



# PAKISTAN'S SECURITY AFTER THE FLOODS

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

**WELCOME/MODERATOR:**

**Stephen Tankel**

Visiting Scholar

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

**SPEAKERS:**

**Haider Mullick**

Fellow, U.S. Joint Special Operations University

Research Fellow, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding

**John H. Gill**

Associate Professor, Near East-South Asia Center

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Transcript by Federal News Service

Washington, D.C.

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STEPHEN TANKEL: Okay, I'd like to welcome everybody here. Thank you for coming to this event, which I know I've been looking forward to for some time.

Two very knowledgeable speakers. First is going to be Haider Mullick. He is a fellow at the U.S. Joint Special Operations University and Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. And he is actually working on a project that he was specifically requested to do by Gen. Petraeus: looking at the scope and scale of Pakistan's counterinsurgency efforts, their strategy and their capabilities, which necessitated quite a bit of field research.

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In so doing, he had the opportunity to observe the impact of the floods, which I know a lot of us have been curious about how that is going to impact Pakistan's counterinsurgency capabilities going forward. Also, the degree to which militant outfits have been able to take advantage of the situation. And, of course, tied into that intrinsically is the question of how this is going to impact some civil-military relations in Pakistan and, in turn, U.S. strategy vis-à-vis Pakistan. So he's going to speak with us – he's going to speak with us about that today.

And then once we've heard from Haider, we'll have the opportunity to hear some impressions from Jack Gill, an associate professor at Near East-South Asia Institute at National Defense University. Jack will offer his own thoughts as well as some responses to Haider's remarks.

Jack joined NESAI, I believe, in 2001, after a 27-year career in the military. He's been following South Asia issues from the intelligence and policy perspective from the mid-1980s, so we're very lucky to have him here to respond today.

In addition to Jack's wealth of knowledge on South Asia, I should also note –because I'm a nerd and I think this is cool – he's written several books on Napoleonic warfare as well.

So in any event, Haider, the floor is yours, and thank you very much to both of you for being here today.

HAIDER MULLICK: Thank you, Stephen. It's my pleasure to be here. This is my second time at the Carnegie Endowment, and I am doubly honored that Jack's here and that Stephen will be moderating. I've known Jack for a while, and I look forward to getting to know Stephen better.

My job here is to share some of my findings about how the security dynamics in Pakistan have changed after the floods and what to expect. I will look at the state of Pakistan; the military of Pakistan, how they are struggling to fight this unprecedented and very, very drastic development.

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Seven million people remain homeless. One-fifth of the country at one time was under water. The one – now that the waters have receded, you basically see no-man's land. Everything is destroyed. I got to travel in the north and the south, in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. And I've seen with my own eyes hundreds of villages under water, thousands of people under the naked sky.

And I'm still shocked by the lack of media coverage in the United States of this terrible plight – much bigger than tsunami, Haiti, and a couple others combined. And still we don't – we don't hear a lot.

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What is even more shocking is, unlike Haiti and other places, this country is of strategic importance to us. It has nuclear weapons; it had a military that was finally showing some success in counterinsurgency.

I was there in May and June before the floods, and then I was there in August and September after the floods. On July 31st, the Pakistani surge, which began in the spring of 2009, ended. They have – the orders given to troops right now are to take care of the road networks – you know, lines of operations, protect these forward-operating bases. And these orders are for the XI Corps and the Frontier Corps in the North.

Approximately 30,000 troops moved away; at the peak of the surge there were 150,000 troops. Most of the helicopters are gone. They are not planning to go into North Waziristan anytime soon – massive troop overstretch.

This is the only institution of the Pakistan military that can do anything in the country. There is no national guard; the National Disaster Management Authority is small, weak, and relies on the military and the army specifically.

They're doing everything, which is expected in relief efforts. But they're not only in charge of the relief, but also reconstruction in the North and the South, and they've taken over governance in the North. So when people talk about a military coup, the Pakistani Army is already running the North and parts of the South, as we speak.

I was there in Nowshera, for example, on the 32nd day after the flood hit it. I asked the relief officer in charge, Lt. Gen. Kashif (ph), whose visiting instructor at the School of Artillery inside Nowshera overnight had to be – had to become this relief officer and is coordinating all relief efforts inside Nowshera, which was hit pretty hard. This is very close to the Swat Valley.

And this gentleman told me that I have not seen a single politician come down here, except of course the president and prime minister that came for about a couple of hours. I went to that camp; there was basically a school building, and more of a photo op.

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After that I got to travel a lot and visit a lot of camps. I did see certain camps that were run by Islamist organizations. They were not LeT or al-Qaida proper, but they certainly had Islamist leanings. They're doing a phenomenal job. For example, their camps were the only ones with female bathrooms, really good medical supplies and, in fact, refused to get medical supplies from the Army because they had their own network that was doing very well.

As far as USAID, they were the first one on the scene, but they had a – they had no oversight of what they were doing as far as Nowshera was concerned. For example, in the first 72 hours, USAID provided two water filtration plants. They gave them to the Army, which was supposed to give it to the civilian administrators. The civilian guy, administrators, did not install those. And I roamed around everywhere; could not find them. So first on the scene, but it could not impact that.

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Now, in other areas – this is not a picture of everything else. I mean, you have Angels of Mercy – Marines – helicopters coming in, saving hundreds of people every day, and a lot of people saw that.

As I walked around and I talked to people of all colors and asking them, do you mind if there's an American flag on a flour bag? And nobody cared about that. This is –

This is why it's so important to reset our partnership with the Pakistanis in moments like this, because this is a time when you can really reset some of the fundamental, underlining principles of – and try to get rid of some of the misconceptions between the people of Pakistan and the people of the United States, and not just the government level.

Unfortunately, I think we have missed that boat, or will miss that boat very soon, because the window of opportunity is very small and strategic communication is, for all purposes, a complete failure. And these are not my words, but words of brave, patriotic Americans working in the U.S. Embassy that I will not name.

