – and what does that mean? What I mean by a negative strategic partnership is that the incompatibility between Afghanistan and Pakistan at different levels. The most important aspect of that negative strategic partnership is the capability gap between us and Pakistan. I mean, Afghanistan is a weak state, a traumatized nation, whereas Pakistan – as we all know, relative to Afghanistan – is a strong state, is a nuclear state. And that has created a huge capability gap between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The second aspect of our negative strategic partnership with Pakistan is we have starkly divergent strategic interests – that Pakistan, because of different factors, has certain geostrategic objectives for itself and for its foreign policy which are in clash with Afghanistan’s geostrategic interest here. And if I can be more specific, it’s this notion of the strategic depths. Some security establishment of Pakistan still believe in that notion and strategic depths require a different kind of Afghanistan which we do not share that strategic depths notion with Afghanistan.

So there are some structural strategic differences between us and Islamabad, so it’s not a question of the personality – whether it’s President Karzai or Akes (ph) or whether President Karzadi (ph) or President Musharraf as long as the two countries define their national geostrategic interests differently, there exists divergent strategic interests between the two countries.

And a third aspect of our negative strategic partnership is the perception. There’s huge difference the way we see Pakistan and the way some in Pakistan see at us. And I give you a very recent example. I was reading Afghan and Pakistani newspapers today and I want to share with you one from a Pakistani newspaper, The Nation, which is 26th of May – which is today – and another from an Afghan papers. And they are two respected Pakistani newspapers. And I think they were all published today. And that is one view in Islamabad – I’m not saying that any of them represent the view of Afghanistan and Pakistan, but each represent a prevailing or dominant view.

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I read – I’ll quote you a part of the Pakistani editorial of The Nation. Of course, it is out of the context, I will say, but I will read one line of that newspaper. “The future of Afghanistan should see a return to dominance being exerted by Pashtuns, by virtue of their being a majority. Apart from being kept in place by foreign occupiers, another problem with the present regime is that even though fronted by Pashtun, it is dominated by the primarily Tajik Northern Alliance.

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That is one quote from an editorial of Pakistan. Let me read you a quote from an Afghan newspaper, Hasht-e-Sobh, which is the leading newspaper in Afghanistan, which shows the different perception that Islamabad and Kabul toward each other. And it is in Farsi – I'm trying to translate it into English. It says that Pakistan's consistent and persistent support for terrorist groups such as Taliban, al-Qaida and tribal forces has been proven and endorsed by the international community and the fact that Pakistan used terrorism as a leverage against Afghanistan and its neighbors, which has created a diversion of interests between Pakistan and its neighborhood.

That is one view from Kabul – the way some of us in Kabul look at – and one view that has in Islamabad. So there is that perception – differences that exists between Afghanistan and Pakistan at different levels and that this trust deficit, really, that exists between us and Islamabad at different level here. Because we do not have, we do not want to go further – what does that mean – the trust deficit between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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Another issue that I have come across is that I noticed, when engaging with my Pakistan colleagues, that I think that there are three types of Pakistani's demand or request or expectation from Afghanistan. The most important demand or request of Pakistan is Pakistan's legitimate interest, which I – we – fully respect and that is a question of refugees. I fully agree that is an important issue because, you know, if they are smuggling, it is a very important issue – the fact that whether some intelligence agency are working against Pakistan interests on the Afghan soil, there are very legitimate interests here that – the question of the uncertainty over the Durand Line, it is again a legitimate – (inaudible, background noise) – we fully respect.

But the second set of Pakistani demands is described with Pakistan's hegemonic demands and expectation from Afghanistan – that what kind of foreign policy Afghanistan should have, what kind of – the ethnic composition of the Afghan National Army that has been conveyed to us officially and formally also. So the fact that Afghanistan cannot have trade with India because Afghanistan is a capture market for Pakistan mostly. So this second set of Pakistan's demands is called Pakistan's hegemonic demand from Afghanistan.

The third set of demands that I detect is called Pakistan's paranoia and phobia and that what you are doing, what India is doing, what Americans are doing. And when we have a little conversation, we notice that really, they are paranoid. They are devoid of facts or the reality.

So Pakistan, it is my view, has three sets of expectations from us: Pakistan's legitimate interests, Pakistan's hegemonic expectation from Afghanistan and Pakistan's paranoia and fantasy in Afghanistan. So as I said, the current state of our relationship is a negative strategic relationship and most of us recognize that we cannot afford this state of relationship and there is an urgent need to move forward. The next step from a negative strategic partnership is to have a normalized relationship with each other and from a normalized relationship to a better relationship and hopefully shall, in near future, a kind of positive strategic partnership in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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So in order to move from a negative strategic relationship that is the case of current relationship, I have advocated the need for a compact a compact between Afghanistan and Pakistan – that we need to come to an understanding to develop and have a compact between Afghanistan and Pakistan. And I identify that such a compact needs to be based on 10 principles. The 10 principles that we can exchange may be added or shortened at least, but identify that any compact – any reconciliation between Afghanistan and Pakistan need to be based on 10 principles.

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The first principle is the principle of good neighborhood relationship. And that means that we need to respect and treat each other as neighbors. The second principle is the principle of transparency – that please tell us what is your anxiety about Afghanistan. We tell you about our anxiety. What you do, what we do needs to be pursued transparently. The third principle is the principle of consistency. What we say, we need to practice – what we lecture the other. The fourth principle is the principle of accountability – that we need to acknowledge that what our responsibility for past – that we did some mistakes and Afghanistan, you did some mistakes with Pakistan and that we have the moral courage to accept responsibility for some our bad behavior in past.

[00:46:45]

The fifth principle is the principle of reciprocity. If I want to have access to Indian market, for example, I should be ready to give the same chance to Pakistan to have access to Central Asia or vice versa. And that is missing in our relationship – the principle of reciprocity. The sixth principle is the principle of mediation. We have some differences, we have some misunderstandings, but the best way is to go to the third party – be it United Nations, be it United States, be it European Union, be it Saudi Arabia, be it Turkey – to third party to mediate our differences – yes.

