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AFGHANISTAN'S IMPACT ON PAKISTAN

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AFGHANISTAN'S IMPACT ON PAKISTAN

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2009

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry, Feingold, Casey, Shaheen, Kaufman, Lugar, Corker, Barrasso, Wicker, and Inhofe.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will come to order.

Good morning, everybody. Thank you for taking time to be with us. I thank our witnesses.

Next week marks the ninth anniversary of the war in Afghanistan. A Pentagon officer said the other day that we haven't been fighting there for 8 years; we've been fighting for 1 year eight times in a row. That needs to change.

Some of our objectives have remained steadfast: Defeat al-Qaeda, deny them safe havens, and ensure the stability of the region. Others have fluctuated. And the previous administration, both the goals and the strategy lurched in directions that confused our troops, our allies, and our partners. None of those partners is more affected by our actions in Afghanistan than Pakistan. I think many people have agreed that Pakistan is a central focus of our policy considerations, no country in that region more vital to our national security. Pakistan is a democracy with 170 million people, a large nuclear arsenal, and a major challenge from extremists within its borders.

It's no secret that the relationship between our countries has suffered its share of strains. Many Pakistanis believe that the United States has exploited them for strategic goals. In fact, a recent survey by the Pew Research Center finds that two out of three Pakistanis actually regard the United States as an enemy. Only 1 in 10 describe us as a partner. So, at the very least, we have a communications challenge, and the question is, What else?

From our side, it's been difficult to build trust with Pakistan's military and intelligence service over the years, because our interests have not always been aligned and because ties between ISI and Taliban remain troubling. We need to fix this relationship. And may I say, in fairness, the current government and many of its officials—most recently, General Pasha of the ISI, has been here in

Washington, General Kayani and others—have made very significant progress in this effort. It may not yet be translated down into the body politic of the country, but there has been a very significant level of change in the—many elements of the relationship. And, in fact, it is the judgment of the administration—and my judgment, I hope shared by colleagues—that many things have moved forward in Pakistan in ways that they haven't in Afghanistan. There has been progress in Pakistan.

In addition, the Senate took a major step in trying to change this relationship, last week, by passing legislation that Senator Lugar and I introduced, and which all of the committee supported, to triple our nonmilitary assistance to Pakistan to $1.5 billion a year for the next 5 years. And the reason we did this is specifically to try to build a relationship with the people of Pakistan, to point out to them that what we want is a relationship that, in fact, meets their interests and their needs.

The House, I'm pleased to say, passed the bill yesterday, and the President has pledged to sign it. And we look forward to seeing its implementation.

This is a landmark change in the relationship. It's not a panacea, and I think both Senator Lugar and I would be quick to emphasize that. A lot more is going to be needed—more money, more change in policy, more investment by the governments themselves, and by officials. It will not solve all of Pakistan's problems, but it is a very significant transformation in the fundamentals of the relationship. And, in the end, only Pakistanis will define the future of that relationship.

But, the Kerry-Lugar initiative signals our determination to put the relationship on a new foundation, with the aspirations of the people of Pakistan front and center. We don't want a government-to-government centric relationship; we want the American people and the Pakistani people both sharing a value investment, if you will, through this initiative.

Just as we strengthen our civilian ties, we also have to understand, our actions in Afghanistan have profound implications for the security status across the Durand Line. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past when we pulled out of Afghanistan in 1989 and left the job undone. A flood of guns, drugs, and refugees swept over Pakistan, and its leaders reacted by supporting the Taliban and other militant groups. President Obama and his team are in full-fledged effort to reevaluate and develop all of the right tweaks, if you will, the right calibrations to our policy for our strategy for Afghanistan, and only then can we really make the right decisions on resources. That decision has to reflect our commitment to the Afghan people and to the security of the United States.

Let me be clear, no matter what strategy we adopt, it must recognize that the actions we take in Afghanistan will have direct repercussions in Pakistan.

So, we're here this morning to examine these potential repercussions. We want to understand the implications and impacts of the scenarios under discussion at the White House and elsewhere. As we know, the Congress of the United States has clearly defined, historical, and well-accepted responsibilities with respect to the

conduct of foreign policy and the conduct of war. And it is important for us to fulfill those responsibilities.

For example, we need to know what the impact on Pakistan would be of a major troop increase in Afghanistan. Would successful nation-building in Afghanistan, in fact, translate into greater stability in Pakistan and elsewhere across the region? Or, to the contrary, does a troop increase in Afghanistan have negative consequences for our goals in Pakistan, and might it, in fact, add to the destabilization, as some in Pakistan in high positions of power have suggested?

The debate has to extend beyond the preoccupation with troop numbers. We need to know beyond, How many troops do you need? What does the manual say? What happens, here? We really need to know, Can you build a legitimate government in Afghanistan, particularly in the restive Pashtun belt in the east and southeast that is of the greatest concern to Pakistan? And we need to know how the Pakistani military and intelligence services might react to a different strategy in Afghanistan.

We also need to understand—this is not the center focus of this hearing today, but I think it's relevant, because of the questions being asked publicly, and the discussion—our goal, as stated by the President, in Afghanistan is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda, and prevent their ability to return to be a safe haven and plot against the United States. That is the stated mission. That is not a full-fledged nationwide counterinsurgency mission, unless the latter is absolutely essential to the accomplishment of the former. And that is something we need to very carefully examine, and it's part of the discussion today because of the question of, What are the implications of that prolonged effort and additional troops to the stability of Pakistan and to the long-term goals of the region?

There's another goal stated by the President, and that is the stability of the region, with a particular focus on the stability of Pakistan.

So, this is the committee's third session that is designed to test the underlying assumptions about the war in Afghanistan, and really to stimulate the kind of debate that most distinguishes this body—the United States Senate—and that will help us, in the end, to clarify our goals, to build a consensus.

Senator Lugar and I share the belief, and we have often said, that American foreign policy is never stronger than when it is bipartisan. And traditionally, when it's been at its best, it's been bipartisan. There are great examples of that in the course of history; and one of the greatest, with Senator Arthur Vandenberg, in a period when the United States had enormous responsibilities abroad. So, we want to continue the effort to try to see if we can get politics to end at the water's edge, and to find the policy that best serves our troops; because, in the end, folks—and I say this from some personal experience—the troops are best served when the people here in Washington find a way to produce a policy that lives up to the high sacrifice that they're called on to make. And that's what we need to do.

Next week, we're going to hear about how to deal with the worldwide threat from al-Qaeda. And I think that's very important, because al-Qaeda is not just tangentially affecting Afghanistan and

centered in Pakistan, but it's in some 58 or 59 other countries, with an increased presence in Yemen and Somalia and the Horn of Africa. And we need to think about what the best ways to deal with that are.

We also need to clarify this approach if we're going to use our military resources as wisely as we ought to, and obtain the consent and cooperation of the American people. Let me emphasize. The consent of the American people, in the end, is the fundamental part of this equation. We know that, also, from experience. And if we lose the consent because we haven't been clear and we haven't asked the right questions, then we have not only not done our jobs, but we may well have betrayed our own interests. And so, it is important for us to do that in the course of this deliberation.

I want to, again, emphasize that our actions in Afghanistan, in my judgment, whatever they are, will influence events in Pakistan, and we need to take that into account. But, the ultimate choices, again, about the country's future, about Pakistan's future, must be made—and will be made, in my judgment—by the Pakistanis themselves.

The witnesses this morning are very well positioned to help us answer these questions. And I want to thank you all for coming.

Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi was Pakistan's top diplomat in Washington for two tours between 1994 and 2002. Few people better understand the complexities that bind and divide our two countries.

Milt Bearden is a legendary former CIA case officer and a clear-headed thinker and writer. He was the agency's station chief in Islamabad in the 1980s, at the height of the United States-Pakistan effort to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Steve Coll is president of the New America Foundation. He spent years working in, and writing about, Afghanistan and Pakistan. His Pulitzer Prizewinning masterwork, "Ghost Wars," remains the seminal volume on the pre-9/11 years in those two countries.

So, we are very, very pleased to have this expertise here today, and I look forward to hearing Senator Lugar's comments and then your testimony.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR, U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

Senator LUGAR. I thank the chairman for holding this important hearing.

As our previous hearings have demonstrated, the choices confronting the United States and NATO in Afghanistan and Pakistan are not simple. The threats to U.S. national security in the region are both real and profound, but they are also largely indirect. Meanwhile, we know that expanding United States military involvement in Afghanistan would proceed during a period of severe economic challenge for our own country. It also would take place at a time of continuing strain on our military forces and amidst questions about alliance cohesion. Given these factors, as we review our approach to the region, we must avoid trial and error, in favor of a comprehensive plan that includes, not just military elements, but also makes progress on development, govern-

ance, other facts that directly affect the stability and welfare of these countries.

The U.S. Congress has taken an important step forward this week, as Senator Kerry has pointed out, by passing the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act. This bill represents a long-overdue investment in diplomacy and development in the region. I look forward to the President's signature on the bill, and the productive engagement with Pakistan that it is designed to produce.

As several of our witnesses pointed out last week, the rationale for increasing United States commitments in Afghanistan depends heavily on our expectations of how events there might affect stability in Pakistan. Although we should not diminish Afghanistan's strategic, symbolic, or humanitarian importance, it is clear that one of the most important goals of an enlarged American commitment to Afghanistan would be the preservation and potential enhancement of stability in Pakistan.

Pakistan has roughly five times as many people as Afghanistan, and possesses nuclear weapons. Its stability has implications throughout the Middle East and South Asia. It also is contending with an al-Qaeda sanctuary, an expanding Islamic insurgency, political uncertainty and a shaky economy.

These circumstances are a threat to Pakistan, the region, and the United States. With this in mind, we must ask what impact our efforts in Afghanistan have on events in Pakistan. Do aspects of our current military posture in Afghanistan aggravate the situation in Pakistan? Would increasing the intensity of our counterinsurgency activities in Afghanistan benefit stability across the border? Would a government collapse in Afghanistan, coupled with significant advances by the Taliban, threaten to destabilize Pakistan?

When the President moves forward, it is essential that he lead public discussion on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and begin to put his own stamp on the assessments completed by his experienced advisers. His initial statements in March served only as guideposts. He must now clarify the best advice Secretary Gates and Clinton, and their respective institutions, have provided to achieve our national security goals in the region. Many questions have arisen surrounding troop levels; civilian force levels, contractor rules, the role development, to name just a few. Any decisions the President makes will be for the long term and will require significant United States investment in diplomacy, development, and defense. His plan will require broad support of Congress if it is to be sustained and funded.

I believe it is possible to develop a strong consensus on the way forward. Both Senator McCain and then-Senator Obama campaigned in the last Presidential election on the importance of a sustained commitment to Afghanistan and Pakistan. The strategic imperative of this region has not diminished, even if events in one or the other country have given us pause to reconsider our approach.

I look forward to our continuing inquiries on this issue, and I join the chairman in welcoming our distinguished witnesses.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Lugar.

We'll start with Mr. Bearden, then we'll go to Mr. Coll and, Madam Ambassador, we'll—you'll be a cleanup hitter.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF MILT BEARDEN, FORMER CIA STATION CHIEF IN ISLAMABAD, RESTON, VA

Mr. BEARDEN. Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

The CHAIRMAN. Can you pull the mike a little closer there—just pull the whole thing, the box.

Mr. BEARDEN. There we go. OK.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the possible effects on Pakistan of our future strategies in Afghanistan.

The Senator rightly pointed out that we're beginning our ninth repetition of a 1-year war in Afghanistan. I would only add that we consider that we're not beginning our 9th year, that, in fact, we're completing our 28th year of involvement since the December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, and, by President Carter's instruction to the CIA, to provide lethal and nonlethal assistance to the people of Afghanistan to resist that invasion.

We are, indeed, approaching 30 years in Afghanistan, and we, indeed, have yet to get it right. I think we're at a critical moment, where the decisions made by the government, at this point, will affect not only Afghanistan, but the entire region, certainly including Pakistan.

As we discuss this entire sweep of American involvement in Afghanistan, we should remember some of the lessons we learned from the Soviet experience, and from the British experience, before that, and from every invader to Afghanistan since Alexander the Great ventured in.

The Soviets spent 10 years, with an average troop strength of 120,000. This was always enough to fuel an insurgency, but never enough to defeat that insurgency. By the time Mikhail Gorbachev took over as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the fourth in as many years, the Soviet Union had become completely bogged down in Afghanistan. Mikhail Gorbachev gave his generals 1 year to turn it around. They couldn't do it, and he returned to the negotiating tables in late 1987, and, in April 1988, signed the Geneva Accords and was out of the country 10 months later.

At that point, after 10 years of involvement with the Government of Pakistan, the ISI, and the Pakistan military, the United States turned its back on both Pakistan and Afghanistan and simply walked away. I would only add that the United States was more than preoccupied with the denouement of the Soviet Union, which I think they managed quite expertly; but, in Pakistan and Afghanistan, events were left to chance.

Not only did we turn our backs on Afghanistan, by 1990 we had slapped sanctions on Pakistan, broken off military-to-military contacts with the Pakistan Army, contacts that had established a relationship between the two militaries over a generation, a key relationship that was lost in the ensuing decade without such contact.

Then came 9/11/2001. And Pakistan, with or without a real choice, signed on with the United States. The United States and Pakistan were allied during the 10-year occupation by the Soviet Union, working with the peoples of Afghanistan and welcomed by the people of Afghanistan. That role has reversed, today. We're viewed, as is the government in Islamabad, as enemies of the Pashtun population, a group referred to by most of us as simply, "Taliban." But in fact we're facing a broader resistance, of one form or another. And so, this current battle has flowed back into Pakistan, across the Durand Line, enveloping the North West Frontier, the Pashtun areas of Pakistan, and has reached into the settled areas, and even as far as Lahore and Karachi and the Sindh, in the south.

Whatever we do, whatever measures we take, will affect Pakistan as the central element in this drama. Moreover, I think that we will be unable to come up with a policy that makes any sense unless we step back a few meters, look at the entire region, and try to understand what everybody in the region is up to.

America is bogged down in a war. We're spending our blood and borrowed treasure to fight a battle that is creating the conditions for others to benefit. I'm not making any accusations against any given country in the region. All of them are looking out for their vital interests. But, India is becoming involved in Afghanistan to an extent that the Pakistanis consider Afghanistan as developing into an Indian garrison. This is not hysteria. This is a real concern. Pakistan has fought three very real wars. And, when you discuss this thing, without emotion, with Pakistan army officers, or ISI, as I have repeatedly, over the years, you will understand these concerns.

You will see that China has its own interests in the region. They have taken on a 25-percent share of a huge copper operation in Afghanistan. They're building a major port in Pakistan at Gwadar. Meanwhile, the Indians, working with the Iranians, are doing the same thing across the border in Iran, on the Arabian sea, building a major port. You have China getting a naval anchor on the Arabian Sea in Pakistan; India and Iran doing exactly the same thing across the border in Iran. You have Russia, whose interest in hydrocarbons across the arc of northern Afghanistan is clear and growing. And we have the United States grasping for a policy.

My suggestion would be that, rather than let this thing become a free-for-all while we're bogged down, that we at least assume that the United States, by its involvement in the region over the last 30 years, and in particular the last 8 years, use its stewardship of Afghanistan to bring about some order in the regional game that is being played. This is a resource-driven, 21st-century version of the Great Game, a recreation of a Silk Route. But we are not, right now, able to manage that game.

So, without understanding what Iran, Russia, China, Pakistan, and India are doing in the region, particularly in Afghanistan, I don't think we can come up with a policy that makes sense for Afghanistan or Pakistan.

I promised to keep my remarks to no more than 5 minutes, and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bearden follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MILTON A. BEARDEN, FORMER CIA STATION CHIEF IN ISLAMABAD, RESTON, VA

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, and members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss U.S. strategy in Afghanistan and the possible effects on Pakistan of our future policies there.

U.S. INVOLVEMENT, 8TH YEAR OR 30TH YEAR?

The search for a successful outcome in Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan requires an understanding of how we arrived at this critical point in our Afghan undertaking, as well as new thinking on how we might proceed.

I have been involved in the region since the mid-1980s, when I was ordered to Pakistan by CIA director Bill Casey to manage America's covert assistance to the Afghan resistance in their war against the occupation forces of the Soviet Union. I have remained active in Afghan and Pakistan matters in the intervening years, assisting in 2008, on the negotiations on legislation concerning Reconstruction Opportunity Zones in Pakistan and Afghanistan. More recently, I have been active in support of the United States Government's efforts to stabilize Afghanistan through development and business stability operations.

As we discuss future policy options, we should bear in mind that America is not beginning its ninth year of involvement in Afghanistan; it is, rather, closing in on 30 years of intermittent association with a regional conflict that began with the Soviet Union's 1979, invasion of Afghanistan. It is a history of three decades of action, neglect, and reaction that have had profound effects on American security and on Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the other important players in the region.

THE SOVIET DEBACLE

The Soviet invasion in 1979, was a gross miscalculation by the Soviet Politburo led by the ailing General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev. The Soviet leader concluded at the time that a limited contingent of Soviet forces would have the "Afghan affair" cleared up before the Americans might even take notice, weakened as America was, he believed, by its retreat from Southeast Asia and preoccupied by its hostage drama in Teheran. The initial Soviet foray was predictably and brutally efficient. The troublesome Afghan leader, Hafizullah Amin, was assassinated; Kabul was secured; and the Soviet's chosen "emir," Babrak Karmal, was installed at the helm. But then events reverted to the traditional Afghan rhythm, taking on a life of their own. By the fifth year of occupation, the Soviet 40th Army had grown from its original limited contingent to a countrywide occupation force of around 120,000. As the Soviet forces grew, so did the Afghan resistance. Though impossible to quantify accurately, by midpoint in the Soviet war there were probably about 250,000 full or part-time Afghan mujaheddin fighters. Soviet forces were constrained by the harsh terrain and infrastructural limitations to no more than about 150,000 troops before their supply lines would fray. They settled for about 120,000 over their 10-year occupation, a number more than adequate to fuel a full-blown insurgency, but never enough to defeat it.