So we have a real problem there, and it's not just to look good. It's a matter of United States national security, because Pakistani people color everything else, including the military.

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So there's two – (inaudible) – no Waziristan operation. If you – if you've read any of my work in the last six months, you would probably see that I was talking about a reconstruction teams that the Frontier Corps was developing. So the – and the XI Corps of the military was developing in the FATA in the North, and basically they were trying to – it was a holding-plus policy. There is no (baiting ?), but, you know, trying to come up with some high-impact projects and helping the people over there.

All those plans are now shelved or on pause. There's very little going on. It is – and to qualify that, it is important to know that I think two years ago nobody would have imagined that the Pakistani military, or Frontier Corps, would be holding South Waziristan for this long, or the Swat Valley. So they're doing a good job holding, and they'll continue to do that. There will be no operations for – in the – at least in the next six to 12 months.

The National Disaster Management Authority, as I said, is also under-resourced. So this is the state: the civilian government, the Pakistani Army, Frontier Corps; police and Rangers are barely holding on to Karachi, for example.

Now comes – it's very important to look at the enemy's strategy. Al-Qaida syndicate, Lashkar-e-Taiba, sectarian groups. I use – you know, the suggested term “al-Qaida syndicate” just to get my points across, but it is a very, very diverse group of various organizations.

Al-Qaida has done a great job investing in groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and company. Lashkar-e-Taiba and company – you know, there's like Sette Sabah (sp) and Jaish-e-Mohammed and other groups – for about nine years have not being touched by the Pakistani military, the only group that has really invested in its membership, recruitment, training, developing second-and third-generation IEDs.

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I got a briefing; there's an IED lab in Quetta run by a school of infantry and tactics. I got a great briefing there, looking at some of the new stuff that the al-Qaidan syndicate was using against the Army, and it's just amazing. These are modern, second-and third-type ambushes and hiding some of the best snipers, for example, and doing a very good job with all of that.

And their job, if you're a smart insurgent, is to take full advantage of the floods, and they're doing it in two ways.

One, they're providing very limited but high-impact relief. So they're first one on the scene, but they only come with 10 bags of rice. (Inaudible) – when the Army comes, it comes with 100 bags, but it's always a little late and they've made their – (word inaudible) – and then they're on their way.

The second thing is to open multiple fronts. They finally have an opportunity – “they” being TTP, Pakistani Taliban, TSNM, al-Qaida network, Haqqani network. They're all very, very happy because troops – troops and resources are moving away from the pressure points that were created by the Pakistani surge. And they're trying to open multiple fronts so they could – they could go further and they could develop more space and have more sanctuary all over the country.

While I was there, there were seven terrorist attacks, were most suicide attacks, and they were all over. They were in Karachi, they were in Punjab, they were in Quetta and Baluchistan. So this is very important.

The other thing is al-Qaida strength was never in numbers. It replicates. It has the best train-the-trainer program in the world. And they've been able to not only train, but also hire some great folks from the ISI alumni network, the Pakistani intelligence agency.

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And ISI alumni network and these groups together were trained by the best in the 1980s, and really retained that knowledge and has updated, mostly using the Internet. And they have the best media campaigns, the best strategic communication, great liaison with tribes, separatists, criminal syndicates and, like I said, second-and third-generation IEDs. And the list goes on.

And Lashkat-e-Taiba has really been the place where all the money has gone, and the attention has gone from al-Qaida. And they've developed this, you know, boogeyman of 300 people, al-Qaida, when in actuality they've been able to expand. So that's very important.

The other thing is we look at – in Lashkat-e-Taiba – (inaudible) – India focus, Kashmir focus, mostly Punjabis and mostly a group that has stayed quiet. But it's actually a group that was actually formed in 1991 in Kunar Province, so they have very, very strong links in Regional Command East in Paktiya – (inaudible).

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And they've basically gone to school with everybody else. Look at Jash-e-Mohammed; look at al-Qaida folks in the early '90s, and they were all literally in school. They were training, being trained together. So it's very important to look at that with that historical perspective. This is not a new nexus. This is not a new partnership between AQ and these other groups.

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The ISI has gone through, to be fair to them, in the last two years, some really effective reforms. They've tried to (co-op ?). They just don't have enough resources to go after everybody that they fire. So in other words, surveillance of the ISI alumni network. And frankly, they have put new – you know, they've put some bad guys on the list, have added bad guys to their list of bad guys. I think al-Qaida was the only bad guy since 2002 to 2008, but they've added Pakistani Taliban in the last 18 months and also Tariq (and Nafaz ?) e-Sharif and – (inaudible) – and some of the affiliates.

They have not added Lashkar-e-Taiba and other groups which are, I would argue, more of a tinderbox for the Pakistanis to deal with. It's just waiting to erupt, because they're losing control over a lot of these things. And even Lashkat-e-Taiba is not on the list. There are various groups that come along; they have come out and they're out-radicalizing the radical leadership inside.

(Inaudible) – or invasion of the Haqqani network – let's just say a cropped version of a Haqqani network remains Pakistan's government-in-a-box for RC East. And there is some hope that related to while we're negotiating through Kabul go to get – (word inaudible) – some of the worst of the worst. But I think that it is very clear that the Haqqani network still is an important asset.

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And if you talk to the intelligence community in Pakistan, they will tell you, they use a term called we are looking for a firewall on our western border that will represent pro-Pakistan governors and district governors in RC East and Regional Command South, into Paktiya – (inaudible). And they believe that this is a compromise from the good old days when they controlled Afghanistan.

So this is a troubling factor, but I think that Washington and specifically ISAF, working through Kabul, is trying to work through this very, very difficult thing.

The – then comes of course our role in all of this. Like I said, USAID is doing a brilliant job in providing aid. They were the first one on the scene; so were the military assets from the United States. First one within 48, 72 hours. Provided the most aid. Lost the battle of strategic communication, but continue – continue to do work.