The other principle is the principle of inclusivity. And that is, Afghanistan and Pakistan – we need to engage at all levels. For Pakistan, it is important to have engagement not only with the Afghan government but also with the Afghan parliament, with the Afghan civil society. It's not only important to have engagement with the Pashtun, it's very important to have engagement with non-Pashtun community in Afghanistan and vice versa for Afghanistan – that we need to engage with the military, with the civil society, with the parliaments here.

The other principle is the principle of complementarity, which means that there is something Afghanistan can contribute, something Pakistan can contribute, something India can contribute, something United States can contribute. So we need to pursue policy that complement all our assets in the region and outside the region. The other principle is the principle of differentiation, which means that when we have differences in some issue, that should not stop us pursuing cooperative relationship in other fields as well.

I'll give the example of China and Taiwan. We know Taiwan and China have serious territorial differences, but that territorial difference has not stopped China and Taiwan to have a first-class trade relationship here. Now, China and Taiwan are one of the closest trade partners despite having major territorial differences. And now, I think we should have that maturity both in Afghanistan and Pakistan that if we have differences over Durand Line, for example, that should not stop us of pursuing a first-class relationship in trade, in counterterrorism cooperation, yes.

[00:49:39]

And the last principle is the principle of solidarity. The principle of solidarity means that when two brothers or two neighbors – one of them is weaker and in urgent need, the neighbor or the brother who is stronger and more richer would extend more generous hands. And Afghanistan, as we know, ladies and gentlemen, we have a difficult time in Afghanistan, to be very diplomatic. And there is an urgent need for all our neighbors who can afford to be more generous towards us. And I think that is really a want that solidarity from our neighbors, including from our sisters and brothers in Pakistan.

Such a compact needs, of course, be redefined or added or modified, but that is, I think, the framework of an enduring reconciliation between Afghanistan and Pakistan. And the way forward – again, I want to emphasize a number of specific issues that it is important for us in moving forward. And the first and most important one is

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that terrorism must be denounced at all manifested forms. And I said, one principle is the principle of consistency here, is that consistency requires that neither of us should have good or bad terrorists.

Either terrorism is good or bad. One cannot have this differentiation approach to terrorism here. And I think that includes our Western partners here – that, again, if I can use my personal hat here, not official line here – is that when an entity is recognized as a terrorism then if the policy is that we don't do negotiation with terrorism, OK, that's fine – that is your policy. But if there's another terrorist group, you prescribe a different set of prescriptions, that – in diplomatic terms – is inconsistency. And some others would describe it as hypocrisy.

[00:52:03]

Here, I think that's absolutely important for all of us in the region – in Afghanistan and Pakistan and for that matter, international community that the consistency approach to terrorism – there is no such in good terrorism or bad terrorism. That is, I think, important – and I think – I read sometimes that it was a Pakistani newspaper – I can see that when they are reporting situation inside Pakistan, there is a consistent reference to activity there as terrorist activity. And when they cover the situation in Afghanistan, some of them still describe Taliban as mujahedeen. So there's mujahedeen for Afghanistan who are waging a Jihad and terrorists in Pakistan who are engaged in anti-Islamic activity. I think it is absolutely important for us if we want to move forward – the need for denouncing terrorism as a leverage. And that's very important for us in Afghanistan.

The second important is that we need to work each others to replace the notion of strategic depths with the concept and the mindset of regional cooperation – that Afghanistan can be Pakistan's best neighbors, but provided it is treated as an independent sovereign nation. But as long as the tendencies that would treat Afghanistan as a clientele state would not – we know it to be the graveyard of the empire. And really, it's not possible to become the clientele state of any neighbors. So that is, I think if we agree on one thing – and that is, we are not good at becoming the client of anyone – be it the empire or Pakistan or Iran. So don't try things that Russia and British and others have, please. We can be very good friends, but really – very good friends – but not the clientele states. And Pakistan, Afghanistan can be the best friends on earth as long as we treat each other with mutual respect.

I think that another important issue for us is that we need to convert at some point on mutual terms our frontier into soft border. Right now, in referring to Afghanistan, Pakistan – often we've heard of the frontier. And really, one cannot be a good neighbor as long as there is frontiers. There is a need for – at some point in the future – to exchange views on how to convert our frontier into a kind of soft border – yes.

Another important issue for us that we have been encouraging our friends – and based on the principle of complementarity – is an Afghanistan-Pakistan-India cooperation. We started this process two years ago and President Karzai sent the message to Afghanistan-Pakistan-India trilogue (ph) and we have said to both our colleagues and friends in India and Pakistan that there is enough space for both of you to work in Afghanistan and really be on the university, counternarcotic cooperation, counterterrorism consultations, joint reconstruction projects. I think there is enough space in Afghanistan that India and Pakistan can work together.

[00:55:57]

Since the ambassador to India and Pakistan are important members of U.N. peacekeeping and are working very good in Africa and in many parts of the world, why not in Afghanistan? I mean, you both that maturity and capacity to work in Africa and Europe as part of the U.N. peacekeeping – why not Afghanistan? Of course, not in terms of the peacekeeping nature, but reconstruction, developmental assistance, and security cooperation – yes.

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That is the context of Afghanistan-Pakistan. But on the broader picture, I want to emphasize three important issues. And one is the importance of the U.S. leadership. In attaining the end state for Afghanistan and succeeding in the reconciliation, U.S. leadership is central. I know some people in Washington think of the world as opposed to world. Fortunately, in our part of the world, you are not thinking. We think the world dominated by United States and we respect that. And as long as United States leadership is there, we will succeed. In the absence of the U.S. leadership, we all failed. And please don't think of yourselves as substitute of the region. You can utilize the region, you can utilize Afghanistan if you are there as a leader. If not, then nothing will work.