By late 1986, Soviet efforts began to falter, and the new leader in the Kremlin, the fourth in as many years, Mikhail Gorbachev, declared the war a "bleeding wound." He gave his commanders a year to "turn it around." They couldn't; and by the end of the fighting season of 1987, diplomatic activity intensified. On April 14, 1988, the Soviets signed the Geneva Accords ending their occupation; 10 months later, they were out of Afghanistan.

And America turned its attention elsewhere.

In the 9 years of their Afghan adventure, Soviet losses were at least 15,000 thousand troops killed, tens of thousands more wounded and thousands dead from disease. The Afghan population suffered horrendous losses—more than a million dead, about twice that number injured, and 6 million driven into internal and external exile. It is instructive to view these numbers against those of the current American effort. While Afghan civilian casualties caused by coalition forces today average somewhat less than 1,000 per year, civilian casualties during the Soviet occupation averaged around 100,000 per year.

PAKISTAN AND THE PASHTUN QUESTION

As it turned its attention away from Afghanistan, with civil war and chaos replacing hard fought victory, the United States would also adjust its relationship with Pakistan. No longer able to stave off congressionally mandated sanctions triggered by its nuclear weapons development program, Pakistan fell out of Washington's favor. In 1990, strict sanctions were imposed on Pakistan, and military-to-military

contacts were cut. Those measures would remain in place for more than a decade, during which the U.S.–Pakistan alliance that dated back to the 1950s and the Baghdad Pact would change dramatically. The abrupt reversals in the bilateral relationship created an almost irreconcilable conviction within Pakistani military circles, and in particular the ISI, that the United States will always leave Pakistan in the lurch when it decides once again to retire from the region, views that officers in the Pakistan Army and the 151 have conveyed to me on many occasions in the past. That discussion is once again at heated levels in Pakistan today, as it is in the United States. The consequences, therefore, of any decision to increase or diminish the U.S. effort in Afghanistan will have far-reaching effects in Pakistan.

Pakistan's role, led by Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) during the 1980s had been central to the defeat of Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Not only did Pakistan serve as the conduit for all U.S. and international aid to the Afghan resistance and the population, but its Pashtun North West Frontier Province provided both safe haven for the the Afghan mujaheddin and refuge for their families. The Pashtuns of Pakistan were also an endless source of recruits for the Afghan resistance. These tribals straddling the Durand Line recognize the British demarkation of their lands only when it is to their rare advantage; otherwise "zero line," as they call it, is largely ignored. Any outside force fighting Pashtuns in Afghanistan, therefore, will also have to deal with the Pashtuns in Pakistan.

Every foreign occupation of Afghanistan eventually ends up as a fight with the Pashtun tribals. That was true during the 19th century British era and the Soviet era that followed a century later. It is true today. It is part of the Afghan playbook, as written by the Afghans themselves, and followed by each consecutive outside power that ventures in. The Pashtun population confronting those outside forces who march into Afghanistan includes not only the roughly 15 million in Afghanistan, but the 25 million or so in Pakistan, as well. Pashtuns will always rise to the fight, but they can also quiet down once a threat subsides, or if a proper deal is offered.

THE INDIAN QUESTION

Any oral history of Pakistan invariably begins with the line, "in the beginning, there was India." As the current phase of American operations in Afghanistan enters its ninth year, India has become firmly entrenched in what has always been viewed by Pakistan as it's rear area. After the United States, India is the second largest contributor to Afghan development projects. Working with Iran, India is developing the Iranian port of Chabahar on the Arabian Sea coast near the Gulf of Oman. Chabahar will provide India access to oil and gas resources in Iran and the Central Asian states. Plans for road and rail construction linking Afghanistan and Chabahar port by the Indian Government are also ambitious, as are burgeoning contacts at all levels between the Indian and Afghan Governments. Afghan President Karzai, was educated in India, and is viewed by most Pakistanis as beholden to New Delhi. Never, in the past 30 years, has Afghanistan appeared so potentially hostile to Pakistan and friendly to India.

Though Pakistani concerns over Indian involvement in Afghanistan have in the past been dismissed by American officials as overwrought, they are nonetheless real; and it is correct that these concerns are being taken more seriously now by the United States. Pakistan Army and 151 officers I have known over the years have been realistic in conveying to me their deep concerns regarding India, a country with which they have fought three costly wars. Indeed, General McChrystal, in his Commander's Initial Assessment dated August 30, 2009, correctly acknowledges the delicacy of Indian involvement in Afghanistan as it impacts in Pakistan. McChrystal writes, "Indian political and economic influence is increasing in Afghanistan, including significant development efforts and financial investment. In addition, the current Afghan Government is perceived by Islamabad to be pro-Indian." McChrystal also points out that increasing Indian influence in Afghanistan is likely to exacerbate regional tensions and encourage Pakistani countermeasures in Afghanistan or India.

If there were a precipitous reduction of American force in Afghanistan, or an outright withdrawal, we should expect the Pakistani Government and its military, including a very capable ISI, to take whatever measures they thought necessary counter Indian influence in Afghanistan. Such an escalation could rapidly increase and amplify the regional tensions, with perhaps disastrous consequences. The Pakistan Army has had the vision of creating what it called a Strategic Regional Consensus, a loose nexus between Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey as a massive and secure rear area for its 60-year confrontation with India. Those dreams, first explained to me by the late President Muhammad Zia ul-Haq, were never real-

ized, and their time may have passed; but were the United States to retire from the field in Afghanistan, a new, and more risky jockeying between nuclear-armed Pakistan and India would most surely ensue. This would prompt even greater Afghan-Indian collaboration, which would only fuel Pakistani conviction that Afghanistan is becoming an "Indian garrison." The prospects for miscalculation in such an atmosphere are grave.

THE REGIONAL PLAYERS

Below the noise level of military operations is the involvement of other regional players in what is developing into a modern version of a Central Asian Great Game. China, viewed by Pakistan as its most reliable ally, is jockeying for position in Afghanistan, partly as a counterweight to growing Indian influence and partly to advance its own long-term economic goals in the region—the quest for natural resources. China has also built a new, turnkey Pakistani port at Gwadar on the Arabian Sea, in Pakistan's Baluchistan province, a project China acknowledges as having strategic value matching that of the Karakoram Highway, completed by the Chinese in 1986, and linking Pakistan with Xinjiang. In addition to Gwadar serving as a potential Chinese naval anchor, Beijing is also interested in turning it into an energy-transport hub by building an oil pipeline from Gwadar into China's Xinjiang. The planned pipeline will carry crude oil from Arab and African sources. Inside Afghanistan, China has secured an interest in the the huge (estimated $88 billion) copper deposits in Aynak, in Logar Province south of Kabul. China is also interested in the massive iron deposits in Hajigak, west of Kabul.

Hydrocarbon and mineral deposits in the arc from Herat in the west, across northern Afghanistan are in play with Iran, China, and Russia. In effect, the other regional players are busily setting the stage for exploitation of Afghanistan's natural resources, while the United States remains bogged down with the war. This should change.

THE FUTURE OF U.S. MILITARY OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

The default position on whether a foreign power should or should not venture into Afghanistan with large-scale forces is usually a simple, "don't go." But America is eight long and troubled years beyond any reconsideration of that default position. We're in, and we have to see it through, if only with a greatly redirected strategy. Though the initial American contingent that toppled the Taliban regime and set al-Qaeda on the run involved less than 300 American special operations forces and CIA officers, U.S. and international forces now number around 100,000, with a mission that seems unclear to both its critics and its supporters. Some Afghans see the American role as simply protecting a corrupt government and the status quo; many more Pashtuns see the United States as the protectors of a Tajik Panjshiri-controlled government.

The current debate seems to center on whether or not to increase U.S. forces by as many as 40,000 additional troops. If the troop increases are intended to advance a new strategy designed to allow a modicum of security and justice to develop, perhaps guided by the Afghans themselves, and to create an economic stake that would become available to more Afghans, such increases could be a good idea. If, however, the increases are considered a "surge" to feed greater levels of kinetic operations, such a strategy will likely fail as the war escalates. Thoughtful Soviet post-war assessments of their Afghan debacle have concluded that with anything less than half a million troops on the ground, no outside force could expect to "pacify" Afghanistan. In reaching that conclusion, Soviet analysts were also aware of the sheer impossibility of supporting a force of that size, even with Afghanistan being contiguous to the U.S.S.R. That analysis, and the constraints included in it, apply to the American intervention today. A marginal surge in support of a military solution will accomplish little, absent a new, broader strategy.

A WAY FORWARD

In addition to creating the conditions for greater security and justice for the Afghan people, the United States might use its stewardship in Afghanistan to work toward an orderly marshaling of the regional players in developing that country's natural resources, deriving, in the process, the maximum possible benefit to the Afghan people themselves. Instead of a free for all race for Afghanistan's resources, the United States could provide the leadership to ensure that the regional players contribute to Afghan stability as they pursue their own valid and vital economic interests, rather than revive the zero sum game that has characterized competition in Afghanistan over the last 8 years. Any outside investment in Afghanistan should have the positive effect of providing alternatives to endless conflict for Afghans,

most of whom would make the right choices if offered security, justice, and a stake in an economy. Only the United States can make that happen.

Indeed, rather than contemplate withdrawing from Afghanistan, the United States will have little choice but to redirect its forces to provide greater security in selected regions, and make a virtue of necessity by taking the lead in working with the regional players in the major investment and development schemes already underway.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to appear before this committee. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you. That's a very cogent, thoughtful oversight, and I'm sure it will prompt a number of questions, and we really appreciate the thinking.

Mr. Coll.

STATEMENT OF STEVE COLL, PRESIDENT, NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. COLL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar. Thank you, members of this committee, for this chance to testify about the effects of United States policy in Afghanistan on the stability and political evolution of Pakistan.

I thought both of the opening statements framed the questions very, very well, and I'll just briefly add a perspective looking at the regional security context.

I'll start with a statement of American interests in this conflict. You know, obviously the success of Pakistan, by which I mean its emergence as a stable, modernizing, prosperous, pluralistic, country at peace with its neighbors and with its own borders and integrated economically into South and Central Asia, is obviously an important and even vital interest, not only of the United States, but of the entire international community.

Over the years—over the last 20 years, the history that Milt described, one obstacle—not the only obstacle, but one obstacle—to the emergence of such a Pakistan has been the persistent view, within its security services and elsewhere in its elites, that the United States will—certainly since 9/11, the view that the United States will abandon the region once it has defeated and disabled al-Qaeda. That has been our pattern of behavior, in their view, and Milton described the episode that gave rise to that perception. It is based in fact.

Pakistani generals correctly fear, today, that a precipitous American withdrawal from Afghanistan would be destabilizing; that it would strengthen Islamist radical networks including but not limited to the Taliban, who are today destabilizing Pakistan as well as the wider region.

Where it gets complicated is that I think, alternatively or concurrently depending on the individual, there are sections of the Pakistani military, and even the civilian elite, who also fear that the United States may be, today, collaborating with India, naively or deliberately, to weaken Pakistan by supporting governments in Kabul that are, at best, hostile to Pakistani interests and, at worst, facilitating what some imagine to be Indian efforts to destabilize, disarm, or even destroy the Pakistani state.

The Pakistan military's tolerance of the Taliban—historically and, I think, currently—and similar groups, is routed in the belief that Pakistan requires unconventional forces, in addition to a

nuclear deterrent, to offset India's conventional military and industrial superiority. This self-defeating logic—as I see it, anyway—of existential insecurity has informed Pakistan's policies in Afghanistan because Pakistani security services and their leaders have seen an Indian hand in Kabul, since the days of the invasion.

And I'm not suggesting that it's entirely illusory. As Milt described, India continues to invest deeply in Afghanistan today. These Pakistani commanders tend to interpret India's goals in Afghanistan as a strategy of encirclement of Pakistan, punctuated by the tactic of promoting instability among Pakistan's own Pashtun, Baluch, and Sindhi populations.

Pakistan has countered this perceived Indian strategy over the years by developing Islamist militias, such as the predominantly Pashtun Taliban and the Punjab-based—type as proxies for Pakistan in regional conflicts and as a means to destabilize India, or at least hold it off-balance.

As for the United States role, Pakistani generals have tended to see it as inconstant and unreliable, based on the pattern of here-and-gone United States engagement in the past and the narrow definition of United States interests in Pakistan, and they've also tended to believe that the United States, as I say, is today lashing itself to an Indian-based strategy in South Asia.

So, what does this imply, as you asked, for United States policy in Afghanistan today? There's quite a lot to chew on there, but let me just mention a few things, in broad strokes.

If the United States signals to the Pakistan military command now that it intends to abandon efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, or that it has set a short clock running on the project of Afghan stability, or that it intends to undertake its regional policy primarily through a strategic partnership with India, then it will only reinforce the beliefs of those in the Pakistani security establishment who argue that nursing the Taliban is in the country's national interests. This, in turn, in my view, will exacerbate instability in Pakistan itself, which is the opposite of United States goals.

At the same time, if the United States undertakes a heavily militarized, provocative, increasingly unilateral policy in Afghanistan, without also adopting an aggressive—or, rather than adopting an aggressive political reconciliation in regional diplomatic strategy that more effectively incorporates Pakistan into efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, then it will also reinforce the beliefs of those in the Pakistani security services that they need the Taliban as a hedge.

Between withdrawal signals and militarization, there is a more sustainable strategy, one that I hope that the Obama administration is in the process of defining. It would make clear that the Taliban will never be permitted to take power by force in Kabul or major cities; it would seek an enforced stability in Afghan population centers, but emphasize politics over combat, urban stability over rural patrolling, Afghan solutions over Western ones; and it would incorporate Pakistan more directly into creative and persistent diplomatic efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and the region.

Such a sustained policy, combined with heavy new investments in Pakistan's success, even beyond—and I was encouraged to hear the chairman say—even beyond the extraordinarily important achievements of the Kerry-Lugar legislation that has to be a begin-

ning, this is the path to provide the best chance that Pakistan's Army will, over time, continue to share power and accept strategic advice from civilians, and eventually conclude that it is in its own interests, the national interests of Pakistan, to cast out the Taliban and similar groups as a mechanism to defend the country against India. And that, in turn—that decision is ultimately the best path to a modernizing, politically plural, economically integrated and successful South Asia.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Coll follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEVE COLL, PRESIDENT, NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION, WASHINGTON, DC

Thank you for this opportunity to testify about the effects of U.S. policy in Afghanistan on the stability and political evolution of Pakistan.

It seems useful to begin with an assessment of where U.S. interests in Pakistan are located. The success of Pakistan—that is, its emergence as a stable, modernizing, prosperous, pluralistic country, at peace with its neighbors and within its borders, and integrated economically in South and Central Asia—is important, even vital, not only to the United States but to the broader international community. The nuclear danger in South Asia alone argues for risk-taking investments in Pakistan's success. In addition, any durable American "exit strategy" from Afghanistan will depend upon the emergence of a stable Pakistan that is moving toward normalization with India and the reduction of extremism within its borders.

For nearly four decades, Pakistan's struggle to achieve its constitutional and founding ideals of democracy, pluralism, and a culture rooted in a modernizing Islam have been impeded in part by the spillover effects of continual warfare in Afghanistan. These spillover effects have influenced the militarization of Pakistanis politics, encouraged the development of a "paranoid style" in Pakistani security doctrines, and more recently, helped to radicalize sections of the country's population.

The United States today is a catalyzing power in this same, continual Afghan warfare. U.S. actions in Afghanistan since 2001 have amplified the debilitating spillover effects of the Afghan war on Pakistan. To name a few examples: The lightly resourced, complacent U.S. approach to Afghanistan following the ouster of the Taliban in late 2001 effectively chased Islamist insurgents into Pakistan, contributing to its destabilization. Dormant, often directionless U.S. diplomacy in the region failed to bridge the deepening mistrust among the Kabul, Islamabad, and New Delhi governments after 2001, or to challenge successfully the Pakistani military's tolerance of Islamist extremist groups, including the Afghan Taliban. In Pakistan itself, the United States relied for too long and too exclusively on former President Pervez Musharraf and failed to challenge his marginalization of political opponents or his coddling of Islamist extremists. During these years, narrowly conceived, transparently self-interested U.S. policies caused many Pakistanis to conclude, to some extent correctly, that the American presence in their region was narrowly conceived, self-interested, and ultimately unreliable.

A recent poll of Pakistani public opinion carried out by the Pew Global Attitudes Project found that only 16 percent of Pakistanis have a favorable view of the United States.[1] That discouraging number has been more or less consistent since 2001; the only time it spiked, to just above 25 percent, was in 2006, after the United States pledged $500 million in aid to Pakistan and after it played a visible and significant role in an earthquake relief effort in Pakistani-held Kashmir. The Senate's recent unanimous passage of the Kerry-Lugar bill, providing $1.5 billion in aid to Pakistan for each of the next 5 years, offers a foothold to begin shifting U.S. policy in a more rewarding direction. However, it would be a mistake to underestimate the depth of the resentments and sources of instability in Pakistan that now confront the United States. A poll carried out by Gallup and Al Jazeera in July asked a sample of Pakistanis what constituted the biggest threat to Pakistan's security. Fifty-nine percent answered that it was the United States, followed by 18 percent who named India and only 11 percent who named the Taliban.[2]

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[1] "Pakistani Public Opinion: Growing Concerns About Extremism, Continuing Discontent With U.S.," The Pew Global Attitudes Project, August 13, 2009.

[2] "Pakistan: State of the Nation," Al Jazeera, August 13, 2009. http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/2009/08/2009888238994769.html.

The measure of American policy in Pakistan, of course, is not American popularity but Pakistan's own durable stability and peaceful evolution. However, the dismal view of the United States held across so many constituencies in Pakistan today—particularly the widespread view that U.S. policy in Afghanistan and along the Pakistan-Afghan border constitutes a grave threat to Pakistan—is a sign that U.S. policymakers must think much more deeply, as this committee is doing, about how the U.S.-led campaign against al-Qaeda and the Taliban will reverberate in Pakistan during the next 5 to 10 years.