The problem of course is the Kerry-Lugar legislation. Kerry-Lugar, for all intents and purposes, was great – great deal focused on economic development. But more importantly, it was the insurance policy for the civilian government. If you read it, it's very specific. We'll give you all this money; it's your money, it's not going to go to the Pakistani Army. You get to use it and we will shut it down if the Army tries to take over.

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The problem is it's become a relief fund, so it's no longer an insurance policy. And while some of it will continue to go as planned, I think some of the bigger projects, the very baseline for the feasibility reports that were created don't exist anymore.

Example: There's a village. Three – three schools, two medical dispensaries, and they're going to build a girls' school through subcontracting. Well, now you go back to that town, there's nothing left. You've got to start with the road, the bridge, the basic dominant structures. So the baseline has been destroyed. That's no longer the same country. Thousands and thousands of miles just destroyed. Out of frying pan into the fire; that's how the people feel.

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The United States policy still remains very inconsistent, perceived to be inconsistent and not transparent. And that – that hurts. That does not protect our aid workers or our military, this whole idea of having small signatures just doesn't work at all. It's not sustainable.

You have to have straight talk on both sides. Where you either had a relationship that comes along every 10 to 15 years, or you have something that you can rely on so when we're bombing Iran in 10 years or Central Asia in 15 (years), or having another military problem with China, at least this country is consistently there in some format. And for that it really requires going beyond these short-term things. And that's why – in the new Congress we really have to look at the dynamics. So it is very important to look at all of these things.

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What makes it worse, add another layer of complexity, is the battle between the Pakistani executive and the judiciary. October 13th, I believe, is a very important date, because the supreme court will weigh on the president's immunity. That could really change a lot of things.

And there are several options on the table. Thank God most of them are constitutional; there is a no-confidence vote. There is another government coming in; there's pressure to change leadership inside the PPP. That will continue to go on.

So in conclusion, you have a military that is completely overstretched. Indeed, the only institution that works – and frankly, the only one that can actually do things. It has a lot of limitations, but the only one – again, relative to other institutions.

They have done a brilliant job distancing themselves. I remember Pakistani People's Party politicians coming out and saying hey, this is – this is the Pakistani military, of course, (but ?) it works under the government. So when you look at these helicopters and look at these guys and you're waving at them, we told them to do this. The army has done a great job. No – do not mix me with that.

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So you have an 80 percent approval rating for the army; 10 percent approval rating for the civilian government on this. They're losing a lot in not just strategic communication. They won't be able to do it; just don't have the capacity. Even if we were to completely forget about the incompetence of the civilian government, the corruption charges, they just can't do it. They just don't have the resources.

And second, they are not – they don't have a civil-military comprehensive strategy. In other words, you have a military guy in a helicopter; politician goes with him. You have a military guy who's the only one who goes in the helicopter, and he gives the press conference. He's giving out candy to the children. He has the photo ops.

And I drove around with the Pakistani military, and – the way people are (viewing it ?), it was very different two years ago when – the military had a 10 percent approval rating. So all other institutions, including National Disaster Management Authority, are overstretched and they rely on the military.

The civilian government, again, is facing a lot of problems, and I just summarized them just now.

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And all of this is becoming very complex at a time when we have the Afghanistan review in, what, two months? And so we cannot expect the Pakistanis to even do the job which we weren't 100 percent satisfied with, which was what was happening in June. In other words, the Pakistani military had made some difficult choices. I visited all the training institutions. I looked at their doctrine; I looked at their case studies; I looked at their lessons learned mechanisms.

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And I look – I matched that with what (they were ?) between 2002 and 2008, and they've come a long, long way. But right now, all of those gains were – (inaudible) – and fragile to begin with are really being – some of them are being reversed. And what –

What worries me is that there's always a group of people when you have institutional change – for example, in the Pakistani military and the ISI – that want to hold on to the status – the old status quo, which is that they will be more likely to cut another bad peace deal with the insurgency in FATA, which would really turn things to the worst inside Afghanistan.

So these are some of the things that I am very concerned about. What gives me hope, in the end, is basically the Pakistani civil society. And some of the young people and students that came out and started working to give relief.

And I'm not even – I'm not even satisfied with the Pakistani media. The last two weeks, all they have done is complain about the Pakistani president. And they have stopped following the floods, the Pakistani media has, the last two weeks. And so they can't expect a lot from the American public or even the American administration in that kind of scenario.

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So what gives me hope then is that I hope that the Pakistani military had retained its lessons learned from counterinsurgency. Their capabilities have gone up. They have a better presence in many of these areas, and frankly, they, you know, were able to hold the Swat Valley and South Waziristan, which is unprecedented. So that gives me hope.

And, you know, I can – I look forward to Jack's comments and the Q and A.

COL. (RET.) JACK GILL: Thank you, Haider, and thank you, Stephen. And thank you all for coming today.

My name's Jack Gill. It's very nice to see some familiar faces and happy to meet new folks. I am a government employee, so I have to issue the disclaimer that my remarks are mine and mine alone. I don't represent the United States government in any way; neither my center, the Near East-South Asia Center at National Defense University or any other branch of the government.

(Inaudible) – offer a few thoughts on Haider's very thorough presentation. It hardly needs a lot of comment, but I have the privilege of being here today, so I'll – I'll offer a few thoughts nonetheless. (Inaudible) – had a couple of points.

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In the first instance, I think it's useful to remind ourselves that even prior to this enormous catastrophe, that Pakistan was a nation burdened by all sorts of enormous challenges – economic, societal, governance, and terrorism being the most prominent and the sort of thing you would see splashed across the news headlines.

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So the disaster has undermined anything that might have been favorable in the sort (instant/incent ?) of moving in the right direction, at least in some areas that Haider has talked about.

In the second place, this is the kind of disaster that would overwhelm any country, not just Pakistan, but anyplace. Look at the challenges the United States faced in dealing with Katrina and multiply that many times, and you end up with where – the misfortunes that Pakistan's trying to contend with today.

