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PASSING THE BATON

FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES FACING THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

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THURSDAY
JANUARY 8, 2009

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PLENARY SESSION 4:30-5:30 P.M.
THE WAY FORWARD IN AFGHANISTAN

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Ballroom A
Walter E. Washington Convention Center
801 Mount Vernon Place, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20001

PANELISTS:

GENERAL DAVID H. PETRAEUS
ASHRAF GHANI

FRANCESC VENDRELL
TOM PERRIELLO

MODERATED BY J. ALEXANDER THIER

INTRODUCED BY DR. RICHARD H. SOLOMON

This transcript done from audio provided
by the United States Institute of Peace.

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 4:30 p.m.

3 DR. SOLOMON: I don't think I need
4 to stress the importance of the issue of
5 trying to deal with the situation in
6 Afghanistan. It's been part of our debate and
7 part of the Presidential discussions for the
8 last year and more and so we're going to hear
9 from people who really understand the
10 situation.

11 I want to turn the moderation over
12 to my colleague Alex Thier. He's a
13 soothsayer. We have a lot of smart people on
14 the staff. Alex has just written and
15 published a book called The Future of
16 Afghanistan. So he may know something that
17 all of us may not know. But, Alex, will you
18 please introduce your panel and we look
19 forward to a very lively discussion. Thank
20 you.

21 MODERATOR THIER: Thanks, Dick,
22 for your great and fearless leadership. This

1 has been a magnificent day and I think we're
2 in for a magnificent close.

3 I'm Alex Thier, the Senior Rule of
4 Law Advisor, at the U.S. Institute of Peace
5 and Director of the Institute's Future of
6 Afghanistan project and I'm thrilled to be
7 moderating this remarkable panel concerning
8 one of the greatest foreign policy challenges
9 facing the United States today.

10 The U.S. Institute of Peace is
11 heavily engaged in working to create a better
12 future in Afghanistan. We have an office on
13 the ground in Kabul and support several
14 partner organizations as well as a growing
15 network of peace mediators around the country.
16 Much of our work there to date has focused on
17 establishing the rule of law, building
18 relationships between state justice
19 institutions and informal or tribal mechanisms
20 that are prevalent throughout the country as
21 well as efforts to end impunity and make the
22 powerful accountable to the law. We also

1 bring together all manner of people here in
2 Washington, policymakers, soldiers, diplomats
3 and academics to exchange ideas, inform the
4 public and encourage them to think in new
5 directions about the challenges facing
6 Afghanistan and the region.

7 As Dick mentioned today, we are
8 launching our new book, The Future of
9 Afghanistan, which is a collection of essays
10 by leading thinkers that looks at Afghanistan
11 in a longer term perspective. The purpose of
12 this book and the project as a whole is to get
13 past the usual short-term thinking to
14 formulate a realistic and coherent strategy
15 for Afghanistan going forward and there are
16 copies in the back if you haven't gotten one.

17 Our time is short and we have a
18 panel of exceptional expertise and wisdom. You
19 have their bios in front of you and a decent
20 introduction for each of them would eat up all
21 time we have. So I'll briefly remind you of
22 who each is now.

1 Our first speaker is Ashraf Ghani,
2 Former Afghan Finance Minister and Governor of
3 its Central Bank and one of the world's
4 leading voices on how to address weak and
5 failing states. Our second speaker is General
6 David Petraeus, the United States Cent Com
7 Commander and perhaps the leading military
8 figure of his generation. Our third speaker is
9 Francesc Vendrell, former EU and U.N. Special
10 Representative for Afghanistan. Francesc has
11 been the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Kabul
12 for much of the last decade. And finally we
13 have Representative Tom Perriello, one of our
14 newest members of Congress who won a
15 remarkable and remarkably close race in
16 Virginia this fall. Tom is a Human Rights
17 lawyer who has worked on post conflict justice
18 around the world including in Afghanistan.

19 Each of our panelists will speak
20 for ten minutes and although time is quite
21 short we hope that there will be some time for
22 questions at the end. So without further ado,

1 I give the floor to Ashraf Ghani.

2 (Applause.)