The second issue that want to emphasize the importance of the full transition. We have a lot – we work a lot on the transition only in one sectors, which is the security sectors. But there is need for more work on providing the condition and the benchmark for full transition. And that means the governance, economic developments, regional involvement. And transition only in security sector would not work.

[00:58:05]

And the third is the importance of United States-Afghanistan-India relationship here. On three basis, this Afghanistan-Pakistan-India is – if I can use the word of marriage – are made in heaven. It's tri-some (ph). One is, I think, the convergence of interests between the three countries that we have the same interests in Kabul with the United States, with India – three countries want a stable Afghanistan. The convergence of the value – we want a democratic, multicultural Afghanistan, India wants a multicultural, multiethnic, democratic Afghanistan and United States. So we are the youngest democracy, India is the largest, United States is the most resourceful. So it is the convergence of the value.

And to refer again to the basis of the complementarity of resources that here, I mean, to have someone educated in India, for example, costs 5,000 U.S. dollars. And the same person would cost over 100,000 U.S. dollars. So I think there's huge potential that exists in the greater cooperation between Afghanistan, India and United States. And I'm sorry if I exceed far more than what I was asked to speak. And thank you for your attention.

MR. TELLIS: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. TELLIS: Well, let me thank both Aziz and Davood for making a presentation that I thought was both extremely cogent and laid on the table a whole range of issues that are open to the floor. I'm not going to say more than I have to, but Dennis. Do we have a mic – oh there we go, thank you.

[01:00:03]

Q: Dennis Kux at the Woodrow Wilson Center. I have two questions – one each for each of the speakers. Turning to Ambassador Khan, it's almost a truism that an insurgency can continue forever if it has a safe haven. What do you think the prospects are for Pakistan shutting down the safe haven? And for Ambassador Moradian, it seems to me – and you alluded to it – that Pakistan has a legitimate grievance against Afghanistan in Afghanistan's refusal to accept the Durand Line even though it has legally accepted it on a number of occasions – in 1893, 1901 and then in the treaty between Britain and Afghanistan in which Afghanistan was recognized as an independent state in 1921, I believe. What do you think the prospects are for Afghanistan's formally accepting the Durand Line? Now, I don't mean detail – there may be differences about here and there, but the basic principle.

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MR. KHAN: I agree with you entirely that in fighting insurgency, we should make sure that insurgents do not get safe havens anywhere. Now, the point here is to examine how much of safe havens are where. And that, I think, certain aspects get a little exaggerated treatment and certain do not. And if we do not tackle it in a realistic manner as to what is the percentage or extent of safe haven where for whom, we would not be able to tackle that insurgency. As far as Pakistan is concerned, you know that the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is extremely porous, extremely difficult. And some parts of that Afghan border are really impossible to control.

And I have not traveled extensively there, but once I did drive down towards Harlachi (ph) and onto Parachinar and that area just at the base of Tora Bora areas. And I tell you, those areas are so difficult that you can hide armies there without their detection. And that is why the mujahedeen action against the Soviet armies became so lethal. Having said that, I think there is – yes, as far as Pakistan is concerned, Pakistan has taken cognizance of that and we have deployed 140,000 troops into those areas, gradually moving forward. And this was unprecedented in history because never before had Pakistani army been deployed in that area.

[01:02:56]

Now, we have a limitation of capacity as far as the army is concerned. How much forces can we put in that area? It is a very gradual process; it has taken place – they are moving slowly into clearing the areas of terrorists and different insurgent groups. We have had good successes in that and I hope that ultimately we'll be able to move forward. But really, I don't think it will be possible for the army to increase the numbers there because it just doesn't have that capacity to do that. We also – as far as that area is concerned – and also, whether you call it paranoia or whatever you may call it, the fact of the matter is that we can only withdraw that much from our eastern border and we have to leave some there.

But the action is going on and you can see the sincerity of our Pakistan army action from the number of casualties that the soldiers have suffered and that those are not at the hands of IEDs or to the suicide bombers. These are actual combat casualties which is more than 3,000 soldiers that have been killed. My friend Moradian talked about a soft border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. I think what Pakistan and Afghanistan need is a hard border, not a soft border. It's really, I mean – soft border has always existed – 50,000 Afghans cross into Pakistan every day, just from Chaman and Torkham, et cetera.

So to that extent, the spirit of what he meant by that soft border is very well recognized and I think is very well appreciated. What we are trying to do is that those areas which are difficult to have some kind of a control there. And some kind of a control can only take place if there is bilateral cooperation. The safe havens that exist – for example out there – the Pakistan army took action in Bajaur. All the militants just quietly moved over into Afghanistan – into the adjoining areas. Now, there were now ISAF forces there, no Afghan forces there to prevent them from finding safe havens there across the border. So these groups know exactly where the weaknesses are. That is where the three countries have to cooperate very closely.

[01:05:13]

And for that particular purpose, a tripartite commission was established between the United States, Afghanistan and Pakistan which meets at a very high level – chief of army staff from Pakistan's side, national security adviser from Afghanistan and chief of the ISAF forces in Afghanistan. But I personally feel that cooperation still needs to be augmented. It needs to be intensified and it should be much more extensive at the ground level. That is only where we'll be able to fight and those areas are extremely difficult. And believe me that groups of 10 or 12 or 15 can cause a lot of damage there.

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But really, it's not because I'm trying to defend the government of Pakistan, but I think that having visited some of those areas, you know, the safe havens are on both sides and they are just sort of moving from one to the other. And there has to be a very serious, concerted action from all the three parties involved in that and only then we'll be able to fight it.

MR. MORADIAN: OK, I think on the question of the Durand Line, it's not only one party that has difficulty, but also the other party also. And that is the concept of the strategic depths necessitate (ph) not recognizing Afghan-Pakistani border, here. My understanding of the security establishment of Pakistan's definition of strategic depths is that they envisage two kinds of borders – Afghanistan and Pakistan. One is the political border and that is the Ahmoud (ph) area – Afghanistan's border with Central Asia. That is the border – well, as far as – the notion of the strategic depths – necessitates having access to that port. And the more pragmatic definition of the strategic depths is the Hindu Kush. And that is the necessity of the Pashtun-dominated areas to be a safe space for Pakistan. And that is that the current reality. So it's not only one side that has difficulty with the border, but the other side also has –

[01:07:39]

Q: What's that got to do with the Durand Line?