There is no unitary, homogenized Pakistan for the United States to effect by its actions in Afghanistan. Instead, there are distinct Pakistani constituencies, some in competition with each other, which will be impacted in different ways by the choices the United States now makes in Afghanistan. These include the Pakistani military and security services; the country's civilian political leadership; its business communities and civil society; and the Pakistani public.

Broadly, the purpose of U.S. policy in the region, including in Afghanistan, should be to strengthen Pakistani constitutional politics and pluralism; to invest in the Pakistani people and civil society; to enable the Pakistani military to secure the country while preserving and enhancing civilian rule; and most critically of all, to persuade the Pakistani military and intelligence services that it is in Pakistan's national interest to pursue normalization and economic integration with India and to abandon its support for proxy Islamist groups such as the Afghan Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and others.

This is the strategic prism through which U.S. policy choices in Afghanistan today should be evaluated.

One obstacle to the achievement of these goals is the deeply held view within the Pakistani security services that the United States will abandon the region once it has defeated or disabled al-Qaeda. Pakistani generals correctly fear that a precipitous American withdrawal from Afghanistan would be destabilizing, and that it would strengthen Islamist radical networks, including but not limited to the Taliban, who are today destabilizing Pakistan as well as the wider region.

Alternatively or concurrently, sections of the Pakistani military and civilian elite also fear that the United States may collaborate with India, naively or deliberately, to weaken Pakistan, by supporting governments in Kabul that at best are hostile to Pakistani interests or at worst facilitate Indian efforts to destabilize, disarm, or even destroy the Pakistani state.

The presence and depth of these fears among the Pakistani elites implies that the United States should avoid taking actions in Afghanistan that reinforce this debilitating, self-defeating belief system within the Pakistani security services. It implies that Washington should, on the other hand, embrace those policies that are most likely to ameliorate or subdue such policies within Pakistan over time.

Pakistan's historical, self-defeating support for the Taliban and similar groups is rooted in the belief that Pakistan requires unconventional forces, as well as a nuclear deterrent, to offset India's conventional military and industrial might. This logic of existential insecurity has informed Pakistan's policies in Afghanistan because Pakistani generals have seen an Indian hand in Kabul since the days of the Soviet invasion. They interpret India's goals in Afghanistan as a strategy of encirclement of Pakistan, punctuated by the tactic of promoting instability among Pakistan's restive, independence-minded Pashtun, Baluch, and Sindhi populations.

Pakistan has countered this perceived Indian strategy by developing Islamist militias such as the predominantly Pashtun Taliban as proxies for Pakistan and as a means to destabilize India. As for the U.S. role, Pakistani generals see it as inconstant and unreliable, based on the pattern of here-and-gone U.S. engagement in the past, and they also tend to believe that the United States is today lashing itself, deliberately or naively, to Indian strategy in the region.

This paranoid style in Pakistani security doctrine has been reinforced in several ways by U.S. actions in the region since 2001. As noted above, U.S. diplomacy has made an insufficient priority, until recently, of attempting to build constructive links between Kabul and Islamabad and to take pragmatic steps to persuade the Pakistani military that it has a stake in a stable Afghanistan free from the threat of Taliban rule. U.S. policy in Afghanistan has failed to develop a robust strategy of political negotiation, reconciliation, and national reintegration that would provide a platform for Pakistan's genuine security concerns. Then, too, the failure of the United States to invest deeply and broadly in Pakistani society, but to concentrate its aid in a narrowly based military government during the Musharraf period, only reinforced the assumption that the United States had once again hired out Pakistan as a regional "sherrif" and intended to disengage from South and Central Asia as soon as its mission against al-Qaeda was complete—just as the United States has

done at comparable intersections in the past, including after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

What does this analysis suggest about the specific policy choices facing the Obama administration in Afghanistan today?

If the United States signals to Pakistan's military command that it intends to abandon efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, or that it has set a short clock running on the project of pursuing Afghan stability, or that it intends to undertake its regional policy primarily through a strategic partnership with India, then it will only reinforce the beliefs of those in the Pakistani security establishment who argue that nursing the Taliban is in the country's national interests.

To the extent that U.S. actions in Afghanistan reinforce this view within the Pakistani security services, it will contribute to instability in Pakistan and weaken the hand of Pakistani political parties and civil society in their long, unfinished struggle to build a more successful, more durable constitutional system, modeled on the power-sharing systems, formal and informal, that prevail today in previously coup-riddled or unstable countries such as Turkey, Indonesia, the Philippines, Argentina, and Brazil.

If the United States undertakes a heavily militarized, increasingly unilateral policy in Afghanistan, whether in the name of "counterinsurgency," "counterterrorism," or some other abstract Western doctrine, without also adopting an aggressive political, reconciliation, and diplomatic strategy that more effectively incorporates Pakistan into efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, then it will also reinforce the beliefs of those in the Pakistani security establishment that they need the Taliban as a hedge against the United States and India.

If the United States adopts a "counterterrorism only" policy in Afghanistan and substantially withdraws from Afghanistan, it will risk deepening instability along the Pakistan-Afghan border, and it will reinforce the narrative of its failed, self-interested policies in Pakistan during the Musharraf period and in earlier periods, undermining the prospects for a Pakistan that evolves gradually toward internal stability and a constructive regional role.

On the other hand, if the United States signals to Pakistan's military command that it intends to pursue very long-term policies designed to promote stability and prosperity in South Asia and Central Asia, and that it sees a responsible Pakistan as a decades-long strategic ally comparable to Turkey and Egypt, then it will have a reasonable if uncertain chance to persuade the Pakistani security establishment over time that the costs of succoring the Taliban and like groups outweigh the benefits.

Between withdrawal signals and blind militarization there is a more sustainable strategy; one that I hope the Obama administration is in the process of defining. It would make clear that the Taliban will never be permitted to take power in Kabul or major cities. It would seek and enforce stability in Afghan population centers but emphasize politics over combat, urban stability over rural patrolling, Afghan solutions over Western ones, and it would incorporate Pakistan more directly into creative and persistent diplomatic efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and the region.

That is the only plausible path to a modernizing, prosperous South Asia. It is a future within reach and it is a model for evolutionary political-military success already established in other regions of the world that recently suffered deep instability rooted in extremism, identity politics, and fractured civil-military relations, such as Southeast Asia and Latin America.

The Obama administration needs to make an even greater effort than it already has to communicate publicly about its commitment to Pakistan and to the broader long-term goal of regional stability and economic integration. There is an emerging, bipartisan consensus within the Congress on Pakistan policy, as evidenced by the Senate's unanimous endorsement of the critically important Kerry-Lugar legislation. At the Pentagon and within civilian U.S. policymaking circles there is a much deeper understanding than previously about the centrality of Pakistan to U.S. interests and regional strategy, and about the need to engage with Pakistan consistently over the long run, nurturing that country's economic growth, healthy civil-military relations, civil society, pluralism, constitutionalism, and normalization with India. On Pakistan policy, Washington is perhaps on the verge of proving Churchill's quip that the United States always does the right thing after first trying everything else.

And yet Kerry-Lugar should be seen as only a beginning. It is essential that the U.S. national security bureaucracy find ways to act with a greater sense of urgency, creativity, and unity on Pakistan policy. In Iraq and Afghanistan, because we are formally at war, American policy is often animated, appropriately, by a sense of urgency. Too often, this is not the case when it comes to Pakistan, even though Pakistan's stability and success is a central reason that the United States continues to invest blood and treasure in Afghanistan. As the Obama administration and Con-

gress refashion and reinvest in Afghan policy over the next weeks, there will be an important opportunity to address this imbalance, in the way that policy is conceived, funded, and communicated.

The CHAIRMAN. Again, also very helpful and much appreciated.

STATEMENT OF HON. MALEEHA LODHI, PUBLIC POLICY SCHOLAR, WOODROW WILSON CENTER, FORMER PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES, WASHINGTON, DC

Ambassador LODHI. Senator Lugar, and members of the committee, I'm honored to appear before you today. I speak, as you know, as a Pakistani citizen and not as a spokesperson for the government.

Let me get straight to the point.

The CHAIRMAN. I should mention—I don't think I did—that you are a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center——

Ambassador LODHI. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. And I failed to say that. But, thank you for the——

Ambassador LODHI. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Distinction.

Ambassador LODHI. Thank you. So, let me get straight to the point. The core strategic objective that the United States seeks to achieve in Afghanistan is, Senator Kerry, as you quoted President Obama as saying, disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda. The key question is whether, to achieve this core goal, it is also necessary to pursue other objectives, such as fighting the Taliban, nation-building, trying to establish a centralized state in Afghanistan. And I think the challenge is to evolve an approach that doesn't destabilize Pakistan.

Let me, at the outset, state that the choice for the United States should not be between an open-ended escalating military engagement and cut and run from Afghanistan. Both could be disastrous—for the region, for Pakistan, and, I think, for the United States, too. A precipitous withdrawal would repeat the strategic mistake of the 1990s, when the United States abandoned Afghanistan to the chaos that nurtured al-Qaeda. Nor should the West risk being trapped in a Vietnam-style quagmire, a war without end and with no guarantee of success.

Pakistan's stability, as I know you are already aware, has been gravely undermined by what I call the "twin blowback" from Afghanistan. First, the Russian occupation—and I'm not going to list the witch's brew of problems that Pakistan inherited; you're well aware—2 million of the 3 million Afghan refugees are still in Pakistan today. Second, the unintended consequences of the 2001 United States military intervention, which increasingly pushed the conflict into Pakistan's border region and further fueled the forces of militancy.

The conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan are interlinked, but they're also different and distinct. They are linked by the bonds of Pashtun ethnicity, a broadly shared ideology, common links to al-Qaeda, and the two-way cross-border movement that does take place. But the two insurgencies are also different in important ways. The Afghanistan Taliban movement is older, more entrenched, has something of a command-and-control structure, a

broader geographical presence, and a national objective, which is the ouster of foreign forces. The Tehrik-i-Taliban in Pakistan, as it is called, the Pakistani Taliban, is a loose conglomeration of a dozen groups with local origins and motives, and it is confined to part of the tribal areas which constitutes 3 percent of Pakistan's territory and 2 percent of Pakistan's population. It lacks command and control, especially after the death of its core group's leader, Baitullah Mehsud.

It has been seriously disrupted by the Pakistan Army's operations in Swat, Bajaur, and, of course, the current military encirclement that is underway in South Waziristan. Most importantly and strategically, the Pakistani public has turned against the TTP, as it's called—the Pakistani Taliban. This, to my mind, places Pakistan in a better position than coalition forces in Afghanistan, something to which, Senator Kerry, you just alluded, to disrupt and eventually defeat the Pakistani Taliban. And this really reinforces a very important principle of counterinsurgency, which is that indigenous forces are better able to conduct such missions. But, the continuing conflict in Afghanistan, of course, does compound the problem, vis-a-vis Pakistan's response to the Taliban in the tribal areas, because continuing conflict can provide a fresh impetus to the Pakistani Taliban.

On the Afghan side, the coalition force faces much greater challenges. And these challenges don't just come, of course, from the fraud-stricken Presidential election in Afghanistan, but they also come because foreign forces, as history attests—and Mr. Bearden has recalled that history for us—foreign forces will always find it difficult to quell an insurgency that portrays itself as fighting for a national cause.

So, a further military escalation in Afghanistan, in my opinion, is unlikely to succeed, for several reasons. I will very quickly list some of these and then get on to the negative consequences military escalation can have on Pakistan.

First, military escalation is unlikely to succeed, because more troops will inevitably mean more intensified combat, even if the stated aim is to protect the population. The primary target, al-Qaeda, can be neutralized in Afghanistan and in the border region with Pakistan if it is rejected and ejected from the Taliban "sea" in which it survives. Military escalation will push the Taliban even closer to al-Qaeda.

Two, even enhanced troops will be insufficient, for all the reasons that Milt Bearden has described. The Soviets, let's remember, at the peak of the occupation, had 140,000 troops, as well as the support of a well-organized and professional Afghan Army, which, at its peak, was about 100,000 people. So, that's a lot of troops that were already there. And yet, we know that they failed to subdue the mujahideen.

Military escalation will also raise the risks of casualties—Western casualties. It'll also increase economic costs for the West. So, I think the question is, Can Western forces absorb these rising costs in human lives as well as the economic costs?

Four, something to which both my colleagues have alluded, an escalating war will also intensify regional rivalries among neighboring powers. Pakistan's concerns about India's growing role in

Afghanistan is well known, so I will not elaborate, because I think we've heard sufficient elaboration. But, the impact of a surge will have at least five negative consequences for Pakistan.

First, it will lead to an influx of militants and al-Qaeda fighters into Pakistan.

Second, it will enhance the vulnerability of United U.S.–NATO ground supply routes throughout Pakistan, creating what military strategists call the "battle of the reverse fronts." In other words, NATO-U.S. forces will be confronting the insurgents with the supply lines behind the insurgents. I'm told by military strategists this is not a great policy to have, because of the increased vulnerability. Pakistan's forces, already overstretched—150,000 deployed in the border region and undertaking counterinsurgency—will have to protect the supply lines because supply needs will double.

Third, such a military escalation will likely produce a spike in violent reprisals on mainland Pakistan.

Fourth, it could lead to the influx of more refugees into Pakistan, with destabilizing effects in both the North West Frontier province and the restive province of Balochistan.

And most importantly, and I think you would understand this, it could endanger, erode, and unravel the key public consensus that has been achieved in the past 1 year in Pakistan to fight the militancy.

The alternative, as I said before, cannot be a unilateral withdrawal by United States coalition forces from Afghanistan, or indeed switch to the narrow counterterrorism approach, which is simply another variation of military escalation. This will be viewed as a strategic defeat, it will embolden the forces of extremism across the world, and strengthen the al-Qaeda/Taliban alliance.

May I, Mr. Chairman, propose a third path, a comprehensive strategy that can pave the way for an indigenous Afghan solution and create the conditions for a gradual, progressive United States withdrawal, while leaving the region with relative stability. There are no easy options, as we all know. But, I think the challenge is to choose the best out of very, very difficult options.

The question really isn't about troop levels, in my opinion, from a Pakistani perspective. It is not about military strategy as much as it is about having the right political strategy, and then having the military strategy that is consistent with such a political approach.

So, a new strategy could consist of the following elements. I'll very quickly run through some of these. The military component obviously will continue to play a part, but it should encompass holding ground in a defensive military strategy, avoiding casualties, not multiplying enemies, and negotiating reciprocal ceasefires, wherever possible, at the local level.

Economically, I think the economic footprint does need to be enhanced by supporting development and job creation at the local level.

But, it is the central thrust of the strategy at the political level which is most important. And that, I would propose, should be aimed at seeking a political solution, drawing into the political process in Afghanistan and integrating within it excluded Pashtun

groups, and those Taliban elements that can be decoupled from al-Qaeda.

Afghan leaders and military commanders from NATO, including United States commanders, have spoken frequently about the need for national reconciliation in Afghanistan. What has been missing, or lacking, is a political framework within which serious negotiations can be pursued and meaningful incentives can be offered to the insurgents.

Talk with the insurgents will not be easy, and they may have to be opened, initially, through intermediaries, but this effort should aim at isolating and weakening the irreconcilable elements of the Taliban.

What could be offered to the insurgents is to disavow al-Qaeda, halt hostilities, support development, abide by the constitution, participate in the political process—the parliamentary elections in Afghanistan are due next year. Political parties, at present, are banned, they cannot contest those elections; I think the time has come to allow the people of Afghanistan the right to form political parties and contest in next year's parliamentary elections.

And I think, in exchange, U.S.–NATO forces can offer a progressive withdrawal all foreign forces from Afghanistan. The aim should be to establish a decentralized political order that has existed historically in Afghanistan, and that reflects the country's complex ethnic mosaic and of course protects the rights of the minorities.

If this can be agreed, and a regional compact can be forged amongst the neighboring states, then it may be possible to contemplate and envision a U.N./OIC peacekeeping force drawn from the Muslim countries as a transitional strategy, because such a force can help implement such an agreement; such a force cannot help forge such an agreement, but it can certainly help to enforce such an agreement. As I said before, this will not be quick, and it will not be easy. Talks may fail in the first instance, but, I think, if there is a hearts-and-minds effect that has to be created at the outset, this is the way to do it, to see how many of the Taliban elements can be peeled away from their alliance, which, by some indications, suggests that the alliance between some Taliban elements and al-Qaeda may be fraying. Talks is the only way to test that proposition or that hypothesis.

A negotiated and progressive deescalation in Afghanistan will be beneficial to Pakistan. Pakistan will be able to manage its fallout. What Pakistan will find hard to manage is an open-ended military presence in Afghanistan which shows no sign of making the kind of progress that will help to bring about stability.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I do want to say that the United States and the Western ability to isolate and eliminate al-Qaeda and violent extremism in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the rest of the Muslim world, depends critically not so much on military strength and counterinsurgency strategy as on the demonstration of the political will and capability to secure just solutions to the conflicts and problems that plague the Muslim world and that play on Muslim hearts and minds. It is this concrete commitment to justice from the United States that I believe will have a truly hearts-and-minds

effect, and be a very important weapon to fight against extremism and militancy.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Lodhi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. MALEEHA LODHI, PUBLIC POLICY SCHOLAR, WOODROW WILSON CENTER, FORMER PAKISTAN AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. AND U.K., WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today to provide a perspective from Pakistan, not as an official, but as someone who has had long experience both as a practitioner and writer on these important issues. I speak before this committee as a Pakistani citizen not as a spokesperson for the government.

I welcome this debate and President Obama's commitment to a comprehensive and careful reassessment of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan.