And with that as a kind of a context, there are a number of things that are quite disturbing as we look at this and look at it not just today, but as we move into the future.

In the first place, the economic impact, not all the immediate economic impact on people whose livelihoods have been destroyed, whose homes have been destroyed and families dispersed, but into the future and the difficulty of reestablishing the agriculture, if we – if the situation does not allow movement rapidly enough, as well as industry for many years to come.

And as Haider has pointed out, in some cases absolutely, complete rebuilding from the ground up will be required.

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Secondly – (inaudible) – I think correctly say that diversion or disruption of security forces, of course – not only have they been diverted from whatever tasks they were proceeding on in dealing with militants and terrorist before, but their own facilities have come – have been damaged. And these militants now who have ravaged Pakistan for the past several years have a gap into which they – (audio break) – very thoroughly.

There's also the challenge of transferring, as moving out of a relief situation into a reconstruction, rebuilding and reestablishment of government situation, the difficulty of transferring from the military role into a civil government role. That's been problematic, I think, one can say fairly in Swat, in the wake of the Pakistan Army's operations there and will be equally difficult, if not more so, given the scale, in the wake of these floods.

Third, the security impact over the medium to long term, in a number of arenas, is – gives us some cause to be concerned. As the flooding has exacerbated a number of existing fractures or cleavages within Pakistan, most obvious of these Haider has talked about, between the army and the civilian government and the severe damage that's been done to the civilian government's standing. And he's talked about that in great detail.

But it's also worth thinking about the frictions between the provinces in Pakistan as well as between social classes, especially between large landholders and tenants, such as the stories. And whether those stories are true or not – I don't know, but they've certainly gained a great deal of currency and at least appear to have some footing in people's minds, that some landowners intentionally breached levees to preserve their own lands and allowed other people's lands or other provinces' lands to be flooded.

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And then again, whether that's true or not, that creates a tension that cannot be ignored.

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(Inaudible) – I think there's another contextual piece that's useful to keep in mind, and that's the floods occurred at a point where much of the population was already jittery and uncertain and concerned about the future and not very secure in their own daily lives. Whether they were attending religious services, or whether they were going to the market or just going about their daily existence, sending their kids to school.

And now, with this devastation and the perception of an inadequate response, in the words of a recent Pakistani think-tank report, quote, "The anger in Pakistan was palpable and obvious," unquote. That was – and the question then becomes okay, how does that anger resolve itself, or how is that then expressed?

None of this bodes especially well for the future – that as we look into the longer term, I think there are a couple of other points that are useful to keep in mind. And Haider's talked about something that's troubling, particularly from the American angle that the U.S. assistance has received so little visibility, despite being fairly rapid, given the circumstances, and more extensive than in any other country by itself, this poses not only a challenge in the immediate term, but also, I think, hampers abilities – our ability to strengthen or expand the U.S.-Pakistan partnership into the future.

(Inaudible) – in this is the government of Pakistan's own challenge in coping with the surfeit of this poisonous conspiracy theory is that any kind of a situation like this tends to generate.

Blaming the United States or India for the flooding are some extreme examples – again, not that the government is doing so, by no means, but that these stories begin to circulate in the press and the government now – then finds itself in the position of having to try to defang or rebut or otherwise denature this sort of corrosive conspiracy theorizing.

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So not on impedes, of course, rational analysis for immediate remedies and measures that might be taken to mitigate future disasters, but has a negative effect, a poisonous effect on Pakistan's international environment, in my view.

International donor fatigue is an additional concern. If you listen to a lot of the reporting in the early days in talking to U.N. officials and other NGO members, the nature of this catastrophe and the way in which it developed, unlike the earthquakes in 2005 or the tragedy in Haiti, made it more difficult for the donor community to react in the way that one might have hoped for.

And now the extent of the devastation and the extent of the human tragedy will make this even more challenging. It's going to take many years to recover, so how do we as a planet, how does Pakistan as a nation, retain the interest and the focus? As Haider points out, even the Pakistani press in recent weeks has turned away from the catastrophe. You can still see reporting in the BBC on a weekly basis, but in many other places it's – it's dropped off the front pages.

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The international community of course can only do so much. But it's certainly deeply in the interests of the world and, above all, of Pakistan itself that the flooded areas not become a breeding ground or a source of radicalism and violence.

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In the longer future, of course, as we look beyond even a recovery phase, the problems of climate change, deforestation and long-term neglect, a variety of preventive measures means that these kind of disasters have to be something that are considered serious possibilities for the future as well.

And that means trying to think now about some expensive and often politically very difficult steps to mitigate future repetitions of this catastrophe, or things of this nature. And again, if you translate that to an American context, think of the challenges the U.S. faces in trying to create either changes in the governance or in society or urban planning in areas of the U.S. Gulf Coast that were afflicted by Hurricane Katrina. Very challenging to do, a lot of invested interests by political groups or by local citizens, and so trying to make those changes for the long term are very, very challenging

One can hope, as – if I can paraphrase Prime Minister Gillani, that the Pakistan government and its friends can try and translate this tragedy into an opportunity, but the picture at present is not very encouraging. I hope that the more hopeful points that Haider's made indeed prove true, but we have a – there's a long way to go and very many difficult challenges in the way to trying to achieve what needs to be achieved to recover from this disaster.

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So I'll thank you for your attention and return the microphone to our chair.

MR. TANKEL: And I will quickly turn and – do we have microphones around? No, people will just speak up. Then I will very quickly turn this to all of you for any questions that you might have. Ask only that you identify yourself and the institution that you are with.

And with that, we'd like to open the floor.

Yes, sir.

Q: (Off mike) – Martin Benson, Swedish consultants. And I have a question; wondering if you could say anything about the situation, especially the – (inaudible) – situation for international relief workers in the area.

MR. MULLICK: It depends on where you go. I think it's directly related to the absorptive capacity of the area you focus on.