3 MR. GHANI: It is an honor and a
4 pleasure to be with you and to participate in
5 such a distinguished panel, all of whom have
6 made or are in the process of making
7 significant contributions to peace and
8 stability in Afghanistan. I would also like
9 to thank Ambassador Brahimi who is in the
10 audience and is the godfather of Bonn process
11 and the peace in Afghanistan, an ambassador
12 who did so much and then thank USIP in general
13 and Alex Thier in particular for their
14 commitment to Afghanistan.

15 As far as governance of the
16 economy and policy in Afghanistan is
17 concerned, we are the fork between two roads.
18 The first is the road of narcotics,
19 criminalization of the economy, corruption of
20 governance and the erosion of trust of the
21 population leading to prolonged conflict,
22 instability and violence. According to the IS

1 indices, Afghanistan is now the fourth most
2 war-torn country, the fifth most corrupt
3 country and the seventh most fragile state in
4 the world. As a result, media commentary in
5 the West is increasing focusing on the vicious
6 circle.

7 The second alternative road
8 however is predicated on a competitive economy
9 revolving around the agriculture, mining and
10 services, an effective state that performs all
11 functions for its citizens and a national
12 identity that renews the tolerant and
13 cosmopolitan values of our Afghanistan's
14 Islamic civilization and embraces a place in
15 our global society. Taking this road will not
16 only lead to peace, prosperity and stability
17 to a virtual circle that will turn Afghanistan
18 into a bridge between the Islamic and Western
19 worlds.

20 In late 2001, international
21 intervention of Afghanistan was based on twin
22 pillars of legitimacy, unanimity of General

1 Assembly and Security Council of the U.N. and
2 the enthusiastic welcome accorded to
3 International Security Forces by the Afghan
4 population. However, a double failure of both
5 the Afghan government and the international
6 community has led us to this vicious circle in
7 which there has been a privatization of
8 politics and a politicalization of the private
9 sector.

10 The international community
11 instead of designing instruments suited to
12 context has relied on generic development
13 tools and approaches that have undermined
14 state capacity and legitimacy and failed to
15 understand the central message of the
16 counterinsurgency doctrine that General
17 Petraeus has done so much to remind us that
18 people must be at the center of any effort to
19 create stability.

20 As the vicious circle in
21 Afghanistan was not invisible, we can be
22 optimistic that the virtual circle is still

1 possible. The priority assigned by the new
2 administration to Afghanistan provides the
3 opportunity for the development of a focused
4 international strategy. With the forthcoming
5 elections in Afghanistan itself provides the
6 possibility of a renewed contract between the
7 Afghan people and our government.

8 Afghan politics is two phases.
9 One is network of violence and corruption both
10 inside and outside the government. The other
11 is a proliferation of social groups, women
12 groups, youth groups and urban volunteer
13 associations which demonstrates deep cravings
14 for justice, law and order and a functioning
15 policy and economy. The presidential election
16 if conducted in a free and fair manner will
17 allow these new forces of order to acquire a
18 voice to articulate the need for a binding
19 social contract, develop a national consensus
20 on the way forward and begin to implement an
21 agenda for building an effective state.

22 Success in Afghanistan will not be

1 brought about through military means alone.
2 The Counterinsurgency Doctrine has made it
3 abundantly clear that successful
4 counterinsurgency operations are only 20
5 percent, about military solutions in 80
6 percent, about political governance and
7 economic solutions. The tactical intent
8 therefore is to arrive at the strategy that
9 makes use of national and international
10 instruments of power to systematically reduce
11 the use of force. This requires maximum
12 utilization of Afghan assets and capabilities
13 ranging from our natural capital to social and
14 human capital supported by the international
15 community rather than ignored or substituted
16 for development projects and system.

17 For the international community to
18 become a catalyst for state building in
19 Afghanistan, the following steps are
20 necessary. First, design counterinsurgency
21 operations in a manner that places the needs
22 and aspirations of the Afghan at center stage,

1 avoid the unsuccessful tactics used by the
2 Soviet Army in Afghanistan and articulate a
3 clear strategy for securing, governing and
4 developing. Afghanistan is especially diverse
5 and the needs of regions that are currently
6 peaceful need to be given equal priority to
7 those where the insurgency is its strongest.
8 Moreover, if counterinsurgency efforts are to
9 become the foundation for a state building
10 strategy, then it needs to frame security
11 within a larger framework of law and order.