There is a famous line in Lewis Caroll's "Alice in Wonderland" which says: "If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there." In addressing the dire situation in which the U.S.-led coalition finds itself in Afghanistan, it is vital to identify the strategic objectives and a realistic plan to achieve these.

What are the strategic objectives that the United States wants to achieve? The core objective as President Obama stated in March 2009 is to "disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda" and protect the U.S. homeland from terrorist attack. The question is whether to attain this objective, pursuing other goals are also necessary: defeating the Taliban, undertaking "nation building" and establishing a centralized state in Afghanistan.

The challenge is how to prevent Afghanistan and its border areas with Pakistan become a hub for terrorist networks that can threaten the region and the world.

Let me at the outset state that the choice cannot be between cut and run from Afghanistan and an open-ended military engagement. Both will destabilize the region further: neither will succeed in realizing Washington's strategic goals.

Any effort to pull out precipitously from Afghanistan would repeat the epic strategic error of the 1990s when the United States abandoned that country to the chaos that in turn nurtured al-Qaeda. But open-ended military escalation risks trapping the West, in a Vietnam-style quagmire: a war without end and no guarantee of success.

It is wise for this committee to consider the impact of any option on Pakistan. I wish this had also been done in 2001 and 1989.

Pakistan's stability has been gravely undermined by three decades of conflict and strife in Afghanistan. The twin blowback from the Soviet invasion 30 years ago and the unintended consequences of the 2001 U.S. military intervention has created unprecedented security, economic, and social challenges for Pakistan and contributed significantly to its systemic crises.

Pakistan's involvement in the long war to roll back the Russian occupation of Afghanistan bequeathed a witches brew of problems including militancy, religious extremism, proliferation of weapons and drugs, and a huge number of refugees, 2 million of whom remain in Pakistan. Their camps continue to add to the challenges facing Pakistan today.

The consequences of the 2001 intervention included fueling further the forces of militancy in Pakistan's tribal areas and producing ferment among the Pashtun tribes. The ramifications of installing a government in Kabul dominated by an ethnic minority were similarly deleterious. As the Afghan war was increasingly pushed across the border into Pakistan and Islamabad took action in its frontier regions, Islamic militants turned their guns on the Pakistani state and its security forces.

It is easy to understand in this backdrop how militancy on both sides of the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is interconnected. But it is also distinct in origin, goals, and magnitude.

The conflict is connected, first, by common bonds of tribe and ethnicity; second, by the broad appeal of ideology; third, by links to al-Qaeda; and four, by the two-way cross-border movement of insurgents who provide each other a degree of mutual support.

It is also distinct because; one, the origin of the Afghan Taliban is older and the movement is more entrenched with an organized command and control structure. Two, the Taliban have geographically a much broader presence in Afghanistan compared to the Pakistani Taliban whose support base is confined to part of the tribal areas, which constitute just 3 percent of the country's territory and represent 2 per-

cent of the population. Three, there is greater confidence among the Afghan Taliban that they will prevail and outlast what they see as a foreign occupation force.

In contrast to the "national objectives" of their Afghan "cousins," the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is a loose conglomeration of a dozen groups that primarily have local origins, motives, grievances, and ambitions. It lacks central command and control. Its core group led by Baitullah Mehsud has suffered a serious reversal by his death and the Pakistan military's aggressive actions to blockade and contain his followers in South Waziristan.

Most importantly public sentiment in Pakistan has now turned decisively against the TTP, leaving the organization in a position to launch periodic suicide missions, but not expand its influence. The Pakistani Taliban today stands discredited in the country and without public backing are in no position to extend their sway. But the continuing conflict in Afghanistan and the perceived obligation to help a movement resisting an alien force provides the TTP with its main motivation, mobilizing rationale and legitimacy among its tribal support base.

Pakistan is in a better position than the coalition forces in Afghanistan to disrupt, contain, and ultimately defeat its "Taliban," by building on the success of the recent operation in Swat and the tribal area of Bajaur. Within 4 months of the military action launched against the Swat branch of the TTP in the northwestern part of the country the Taliban have been driven out of Malakand region, their advance into neighboring areas has been halted and the writ of the government has been reestablished. Over 90 percent of displaced people who were forced to evacuate ahead of the fighting have returned to their homes, defying doomsday predictions. The Pakistan army has demonstrated improved tactics and counterinsurgency capabilities.

This reinforces the point that Pakistan has the capacity to deal with the threat of militancy by its own efforts, but without the compounding complications engendered by the fighting across its border. It is also a reminder of the most important lesson of counterinsurgency: indigenous forces are better able to undertake successful missions.

On the Afghan side, U.S. and coalition forces will face much greater difficulties against the insurgency especially if the present military and political strategies remain unchanged and also when a fraud-stricken Presidential election in Afghanistan has denuded the country of a legitimate government. The ongoing strategic review and the debate that is underway are timely and critical.

One response being proposed to this dire situation is a substantial surge of military forces. This raises the question: To what end, at what cost and with what chances of success? Although many will see the parallel as odious, history cannot be cast aside; the Soviet Union deployed 140,000 troops at the peak of its occupation but failed to defeat the resistance.

If the central objective is to disrupt and defeat al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan's border region can this be achieved through a military escalation? Has the situation improved or deteriorated after previous military surges? So far the presence of more troops has increased militant activity and support for the Taliban. Even if the stated aim is to protect the population, more troops will mean intensified fighting with the Taliban.

But al-Qaeda can only be neutralized in Afghanistan and in the border region with Pakistan if it is rejected by and ejected from the Taliban "sea" in which it survives. This urges a strategy to separate the two movements by military, political, and other means. A strategy of military escalation will push the two closer and strengthen their links rather than erode them.

For the purposes of the strategy review and for consideration by the members of this committee, let me offer three possible scenarios for what could happen in Afghanistan:

(1) Military escalation: This will inevitably be directed at the Taliban and will likely evoke even more hostility from the country's Pashtun-dominated areas and closer cooperation between al-Qaeda and the Taliban thereby further impeding the core objective of eliminating al-Qaeda. Although the Taliban do not represent all Pashtuns, they do exploit Pashtun grievances and use the foreign presence as a recruitment tool.

If history is a guide in this graveyard of empires, a military solution is also unlikely to succeed for several reasons:

(i) The enhanced military forces will still be insufficient to "hold" the countryside: independent estimates suggest that the Taliban now have a permanent presence in over 70 percent of Afghanistan. If Moscow with 140,000 troops supported by a more professional Afghan army of 100,000 could not succeed against

the mujahideen, why should it be any different in a country whose people have historically united against outsiders?

(ii) Escalation will inevitably lead to mounting Western/American casualties, which will erode further public support in both the United States and Europe. The insurgents can absorb higher losses and fight on. Pakistan has incurred 7,500 casualties among its security personnel (dead and injured). Can Western forces envision such heavy losses and still count on public support for the war?

(iii) The economic cost of the war will also escalate. Will Western Parliaments preoccupied with economic recovery and burgeoning debt burdens agree indefinitely to defray the growing costs of an unending Afghan war?

(iv) Escalation will likely intensify rivalries among the neighboring powers in a region where a subterranean competition is already in play. Pakistan's concerns about India's role in Afghanistan are well known. Moreover if the West's confrontation with Iran on the nuclear issue intensifies, there will be consequences in Afghanistan (and Iraq) that will have to be factored in.

(v) Reliance on a surge conveys the signal that the United States is only applying a military solution and is bereft of other nonmilitary components of strategy. This is at odds with the comprehensive approach that President Obama promised to implement in March 2009.

As for the impact on Pakistan, further military escalation on its border is fraught with great risk. Far from diminishing the threat of instability this will enhance it, for many reasons. Let me list five:

(i) It will likely lead to an influx of militants and al-Qaeda fighters into Pakistan and an arms flow from across the border.

(ii) Enhance the vulnerability of U.S.–NATO ground supply routes through the country as supply needs will likely double. This will create what military strategists call the "battle of reverse front" in which U.S. forces will have their supplies "located" behind the insurgents. Protecting these supply lines will also overstretch Pakistani troops, 150,000 of which are at present engaged in border security and counterinsurgency.

(iii) It could lead to an influx of more Afghan refugees which can be especially destabilizing in the restive province of Balochistan.

(iv) A surge in Afghanistan can be expected to produce a spike in violent reprisals in mainland Pakistan.

(v) Most important, intensified fighting and its fallout, could erode and unravel the fragile political consensus in Pakistan to fight the TTP and counter militancy. Pakistan's recent success against militants needs to be reinforced not endangered.

A second scenario is a unilateral withdrawal by U.S. forces without a political settlement. This could be accompanied by what is being called a remote-controlled counterterrorism strategy, involving an air war focused on al-Qaeda.

This scenario is also fraught with great danger. It will be viewed in the region and beyond as a defeat, will embolden the forces of violent extremism across the world and strengthen and even solidify the al-Qaeda/Taliban alliance.

It is necessary to consider a third scenario: one that involves a new strategy to pursue a political solution that seeks to integrate excluded Pashtun groups and those Taliban elements into the Afghan political process that can be de-coupled from al-Qaeda. President Hamid Karzai and American and British military commanders have frequently called for reconciliation efforts but what has been absent is a political framework in which serious negotiations can be pursued and which offers real incentives to the insurgents to abandon violence.

This will ultimately involve negotiations for a progressive reduction of Western forces from Afghanistan in return for the insurgents agreeing to a number of conditions. Fashioning a new political structure, that provides a power-sharing arrangement to bring in underrepresented Pashtuns, will help to neutralize the insurgency in southern and eastern Afghanistan.

Even if the central leadership of the Taliban refuse to engage in talks this will offer a concrete way to co-opt and peel away local Taliban commanders. There are indications that the alliance between al-Qaeda and many Taliban elements is fraying. Talks will offer opportunities to test this.

Political engagement, even if it does not at first succeed, will represent a meaningful "hearts and minds" effort that can also help create the conditions to isolate the irreconcilable elements among the Taliban.

A plan of action to achieve such a political solution will involve the following elements:

A. Military

(1) Hold ground in defensible military encampments. Avoid creating pockets of vulnerability that risk higher casualties. This will enable the conduct of talks from a position of some strength.

(2) Restrict offensive operations except in retaliation/self-defense.

(3) Negotiate reciprocal cease-fires at the local level with different actors including local Taliban commanders.

(4) Restrict air strikes only to terrorist targets based on verified intelligence; avoid civilian casualties.

B. Economic

(5) Focus on economic development and job creation at the local level, building capacities region by region through local communities.

C. Political

(6) Launch a national reconciliation initiative to draw in more Pashtuns into the political process. Open talks with the insurgents initially through credible intermediaries. Set out the terms of the dialogue by asking the various Taliban elements to disavow al-Qaeda, halt hostilities and support development efforts and the build-up of Afghan security forces. This will need to be accompanied by the willingness of U.S.–NATO forces to accept a progressive withdrawal from Afghanistan.

(7) Seek to involve as many Afghan players (political and tribal leaders, local powerholders) as possible in the reconciliation process.

(8) Allow political parties to contest next year's parliamentary elections (banned at present) to ensure that the reconciliation efforts are consolidated.

(9) Ensure that the expansion of Afghan security forces is not ethnically skewed. At the moment it is, to the disadvantage of Pashtuns.

(10) Promote a political arrangement that once worked in Afghanistan: a loose, decentralized political and administrative order which strikes a balance between and reflects Afghanistan's ethnic composition and protects the rights of all minority groups.

C. Regional

(11) Forge a regional compact between neighboring states especially ensuring support from Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia for such a new political order in Afghanistan.

(12) Promote a formal accord between Pakistan and Afghanistan that includes Kabul's recognition of the Durand Line.

D. International

(13) Consider a U.N./OIC peacekeeping force drawn from Muslim countries to implement an agreement once it is reached.

Achieving this outcome will neither be quick nor easy. But Pakistan's stability will be helped not hurt by a progressive, orderly deescalation in Afghanistan. Pakistan will be able to manage its aftermath as a negotiated end to conflict in Afghanistan will be salutary for its future stability. It will further deflate the ideological appeal and political motivations of the TTP and other militants.

Pakistan's long-term stability however will depend on a number of other factors:

(1) Continuing and consolidating public support for security operations against militants. In this context U.S. drone attacks, tactically regarded as effective are strategically costly as they erode public support and consensus. The lesson from the use of air power in the Middle East should not be ignored where this has had an intensely radicalizing effect.

(2) The capacity of the state to provide effective governance in the post-conflict regions including Swat.

(3) Financial stabilization and economic revival. The U.S.-supported IMF injections have led to a modicum of financial stability. But ensuring sustainable growth, adequate job creation, social stability and reversing militancy will require larger infrastructure and social sector investment and trade access for Pakistani products in the United States and European markets. Market access through a free trade agreement can help Pakistan become a competitive producer, attract foreign investment and serve as a base for exports to the West.

(4) In Pakistan's fragile political situation U.S. actions should not contribute to the breakdown of the national consensus against violent extremism by escalating demands on Pakistan. Efforts to determine Pakistan's security paradigm and decide on its priorities undermine that consensus.

(5) Addressing Pakistan's security concerns vis-a-vis India and promoting a peaceful settlement of Kashmir.

(6) The ongoing public debate in Pakistan about the benchmarking of U.S. economic assistance to Pakistan is a reminder how such conditionalities erode much of the hearts and minds effect as they reinforce the transactional nature of the bilateral relationship that Pakistanis so resent and strengthens rather than breaks from the paradigm of treating the country as hired help rather than a valued ally.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the United States and Western ability to isolate and eliminate al-Qaeda and violent extremism in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other Arab and Muslim countries will depend critically, not so much on military strength and counterinsurgency strategy, as on the demonstration of the political will and capability to secure just solutions to the conflicts and problems in the Islamic world: the Palestine question, Afghanistan, Kashmir, and Iraq.

It is this concrete commitment to justice and genuine economic cooperation in the interest of the poor and deprived in the Muslim world that will succeed in turning the tide against extremism and militancy.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much, Madam Ambassador.

I repeat again, I think all three testimonies are really enormously helpful in framing the interests here, and the questions here. And there really are just so many questions that leap out of each of the testimonies, so we've got a good number of Senators here, and we want to have a chance to dig in.

Let me frame, quickly—I want to emphasize one thing. I think it's appropriate in your testimony to talk about the impact of a potential total withdrawal, et cetera. But, nobody—I want to emphasize—nobody that I know of up here is, in fact, proposing that. And that's not the debate that I think we're having. I think the question we're having is, Recognizing the legitimate interests that you have defined and others have defined, what is the method by which we best achieve them, sort of—you know, meeting those interests, serving those interests? And it may be that some people will have a different sense of what those interests are, it may be that we—there are some who want to expand them, but we all understand, there are some base interests—basic interests that are there, and they are not served by just, sort of, walking away. So, I don't see that as on the table. I don't think there's anyone up here talking about that, so I don't think we need to, kind of, go to that part of this discussion.

The question is, sort of, What strategy works? And what are the basic assumptions—maybe one should even use the word, in some cases, "truths"—what are the basic truths, that we need to begin to accept as you think about, "OK, here's how we respond to that"?

Now, you've set forth five very powerful and important notions of what happens if we put additional fighters into Afghanistan. You've said that a surge and an escalation—and maybe that assumes it's a certain kind of surge, too. It could be that you put additional troops in, but they're for a very different kind of purpose than what we've done previously, and therefore, it maybe acceptable to accomplish something. I think we have to examine that premise. But, assuming that a surge in escalation, sort of, was more of the same, you say it will lead to a further influx of militants and al-Qaeda fighters into Pakistan. You said it would enhance the vulnerability of U.S.–NATO ground supply routes through Pakistan, creating a battle of the reverse front; we've seen some of that already in caravans that have been attacked near the Khyber Pass, near Peshawar, et cetera. You say it would produce a spike in violent reprisals on mainland Pakistan. It could—you say it would lead to an influx of more Afghan refugees, with fur-

ther destabilizing effects in North West Frontier provinces, in Balochistan. And, finally, you say it could erode the present fragile political consensus in Pakistan to fight the militancy. And I will comment on that. I was there, in Pakistan, meeting with the Prime Minister, when one of the efforts in the territories went awry, and I felt and saw firsthand the level of intensity of the hue and cry and backlash that came as a result of it. And it was a good lesson to learn.

So, I return to both Mr. Coll and Mr. Bearden, based on your experiences. Can you respond to the committee, based on your experiences and judgment—Mr. Bearden starting with you—What is your reaction to those five propositions about what happens if additional troops go in?

And is there a legitimacy to what I said, that you might have additional troops, but, if they're tasked in some different way, might that mitigate, or indeed even eliminate, some of the things that the Ambassador has suggested?

Mr. BEARDEN. I would agree with that, Senator. I would suggest that, if a surge involved more kinetic operations against what we call the Taliban, it would simply foster a symmetry in violence from the other side. There will always be enough Pashtuns to meet our troops on the field. And one must understand, fundamentally, that, at the end of any foreign adventure or occupation of Afghanistan, it is a battle with the Pashtun people.

During the Soviet period, I was repeatedly asked, by this and other committees, how many mujahideen are fighting against the Soviets. I said, "I don't know." I said, "I think I'll give you a number that was around 250,000 full- or part-time mujahideen," which was perfectly adequate to tie up 120,000 Soviets. The Soviets settled at about 120,000 troops, because any surge above about 150,000 within 30 days would have probably snapped their supply chain. They couldn't support more than about 150,000 at any given time. And the U.S.S.R. was contiguous with Afghanistan. Dr. Lodhi has pointed out, certainly, the supply-line problem. We land our supplies in Karachi, they move to Quetta or Torkham at the Khyber Pass, and if we were to surge our troops, absolutely our supply lines becomes part of the rear-area battle.

Now, your question, Senator, on whether or not we could move in 40,000 troops, or up to 40,000 troops, with another mission, to do the inkspot strategy to start providing security so that the Afghans themselves could start reclaiming a district at a time, or a city at a time, that might work, but it will be a very, very serious challenge, because the other side has the edge on the United States on the information war. And any additional troops we put in will be characterized by the other side as a kinetic surge. So, we'll have to deal with that in strategic communications and in other ways, by showing what we're doing on the ground.