MR. MORADIAN: No, the Durand Line is absolutely important – that we need to convert that frontier into a soft border. And that (recourse ?) by both sides – it's not only our side. One – we've proposed to our Pakistani colleagues in 2008 – Dr. Spanta then was the foreign minister. We proposed commencing Afghanistan-Pakistan strategic dialogue. And one item that we proposed to be discussed was that issue. So we are not escaping from the importance of that issue. So we have proposed formally to Pakistan that we are ready to start conversation on that issue.

However, that requires a reciprocal measure here. And one is that in such difficult times, no Afghan government has the courage to be proactive on that issue. And in order to settle that issue, we need more stable environment here. And that means that terrorism must not remain a leverage against us. And as long as the leadership of the Taliban remains protected in Pakistan, that will not be – (inaudible [69:10]). So I think we first need to create a stable environment in our part of the world which enable us to address those issues here.

And the terrorism, they do not need borders – what we have seen in the case of Mexico and the United States here. And what we think about the sanctuaries that the leadership of the Taliban. We have given the list of 55 to 60 leadership of the Taliban and I think to arrest or deport 60 people, you don't need a huge army – you can do it with a few intelligence officers or with a police force. So that is, I think, not about the border issue, it's not about the nature of the border – it is, are we ready to denounce terrorism as a leverage of foreign policy or not.

MR. TELLIS: Aziz, you –

[01:10:03]

MR. KHAN: May I just say a few words about that particular question. I think there's urgent need to – in my personal view – at least demarcate the Durand Line accurately because since a very long time – whether either side – I mean, it doesn't bother me, really, very much whether Durand Line is accepted as a border or not if it is accepted – because it is accepted as a border. Afghanistan doesn't recognize it as a border, but it is for all practical purposes is a border.

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However, there are – over a very long period of time, no demarcation work has been done of the boundary pillars and so on, which have gone into disrepair and that creates difficulty. Sometimes you do not know which is the Afghan side and which is the Pakistani side and I think it is important if that particular thinning is demarcated – once more boundary pillars and so on are established so that the two sides know at least – whether accepted or not – that this is the line between the two countries, this is the border between the two countries.

As far as the concept of strategic depth is concerned, now I think it has reached its strategic depth a long time ago. Somebody – the generals also get their crazy moments to describe things and for example, it's the same way as Cold Start was started by something – it just got a cold start and nothing else. It will remain in the deep freeze. But it really rubbed the Pakistan the wrong way – created a lot of tension between the two countries. The same way is the concept of strategic depth. It was spoken of in, I think, '89 or something like that and subsequently it has been clarified by several stages that what they mean is a friendly Afghanistan and nothing more than that. That concept in its original form 30 years ago has been dropped, has been buried and we should just not talk about it.

[01:11:58]

Pakistan is not talking of whether the Hindu Kush is the depth area or the Amu River is the depth area. No, we would like the Durand Line to be demarcated, established and recognized and we would like our strategic depth only up to the Durand Line and not beyond that. I can't speak on behalf of the government because I have nothing to do with the government, but I'm quite sure that should the Durand Line be demarcated and accepted, that would solve all the problems between the two countries.

MR. TELLIS: Bill?

Q: This is extremely useful, Ashley. I think this is a great initiative – I'm glad that you do this. And Dr. Moradian, the notion of Afghanistan as South Korea – this is a very interesting – this gives us something to kind of shoot for. And that's a very useful model to be thinking about. And there are troops in South Korea – have been for a long time. Not so many, but it is there. So I think that's a very useful proposal and useful concept to have out there.

Ambassador Khan, my problem, though, is figuring out U.S. relationship with Pakistan. We've talked a little bit about the May 1st, May 2nd raid and a Pakistani observer has said either Pakistan is a failed state because they didn't know or it's a rogue state because they did know. And you're not in the government, you don't have to opine on either one of those. But if it's a rogue state, then I don't know where support comes for Pakistan. I mean, the United States would like to be able to have a good relationship, like to support, like to work with, like to eliminate sanctuaries, like to fight terrorism, make no distinction between good terrorists and bad terrorists, but listening to Pakistani leaders, listening to the Pakistani people, listening to the Pakistani military, listening to the Pakistani lawyers defending assassins, it's hard to understand where we go with this relationship. So what would you advise the United States and particularly the U.S. government? Thank you.

[01:14:03]

MR. KHAN: First of all, it depends on where you read what opinion. I mean Moradian just quoted from The Nation – nobody reads that wretched paper. It probably has a circulation of 10,000. It's an extreme right-wing paper, and, you know, nobody takes that paper seriously except for a very small fringe group which thinks in different lines and so on. As far as the relationship with the U.S. is concerned, I think it's also for the United States to decide what kind of a relationship it wants to have with Pakistan. First of all, I think like to is a wrong word. Pakistan and the United States have a robust relationship and a good relationship. There are difficulties – yes, there are problems.

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And the problems arise because this relationship, unfortunately, right from the time of independence has remained an episodal kind of a relationship. And what we need to do is have a strategic kind of relationship towards which an attention is being paid now. For me, personally, for example, it pains me to see the way the relationship has sunk to its lowest depth. I mean, I recall when I was in college – that was a long time ago; recall is almost impossible because it was so long ago – but at that time America was the most favorite country and America was the most like country, Americans were the most like and admired people in Pakistan. And it really hurts me to see how that entire thing has deteriorated to an extent today that at the popular level – I’m sorry if I put it bluntly, but it’s the perception really and not reality how everybody dislikes United States in Pakistan, despite the fact that still at the government level it’s a good relationship.