The – (word inaudible) – has done a much better job – Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Swat Valley, Nowshera – precisely because of the relative success of counterinsurgency operations. And there was a population resettlement program; otherwise, you know, known as the IDP problem, for example. So the international community, the Pakistani Army, USAID, International Red Cross, worked really hard to set up camps. And they were able to get back, I think, about 2.2 million people got out of Swat during the operations, and I think within five months about close to 2 million were rehabilitated, quote-unquote. So there were camps. There was a process in place. And if you threw money at it, you knew where it's going to go.

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And if you focus on that area, you're also more secure, because that's where the troops are and they have more experience.

In the south, it is really the wild, wild West, where the absorptive capacity is very, very little. And you – they haven't had anything of this nature. There were no – (inaudible) – Sindhi IDPs in the last, you know, nine years of this war.

So it depends on where you're going and then, frankly, what your local – who your local partners are. And then I think National Disaster Management Authority is a great place to start that conversation, if you represent an NGO that wants to work and in what sector. I think then – and then again you'll end up with the military taking you to places.

Just little things like – I think I was at the Canadian NGO WorldVision food distribution, which was very interesting because they had a little photo op going on as people were saying we want food now, and it went on for about half an hour. And to some degree, I can understand because they need to know that the food got to the people, so this – the video was actually evidence.

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But the army was the one that put everybody in a file. And they had a system so that people who didn't have NADRA ID cards, national ID cards, there's no biometrics done – that there was, you know, they were minimizing the application and other things. So you still have to work with the military.

So I – again, north and south, big difference, and then pick your spot and then go through NDMA.

MR. TANKEL: Yes, sir?

Q: Hi. My name is – (inaudible). I'm from Pakistan originally. I just wanted to comment and then ask a question.

MR. TANKEL: Brief comment, and then –

(Cross talk.)

Q: (Off mike.)

MR. TANKEL: And did you have a question?

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Q: Yeah, I have just one comment that Mr. Haider didn't mention. There was mentioned – you mentioned about landowners breaching the land. But the biggest – (inaudible) – which – is that the breaches occurred in such a – (inaudible) – area, the – (inaudible) – Area, was because they wanted to save a lot of – (inaudible) – and they tried to be safe from the flood. So the breaches (happened ?) and the one who was – (inaudible)?

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Unfortunately, the stories – (inaudible) – the people don't get a hearing. On the – (inaudible) – but the real question is he commented that the U.S. – (inaudible). What should the U.S. have done? You say we lost opportunity. What was the thing we should have done, Haider, that we were –

MR. MULLICK: Okay. Everybody's awake now.

When I talked about wild, wild West, I was not talking about – and I would never, ever do that – about the culture of – (inaudible).

Q: (Off mike.)

[00:37:40]

MR. MULLICK: Yeah. I was talking about what I saw with my own eyes. I don't know when the last time you were standing on the embankment that saved – (inaudible). That's where I stood and I saw hundreds of villages submerged in water. I was talking about the destruction of the floods had created the wild, wild West – not that the people were militant, okay? So I was just talking about absorptive capacity and what I saw with my own eyes, and I brought it back here. Very few people have done that.

The second point, you talked about the landlords. I completely agree with you. I had to leave something for Jack.

(Laughter.)

And the third – the question was very important – strategic – I'm not a strategic communication expert, okay? You have to hire people from the Wharton School who can really –

Q: (Inaudible) – do you know about the story of – (inaudible)?

MR. MULLICK: Saved the military base where?

Q: (Inaudible) – base.

MR. MULLICK: No, I –

Q: (Inaudible.)

MR. MULLICK: No, I –

(Cross talk.)

[00:38:33]

MR. MULLICK: Yeah. And I didn't even – but what was important then was to really have a robust – robust media camp. And for example you had – brilliant people at ODRP, including Gen. Nagata, who had moved

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the Ghazi Air Base. And they were coordinating a lot of these Marine helicopters that was literally saving hundreds of people every day.

They weren't able to take a story and show it to the rest of the country. Then these same helicopters and same folks moved to Sindh. They weren't able to show it on the vernacular press and the Pakistani media. When they did, they failed because nobody understood. So that's what they should have done right away.

And they – when I say that they've lost the – (inaudible) – doesn't mean that they've completely lost the – (inaudible). There are still opportunities to change all of this, and there's a lot of good work that the USAID folks are doing; we just need to make it visible. (Inaudible) – be sensitive; you can't make it visible the first couple of days because you're trying to help and then have a photo op at the same time. But people need to know.

[00:39:31]

I remember sitting in Islamabad watching TV at night and the Saudis had one C-130 and (GEO ?). Showed that for five hours straight. And they had, like, a – literally a 30-second clip from Gen. Nagata, talking about hundreds of flights coming in, you know, in that span of time.

So this is what I mean. This is a small example, but this itself is a long debate, and we can – we can discuss it afterward.

Q: (Inaudible.) Can you help explain – can you help explain – (inaudible) – attacking civilian targets in terms of how much, you know, alienation it's causing among the – (inaudible) – I'm not suggesting that they, you know, enjoyed any – (inaudible) – to begin with. But we saw attacks particularly in – (inaudible) – Karachi. So yeah.

MR. MULLICK: It's very hard to put them in a nice group, you know? There's so much of publication and consultants coming from – (inaudible) – and some of them are sectarian groups of – (inaudible) – attacks against the Shia or the – (inaudible) – or the Sufis.

But there seems to be – there's a – (inaudible) – that I agree with, which is to open multiple fronts. And the trade-off is, yes, we're going to lose some public support, but then these troops that are putting this pressure on us would eventually start moving, and that's what we need.

[00:41:05]

So what they'll look for, in a perfect world, they look for another Mumbai. More realistically, they look at opening up another front in Karachi. I got extensive briefings from the intelligence community that talked about folks that they had captured who then gave intelligence about a plan to attack the Karachi airport, to disrupt the NATO supplies, as you saw.