In my opinion, there is no possibility for the United States to provide enough troops in Afghanistan to "pacify" the situation; quotes on the word "pacify." GEN Dan McNeill, as he left ISAF, was quoted by Der Spiegel—and I understand there was discussion of this, the accuracy of the quote——

The CHAIRMAN. It's an important quote, yet again.

Mr. BEARDEN [continuing]. On—that it would take 400,000-500,000 troops to pacify Afghanistan. In researching of my book on the Soviet War in Afghanistan, I went to Moscow and spoke with what were my opposite numbers in the KGB and the Soviet Army at the time, and their conclusion was that it would have taken half a million troops to accomplish what they set out to accomplish. I think you'll find most of our colleagues in the Pentagon if discussing this frankly would think a half million would be about right. That's an impossibility without a draft, and it's an impossibility in any case.

So, what I'm saying is, a kinetic surge makes no sense. It will fail. If you want to raise the number of the troops that you have now to try to accomplish something else, to provide security and perhaps justice to the Afghan people, and let them begin to develop their own solutions, it might work.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, do you need to add to that, Mr. Coll, or do you agree with that?

Mr. COLL. I broadly agree with it. I mean, I would just say that it certainly does depend on what the troops do and what vision of deployment and balance between——

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let's talk about what they might do——

Mr. COLL. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. In a moment here. But, I want to come back to, sort of, some of the underlying concepts here. You talked earlier about the 100,000 Soviet troops and their inability to be able to accomplish the goal. And you've just added on, sort of, these postmortem assumptions they made. Is there a distinction in—and, Ambassador, you might want to add in—is there a distinction between the United States presence and our purposes there, and what we've gone in to do and achieve, and the perception of the people of Afghanistan about that, versus the Soviets, who just crushed in and decided, "You know, we're going to take over" and exert their will? Isn't there—I mean, are we granted more latitude in our capacity here?

Mr. BEARDEN. I think, indeed, we are. There is an underlying sense of—I mean, we are not Russians. The founder of modern Afghanistan, Abdur Rahman Khan, on his deathbed, turned to his son and said, "My spirit will remain in Afghanistan, even though my soul will go to Allah. My last words to you, my son and heir, are: 'Never trust the Russians.'" This is part of the Afghan DNA, if there is an Afghan DNA. And, indeed, we have not reached that point of parity with Soviet occupation forces.

But what I would suggest, though, that there is possibly, to use the overused phrase, a "tipping point," that if you raise ISAF and United States troops to a point—the Afghans might come to view us as just another occupation and respond accordingly. Most of the people we're fighting might not have even been born when we were assisting the Afghan people resist the Soviets. So, yes, we're not the Russians, but, that's a distinction that I would not count on indefinitely.

The CHAIRMAN. And in your judgment, what would be the effect if the Taliban were, in fact, to take over? I mean, you have Pakistan, that existed for many years; you were working with them during that period of time, and the Taliban were there.

Mr. BEARDEN. Well, the Taliban—well, no, the Taliban didn't exist until——

The CHAIRMAN. Excuse me, the Taliban came in afterward, that's right. They came in——

Mr. BEARDEN. They came in the early 1990s.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. After that first period.

Mr. BEARDEN. But, I think your question implies——

The CHAIRMAN. Let me finish the question.

Mr. BEARDEN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Describe for us, in your judgment, sort of—and there are—you know, we hear differences about 20 percent of the Taliban are Mullah Omar Taliban, and other Taliban are rentable Taliban, and some are—you know, you get through this sequencing. Can you help us—and maybe Madam Ambassador—get a sense of that? And what would Pakistan's attitude be today? Because, I understand the—you've described it—the Pakistanis are very concerned about the Indian presence there. Some have asserted they might be happier with the Taliban presence than an Indian presence.

Mr. BEARDEN. Oh, of course they would, yes, Senator. The——

The CHAIRMAN. You say "Of course they would."

Mr. BEARDEN. I think that the Indian presence is something that all of the Pakistani military and intelligence people find impossible to reconcile. They see Indian construction companies working as subcontractors on U.S. aid-financed projects, they see that it is the largest single donor, after the United States. And they fought three very real wars with India, and they've almost gone to a fourth on a number of occasions. So, that is not hysteria, that's a reality of the region.

Now, we all looked upon the Taliban, when they ended the civil war in the mid-1990s, as, "Well, maybe this will work out."

I think our problem, here in America, is that we tend to think the Taliban all came from some secret valley, way in the middle of Afghanistan, rather than the fact that they're almost all the number-3 or -4 son in a Pashtun family, where you look up and you say, "Well, number 1 gets this, number 2 does that, but number 3, what do we do with him?" Well, maybe we send him down there to the madrassa, they'll feed him. Every family has one son like that, but the only thing is they're in charge now.

But what is it? The Taliban. It's a handful of people who are deeply committed. It is a larger number of punks with guns. It's criminal gangs. It's all of the above, but they all come from a Pashtun family in that belt straddling Pakistan and Afghanistan for the most part. It's like cognac and brandy. All cognac is brandy but not all brandy is cognac.

All Taliban are Pashtun but not all Pashtun are Taliban. I think we're going to have to start understanding who they are and deal with them and, indeed, understand that where they fit into the Pakistani view of its rear area both on the positive side and on the negative side. Many Pakistanis would fear that the question of Pashtunistan could raise its head again, depending on what America does in Afghanistan.

Pashtunistan is the concept of all of the Pashtun peoples in that belt of maybe 40 million people becoming yet another country. And

most Pakistanis know that Hamid Karzai's father was an advocate of Pashtunistan. They also know that Hamid Karzai got his Master's degree in India. So, I suggest that the distrust just goes on and on and on.

The CHAIRMAN. These things matter. Madam Ambassador, do you have a comment before Senator Lugar questions?

Ambassador LODHI. Yes, I just want to make clear the fact that Pakistan sees its strategic interests vis-a-vis Afghanistan as a country that is stable, it's peaceful, and it is nonhostile. I think that is the key, plus I think for many Pakistanis, Pakistan is of primary importance to them.

Afghanistan is of secondary importance to them. It is of importance, but the primary importance now lies in Pakistan's ability to deal with many of its security, economic, social challenges that it is negotiating with right now. So that's one.

The other is I can't help but make a very brief comment on how the U.S. presence is perceived in the region. I think, you know, however well intentioned, however you may have a self-image of being a force for good, many Pashtuns on both sides of the border see the United States as an occupation force, no different from the Soviet Union.

Let us not forget that the Soviet Union had also embarked upon a modernization strategy for Afghanistan. They had also tried to liberate women. They had tried to introduce secondary education; all of that. Now, of course, the brutality practiced by the Russian Army has no parallel. There's no question about that, but I can speak from my side of the country, sort of Pashtun belt.

I think the problem that we are confronted with in Pakistan is that much of the rationale, the legitimacy and the mobilizing power of the Pakistani Taliban is coming from the sense of sympathy that many tribes have on the Pakistani side of the Durand Line with their Afghanistan cousins as it were within they share tribal and ethnic linkages, that they are resisting an invader, even if the invader came in with very good intentions and had every justification for doing what they did; of course, 9/11. So we can't discount the sentiment. We have to deal with this one way or the other.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Lugar. We'll just be a little looser on the time because there's only a few of us here. I want everybody to have a fair extension here. So why don't we make it 10?

Senator LUGAR. Dr. Lodhi's point that the Russians were actually promoting the rights of women and secondar education during their occupation, albeit, as you say, in a rather brutal fashion, is certainly a new insight that I suspect we've not heard before in this committee, or at least not as frequently as other people thinking about this have.

I'm impressed, however, even more by the observations about the Pashtun. Now as we try to trace our policy, we go back to the fact that we were attacked on 9/11 and people say from where. Well, the camps in Afghanistan.

Others would say that the camps were training people, but in fact most of the people who attacked us on 9/11 may or may not have come out of the camps. This was a part of the structure and

a part of the international situation, but in any event, we asked the Taliban to let us go after the camps.

In response, the Taliban said no, they're going to protect the camps, you can't just come in and take hold. So then we got into a conflict with them.

Now, as I hear all three of you, you're defining different kinds of Pashtuns. Some Pashtuns, as you say, are affiliated with the madrassas and often become leaders of a more virulent group that would possibly protect al-Qaeda, while there are others who may be less inclined to do so. From our standpoint, however, we just took them all on at this point.

Now, as you all pointed out, the Pashtuns are both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. So, there are many Pashtuns that exist apart from those protecting the camps for al-Qaeda. Nevertheless the justification for the so-called just war was to overthrow the Taliban, which was in effect made up of Pashtuns who were harboring al-Qaeda.

Subsequently, we've developed other ideas for Afghanistan, such as the promotion of women's rights and encouraging parents to put their children in schools, and now we have helped Afghanistan hold a second countrywide election supervised by all sorts of checks and balances, rules, and commissions that we feel are important in different contexts whether it's Latin America, as we went through the 1980s, or other parts of the world, Ukraine more recently.

Now, I'm just sort of tracing what I see to be a potential outcome of all of this where we could as a country, as you've all suggested, try to find someone to talk to in the Pashtun community who is prepared to make peace not only with us but, more importantly, with the rest of their countrymen. Such an arrangement may induce the Pashtuns to help offer a defense against a minority of intruders to the cities that right now cause us to assume a more defensive position in Afghanistan, as some of you have described it.

We're not involved in a surge against people, pinning them all down, but we are trying to provide some training to police and to members of the army. At the same time as we're trying to possibly include in the police and the army some of the Pashtun we're talking about here, who have been a party to all of the business on both sides of the Durand Line. That may or may not work, but as I listen to all of you, it appears that this may be a promising way to bring about some stability that we should begin looking at.

Now, finally, our ability to leave depends upon, I suppose, the civility of that arrangement and it's interesting because you mentioned and we mentioned in our opening statements, our Kerry-Lugar business now. The thing that impresses me the most as I read the clips from the Pakistan press each day and they've been writing about this consistently for 6 months, is that many Pakistanis believe that the impressive thing about the bill is not really the money but that this bill offers assistance over a period of 5 years, the numer 5, as opposed to a 1- or 2-year timeframe.

Five years is a long-term commitment by the United States to Pakistan. Recently, the press has speculated that this bill might get signed, which has led some to say that the bill is a terrible idea due to what they perceive as all kinds of conditions, all sorts of in-

trusions. They're not sure they want all of those Americans there for 5 years, but most people still like the idea.

In Afghanistan, it's not so clear really what the commitment may be. There's not a comparable five on the scoreboard over there and even if there was, some would say we don't find President Karzai very reliable. We think there are some real problems regarding his family, the warlords that he deals with, and the way the election was held. How can you have a stable Afghanistan with a government that is unreliable, unsubstantial, and not up to our standards?

So I'm going to ask all three of you to comment about, first of all, how do we deal with President Karzai? Also, how do we get these talks going with the Pashtun on both sides of the border, who may be helpful with successful negotiations with the leadership of the country or could help with the creation of a more reliable defensive posture around cities so that life might go on for people without interminable battles. Even if the Pashtun could not completely secure the areas around the cities, could their presence at least lead to a situation where Afghans would be fighting, most of them in the context of police action against intruders in normal life?

Would the effect of that policy be salutary with regard to Pakistan? Should we, as Mr. Bearden said, be considering what the Chinese are currently thinking about this?

We've heard about the Indians. What do the Russians think? Who are the other players? Are there people we're leaving out of this proposition who might have reasons to try to destabilize?

Would you start, Dr. Lodhi, with your thoughts about this?

Ambassador LODHI. I think, Senator Lugar, you're absolutely right. General McChrystal also mentions the crisis of confidence amongst the Afghan people in the government. So I think the whole debate is focused on this again.

I just want to reinforce a point I made earlier in the context of your question which is that the debate right now is what kind of military strategy: more troops, less troops, what are these troops doing in Afghanistan? The real debate should be what is the political strategy because counterinsurgency cannot succeed at any time, unless it has a legitimate political foundation on which it proceeds.

There is no insurgency that I can think of that has been neutralized by military means alone. Insurgencies have to be neutralized by a combination of political and military means. So I think that's a question that has to be addressed by yourselves and, of course, the U.S. administration.

It comes back to the point that we have to define and clarify the political strategy. Now, when you say how do we proceed with talks and with whom, I think this is a very, very difficult question and you're right to ask it, but I would venture to suggest that this could be done in three ways.

One, at the local level but something would have to be offered the insurgents because I think so far, the efforts that have been made from time to time, and these have been very local efforts, have not survived for very long, fail largely because not much was

offered to them. So why should the other side surrender as it were unilaterally? So what is it that's been offered?

The second is I think initially talks would also have to be opened through intermediaries, not just with the United States to decide who it wishes to use as an intermediary from within Afghanistan and from outside of Afghanistan.

Third, I think it's important to initiate an Afghan political process as quickly as possible aimed at national reconciliation along these lines as part of this political strategy. I think the longer we delay that, the harder it will become to bring in and draw in so many of the Pashtuns that may not be supporters of the Taliban.

Let us make clear the fact that the two are not interchangeable. There are Pashtuns, as you rightly said, Mr. Bearden, and then there are the Taliban, but we do have a situation and I'll finish on this point because I think it makes the point about a military surge more effectively than I've done so far.

The question we have to ask ourselves is what did previous military surges do in Afghanistan? Did they lead to an improvement in the situation or did they lead to deterioration in the situation?

I think that question is very well answered by the fact that independent estimates of the control of Afghanistan suggest that the Taliban now have a permanent presence in over 70 percent of Afghanistan. Two years ago they had it in 60 percent of Afghanistan and maybe 4 years ago, they had it in whatever it was, 30 or 40 percent.

So what is it? That's simply enhancing troops is not able to do it and I think the answer is provided by the lack of a political—credible political strategy being worked by the legitimate political actors and having the support of those who can help in this process.

Thank you.

Senator LUGAR. My time is up, but I will take the liberty of just asking you, Mr. Bearden and Mr. Coll, for at least a few comments.

Mr. BEARDEN. On the question of the election and the current political situation in Afghanistan, some things are too hard to do all at the same time. Many Afghans, particularly the Pashtuns, will look at the government as completely corrupt, as you pointed out. Others will claim that U.S. forces are in the country to support and shore up a government that is essentially Northern alliance, Tajik Panjshiri-run. They don't consider Hamid Karzai a genuine Pashtun. They consider him a creature of the Tajik Panjshiri people that came into power with American support 8 years ago.

I think Dr. Lodhi is right. We're going to have to come up with a strategy for engaging these people. At the same time, if we do not put resources into development projects that will provide a possible stake for these people, then we'll get nowhere. There aren't many options right now for the teenage Pashtuns. Pashtun boys go from childhood to manhood. They don't do the adolescent thing that we do with iPods and that kind of stuff. They just go from a child to a young man with a Kalashnikov. If we don't offer some projects that will give them a stake in something, whether it's a road or an agricultural project or something, where they can get $9 a day instead of $8 a day, then we will continue to fail, as well.

The political side, let's get beyond this. A runoff. The snows are almost ready to start filling the high mountain passes. We want another 4 months of this? Just get on with it. Take a deep breath and move forward. I think President Karzai would understand that he's got a new chance now, if he's got 50 percent plus one vote, to become a statesman or to end up on the ash heap of Afghan history.

So I don't think we have the wherewithal to control that, but we have to start doing some things differently inside the Pashtun belt of Afghanistan.

Senator LUGAR. Mr. Coll.

Mr. COLL. Just very briefly, maybe just to sketch a little bit of the complexity of this subject.

The Pashtuns, of course, there are more Pashtuns living in Pakistan than in Afghanistan. There are, I think, about 10 to 15 percent of the Pakistani Officer Corps are Pashtuns. They're a very diverse people. They're also internationalized to a degree that I think is underappreciated in our discourse about them.

The Pashtuns in Dubai and Abu Dubai are working on construction sites. There are Pashtuns by the hundreds of thousands at least in Karachi driving trucks. This is a transnational talented people that also lives along the border and in southern Afghanistan in considerable poverty and deprivation, but it's a very complex subject.

The Taliban are a minority extreme movement within a broadly based and internationalized people. So I don't think we should reduce them in our eyesight but understand that because of their complexity, there are opportunities to build political coalitions that are sustainable, frankly, just as the Government of Pakistan has done throughout its existence.

And then on the political strategy subject, in Kabul, there are lots of opportunities, I think, to engage the Afghan political elite in their own processes of political reform and unification.

The Bonn Process selected the Afghan Constitution of 1964 for the absence of anything better. It was sort of ratified in a hurried process in the early years after 2003. It's left the country with a debate among Afghans about what would be the best political system to address their pluralism and their development and whether or not the Parliament should have a greater role, whether or not Governors should be elected, whether or not political parties should be allowed to flourish.

As Ambassador Lodhi suggested, and I agree, Afghans are ready to have such a discourse, whether it's in the form of a Loya Jirga or some other kind of political process and it needs to address not only these broad questions of governance and political power-sharing but also electoral reforms to prevent fraud, such as occurred this time, from ever occurring and other kinds of compacts that can stabilize the center.

This is part of what a political strategy means. Concentrating American and international effort on the creation and sustenance of such dialogue rather than distracting ourselves entirely by discourse about military tactics and, finally, there's the national reconciliation and reintegration piece.

Not to reiterate too much of the Soviet era history, but, you know, after the Soviets left, they left behind a client government headed by Dr. Najibullah. He was the modernizer, an Afghan strongman, who actually held on and controlled Afghanistan cities until after the Soviet Union dissolved.