[01:15:55]

There is a need to do a lot of public diplomacy and I’m glad to see that your new ambassador there in Islamabad – both he and his wife are devoting a lot of time and attention towards this aspect of the relationship of explaining what Americans stand for or what their intentions are. I think that with a very little effort, that relationship can again be brought back – overcome the difficulties. But you have to have a look at that relationship in its entirety. We should not start looking at the relationship from May 1 or May 2 or such and such date. It’s a very old relationship, it has been a very robust relationship and I think it will continue to be a good and robust relationship.

The difficulties – in every relationship, there are always certain difficulties – certain misperceptions of different appreciation of a particularly situation. But about certain aspects of what the situation on the ground is, you have to pay a little more attention to what Pakistan thinks or views certain aspects. We were your partner as far as jihad against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was concerned. At that particular time, Pakistan could do no wrong. Even the A.Q. Khan “Walmart” and everything was forgotten. All these rogues who are called terrorists today were the glorified mujahedeen.

And I remember – and I’m a Pakhtun myself – I remember once I read an article in New Yorker – I recall 30 years ago, so – and the way the Pakhtuns were described on a white charger coming, you know, with the flowing robes and I said, is that me, really? I mean, we are quite ordinary people and we were being painted out to be superhuman beings. So I think it’s about time to put our feet on the ground and start looking at the relationship in its reality, in its entirety. And I, for one, feel that it’s a very strong relationship between the United States and Pakistan and these temporary difficulties that we have would be overcome.

Even here where we have talked about the May 1 – I mean, just look at the kind of cooperation we have had also in this specific field of fighting al-Qaida. Look at the number of people that we have caught and handed over to the United States. Every important al-Qaida catch as been done by Pakistan. So the cooperation is there. The cooperation has been there and I think it will continue there.

[01:18:32]

MR. TELLIS: Young lady – (inaudible).

Q: Thank you very much for all of you coming this morning – this has been wonderful. My question regards China and its involvement in building the port in Afghanistan – or, I mean, mining the copper and becoming somewhat involved – marginally – in this debacle. Do you believe China has a role in the mediation process given India-Pakistan relations and just the paranoia, if you will, in general?

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MR. : Are you asking me?

Q: I'll listen to both of you, actually – I'm curious of both of your answers.

MR. KHAN: I think China would probably keep itself out as far as the reconciliation process is concerned. But China is very – I feel – is seriously interested in economic development of Afghanistan. The investment that they have promised for the Aynak mines – copper mines – I think is 3.2 billion dollars, something like that. So it's good that China gets economically involved. As for its political part is concerned, I think Chinese are very pragmatic people and very wisely, they are keeping out of it. There are enough players in the field, I think U.S. along with NATO forces and all can handle the situation with the help of the Afghan people and Afghan government and they should be able to move forward.

[01:19:49]

But China's intentions vis-à-vis the area are very positive. I think there's nothing to fear from that. But at the same time, I think – I can't speak on behalf of the Chinese, but my own reading is that they would just confine their cooperation to economic cooperation and nothing beyond that except for the slight worry that they have as far as terrorists are concerned. And there, I think they are settled – they have a very small border with Afghanistan and with Pakistan they have very good cooperation as far as Uyghur problem is concerned. I think we are cooperating very well with each other.

MR. TELLIS: Davood?

MR. MORADIAN: Yeah, I think – one advantage of being with the government is to have the chance to access to the official reading. And as you know, Prime Minister Gillani was in Kabul and there was a report of that at Wall Street Journal, which I think it's not very extreme as what (he hears?). I think the readout that I received from my bosses that shows that the consistency of Pakistan here. So that report, ladies and gentlemen, that was published in Wall Street Journal reflects what happened in the conversation.

And also, as you know, Pakistani foreign secretary was in Kabul two days ago and again, I spoke with my bosses last night and said, what, anything happened? It says, the continuation here. So it's, I think, unfortunately and sadly to say that at least it's not only The Nation that say something controversial. The official conversation that has taken place between us and Islamabad, again, if I can use and give that permission from my boss to share this with you that the continuation – the consistency about the Pashtun factor – the different factors. So it's not only The Nation which says something controversial, it is the official.

And on the question of the China, again we have approached the Chinese on three issues. The first issue is the terrorism – that we all share that trait in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and China and we have started a conversation with our Chinese counterpart in Beijing about terrorism. And in fact, I was in Helsinki a few months ago and I'm going to be in Helsinki in two weeks' time so terrorism is a matter that we have started exchanging views with our Chinese counterparts.

[01:12:42]

And the second issue is, as I said, this principle of mediation – that we have asked our Chinese colleagues to help us and Pakistan as a kind of mediation. As you know, Pakistan and China have an excellent relationship and we have a good relationship with China also. And we have asked our Chinese colleagues to help both countries to come a kind of understanding. And a third area that we have been working is the economic cooperation investment

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opportunity for Afghans and we are reasonably very pleased with our conversation with our Chinese colleague on these three issues.

Q: Thank you. Barbara Slavin from the Atlantic Council. For Ambassador Khan, I have a question about the current talks – apparently there are talks between an aid to Mullah Omar – I believe his name is Taib Agha – that the Germans are mediating, whether you know this gentleman or know anything about these talks. Can you tell us a little bit more about Mullah Omar – you said he would be difficult. It's widely believed he's in Pakistan – that he's in Quetta or he's Karachi. If not, where is he and why isn't he brought forward? And for Mr. Moradian, you talked about Afghanistan as a South Korea. Is there a North Korea in this analogy? And could you say a word or two about Iran and how it can become part of the solution. There are reports that it's aiding Taliban; it's been a sort of good and bad friend to Afghanistan. Thank you.

[01:14:26]

MR. KHAN: I really do not know who the Germans are facilitating the mediation – the last time somebody facilitated the mediation, we found out that it was a shopkeeper from Quetta. And I think he was paid a few million dollars for that, and – (inaudible) – provided a plane, so be careful when you are – and I think there Pakistan's role and help would be extremely important.