So there's very strategic in that sense, but local partners in the same time have their own goals. And unfortunately, when they did attack – (inaudible) – and Shias and Sufis, they weren't able to garner the kind of anti-Taliban sentiment that we would expect. Because, unfortunately, killing Sunnis and Shias and – (inaudible) – or even Sufis just didn't get the kind of reaction from the Pakistani people.

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So they lost less and they gained more by actually opening up. So if you look at the rangers and the police force in Karachi, completely overwhelmed. It's only a matter of days that they're going to call the military to step in if the rate of violence keeps increasing. Other places, too.

So I think that's the time. Because they were under a lot of pressure. They lost a lot of sanctuary. They lost most of Northern FATA. They lost South Waziristan. They lost the entire Swat Valley – (inaudible) – in the last 18 months before the floods. They want to gain back and they certainly want to –

[00:42:29]

So I think the trade-off works for them, and this is – there's a net gain, as I understand it, knowing – (inaudible) – please take away, because all these groups also have their own specific regional sectarian goals.

COL. GILL: I think I would highlight the importance of what Haider mentioned at the very end, that each of these outfits and sometimes some factions within them, require a nuanced approach.

But in a general sort of sense, it's important to stress what he mentioned regarding the – (inaudible) – of minorities, that that's a fair and in many cases would be considered a fairly safe target, and yet you also create mayhem; you bring the government into question, and you cause – you can hope to cause potentially a government overreaction that redounds to your benefit as the militant, or a reaction by counter militant groups or radical groups within the minority elements.

And so you thereby create disturbance and anarchy and a sense of poor governance that for many militant organizations they consider beneficial as for their sort of immediate purposes, for a longer-term goal.

Q: (Inaudible) – Program on – thank you. Program on International Policy Attitudes.

I'd like to go back to the question of why you see a decline in media coverage of the floods. And to try to think through possible causes and conditions for that. It occurs to me is that it may be just very logistically difficult to do audio-visual, to get in with a crew and have enough of a power source, given the resources that the Pakistani media has got and if that's the case, that could be looked on as a need that NGOs could help to fill, for instance.

[00:44:27]

Another possible reason is that if the Pakistani media is overly focused on the operations of the government in Islamabad, if the government is not visibly planning for the future – you know, if it doesn't set up committees of experts that are developing plans for how they're going to get Pakistan out of this, then that creates an absence of events for them to cover. I'm just speculating, but sometimes something like an absence of media coverage is a soluble problem.

MR. MULLICK: I think the number-one problem is that the American media doesn't realize that the probability of the next 9/11 coming from Pakistan is much higher now than it was a year ago. And it will continue to be like this for a while. That's the bottom line. So you want fear mongering? Here it is.

And what they do, the media, has to just connect the story of the floods to national security and very – and then just come out with a really nice chart of troops, number of troops and what they're – where they are and what

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they're doing, and the capabilities of the Pakistani government. And then you can add nuances about reconciliation with the Taliban and other things in Pakistan's geopolitical stance.

They have not successfully made that connection. If they did that, you would see everybody there.

I came at the beginning as far as for people who actually have hearts, the humanitarian factor is also very important, but it's a subset of the national security part, okay? That's where our investment is; that's where the weapons have gone; and that's, frankly, the only partner. Otherwise, we have to have about 400,000 troops and do a ground invasion, capture the nuclear weapons, and then do the job ourselves.

[00:46:20]

And so you have to have a straight talk about exactly why Pakistan is important, and unfortunately, it's the negatives that will bring the media there.

The humanitarian part is a very important aspect, and I think again, I was just shocked when you didn't see Anderson Cooper from CNN camping out there like you did in Haiti. I think Sanjay Gupta came for, like, a couple of days. There's a great shot of – (inaudible) – something at CNN, he does it. But the – (inaudible) – did a great job; New York Times; I think somebody at Washington Post. I know David Ignatius is there as we speak.

So they did a good job, but you've got to get the visuals out there. And they did amazing stories. Amazing stories that we just haven't heard about. Even from relief – relief actors.

I met a gentleman in Nowshera and he was a noncommissioned officer. He was giving orders to evacuate hundreds of people in a matter of, like, 16 hours. And his entire – his own family was stranded. Did not mention it at all. In the end, said, you know, when the day was over, he's like, by the way, my family's stranded out there and mother-in-law with a wheelchair is on top of this roof. I have to go on a boat and get them. And he got all of them back.

[00:47:35]

But he was so committed to saving other people. This is just an example. These are the kind of stories, obviously, military focus, but then there are amazing number of stories from NGOs and the private citizens, across the board, that came out and relieved. The sense of community in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjabi is amazing, because those are the people that set up community kitchens and things like that.

And so you've got both angles, and I think it – and if you want to talk more, you've got – (inaudible) – from The Observer who's done a lot of work. You have Robbie (Ahere ?), who's associated with ISPU and they really look at this, you know, as that's their focus. But I look at it as a subset of security.

Q: I'm (Polly Nya ?) – (inaudible) – been following – thank you – South Asia for a long time. And I wanted to ask Haider Mullick to clarify something.

I understood – and you could see the thrust of your argument that gaps in the government's response, civilian and military, to the floods gave the – gave various militant groups an opportunity to show their stuff and perhaps do some recruiting.

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[00:48:54]

But what I am not sure I understand, or maybe I misunderstood what you said, is how the possible increase in support around the edges for these groups increases the threat that a next attack on the U.S. will come from Pakistan. I wasn't sure if you were – if that was the causal link that you were making.

How is that greater than it would have been without the floods?

(Cross talk.)

Q: It seems to me the threat projection is quite different from public support and disruption of government control.

MR. MULLICK: Yeah. Thanks. Thanks a lot, Polly (sp). Polly's (sp) known me for a long time. When I first came there as a graduate student, and I really respect. So I'm –

What I was – the argument I was making was of the entire syndicate, and I wasn't just talking short term, but in the long term, a smart insurgent would like to open multiple fronts and create more space.

Now, that space doesn't mean tomorrow you have a hundred recruits, but you create an environment where you can eventually have an increase in the recruitment rate.