You could even argue that the Soviets in some technical sense, that while they were defeated strategically in Afghanistan, they never lost control of the Afghan state. The Afghan state headed by Dr. Najibullah only collapsed after the Soviet Union itself dissolved and during that period when he held the cities against mujahideen assault after assault after assault. There were tens of thousands of women at work in ministries and girls in schools and high schools, but the reason he succeeded was that he, besides being a secret police chief and a tough man and a sort of rather strong leader, not someone that you would admire as a political figure, but he was very successful at a national reintegration strategy. He held the cities, used the footprint of the cities and then reached out and picked off tribe after tribe.

He converted his enemies into stable sources of not necessarily his marching alliance, but he was able to settle things down again and again by pursuing a national reintegration strategy. If he was able to do that, despite being discredited and despite having no resources, if the international community pursued such a reintegration strategy funded and adopting the best practices that have been developed elsewhere in the world to bring young men in, give them stipends, give them jobs, give them a future, this is part of the political strategy that requires greater emphasis. It's rarely discussed as part of the policy package.

Instead, we tend to always be asking what international troops will be doing.

Senator LUGAR. I thank you all for discussing it this morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Lugar.

Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to be very brief.

First of all, I want to apologize to the witnesses. I was in and out this morning and have to run in about half my time. So I'll try to just be 5 minutes.

First of all, I want to thank you for your testimony. One of the major challenges we have in the Congress, forget the administration for a second, is to get this strategy right and make sure we make determinations about—after a lot of analysis and review—make determinations about what's the right strategy before we have a full-blown debate on what the resources should be. So you're helping us do that.

I might have time for just one question, but I wanted to see if all three of you could comment—and I know it's hard to do in a minute or two—but could you comment on the relationship between or among, if any, Quetta Shura, the Quetta Shura Taliban, the Haqqani Network and al-Qaeda. Mr. Bearden, we could start with you and what your sense of these relationships. A lot of the debate on this policy will center on the nature of the threat within the

region or within and between the two countries, but also the nature of the threat as it relates to our national security interests.

Mr. BEARDEN. I think that the suggestion that the al-Qaeda Arabs can control the Taliban Pashtun or any other Pashtun insurgents is a bit overdrawn.

Many of these people, including the father, the granddad of the Haqqani Network, Jalaluddin Haqqani, we knew well as a fierce anti-Soviet commander during the time and he, indeed, got along with Arabs as many of them did, but they always felt that after the Soviets, the Arabs were a significant irritant, as well.

I'm not certain that we would ever see al-Qaeda come back under any condition and take the control that we at least attributed to it at the time of 9/11.

Now the Quetta Shura, there's a debate. The Quetta Shura probably exists. Yes, it exists to some extent, but it's like discussing somehow our belief that Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri are in Pakistan. Nobody's seen them for 8 years.

We've repeated that claim to the point where we accept it as true, but bin Laden could be in Yemen or Aruba or here in Washington. I have no idea where bin Laden is and I don't think anybody else in the government does. If they did, they would just go get him.

But we have been locked into repetitive statements that have become doctrine that don't get challenged anymore. I'm not too sure that the language we have now for al-Qaeda, disrupt, dismantle, et. cetera is even valid today.

I think someone could stand up and say that's already happened. What has not happened is we've not had national closure with bin Laden and that is what we're seeking.

The Afghans aren't controlled by anybody. They've never been controlled by Pakistan, as is often suggested. Even General Babar, who was Benezir Bhutto's adviser, said they're "my boys." Well, they're not anyone's boys. I used to work with an ISI general and would go to them and ask "are we going to be able to get the Afghans to do X and Y?" And he'd be thoughtful for a moment and say, "You know I can usually get the Afghans to do something they really want to do." That's what happens in Afghanistan.

So I think that's a reality we're going to have to bear in mind as we move forward. Who controls what and whether Quetta Shura is important or not, I don't know.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Doctor. I know we have limited time.

Ambassador LODHI. Very quickly. I think I would agree with Milt that there's just so much speculation around this whole notion of Quetta Shura and I think if the wrong facts and evidence, real-time intelligence, and it is pinpointed where these people supposedly are, I have absolute confidence Pakistan will respond.

But having said that, one point that I do want to bring to your attention is the fact that Quetta has a refugee camp, one of many that still exists in the country, which are larger than many cities in Europe, and these refugee camps are really—provide a haven for many who come back and forth from Afghanistan and I think one of the points my country has made for the last 8 years, if not more, has been to shift these refugee camps across the border into Afghanistan. Then you can deal with them and you can deal with

whoever's hiding out in these camps, but it becomes very hard for Pakistan which is constantly being berated for not doing enough, for hedging, and for all sorts of other allegations that are made certainly in the media and yet when Pakistan says, look, we have a problem with these camps, there's something going on.

We can't monitor all the people who come in and out of these camps; if we tried to do that, if we tried, for example, to do a shalita in one of the camps in Quetta, you can imagine what the outcry would be in Pakistan, much less the international community.

So somehow these factors don't get play in your country and really do need to.

Mr. COLL. To quickly answer your question, I think the Haqqani Network has a close historical collaborative relationship with al-Qaeda. The first al-Qaeda training camps were established in territory that Jalaluddin had controlled and if, indeed, bin Laden and al-Qaeda leaders came back across the border right after Tora Bora, they would come into North Waziristan territory that are Haqqani-controlled and there's lots of other evidence of these networks.

That's the most likely closest collaborative relationship. The Quetta Shura, meaning Mullah Omar and his gang, have had a longer and more ambivalent relationship with al-Qaeda and I think that it persists today. I don't see evidence in the reporting that Mullah Omar's group sees the same kind of collaborative benefit in the relationship with al-Qaeda, though they certainly communicate and, to some extent, share goals.

Senator CASEY. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the testimony of all of you, and I appreciate the chairman and ranking member calling this hearing today, and I think the context you provide is very, very helpful.

I do hope at some point in the near future—I know Secretary Gates has certainly agreed to this—it will actually have Eikenberry and McChrystal and Anne Patterson in to do the same kind of thing, but the context he provided us is most helpful.

To me, where we end up in all of this is sort of a circular discussion. You know, the President, back in March, February, or March, talked about a narrowed mission to focus on counterterrorism. And everybody said it's a narrowed mission.

I immediately said that that meant nation-building, because, in fact, in a country like Afghanistan with poor people and not much of a government, in order to win the hearts and minds of citizens to have the counterinsurgency side, it ends up being nation-building. Lo and behold, people are now realizing with the metrics that have just been laid out a couple weeks ago, in fact, what we're engaged in right now in Afghanistan is nation-building.

So I hear the—and by the way, I'm one of the few folks on my side of the aisle that think it's appropriate that the President takes some time right now to think this through. I think a prolonged length of time is very damaging. I hope we'll come to some conclusions soon.

But I also am a little concerned. I hope that Pakistan doesn't become a diversion. I think Pakistan's very important, but I hope we

don't come up with something that's sort of a halfway approach, sort of a Solomon's baby, something that is cute. And I'm afraid that we possibly are moving down that path.

So with that context, I'm confused. Mr. Bearden, I hear about the young men and women there who don't do the things that our young men and women do to stay busy. It does seem to me that regardless of whatever political reconciliation we might incur, that there's going to be a large degree of nation-building that has to take place for there to be a political settlement. I would like for you all to respond to that briefly, if you would.

Ambassador LODHI. I think the question that you have to ask yourself, really, the United States needs to ask itself, is whether nation-building can ever be undertaken by those who are foreigners to that land, because that produces its own dynamics.

I think the mission to transform other countries' societies are best left to the people of that country. I think they can be helped, of course, and the United States should, in my opinion, enhance its economic footprint in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, but that's a different way of helping a country build itself.

But I do think, from my long years of experience, I just find the whole notion of nation-building by an outside force as really well intentioned, but misconstrued, misperceived, and therefore, resisted by large sections of that country's society who feel that their way of life, and, in this case, the Islamic way of life, is somehow being changed according to somebody else's political agenda.

So I would just caution you on that, but not for a moment say that there should not be a development surge, that infrastructure help should not be given to Afghanistan and indeed Pakistan. That's a different thing. But nation-building has a completely different connotation.

Mr. BEARDEN. To take you back and give you a little context, the nation-building discussion underway today is, in fact, a delayed discussion from 1989. The end of the war for the Afghan people, when the Soviets left on February 15, 1989, had produced a million dead, probably 1½ million injured in the war, and 6 million driven into internal and external exile, 3 million of which were in Pakistan, next door.

To be fair, a civil war broke out rapidly thereafter, and you don't fight your way in with aid. But then during the 1990s, we simply walked away. Now we're going to have to do something, I think, in the way of infrastructural development and other attempts that will provide the Afghans a stake in something other than the only industry they've had for the last three decades, which is warfare.

I agree with Dr. Lodhi, to the extent that we can make a large number of mistakes, if we go in and try to rebuild the nation and we make it look like Oklahoma or something like that. But I do suggest that we have a responsibility, and it is in our vital interests to do something in the way of what you're calling nation-building, but it should be very, very thoughtful and unique to the circumstances.

Senator CORKER. Mr. Coll.

Mr. COLL. I would just add that I think the good news is the kind of nation-building that Dr. Lodhi's correctly anxious about is not required in the medium run for the United States to achieve

its broader goals of regional stability and prosperity. The real context, in my view, for this policy dilemma the United States faces resides in competing visions in South Asia itself between a path toward modernization, economic integration, normalization of relations between India and Pakistan, and a proud march toward the Asian Century constructed by Pakistanis, Indians, Afghans.

The role of the United States is not to create and build that future, but to enable it by ensuring that the sources of instability, particularly the Taliban and al-Qaeda, do not create conditions that delay or retard that effort. It's already underway.

And so in Afghanistan, stability and the prevention of a regionally destabilizing, disruptive war is an American mission. We took it on after 9/11. We have our own interest there. But the kind of nation-building that is ultimately going to pull Afghans into a stable and prosperous future is going to be constructed by Indians and Pakistanis themselves, in which Afghans and other central Asians and the whole region will eventually participate, if the failure of these fragile states doesn't get in the way.

Senator CORKER. So let me move on, and then I'm going to come back to that in just a second. But, Dr. Lodhi, when you talk about the grievances that plague the Muslim world, that's obviously a sort of mid-to-longer-term issue, but could you be specific about two or three of those that would come to your——

Ambassador LODHI. Well, I think if you asked any Muslim anywhere in the world what moves him or her, I mean, I can't speak for everybody, but I think the first answer would be Palestine and the need for a just settlement and the need for the United States to put the kind of political resources to ensure that the process doesn't trump an outcome, because we've seen in the past that process becomes something which is an end in itself.

So the issues that plague and play on Muslim hearts and minds are very clear. In my part of the world, it's Kashmir. I mean, the "K" word, I'm told, is not even mentioned in Washington anymore. Why not?

I think the single most important way in which the United States could demonstrate that it stands by justice is to play a role in helping to bring about a Kashmir solution. It doesn't have to get involved by mediating, but I can tell you that will have a much greater impact on Muslim hearts and minds, certainly from the country that I come from and its neighborhood than probably any other issue.

So I think the issues are very clear. It's Palestine, it's Kashmir, it's how the whole Iraq issue is ultimately resolved. And, of course, it's Afghanistan, where people wish to see something other than just military escalation and the application of a military solution, because Muslims obviously turn around and say, "Why is it that the West does not adopt just positions when it comes to us?" Now, what a just position actually amounts to is something that we can discuss in more detail later, but they're very concrete issues.

These are the conflicts that are going on, and they need resolutions, and they're the ones that provide the oxygen that many terrorist groups use. These are legitimate grievances that are leveraged and used, so we must take the oxygen away from these people. And I think that's being smart about how to deal with this.

You're not at all conceding to them. You're being smart about how you're dealing with all of these issues.

Senator CORKER. Thank you. And, of course, those are the same issues we have heard for decades, and I appreciate your bringing them up. So let me get back into the issue at hand. The President announced in February or March what his strategy was. Obviously, there has been a gearing up toward an American-type nation-building. That's been what's been geared up too.

So now we have a commander on the ground there that was told to put in place whatever it took to make that happen. He's requested 40,000 troops. Many of the things that you have talked about are nice to talk about—no offense—in this warm room with all of us here, but there are actual kinetic activities that are taking place right now in Afghanistan, and there's a conflict underway. There's an unsettled Presidential election there that has many flaws.

So with this great context and background that you all have, give me one, two, three steps that, if you were President, the tangible steps you would take beginning 30 days from now as it relates to Afghanistan.

Mr. BEARDEN. On the nation-building side, first——

Senator CORKER. You don't have to get derailed on that, but just——

Mr. BEARDEN. I'm not. I think there's an important point I would make is that we're not talking about a U.S.-driven Marshall Plan. There's huge money in the region and huge interest in Afghan national resources. What I'm saying is that America is bogged down in a war, while Chinese are buying copper mines and looking at the huge iron ore deposits in Hajigak to the west of Kabul, the Russians are looking at the hydrocarbons across the North, and the Iranians that we don't seem to ever want to mention have—there's 24-hour-a-day power in Herat in western Afghanistan, because the Irans want it to be there.

I think that if we were able to marshal some of those regional forces, and there would be a huge amount of developmental benefit, let's say, from some of their development of natural resource operations, constructions, creation of ports, movement of national resources out, and large employment of Afghans, with precious little American input, other than guidance, because we're supposed to be in charge there.

Senator CORKER. I was just in Iraq, and I agree, there's a lot of positive activity there. But back to the question—OK. We have a request in front of us for 40,000 troops. And so the answer is: yes?, no?

Mr. BEARDEN. The answer on that one, Senator, would be that there will not be a military solution. If you wrap up 40,000 troops, don't even think that you're going to bring anything under control. That number will be matched by those who oppose the troops.

But if you're going to try something else with those troops to create pockets of stability, I could go along with that, but I'm not a big fan of any kind of surge. You cannot have a kinetic surge and expect to win.

Senator CORKER. Of course, my understanding is with those troops that the purpose is to protect the major population area, so I'm confused by your response.

Mr. BEARDEN. Well, we don't know yet. I'm saying that if you're surging, if it's a surge, it will be interpreted as a kinetic surge by those who oppose us right now. I'm not too sure what happens once 40,000 more troops get on the ground. Forty thousand troops will beget forty thousand more enemy, and you will end up in more dust-ups, I think.

Senator CORKER. OK.

Dr. Lodhi.

Ambassador LODHI. I think the question of how much is ever enough is going to put you on a slippery slope. When will enough ever be enough? Because I think without a political strategy, you're putting the cart before the horse.

A military surge without being clear how politically you are going to proceed in the backdrop of a fraud-stricken Presidential election, where General McChrystal says the Afghan people have lost confidence in their government—and he said this prior to the Presidential election—I think is inviting trouble, in my opinion.

You will multiply the number of enemies that you have in Afghanistan. You will set yourself as greater targets. Because there are that many more people, there will be that many more targets. Casualties will go up, and the consequences for my country, Pakistan, will be hugely destabilizing.

Senator CORKER. So I think that's an interesting answer, and I realize we've all talked about the Pashtuns and trying to bring them at the same time. The Taliban has got 30 percent of the country under its control today, and I would say that's gaining, and you all are saying plus or minus. But let me just ask you this. American sensibilities, how will we respond to a country that has large amounts of its territory under Taliban control, and are you thinking that through this political strategy, that we leave those territories as are, or are you thinking over time, that the saner-thinking Pashtuns pushed them out? I mean, what are you thinking in that regard?

Ambassador LODHI. Well, I'm asking the question whether, by what you're saying, the objective of the United States then becomes the avoidance of defeat. Is that the goal that the United States has in Afghanistan, or is the goal to disrupt defeat and dismantle al-Qaeda and protect the American homeland from terrorist attack?

I understand that as your core goal. If that is the core goal, I think the question you have to ask yourself is whether proceeding along the track of enhancing troop levels in Afghanistan takes you nearer that goal, or does it take you away from that goal? Does a policy of military escalation leave the region with stability, or does it leave the region with greater instability?

I think the goal is yours. We have pointed out—at least I have, and so have my colleagues—some of the risks and the costs. Now, I think in determining strategic goals, you have to factor in these costs. There will be costs, and I think assuming that somehow troops are going there to protect the civilian population assumes that your opponent or the enemy or the insurgent is going to accept that. The insurgent will engage these increased combat troops in

Afghanistan in intensified fighting. What will your troops do? Respond. Military escalation will follow.

So I think the sequence of events, regardless of the original intentions, will lead to intensified fighting, and I think the question then to ask is does that help take you closer to your goal, or does it take you away from your goal?

Mr. BEARDEN. The Senator raises a very interesting prospect. What would happen in some of those areas where the Taliban are in control? An experiment might be just let happen what will happen, and then turn the lights back on in 6 months, and you will probably find that a bunch of bearded guys have been replaced by a bunch of bearded guys that might be ready to sit down and talk about something.

I'm doing that in response to your statement that we may, in fact, have to cede large slots of territory in a new strategy, and it might provide some very interesting developments in itself.

Senator CORKER. Mr. Coll.

Mr. COLL. I think I'd like my two fellow panelists—I don't per se oppose the dispatch of additional troops to Afghanistan. My question is what are the troops for, and how do they connect to a successful, plausible, political and regional strategy?

And I think that there are—to answer your question about what could be done in the next 30 days—markers of what a successful political and regional strategy might look like. I'm not suggesting this has an engineering blueprint, but for a flavor of the kinds of things I'm talking about, linking population security to a vision of political and regional strategy to initiate an Afghan-led process of political and constitutional reform that is supported by all of the opposition, significant opposition candidates in the election, and resourced and supported by the international community to initiate within 30 days a program of well-resourced national reintegration that has the prospect within 6 months of providing an address for those local and regional Taliban leaders who want to reengage with the constitutional system in Afghanistan to turn up at, and to be rewarded for, their decision.

To think about partnership with the governments in Islamabad and New Delhi and Tehran and Moscow and Beijing, to reinforce this strategy of stability, security, and political emphasis. Now in that context, if the military advice from General McChrystal, whose vision may be consistent with what I'm describing. He hasn't actually come forward to lay all of that out yet. If he said, "I can get you there, but I need X trainers, In order to put Afghan forces in the lead by 2012, I need the following bridge period. I need the following training vision, and I'm not going to be out knocking on—bringing young men from Tennessee and Upstate New York into rural Pashtun villages, knocking on doors, asking who's inside, Are you good guys or bad guys?"