As far as where Mullah Omar is, tell me where he is. I would like to have 25 million – I'd let the Americans know and cash in on the 25 million dollars which I could do with. Nobody has any idea where he is and I won't venture any guess on that at all. The difficulty that I – when I said that it would be difficult negotiating with Mullah Omar is because I think he's a difficult man. It's a purely personal view – he'll not negotiate, he'll probably disappear somewhere if finally the crunch comes to that. I hope I'm proved wrong and he does come around and negotiate.

But it would be difficult negotiating with him. You'll have to be very careful. It will have to be very carefully prepared, orchestrated, contacted and I think only the Afghans would be able to handle that and they should quietly start sending feelers and so and so forth. And of course, the Americans in the background – because one of the major demands that they have is that the foreign forces should leave the country. So those factors have to be considered. The negotiation process, I think the reconciliation process – at least there are intentions to start it; I don't know whether it has started or not, but it will have to be very carefully prepared and I think Afghans would know whether they are talking to the right man or whether they are not talking right people, whether they represent or they do not represent.

Otherwise, there are a lot of characters who would like to take advantage of the situation. Recently, I read that some reconciliation process was going on in the Maldives. And then I discovered who the characters were and they had nothing to do with the FATA Vard (ph) – (inaudible) and they probably had a good holiday in the Maldives at the U.S. expense. But you should be careful about that.

[01:16:43]

Q: (Off-mic.)

MR. KHAN: Again – Moradian may disagree with it entirely – in my view, al-Qaeda and Taliban are two separate entities. Al-Qaeda was there, Taliban inherited Osama bin Laden; they did not invite him into Afghanistan. It was the government of Professor Rabbani which had invited – given asylum to Osama bin Laden in Jalalabad. Hajji Qadir was the governor of Jalalabad at that particular time; I think he came in May '95. Taliban captured Jalalabad and if we have the time and I can indulge in some storytelling – can I? Their head of government – Mullah Rabbani

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– Taliban head of government – told me that when he – he was the commander who captured Jalalabad from Professor Rabbani’s government.

And he said that I was sitting in my tent and a tall Arab walked in and talked to me and he said, I am Osama bin Laden. He said, I had never seen him. He said the previous government had given me asylum here. Now that you have captured this area, what will be my status? And so they told him that we have heard your name, you are a great mujahed, you have done sacrifices for Afghanistan. They had so many Arabs who gave their lives fighting with Afghans to throw the Soviets out so whatever terms and conditions under which you were given asylum, please live peacefully here. And that well, he was supposed to live peacefully in Jalalabad.

[01:18:19]

And that situation remained and there was hardly any contact between the Taliban and Osama bin Laden until, I think, somewhere towards the end of ’98 or so. And that is where slowly, when the Taliban government was sort of ostracized by everybody – of course because of their own stupid policies, but nonetheless – and they felt they were in a corner. That is where Osama then weaseled his way towards the Taliban, gave them some money and told them that look, you are bringing true Islam here and that is why the whole world is against you and blah, blah, blah.

And from there on, it became – but even then, the contact was very limited. It was between the top leadership and not beyond that. I think the number Arabs in Afghanistan at that time were about 2,500 or so – not more than that – which were there because they could not return to their countries for one reason or another. And the Taliban were very keen at that particular time to get rid of all those people. They said, we cannot throw them out, but if some country is willing to accept them, we would be happy to do that. But we just cannot throw them out.

I mean, I’m not trying to be an apologist for the Taliban or al-Qaeda, but that was the – even after 9/11, the Taliban asked a whole shura of ulama, gave a fatwa that if some country is willing to take him, we would not prevent him from leaving, which was a polite way of saying that he should get the hell out of there, but help us – we can’t do it ourselves. So that is the situation as far as that is concerned.

MR. MORADIAN: On the question of South Korea, we had a meeting at the Pentagon two days ago and I used that analogy. And I said that we are South Korea for this reason and I identified India as Japan, China as the same and there must be a North Korea. But as I am a diplomat, I’m not going to indulge. But if one have an objective comparison, I think we could find the North Korea is there. The North Korea is there but I know it’s too undiplomatic to indulge in why there must be a North Korea.

[01:30:50]

On the question of Iran, as many of us in that part of the world, we have a multiple identity and multiple interests in contradicting each other. Of course, with Iran there are areas of common interests: a stable Afghanistan, a peaceful Afghanistan is an interest of Iran’s. The question of the drug is a major issue for Iran because the refugees is a very important issue for them and also the spread of radicalization into particularly the Sunni-dominated area. So there are some convergence of interests between us, United States and Iran.

But having said that, there are some divergent interests here. We have a democratic disposition – I know it’s not very working at this stage, but it’s still – our media, for example, our democratic disposition – much, much advanced than Iran’s. So there is this democratic incompatibility of regime with Iran and Iran as a theocratic regime does not like one to have a neighbor which is a democratic nation. And also, Iranian’s fear of encirclement by the United States – it is an issue that has forced them to maintain and strengthen their engagement with the Taliban.

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So after Pakistan, Iran is the second place for some members of the Taliban they consider as a safe haven. But also, Iran has also important compatibility advantage that in terms of the trade, reconstruction it's much cheaper, more efficient than many from outside the region. But no one in the region can compete with India because of, again, this interest value and the compatibility that exists between us and India here.

Q: Thank you, Ashley. Tom Lynch from National Defense University. A comment and then two questions for the panelists. Thank you for your presentations this morning on a very important topic. Just a comment, Ashley, I think you introduced the topic correctly by talking about transition in Afghanistan which is a very powerful and poignant point. I just wanted to highlight – having worked a little bit on transition in a former life – that, as articulated in Lisbon, the transition does not start in 2014, it starts this summer.

[01:33:28]

And the transition is to allow and further enable the Afghan forces to have the power and the capability in the field so that by the end of 2014, they are the ones that have the lead across the country in the counterinsurgent fight. And I think that transition is important to recognize that way as opposed to something that starts in a finite manner in 2014. Having said that, though, I think it's important for us to think the pathways through – this summer to 2014.