The – (inaudible) – area that they've always had, and I agree with you, which actually becomes worse, which is North Waziristan. So yes, you have a – (inaudible) – camping and you – it's difficult to do the kind of training that you can do in Southern Punjab, but they have a very close link with insurgents in Southern Punjab.

[00:50:20]

This area was supposed to be part of the target list for the Pakistani military. When I was in June and I was talking with the 11th Corps commander, he was very confident about going into North Waziristan. Selectively, obviously, they have – the Pakistani military has a special place for the Haqqani network. But they were at least going to make an attempt. They're not going to make that attempt.

And then what happens is with – these troops are literally holding Swat and South Waziristan. Literally. I mean, the (day ?) you move them, the bad guys come in right way. And they haven't – there is no long-term strategy there.

For example, there is no – (inaudible) – who are ready to take over. Or even Frontier Corps, even though Frontier Corps has come a long way. So it's very important to look at –

So in the – the reason why the probability goes up is that there is no North Waziristan operation. And in the medium to long term, in about a year, if the situation is sustained, then you see more spaces where these things can happen. You normally see how smart al-Qaida is with, you know, trying to recruit Europeans and other people. I think about 35 countries that don't need a visa to the United States, citizens of those countries still being trained and being killed. (Inaudible) – is a good example.

[00:51:31]

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So they're smart; they're trying to take full advantage; they're looking short-term, medium-term and long-term. And the way I've looked at al-Qaida, their lessons learned, their metrics – I mean –

I just want to plug – in my report, which comes out next week, and you'll see really nice tables of stuff that I've picked up in the last couple of years from them. It's extremely smart organization – (inaudible) – that has done this amazing work.

So they look at this in a very strategic way. And they do these cost-benefit analyses of popular support versus getting as many army folks out of their area, so they can expand operations.

So this – this is why I said that. It's not – the probability increases because they'll get more space and that Pakistanis don't go into North Waziristan. Now.

MR. TANKEL: (Off mike.)

Q: I'm – (inaudible) – from – visiting fellow at – (inaudible).

I would like to clarify one thing, that as you mentioned, that Pakistan – (inaudible) – is not going into the North Waziristan. The presence of Pakistan Army – (inaudible) – more resistance. It's not free run for the – any segment of the – (inaudible) – to run the sanctuaries there. The only problem is that the offensive is not being launched, and that is being tied up because Pakistan Army had a successful operation in South Waziristan, then in (Kuramagentsi ?), then in the Swat and all different – (inaudible). So that is the reason. So the presence of the Army is there.

[00:53:04]

One of your terms that you used that was – your talk – that was al-Qaida syndicate, and then you – bunch of – (inaudible) – Lashkar-e-Taiba, et cetera, et cetera. By implication, it means that all these bad – implication, it means that the syndicates had, or the segment of the syndicates have – (inaudible) – Pakistan Army is fighting for last six years against the Tariki Taliban. It has lost more than 2,700 soldiers. The injuries are beside that. It is more than what we suffered in '65 and 1971 war with India.

Still you think that Pakistan Army would be allowing any other segment of al-Qaida, which has – (inaudible)? I couldn't understand that.

MR. MULLICK: When I talked about the syndicate, it's a symbiotic, very complex relationship. The table I draw is like the import from and export to al-Qaida.

Many of these relationships between these groups remain clandestine. (Inaudible) – is never going to openly come and say, you know, we talk with number three of al-Qaida all the time, or we get their trainers, or we try to put – all these expertise are out there. And now you – and let me throw in another group, Baluchistan Liberation Front, for example.

[00:54:22]

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And if you look at the BLA, they don't get along with TTP at all. But if you look at some of the things – again, I traveled in Kuwait. I met many of the folks who have been fighting in the Baluchistan insurgency between 2003 and 2006, of how – how many of the expertise or the things that they would look at, IEDs and others, were being transferred.

So you don't necessarily have to have the exact same goal. And many of them have local goals, and then some regional and others have international ambitions. TTP, for example, has evolved from being a local group to now coming out with these statements, we're going to bomb New York City. Whether they can or not, highly suspect. If anything, I think other groups have a better chance of doing that.

That's what I meant with the symbiotic relationship. And they cut it off. It's based on opportunity, based on need, and what the other person can do.

Al-Qaida needed these groups to stay alive in those areas. They don't have direct tribal liaisons. They don't have the kind of protection that was provided. That doesn't mean I'm al-Qaida if I'm providing them protection. But at the same time, there is a connection. That's what I meant.

So it's not – I wish it was that simple, because then we would win tomorrow. We'd know exactly where they are and everybody's in one nice pool, and gone.

[00:55:33]

I completely agree with you. (Inaudible) – port outside on the Pakistani surge tracks down two years of – research looking at how the Pakistani military changed its strategy, gone to all the training institutions, talked to people from the captain level all the way to the three-star. And so I followed it very carefully, and I'm – I'm, you know, always optimistic about where they came from – from the operations in – between 2002 and 2008.

But the floods is a game-changer. We have to admit it. And we have to admit that an army that lost 3,000 and a country that lost more people than any country, and an army that – in the coalition that lost more men than in any other country, then had to also do relief efforts, because nobody else is there. And they had to provide their combat helicopters at times; and you know this. So how can you have an offensive – I mean, so – so I agree with you in that – in that context.

And so I wanted to clarify about the syndicate. It's always complex, but I can draw a network right now, and tomorrow morning it will be irrelevant. Because that's how dynamic these groups are.

MR. TANKEL: Question in the back? Yes.

[00:56:48]

Q: Nick Brown, University of Chicago. I wanted to ask as far as Mr. Mullick, you said there would be sort of a multiple-front war that al-Qaida is kind of engaging with the military. I was wondering what you think that the military and the civilian government, as far as regionally, where should they focus their efforts after the initial crisis phase is over? And more importantly, where do you think that they will focus them?

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I mean, as Americans, obviously, we'd like to say the tribal regions, but I would be surprised if they're not worried about possibility some sort – India trying to use this as some sort of means of bringing up the issue in Kashmir again.