That self-defeating pattern of rural patrolling and counterinsurgency, I asume, is not his vision, but I'm just not clear as to what the additional troops are meant to resource by way of that——

The CHAIRMAN. On that note, Senator, I have to interrupt.

Senator CORKER. Let me just close by saying this. I think the one thing, Mr. Chairman, that has never occurred, and that is an understanding of what success actually means there. And I still

think, until we lay that out for the country and we lay that out for our military and we lay that out for the civilian operations, we're going to continue in what I think are very circular talks.

Mr. Coll—just his last, which I appreciate—still leaves territories where al-Qaeda ends up potentially being a safe haven, so these things end up being sort of circular discussions.

I thank you for the testimony, and I'm sorry to take so long.

The CHAIRMAN. Thanks.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to follow up a little bit on the line of questioning that Senator Corker started, because I'm still trying to understand exactly what this more sustainable strategy is between military buildup and total withdrawal. I understand some of the points that you've laid out. Dr. Lodhi, I understand when you say we need to reach out to the Pashtuns and try and bring them in and make some agreements. What I'm not clear on is what the incentive is on their part to do that if they don't see—if they look down the horizon and see no further increase in U.S. troops and what, as you have pointed out, has been an increasing presence on the part of the Taliban over the years, based on the troop levels and the actions that we've taken to date. So, I'm really trying to figure out how we do this third-way strategy that you all are talking about, because it's still not clear to me. So, I don't know if you—if anybody wants to respond to that before I go on to the next question.

Mr. BEARDEN. I would just have a—one comment is that we sometimes presuppose that all the Pashtuns want to do is fight. They will always rise to a fight. And there's no question about that. They're the—it's—the "best-friend/worst-enemy" is always the description of the Pashtun tribals. But, they will also quiet down if that fight subsides and it is not brought to them. And if there are other stakes that are created around them that they can have a part of, they may even start making deals.

So, I know the middle way is difficult to describe, but I think if you continue a kinetic approach to them, they'll fight forever.

Senator SHAHEEN. But, I guess, it seems to me that what you're describing is what we've been doing for the last 8 years. I mean, we haven't—until recently, haven't increased troops, and we have—I mean, what I've heard and—what I heard—I was in Afghanistan in May, and we heard that, "Well, you know, we want to provide economic assistance." We've built all these schools, but, unfortunately, we build the schools and then the girls and the students are interrupted by the Taliban from attending, and so, we have to provide security for those schools. So, I'm still trying to understand how we do the economic assistance, how we provide the resources that you talked about, into development projects, at the same time we're not increasing troop levels to provide that security. How does that happen?

Mr. BEARDEN. Well, I think the example you used is the—that the—you know, is nothing more of a lightning rod than—that America is going in and building girls' school in Pashtun, Afghanistan. I mean, it's a nice thought, but you must understand, when you do that, that you're inviting somebody to shut it down and then

you just raise the prospect that we have to build a girls' school and then protect it. I think that prevents us from——

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, how about a boys' school?

Mr. BEARDEN. Little boys don't go to school, either. No, but the point is, is that, I think, when we build those schools—why start with schools? A well—digging a well might be something that has a greater range.

Senator SHAHEEN. Heard similar stories about——

Mr. BEARDEN. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN [continuing]. Wells. I mean, it wasn't limited to—I chose an unfortunate example, because——

Mr. BEARDEN. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. What we heard was that there had been some successes—health care was a success that was talked about in the villages—but that whenever there was an effort to provide some of those resources, it was very difficult to have them secured by Afghans without the Taliban coming in and undoing the benefits.

Mr. BEARDEN. I think most of those, those well-thought-out efforts, were considered only incidental by the opposition, by the enemies, who viewed us not as nation-builders in any way at the time, or not providing them a stake in something, but as an occupying force. And if that is what the debate is now in this government of what are we going to be in the future, not what we have been in the recent past, then maybe they will change their attitude, as well.

I do say, again, they rise to the fight every time, but they'll also quiet down if you don't always bring the fight to them. But, you know, this is not easy.

Senator SHAHEEN. Does anybody else want to comment on that? How do we do the things you're suggesting?

Mr. COLL. Well, Senator, I mean, I would say one thing. You mentioned that you—two things. I don't regard our advice as just a third way or a middle way. I think it's an attempt to try to bring forward an emphasis on political and diplomatic strategy. And it may be that General McChrystal and the Obama administration have this firmly in mind. That seems to be what the President has been saying, "Let's get the strategy right, and then talk about resources behind it."

And I certainly, in my own intention—by emphasizing, in specific ways, what political reconciliation, reintegration, and regional diplomatic strategy looks like, I'm simply trying to put that ahead of the resourcing question.

You said that you've worried that the status quo was, in effect, what we've been doing all along. In fact——

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, that what you're suggesting is what we've been doing all along.

Mr. COLL. Right. And, in fact, I don't think that either—that that's the case, that the narrative of U.S. military and political policy in Afghanistan since 2001 has been a zigzag and has been characterized by grotesque underresourcing of a very ambitious mission. The theory of the case early on was, we didn't need very many troops, and yet we could transform every nook and cranny of Afghanistan. We went in with national ambitions that encompassed virtually every rural district, but neither the soldiers to pro-

vide the security, nor the funds, nor the mechanisms to deliver those results.

It was the overstretched fabric of ambition and the resources that created the gathering crisis that now confronts the Obama administration. And I think that, in the course of that, there have also been attempts to undertake military solutions to what are essentially political problems. And even as recently as this year, thousands of marines were sent into rural Helmand province on a mission whose strategic, sort of, purpose I struggle to understand. They kind of went through a—I mean, you asked a lot of brave men to take enormous risks in what is, in my mind, a geographical kind of cul-de-sac that didn't produce population security and didn't produce a transformational effect on national politics.

And so, I'm hopeful that when General McChrystal—if he appears before—that, when you ask him that same question, that he'll have a vision that you'll find convincing. But, what I understand from the open sources is that the basic idea is, not only to try to put this political and reintegration and regional strategy before the military resources, but then to deliver those resources against a clear vision of transition to Afghan security forces and to Afghan politics, within a time-bound period.

And now, it may be—and the Senate has played an important role already in raising questions about, Are there alternative ways to get from here to 2012, rather than 40,000 American troops? But, I think there's a shared vision, as in Iraq, that the goal is to put Afghan security forces forward so that United States forces can transition from direct combat to overwatch to support, and head to the exits as Afghans take control of their own security.

So, I think that big picture, there's a broad understanding of. It's a question of, What are the short-term investments by the United States, and particularly the hardest question, the role of additional troops in achieving that vision?

Ambassador LODHI. May I?

Senator SHAHEEN. Yes?

Ambassador LODHI. I think, two or three points which emerge from your question. The first is, you said that were—you know, there haven't really been these military buildups, but the last few months have seen 21,000 U.S. troops go into Afghanistan—I mean, that's a surge, if there ever was one——

Senator SHAHEEN. Right.

Ambassador LODHI [continuing]. 17,000 of which were combat troops.

Now, the question that has to be asked is, What did that produce? So, further military buildups, in my opinion, are unlikely to produce an outcome different, unless you have the connecting link, what you are looking for, which is a political strategy. And I think there, with all the talk about "smart power" and a development surge and a civilian surge that we heard from the Obama administration in March this year, we didn't see any of this rolled out on the ground. In fact, what was rolled out on the ground was essentially a military solution. Now, that may have been unintended, because you didn't have the means to do the civilian surge; but if you didn't have the means in March, how do you develop the

means now? So, that part of the strategy, I think, will remain open to question.

And as for the political strategy, you know, I will just reinforce—I think there has to be an effort to draw in as many Afghan and the excluded Pashtun groups, and peel off as many of the Taliban elements as possible in such a process of reintegrating them into the Afghan political process. And, I think, ultimately the bargain that will have to be offered to them, in my opinion—to many of these insurgents that are prepared to disallow al-Qaeda, so I have to keep making this distinction——

Senator SHAHEEN. Sure.

Ambassador LODHI [continuing]. And abandon violence—is that the United States and NATO forces will ultimately be prepared for a progressive reduction of forces over a period of time, without reducing its economic commitment and its responsibility to the Afghan people, after years of so much devastation and destruction.

So, I think this is the kind of political, sort of, solution that I see down the road. I'm not saying it's going to happen tomorrow, or should happen tomorrow. But this is something that has to be envisaged, because I think to rely on the Afghan National Army, much as I'm—absolutely, I agree with Steve that this is a very important part of any ultimate exit strategy that the Afghans themselves are able to take responsibility for their own security. But this doesn't take away the most important deficit that the Afghan National Army and police still stuff, which is they're ethically skewed in favor of non-Pashtun groups. So, you have to ensure that it becomes an ethnically balanced security force to start with.

And if these people are not joining the security forces, the Pashtuns, then we have a real problem on our hands, because how do we persuade alienated chunks of people, who are so key to Afghanistan's future, to be recruited into the Afghan National Army.

Because I think the exit plan ultimately will depend on something which, frankly, has not been proceeding—even by those who have been doing the training of these forces—according to plan, as it were.

Senator SHAHEEN. My time is up, Mr. President.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much, Senator, we appreciate it.

Senator Wicker.

Senator WICKER. Thank you. Very thought-provoking and excellent hearing, Mr. Chairman. Sorry I haven't been able to be here for all of it and to pay attention to every word.

I'm interested in the history lesson that Mr. Bearden began with, of three decades of action, neglect, and reaction.

And so let me ask you—all three of you, if I might—just trying to understand where the mistakes have been made. April 14, 1988, the Soviets were gone from Afghanistan.

And, according to your printed testimony, Mr. Bearden, you say America turned its attention elsewhere—I believe in your verbal testimony you said we turned our backs on Afghanistan.

For all three of you—what was the mistake—what should our level of involvement have been at that point? What mistake did we make?

Mr. BEARDEN. Senator, the Soviets left on February 15, 1989. America didn't just take a break and take a 3-day pass, what happened—in May of that year—the Hungarians figured out that the Soviet Union was finished, and they cut the barbed wire with Austria.

In June of that year, the Poles elected the electrician from Gdansk. All through that summer, the East Germans came out, first in tens, then hundreds, then thousands, until the Monday demonstrations had hundreds of thousands of people on the street, and November 9 the Berlin Wall was breached, and 329 days later, Germany is reunited inside NATO in what I think is one of the most masterful maneuverings of foreign policy in this country since George Marshall was Secretary.

The Soviet Union, on Boxing Day, 1991, slid beneath the waves. So, that's what we were doing.

Meanwhile, back in Afghanistan—in the absence of a foreign occupier, and the only time the Soviets looked like a superpower was leaving the country—they reverted instantly to their unruly ways, and there was a civil war. And we blame ourselves, because we did not do anything after that, but we couldn't do much. U.S.A. doesn't fight its way in to assist people, but then I think in the 1990s we just lost interest, and that was a fateful thing for the whole decade.

Senator WICKER. So, what level of involvement should we have had?

Mr. BEARDEN. I think what you have to understand—or what I understand—is that once the Soviet Union left the scene, and we became the sole remaining superpower, we then had a responsibility for a new construct internationally—it was the failed state. During the whole cold war, states didn't really fail, because the Soviet Union would run over and throw some money at it, and put it in their team, or we would run over and put money on it and it would be on our team.

But when the Soviet Union retired from the field, we had a failed state. And I don't think we took that seriously. At what point could we have done something differently? I don't know. Perhaps it was the change of the guard, from a Reagan administration—who might have been credited with being involved in bringing down the Soviet Union—or the refusal of a subsequent administration to acknowledge that. I mean, it becomes involved with Washington politics, as well.

But, we didn't do it, and for whatever reason, the consequences of that became apparent in——

Senator WICKER. All right. Let me really fast-forward before I let the other panelists respond. September 11, 2001, the Towers go down, the Pentagon is hit. Every single member of the House and Senate—save one—voted for us to become involved in Afghanistan. NATO was all on board. The United Nations was not standing in the way at all. It seemed that there was unanimous support for what we set about to do.

Now at what point did we lose our way in the 8 years since then?

Mr. BEARDEN. The initial response was understandable. We moved in very quickly. Within weeks we had Special Operations Forces and CIA officers on the ground.

Senator WICKER. Did we make the correct decision?

Mr. BEARDEN. On that, yes, that's just fine. What happened, though, is that—if you go back and reconstruct, as Steve Coll has done so admirably—is that we had disbursed the Taliban, collapsed the entire Taliban structure with less than 300 Americans on the ground, supported by air. That—and they were just CIA officers and Special Operations Forces.

A decision to turn this thing over and bring in big Army is one point that one would have to look at. Tora Bora is a case that is so hotly debated yet to this day, but the thought that you're going to have Afghan—certainly non-Pashtun Afghans—go ahead and attack the final fixed position, rather than U.S. Army Rangers or Special Operations Forces—was probably a mistake. Because Afghans don't usually do that—attack fixed positions or defend them. That would have been our job, and we might have been able to take care of something then if—you know, would there have been a chance to get bin Laden? I think people say there would have been.

But from that point on, when we rose above those numbers, we changed the game for ourselves in Afghanistan, and we didn't understand that there's one playbook for everybody that goes in there. Whether it's Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, the British or the Russians—there's a playbook for Afghanistan for foreign occupying forces, but the secret is, it is written by Afghans, and not by us.

Senator WICKER. Mr. Coll.

Mr. COLL. Let's go back to your history question and offer, maybe, a slightly different interpretation of the period after the Soviet withdrawal. I don't—by any means, hold Milt responsible for this, because he was off working on the Soviet Union at this point, which as he says, was the bigger strategic issue of the day—but it's important, I think, the details are important.

After the Soviets left, the United States continued to pursue a military solution in Afghanistan. Our aid to the mujahideen rebels—even as they collapsed into a civil war amongst themselves—continued right through to the end of 1991. We allowed ourselves, with the Pakistan Army, to pursue a military campaign for the purpose of overthrowing the legacy Soviet Government in Kabul.

At the time, Mikhail Gorbachev was desperate to engage us and the international community in negotiations to reconstruct stability in the region in Kabul and Afghanistan—very difficult work, perhaps a fool's errand—but we never took it up because we were convinced that we didn't have interests sufficient to justify the hard and uncertain work of partnering with regional countries to build stability in Central Asia.

And, you know, Gorbachev, I think, was justified—he had his hands full—but he was justifiably puzzled about our attitude. Essentially, he said, "Look, I've got a Muslim population across my southern rim, I don't want them to be infected by Islamic extremists. OK, you used anti-American Islamic extremists to defeat us, but truly you go down to the mosques on Friday and understand that they hate you just as much as they hate us. You've just restored a democracy in Pakistan, don't we have a shared interest

in doing the hard work of building regional stability in trying to reconstruct a stable center in Afghanistan?"

And we—out of distraction as much as deliberation, I think that's absolutely correct—rejected that course and just went on automatic pilot. We produced a deepening civil war, and then we turned around and left after 1992, and the place just absolutely collapsed in on itself, and the Taliban came to power.

So, I do think that this vision of politics and regional stability—an eye on the long term and on the fact that we have a national interest in a stable Central and South Asia and on modernizing Central and South Asia—is a source of continuity between then and now.

Ambassador LODHI. Thank you for asking this question, because I think it will help you understand what is really etched on the memory of a lot of people in the region—including in my country. The memory is one of a very hasty disengagement after the cold war was one, and the Soviet Union collapsed and the rest of the Red Army rolled out of Kabul.

I think the haste with which the West disengaged—and when I say disengaged, I mean in two very significant ways—one I remember very clearly that Pakistan at that time had urged the United States to help in establishing—what was called at that time—an interim, transitional, provisional government in Kabul before signing of the Geneva Accords under which the Soviet troops withdrew.

Now, many thought this was a ploy by Pakistan, but I can't really—I'm not here to give an interpretation of history—but it is factually correct that Pakistan had said, "We must have a political arrangement that will hold, that will provide a minimum degree of stability in our region, before you hastily leave this region." But Pakistan's pleas went unheeded at that time.

The second type of disengagement is—I wonder if you've seen the movie, "Charlie Wilson's War"? I think it's a very interesting and very poignant scene where Charlie Wilson—I don't know whether it's factually correct, but I think substantively it's correct—in terms of whether he physically went around the corridors of Capitol Hill asking people to help in rebuilding Afghanistan, which had been devastated after decades of conflict. And he said, the United States had a responsibility to help the people rebuild their lives and rebuild their country.

And I think the scene sort of shows people sort of turning out and saying, "Well, you know, we won the war, so what are you coming to us for, now? I mean, tell us about where the latest crisis is?" Something like that.

So, I think this is very important and from Pakistan's perspective, please remember another historical fact. Within less than a year of the Red Army having been defeated and the Soviet Union imploding, Pakistan came under wide-ranging sanctions under the Pressler amendment, giving the Senator from South Dakota the kind of national fame and notoriety in my country which he doesn't have in this country, I know.

So, I think it's true. What had happened was that the Pakistani public—and I think we are dealing with that burden of history, even as I speak today—which is that you have a large chunk of people in Pakistan who feel, "Well, this is a transaction relation-

ship, we are seen as hired help, we are not seen as a valued ally," and I'm sorry to say that much of this remains on the public mind in Pakistan. That this is cut and run, they come in, they use us, and then they walk away. So, I think the Pakistan component has to be understood.

Last, when you ask about 2001 and immediately after, you know, the response to what had happened, the tragedy of the United States, I think the initial decision to use the northern alliance to go into Afghanistan actually doomed the project from the start. Because what it did was, it immediately—in the very initial stages—alienated the Pashtuns, given the historic rivalry between the northern alliance and the Pashtuns, not all represented by the Taliban, but still having very strong misgivings about the northern alliance.