And there I have a question for you, Ambassador Khan – and thank you for your presentation. And it goes to the following point that you made about the desire for increased and fraternal relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. But the question then is, if in fact there is this irritant – this irritant of a number of individuals – Afghans – who are believed to be living in Pakistan, then why is and what would Pakistan lose from officially labeling and branding them as inhibitors of fraternal relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan and indeed to alerting their security and their internal police services that these individuals are to be apprehended and are to be picked up as part of a process that could help expand and go beyond.

Maybe there's something that I'm not recognizing that would be very devastating to Pakistan internally or be a problem for Pakistan in terms of some type of blowback. But in that context, perhaps you could address why, if the United States and the coalition has been willing to help Pakistan against problems like Baitullah Mehsud – to help eliminate him from the picture – that the United States has offers to do similar things with some of these other individuals that are a problem for Pakistan wouldn't be pursued.

And Dr. Moradian, thanks for your comments, but I'd like to know also, in terms of establishing this peace and this relationship moving forward, how is it right now that Afghanistan is not talking in great detail about how it must do more to deal with the disaffected Pashtuns? And clearly there are tens of thousands of them in the south of the country that don't recognize the legitimacy of the current constitutionally-aligned government. And how is that Afghanistan is not yet at a point willing to talk about the importance of talking about refinement to the current constitutional process to find a way to get into the tent those that are disaffected and indeed that Pakistan points out correctly are disaffected with the current government as it exists. Thank you.

[01:35:39]

MR. TELLIS: Thank you, Tom. Thank you for also setting the record straight – I've been misspeaking about 2014.

MR. KHAN: Well, as far action against these individuals are concerned, I already explained that the process has started. It's just that Pakistan has that much capacity and it's dealing with it. As far as Baitullah Mehsud is

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concerned, we do not – let me put it a little diplomatically – we have not found the capability to prevent the United States from continuing to target wherever they wish to target. Baitullah Mehsud was droned out and you are trying to drone out others also which are there and that action is going on.

In any case, Pakistan is trying to move its forces. The government has repeatedly said – for example, the action has already been taken right up to South Waziristan. Now, the part of Waziristan is left. Once the government finds that the time is right to take that action, that probably would – I hope that time is sooner. In my own personal view, it's going to be a hell of a tough fight. It's going to create a lot of problems for the government of Pakistan. And the blowback in Pakistan would be humongous.

[01:37:03]

For you, it may be a newspaper item, but we have had 30,000 killed in Pakistan since this action in those areas has started and all that is happening inside Pakistan is a consequence of that action that has started. If we can embellish it on different kind of examples and chicken coming home to roost and all that kind of a thing, the reality on the ground is not that. These chickens are not coming home to roost; these are chickens which are now creating problems for us as a consequence of a certain action.

So it's important to look at things – the catchword phrase is – and nice catch phrases like North Korea, South Korea also might make a sexy comment, but here I just may say that it's in this case, North Korea is feeding the South Koreans and not the other way around. So we should be careful about which way we use – smart sentences are nice to coin, but one should look at the reality on the ground. As far as action against these groups are concerned, the government of Pakistan – the Pakistan army – is going to take the action. But believe me, those terrains are extremely difficult – extremely difficult.

And as it is, you know that we have suffered about 3,000 – I mentioned that 3,000 troops killed in those areas. And once we enter into that area – and let's not miss – we sort of underestimate the capacity and capability of the Afghani group. And don't forget that that was the most effective jihadi group against the Soviet Union and they have huge support there in Khost area. They don't need hiding places in Pakistan. And not much action is taking place there.

I mean, look at the border – OK, if he's so dangerous and he's there, put in forces there and then track the – (inaudible) – which, by the way, the day Pakistan army thinks of starting action there, the American forces and the Afghan forces also better be ready on the other side to give full support, otherwise it would be a meaningless exercise as it has been in other areas because these chaps just cross over and find refuge in that area and then come back. So it will have to be very carefully planned – the tripartite cooperation. Both intelligence and combat level would be required and I suppose it will happen when the time comes.

[01:39:30]

MR. MORADIAN: On the question that the gentleman asked, as I said in my presentation, I recognize the importance of the governance and that was the reason that I identified the reconciliation between the government – state and society – as the principle issue when it comes to the domestic aspect of the reconciliation. And I cannot agree with you more on the centrality of having an inclusive and functioning governance structure. That is – I fully agree with you. But there is a misunderstanding and misperception about the governance in Afghanistan, that some see that there is only one community is disfranchised at the expense of other community.

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Now, let me share with you the observation that I have in my Washington visits. We are here part of a Harvard University-NESA program called the U.S.-South Asia Leadership Engagement, which brought together people from Afghanistan, our good friends, ambassadors from Pakistan and India. And there was a conversation and exchange between Afghan, Pakistan and Indian and some comments by some Afghans were not received by some of our Pakistani participants.

And they approached the NESA, if I can share this with you, that, why you invited all Panjshiri and non-Pashtun who hate Pakistan here. And a colleague from NESA conveyed that protest. And I told him that, let's have that conversation, what does that mean, that we are all Panjshiri, all non-Pashtun against Pakistan.

[01:41:23]

And I introduced the Afghan delegation and I established a number of factors: First, no one from us was from Panjshir. One was from Kandahar, one was from Kunar, one from Herat – I'm from Herat – one from Kabul and one from Sheberghan in the north. Of the ethnic composition of the group, I established with evidence that 60 percent of the delegation – six-zero – are Pashtun. And we identified that important community of Hazara was not represented there. So if there's any for ethnic composition of the group, it was overrepresentation of the Pashtun and underrepresentation of the other group here.

So that is the misperception that exists outside Afghanistan, that only the challenge of the governance impact the Pashtun – unfortunately, it impact all community here. We have serious challenge in many part of Afghanistan. The bad governance, the predatory behavior exists in the north, in the south, in the east – as we see, huge importance. That is one misperception.