So if you could just talk a little bit about that.

MR. MULLICK: The Pakistani Army is an India-centric military, okay? It's a predominantly conventional force. It has gone through a very, very difficult process of developing fairly good (irregular ?) warfare capabilities over time. They've fought counterinsurgency since 1947 – several times in Baluchistan, Bangladesh – (inaudible) – several times.

So it's not like they didn't have the experience. They just came to the wrong conclusions. They just don't match up with the best practices that we know of, but they do things differently and they have their own hybrid.

For example, when the pressure built up in the Pakistan military in – early in the spring of 2008, Gen. Kiyani set up the secret commission that called up all his main generals and the agenda was why are we losing the war and how can we win?

And at that time the end goal was not necessarily population security, but it was also – it was actually the coherence of the military and the morale level. There was a 10 percent morale level; nobody wanted to fight this war. You're killing a fellow Muslim, fellow Pakistani, you come home, nobody sings songs about you. And the media was against the military. So it is India-centric.

[00:58:443]

We don't have a choice. If we look at Pakistani military and say, hey, why don't you focus on the tribal areas and let the national guard or your military or your civilian government do the rest? No. Military has to do everything. So that's a – (inaudible) – people, okay?

So whether it's a war with al-Qaida or multiple fronts, relief, and at times even governance; let's be really honest about it, they're the ones that are spread out. So if you look at them and say, hey, can you – (inaudible)? And so it's a real number of troop strength capabilities and the kind of burden that the military's facing after the floods. And it's completely overwhelmed.

The good old days of just two months ago when Gen. – (inaudible) – and I were sitting – when he was so passionate about reconstruction teams that he was setting up, I looked at how Frontier Corps had come a long way, they cleared areas, they had a sophisticated plan for population resettlement for the – (inaudible) – Tribe. And those were very optimistic times. That's not the situation today. They are completely overwhelmed.

And so the question now is when we demand something, we have to know the new parameters and the new baseline, which is a very different country.

[01:00:09]

Q: (Inaudible.) I'm wondering if you've noticed any significant changes in the rhetoric or about the Indus Waters Treaty or about how environmental issues should be approached, deforestation, or do you – or, a sort of

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subset of that, do you see their space being opened up in the future now for sort of environmental rhetoric to be more robust than dressing in a substantive way?

MR. MULLICK: Yeah, your question is very important. In fact, it leads up to something that I didn't mention, because I didn't want to completely make you guys suicidal, is that the floods come every year, okay? And they will come next year. And we haven't even talked about that. And so I think it's very important.

I think the civilian government, my own understanding, is that tried to play the India card with (oil ?) in the Swat. It just didn't hold. I mean, at that time, you know, saying that somehow we'd open up a couple of dams or some – let go of some water. It just didn't work.

I mean, when you have your own feudal lords doing these things and others – folks that are involved in diverting water, when they – (inaudible) – approval rating for the federal – or the provincial government. These things really don't stick. But, you know, I believe that they tried it. I don't think that there's any truth to that.

[01:01:35]

But the Indus Water Treaty generally speaking is a hot topic. Again, in the good days before the floods, there was real talk about – you know, and the argument from the Pakistanis was we need to basically reexamine it and India is suspect of building more dams than it was supposed to and then water surges? And things of that nature.

And so you go from, like, drought to, like, massive floods. I don't think they're looking at that right now. It's basically survival for the government, survival for a lot of people.

But these two things: the floods will come next year, and that the Indus Water Treaty is a sticking issue, will eventually come back.

[01:02:13]

COL. GILL: (Inaudible) – this is a good point, and that's what I was – one of the things I was trying to get to was this piece. Long-term, and oftentimes very difficult, measures to implement in how do you provide local people with alternatives to cutting down all the trees in the neighborhood?

How do you try to prepare for and get a government system that's strong enough to implement the kind of flood-control measures and to update the systems that date back to the British colonial times, desalting waterways and all these kinds of challenges. If you look at the time of President Musharraf and the difficulty of attempting to build a dam, that caused great controversy because one province felt it would be disadvantaged, the other appeared to be in favor of a different province.

So these kind of challenges are very hard, politically, to cope with, and yet, this flooding highlights the challenge and the devastation that can be caused if you don't address those things, and those are all within the near term but will have longer-term consequences. So that's going to be very, very difficult, I think, and Haider highlights some of the detail level of that. But it's very challenging.

Q: Jennifer Oetken with the Carnegie Endowment. I was curious as to whether you're familiar with the SARC response to the floods and if there was – if they were involved at all in any disaster management or food relief.

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COL. GILL: No, I'm not.

Q: Oh.

COL. GILL: Yeah. I don't know that SARC as an entity – the individual countries have done, but I don't know that – it's possible, I just don't know. I should highlight, by the way, that in terms of these are mitigatory actions that one can take, Bangladesh gets some considerable credit for – because of the challenges it faces every year, or practically every year with cyclones on a recurring basis, they've taken some steps that have helped to mitigate the impact on people at the village level when the cyclones strike.

[01:04:18]

So there might be – I'm not familiar with all the details of those, but there might be steps there that would be of benefit to Pakistan to look at to see what might apply, what might not apply in Pakistan's place as well.

MR. TANKEL: I'd like to thank – I'd like to thank both of our speakers for being here today and for taking everybody's questions. Very clearly, this is a complicated problem that's going to be with us for a while. I think the fact that the Kerry-Lugar legislation, as you said, has become relief aid rather than what it was intended is problematic.

Clearly, civil-military relations and the future there is something that we're all worried about. We'd agree – I mean, I think we're all also aware, Haider, as you pointed out, that the bandwidth problems that existed even before the floods for the military have become far worse, and – (inaudible) – the economic and social problems that existed and that continue to exist.

[01:05:23]

Thank you both for shedding as much light as is possible on all of these different issues, and thank you all for coming today. Thank you. (Applause.)

(END)