I think the moment the war was conducted in that manner, the Pashtun areas were lost. And then it was only a matter of time when the Taliban were able to make a comeback in some of these areas.

Senator FEINGOLD [presiding]. Continuing—thank you, Senator—I'm going to continue in the chairman's brief absence, and I want to commend the chairman for holding this hearing. I apologize for getting here late, I was at a markup of the Judiciary Committee on the Patriot Act—the U.S. Patriot Act—that went right up to this time, but I—this is a terribly important subject.

And I want to commend the chairman for holding the hearing on what, I think, is perhaps the key question facing the United States in Afghanistan—namely, how do we relentlessly pursue al-Qaeda without further destabilizing Pakistan and the entire region?

I'm deeply concerned that our massive open-ended military presence might be contributing to the growing militancy in the region, including in nuclear-armed Pakistan.

In appearances before this committee earlier this year, in direct response to my questions, both Special Envoy Holbrooke and Admiral Mullen acknowledged that our military efforts in Afghanistan could, in fact, push militants across the border into Pakistan. And it is far from clear to me that the predominantly military approach that we're currently pursuing in Afghanistan is likely to achieve its stated aims, or that it would have any impact on our ability to eliminate al-Qaeda's safe haven in Pakistan.

So, I've already enjoyed the brief time I've had to listen to the witnesses, and will listen to their testimony.

But let me ask Dr. Lodhi—I've heard some argue that the people and Government of Pakistan would interpret a decreased United States military presence in Afghanistan as a sign of abandonment, and an indicator of what could also happen in Pakistan. Given that no one here has been talking about abandoning Afghanistan, and certainly not cutting back on civilian and development aid and counterterrorism, and given that legislation recently passed in the Senate significantly increased civilian aid to Pakistan—what do you think would be the reaction in Pakistan to a reduction in United States troop levels in Afghanistan?

Ambassador LODHI. I think, Senator, the issue really is what kind of a strategy will the United States have. I don't think troop levels really indicate—except that if you enhance the troop levels,

it indicates that a military solution is being relied upon, that that's the principal prong. And that, I think, very few Pakistanis would welcome an enhancement of troops in Afghanistan, because every troop surge has produced a certain effect, which has not been to achieve your objectives. Why should it be any different if the troop levels are enhanced?

So, I think we come back to a more fundamental question, which is what are those troops going to do? And I don't think anybody in my country is yet convinced that there is some kind of new strategy—particularly the political power of that strategy—which is going to amount to doing anything differently.

So, simply putting in more troops will be hugely destabilizing for Pakistan, it could be viewed as a very negative signal that will indicate that there's more of the same coming, and if it's more of the same, it simply means pushing the conflict into Pakistan's border regions, and actually giving the militants—which Pakistan has managed to contain to a very large extent in the last few months by very successful operations in Swat and Bajaur—it will muddy those waters.

It will also distract the Pakistani forces—which I was saying before you came—that are already overstretched, 150,000 are deployed, overstretched—then we have to now protect the ground supply lines, because supply needs will double, maybe triple, if you're looking at 40,000 troops—even if you're looking at 30,000 troops. The more they go up, the Pakistan Army will be expected to protect those. We will be distracted from our own counterinsurgency missions that are going on right now, very effectively.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you, and Doctor, thank you for your answer.

And Mr. Coll—Dr. Lodhi apparently already alluded to this, but I'm very concerned about corruption within the Afghanistan security forces, particularly the police, as well as the political implications of vastly expanding an Afghan Army that is characterized by ethnic fissures and subject to the command of a civilian government of questionable legitimacy.

Is there a possibility that we're creating a security apparatus that could someday contribute to instability—to instability within the region?

Mr. COLL. I think that's a very important question, and a question that isn't asked often enough in this discourse about new strategies.

Indeed, in Washington, it seems as if across all points of view, this idea of rapidly building up the Afghan Army and the Afghan police is a consensus view that nobody ever pokes against.

And I think that the recent history of Afghanistan certainly should give rise to an understanding that there are real risks of exactly the sort that you describe.

I can think of four instances in Afghanistan over the last several decades where political disunity in Kabul, factionalism and unresolved ethnic and other kinds of identity politics problems in Afghan politics have infected the security services and the army and caused them to fall apart, or to divide, or to dissolve altogether.

In fact, you could argue that, at least in a technical sense, the Afghan Army fielded against insurgents, has never been entirely defeated, but it has literally dissolved, for lack of political glue, on a number of occasions. That's what happened to the Soviets in the 1970s, when they were building up Communist cells, it got so bad they had to invade, they came in—the army dissolved again on them—they built it up until 1992 in Najibullah after the Soviet Union left, had his army dissolve on him, as well.

And, again, in the mid-1990s when the northern alliance forces tried to build an army in the same way, factionalism in the round cabinet caused the army to melt away in the face of the Taliban. The Taliban didn't really conquer Afghanistan by military force, they took advantage of this structural flaw in the security forces that they were defending.

So, I don't take it for granted that the American project of rapidly building up Afghan security forces is doomed, but I think it's a—there are serious risks in the project, and obviously the evidence to date is that those risks are especially acute in reference to the police. I've heard figures of attrition and turnover and corruption that are just appalling. And I've heard people say, as bad as you think the project of building up a stable, noncorrupt, Afghan police is, it's worse. The army gets better marks, but even there its ultimate viability depends on political strategy in Afghanistan, because it will never stand firm unless the center is also firm.

Thank you.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you.

Finally, Mr. Bearden, the stated goal of U.S. troop increase is to ensure, of course, that the Afghan Government has control of its territory, to the exclusion of the Taliban. Is that an achievable objective? Has that ever been the situation in Afghanistan? And is that the only way to prevent al-Qaeda from establishing a safe haven in Afghanistan?

Mr. BEARDEN. Let me first comment, just for a second, on the last question, as well.

Right now, the ethnic mix in the National Army is roughly 60 percent Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, and others—non-Pashtuns. Pashtuns are around 40 percent—they have taken note of that. The challenge of taking a Pashtun tribal fighter—and turning him into a national soldier, when he doesn't believe there's a nation that represents him, is a challenge.

The other issue is that as we build forces regionally—rather than letting them rise in a more natural way—we may be repeating the errors of the Soviets. When I was involved in the anti-Soviet resistance movement, they created large numbers of militias all over the country, and armed them, and they turned out to be a wonderful source of inexpensive weapons for our project. I just went to their Quarter masters and paid them, and bought all of this stuff, and saved on shipping charges. So, we have to bear that in mind and understand how it all worked.

Now, I don't think anybody is going to expect us to construct a national army that regains territory. I think they're going to have to talk it through. I don't think that anybody is going to win that fight. I think it's an ethnic issue. I think if the Afghans have their own strategy in doing this, they'll be able to come up with a solu-

tion that we're not capable of articulating. So, I don't see a military solution for us or the Afghans.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you. The committee will stand in recess until the chairman returns.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. I apologize—I was on the phone in the back, there. So many things going on, trying to do health care while I do this.

But I do have some questions that I want to follow up on if we can, just quickly before we break up, here.

Disrupt, dismantle, defeat al-Qaeda. That's our goal in Afghanistan. But to the best of my knowledge, al-Qaeda is not really in Afghanistan today. Can you comment on that, Mr. Bearden?

Mr. BEARDEN. I might take it even a step further, Senator. I think that al-Qaeda has—to a large degree—been disrupted and dismantled. Earlier, I commented that it is part of our canonical belief that they're all in Pakistan, and I don't think we have any firm evidence of that. I've talked to people from the tribal areas, and they say, "Well, yeah, he'd be protected if he were in that valley," but there's not even a whisper. And you can't even have a strange bird fly into that valley without the cousins of the next valley knowing, and they would start whispering about it.

So, you know, I would be heartened if that was our goal, because I think we will discover that we've achieved it.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, that's what I want to hone in on, here. And I want to try if I can press you, sort of, for a fast set of answers simply because we're time-pressed a little bit, but—therefore, I mean, that's my judgment right now. I look at it, and I say al-Qaeda's in a lot of different places, but it certainly isn't any central sort of focus in Afghanistan.

And then we get to the "prevent the return" sort of concept. Now, I've interpreted that as preventing them from having a sanctuary, a training camp, plotting, because who knows? If somebody returns one day and goes out, or whatever. It seems to me that we have to examine that.

Is this entire counterinsurgency operation that General McChrystal wants to engage in to create some kind of country in Afghanistan where we feel comfortable that they can't return? And how likely is this return, given what you just said about the relationship between al-Qaeda and the capacity, you know, ultimately, if the Taliban took over Afghanistan? Which we don't like—but is it likely? Is it a certainty? Are there odds as to what happens with al-Qaeda?

Mr. BEARDEN. Well, this is all opinion, but one has to reconstruct what we were dealing with in the 1990s. You had several things happen, you had—first, during the anti-Soviet period, a significant number of Arabs filtered into the region, into Pakistan and they went over and they didn't play a major role in the combat, but it was sort of an Arab, Club Med-Jihad thing combined.

There was a little emptying of prisons across the Arab world, letting these guys go off into the region with the fond hope they might step on a mine. Then they left Afghanistan when the Soviets left, and went back home full of plans to change things there. They found out that that wasn't going to work. So, then the Soviet Union

falls in the playgrounds that some of them enjoyed in Eastern Europe, were closed to them, and then the Sudanese kicked bin Laden out of Sudan.

And so it ended up as the end of the line where they all were. And then the seething thing that followed, that created the plotting and then the camps in Afghanistan—or in Hamburg, for all that matter where Muhammad Atta was—happened and then 9/11 happened.

Now, I think we would also find that preventing that from recurring in Afghanistan wouldn't be too hard. I don't see that—all of those planets lining up, again, ever.

The CHAIRMAN. When you say—now, this is very important. This is a very important thing to try to focus in on. Preventing that from happening again, preventing al-Qaeda from getting that kind of foothold, you think is much easier than having 100,000 troops, or 67,000 troops?

Mr. BEARDEN. I think if we do some of the things that have been discussed here today and that are obviously on the table with the President's review, that much of that could—only happened in the 1990s because we had completely left the field—including Pakistan.

The CHAIRMAN. And, best judgments here, are there ways to do things where you don't completely leave the field?

Mr. BEARDEN. Well, of course you don't completely leave the field, but that doesn't mean you have to have 120,000 ISAF troops in the field, either.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you agree with that, Mr. Coll?

Mr. COLL. The last part, although——

The CHAIRMAN. What do you disagree with on the first part?

Mr. COLL. Well, you seem to be asking whether we could permit the Taliban to take control of the Afghan state.

The CHAIRMAN. I'm not. I don't want to prevent—I'm asking what happens if they did?

Mr. COLL. If they did, whether or not the return of al-Qaeda would be a significant risk? And I think it would be. I think that al-Qaeda seeks a state, and if the Taliban provided a state, they would find ways to capture it—as they did before in Afghanistan in the 1990s.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me go to the correlating question, then. Are there ways for us to think, as we reevaluate this policy, about ways of preventing al-Qaeda—not al-Qaeda, excuse me—sort of having, I think one of you mentioned this earlier—one of your goals is, the Taliban are not going to take over.

Mr. COLL. Right.

The CHAIRMAN. And ways to prevent that that involve far less troops and a far lesser kind of strategy.

Mr. Coll.

Mr. COLL. Yes, I think we are all three in agreement to versions of answers to that question and that really a question—another way to ask your question would be to say, what is the minimum level of American troops necessary to guarantee, credibly, that the Taliban will never take control of the Afghan state, and to guarantee—or to invest in the prospect—of Afghan stability, sufficient Afghan stability, to finish the job politically, regionally, and otherwise—and to allow the Pakistani state to find its own success, be-

cause ultimately the ticket home—for everybody—is through Islamabad and Delhi.

So, if you can define the question that way, then it becomes a technical question. And I don't know what General McChrystal's advice is about that, because I'm not entirely certain what the additional troops are meant to achieve. If the answer is that they're out patrolling rural districts along the border for the sake of population security in villages, you know, that's one thing. If the answer is, "This is the number that's necessary to meet the answer to that question—Taliban can never take cities, hold cities, can't take the state and the country will become more stable," then I'd be interested in that.

The CHAIRMAN. To what degree does the narcotics trade and Helmand play into this, in terms of our ability to achieve any of these goals?

Mr. COLL. The Taliban have diverse sources of finance which, narcotics is certainly one. But going after farmers in Helmand is not the way to disrupt their access to that revenue stream. It's also important to recognize that the Taliban's financing comes from other sources, besides poppy growing. They tax roads, they tax local citizens, they tax people for providing them justice and other services that look like a government, and they also have access to funding from the Persian Gulf that may be an even larger part of their revenue flows than narcomoney.

I do think that the Helmand operation demonstrates once again that cost of putting poppy farmers on the front lines of a counternarcotics strategy far outweigh the benefits, especially if it's the United States that's carrying out that kind of combat.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Bearden, how much footprint is necessary, in your judgment, to be able to carry out the counterterrorism goal with respect to al-Qaeda itself?

Mr. BEARDEN. Let me clarify an earlier statement, briefly. I'm not suggesting that I would be OK with the Taliban taking over the country, but primarily because I don't think they can, I think that is not going to be a repeat of the 1990s, as well.

The CHAIRMAN. They can't no matter what we do, or they can't?

Mr. BEARDEN. I think that Afghanistan won't go through that particular game again. I think there could be some very nasty events if we just walked away, and we don't want to do that——

The CHAIRMAN. Civil wars, Tajik, Hazara—?

Mr. BEARDEN. They'd have to be sorting things out, and that's almost never pretty. But right now, the Pashtuns perceive a major imbalance of what they think is the natural way for Afghanistan—right or wrong—they view us there as propping up a Tajik-Panjshiri government. And there are more Tajiks in the army than there are Pashtuns in the army at this moment, which is an imbalance, in their view.

But, do I think we would return to the point where you've got Taliban, Pashtun-Taliban marching on Mazar? I don't know that I see that again, nor that our troop presence there has to prevent that.

I do think that the United States is going to have to stay there for the long haul with a new strategy, but I do not see that kinetics are going to be a huge part of that strategy.

The CHAIRMAN. I have that as a central comment—I mean, that is really an important comment that you've made, and I think it's embraced in what Mr. Coll and the Ambassador have said, and in our own thinking. And I hope down at the White House—I would assume, in some of their thinking—although I'm not certain, given some of the things that I've heard.

Sitting with the Secretary General of NATO the other day, I sort of questioned him about it, felt like, you know, we're heading off into this grand counterinsurgency strategy. And I think that's what the President is examining very, very closely, right now, whether that's the way to go here.

My next question to you, in line with that, would be how do we achieve the even newer—let's say that we adopt a different sense of how we want this presence, and it is less kinetic, less military, more focused on these other things. How do we do that with a government that has proven itself to be completely dysfunctional, even corrupt and at this point, therefore, greatly affecting the pegs of counterinsurgency of either security or development?

Mr. BEARDEN. Two points I'd make. The first is—that we haven't mentioned up until now is—many of the numbers of American troops increases, in reality, would reflect replacing NATO troops that are going to be gone by the end of next year, or the end of 2011, at any rate. So, you know, that may be built into the thinking of General McChrystal, because we're going to see NATO, I think—the Canadians have already passed their legislation getting out in 2011, and others will leave. So, it will be an American show if we're in the long haul.

Now——

The CHAIRMAN. You don't think NATO will commit to make this a longer commitment? Because that's going to affect, greatly, I think how the American people view this?

Mr. BEARDEN. Well, you are seeing some that are bearing the brunt of—the non-American troops that are bearing the brunt of the battle—are going to leave. I mean, the Canadians have already made their statement, we'll watch the British.

The CHAIRMAN. But, if we're talking about a less kinetic effort, one hopefully is looking at, then, making a greater commitment to these other things that we're talking about that make a difference.

Mr. BEARDEN. That's right.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you agree with that, Ambassador?

Ambassador LODHI. May I—Mr. Chairman, say that I've lived in, traveled in Europe a great deal, very recently. The war is hugely unpopular in Europe. I don't know what NATO's Secretary General may have said, he comes from a small country. But the big nations that are doing counterinsurgency—and the very few nations in NATO that are doing counterinsurgency—that's exactly where the public support is evaporating. And I think we have to bear that in mind.

But, if you'll allow me one quick point about al-Qaeda—I think the assessment in Pakistan is that al-Qaeda's capacity to mount mass casualty attacks on the West, including the American mainland—has been very sharply curtailed; al-Qaeda has been degraded, but it has not been eliminated. It exists, but it exists—and I want to draw some attention to this, because I think we've spent

a lot of time on conceptualizing everything through military terms, and then the three of us agreed that we need a political strategy.

Al-Qaeda exists more as an idea today. What it does, is, it has an inspirational effect across where there are Islamic communities that are alienated or disaffected from wherever they're living.

I think we need to also address attention, not just to how to fight al-Qaeda militarily, but also deal with it ideologically. I think Europe has done a great deal on this count, the United Kingdom has—I think the United States needs to look at ways in which we can develop counternarratives, and we can have ideological counterresponses. Because this is the appeal that we must seek to diminish, because the sanctuaries, in terms of the physical sanctuaries—I think we will be able to manage. It is the sanctuaries in people's minds that we need to deal with.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I want to thank all of you. I, personally, have a lot more questions I could ask, and I'm going to ask them of you, but just not here, now. I'd like to ask of you to be available in these next days. I'm going to Afghanistan and Pakistan shortly, and I would like to think through, very carefully, the things that I ought to be making sure I'm properly focused on when I go over there.

So, if we could continue this discussion, we would be enormously helped by it.

And I thank you for today. This is very, very interesting, very instructive, stimulating and challenging in a lot of ways. And you've given us a lot of food for thought, which is what a good hearing like this ought to do.

So, I thank you for taking part in it.

And, Mr. Bearden, thank you so much for your service. We have great respect and admiration for it, I appreciate it.

We stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:45 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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