The second misperception is that the disfranchisement and good governance makes people suicide bomber. I mean, in terms of the bad governance disfranchise community – you repeat any developing nation, you will see the percentage and the degree of bad governance. But whether it's Central Asia, for that matter, or India or Arab world produce suicide bomber – no. Today is a different context that produce suicide bomber and different context that produce disfranchisement. So I think this is a huge misperception that we identify bad governance as the cause of suicide bombing. Suicide bombing is a kind – it has its own infrastructure, its own dynamic. Yeah.

So I just am going to summarize here that yes, sir, I fully agree with you that there is a huge degree of disfranchisement in Afghanistan which impact all communities. And the importance and the centrality of having an inclusive and a functioning responsive state institution at different level – while it is amiss that only Pashtun have been abused all community, unfortunately in that case we have been – inclusive has been the fact that all have been impacted.

[01:43:58]

And on the ethnic composition of the Afghan army, for example, which is another misunderstanding which I heard in this town – that is not the reality, that if you go to the website of NATO Training Mission, there ethnic composition of the Afghan national security forces reflect the understanding, the estimate that exists here. And as of the ethnic composition of the Afghan political elite, two-thirds of the senior official in the Afghan government happen to be Pashtun – two-thirds. But that his not an issue; I think what is absolutely important is we have to change the discourse from an ethnic-based discourse to a governance discourse – a responsive here, accountability rather than ethnic politics.

MR. TELLIS: The lady there, please.

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Q: I'm Diane Perlman, I'm with the School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason, also Mediators Beyond Borders. And I'm co-authoring a book on reconciliation with Johan Galtung and his image is not Korea but Switzerland for Afghanistan. So anyway, this is terrific, thank you for much. First of all, you mentioned about the need for mediation and conflict resolution so do you have qualified people who are working on this, the first one. The second one, in terms of terrorism, in addition to denouncing it and what you just mentioned are people working on reducing the conditions that incite recruitment or dealing with just grievances or looking at some of the factors that might inspire some people to radicalization? And do you have plans for something like a truth and reconciliation commission or some process to help with that and when might you imagine that – if so, when – usually that happens when conflict is –

MR. MORADIAN: I think we have an Afghanistan transitional justice process which was part of our commitment in the Afghanistan Compact which requires a number of measures that Afghan governments need to implement, including recognition of the victims – (inaudible) – documenting the past abuse. So we have a process but that process mainly focuses on – (inaudible) – the past. For the present stage of the conflict, we have a number of initiatives and measures.

[01:46:45]

To begin with, this peace process reconciliation is not 2011-fashion. It started really in 2003 – as the ambassador mentioned that President Karzai, in his first months in office invited Taliban to come back to civilian life here. The only difference is that in this month, it has been accelerated. So from the very beginning, at a political level we started that process and in 2003, we established a peace consolidation committee which is chaired by Professor Mojaddedi. So we have that mechanism which has offices across Afghanistan working from 2003 and now we have high peace council at national security council – one-third of our resources is allocated to peace and reconciliation – not now, for a number of years.

Our intelligence department has a number of important departments working in that issue, yes. So really, we have been doing whatever we could to have an inclusive, but there's a problem here. In order for reconciliation to work, there is a need for other factors which have been missing which I term as pull, push, hammer factors. The pull factor is the responsibility Afghan governments, Afghan civil society, Afghan political community of pulling the disfranchised opposition – the Taliban, the Haqqani who wants to attract them into us and that are the pull factors at different levels – at the policy level, at the local levels. And we have been very successful on the pull factors, yes.

Now, if I can imagine myself as a Talib, I know there is an address, I know there are people that are contact them, I know there is a package ready for me here. And that package, that telephone line has been there – we have conveyed that message to the Taliban by different channels that if you want, you can come back there. So the pull factor has been there. But what has been missing has been the push factors. And the push factor is a safe haven – it is sanctuaries.

[01:49:25]

And the third factor that has been not very strong – I call it the hammer factor, the hammer factor – the determination of the international community to succeed in Afghanistan. And this deadline of July 2011 – the concept of transition and withdrawal has confused the Taliban and other groups that if we just wait another two, three years, we don't have to come back since anyway, they are leaving, that way we have to come back.

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So in order to reconciliation to work and to succeed and pay dividend, there is a need of combination of the three factors – of the pull factors, which is the Afghan government, Afghan civil society, Afghan political community; the push factor of friends in Pakistan – I don't mean physical pushing them into us but at least encouraging, deny them sanctuaries and they are not – as I say, there are less than 60 of those individuals. And closing the training camps out there – the madrasah factor here. And then the hammer factor, which is the resolve and determination of the international community to success. When bring together all these three factors together, then there is a chance for succeed in Afghanistan.

[01:50:51]

MR. TELLIS: I think we had, this morning, a very extended and a very candid conversation in many ways of the kind that often doesn't happen between two countries that have a range of issues on which there is no agreement. One of the things that's going to challenge the United States in the months ahead is not the fact that either Pakistan or Afghanistan don't have good intentions but that at some fundamental level there are differences with respect to national interest.

And those differences of national interest will have to be reconciled in some fashion if the administration's vision of a successful transition is to be achieved. I think the message that came across quite clearly from both Davood and Aziz was that the task has become so much harder because of the set of deadlines that are looming and the consequences that those deadlines have with respect to the incentives that it imposes on all the actors. Now, at one level the deadlines might kind of focus the mind, compel us to do things that we might otherwise not have done, but at another level, the deadlines offer a form of escape. And how we are going to juggle these two competing perceptions of the deadline is something that those who occupy the august quarters in 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue will have to figure out in the months to come.

I want to just take the opportunity on behalf of all of you to thank Aziz and Davood for spending this morning with us. I know Davood is getting ready to get on an airplane and leave today. I also want to thank all of you for coming here and I expect that in the months ahead, we will do a series of these events – politically on Afghanistan. So I look forward to seeing you all again. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

(END)