12 Second, the international
13 community needs to arrive with a clear
14 understanding of the functions of the state
15 and the levels with which these functions must
16 be performed. Afghanistan has five levels of
17 governance, village, district, municipality,
18 province and central government. Legally it's
19 a unitary state, but it is effectively highly
20 decentralized. Measures for support of each
21 level of governance and mechanisms of
22 international engagement such as PRTs must

1 therefore create alignment of state
2 effectiveness at all levels. The success of
3 the National Solidarity Program, something
4 that Bob Zellick reminded us this afternoon,
5 a program directed to villages indicate that
6 Afghan citizens are willing to do the heavy
7 lifting of development when given the decision
8 right and the resources.

9 The National Telecom Program
10 indicates how the regulatory function of the
11 government can be used to encourage the
12 private sector to provide services. This
13 program brought about an increase from 100
14 mobile phones in 2002 to the current estimate
15 of 7.5 million phones simultaneously creating
16 one of the largest sources of fiscal revenue
17 for the government.

18 Three, a land or country where
19 narcotics play such a large role requires the
20 design of an economic policy tailored to
21 unique contextual assets, capabilities and
22 constraints. The aid system has shown little

1 ability to come forward with such a design and
2 therefore innovation should come from outside
3 the system and draw on the most innovative
4 minds that exist across the business, social
5 and government sectors.

6 Four, overcoming the challenge
7 presented by narcotics in Afghanistan requires
8 international partnership on designing and
9 implementing an innovative agricultural
10 strategy that could increase the income of
11 rural Afghans from \$1 to \$4 per capita which
12 is the deciding point between engagement in
13 legal and illegal economies.

14 The feasibility of this approach
15 depends on two conditions beginning first with
16 market access to Europe, the Gulf, China and
17 India but particularly NATO and U.S. Forces as
18 consumers of Afghan produce. Second,
19 investment in infrastructure and institutional
20 support mechanisms that have been proven
21 necessary to underpin successful agricultural
22 development.

1 Fifth, investment in youth through
2 vocation and higher education needs to become
3 a priority. Harnessing the global
4 communication revolution could provide Afghan
5 youth, who constitute the population, with
6 access at minimum cost to institutions of
7 learning across the globe and thereby turn
8 them into stakeholders in the prosperity and
9 stability of the global system.

10 Six, the international community
11 needs to shift from the role as a substituter
12 to that as a partner in capitalists for good
13 governance. This means a commitment both on
14 the part of the Afghan leaders and
15 international actors to create criteria for
16 transparency, accountability and mutual
17 responsibility. Such an approach in turn will
18 require changes in the current instruments of
19 foreign aid and a shift from short term by
20 annual financial support to medium to long
21 term mechanisms for resource allocation and
22 effective utilization.

1 Afghanistan was the first
2 challenge of the 21st century to our inherited
3 institutions of the 20th century. The
4 performance thus far has been decidedly mixed
5 as these organizations have failed to overcome
6 the organizational stove pipes of security,
7 diplomacy and development. Getting
8 Afghanistan right is not just important for
9 Afghanistan's sake, but for the creation of
10 global capacity to deal with international
11 challenges.

12 With a commitment of the new
13 administration to Afghanistan, the deep
14 reflection on counterinsurgency, the
15 increasing acknowledgment of the centrality of
16 the effective states, by both the development
17 and security communities, the conditions exist
18 for a type of approach that can devise
19 strategies suited to context.

20 The people of Afghanistan are
21 ready for fundamental change and want nothing
22 more than to lead normal lives. We hope the

1 international community is ready to partner
2 with us and embark on the difficult but
3 promising journey of transforming Afghanistan
4 into the state that can fulfill its obligation
5 towards the citizens, the region and the world
6 at large.

7 Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 MODERATOR THIER: Thank you.

10 General Petraeus.

11 GENERAL PETRAEUS: Good afternoon.

12 Alex, thanks for this opportunity. USIP,
13 thanks for organizing such an important
14 gathering and I see that congratulations are
15 in order on your 25th anniversary and I, too,
16 want to start by saluting Ambassador Lakhdar
17 Brahimi. The SRSG in Haiti for whom many of
18 us were privileged to serve and a man who has
19 contributed so much in so many difficult
20 places over the years and it's a privilege to
21 see him again here.

22 One observation up front if I

1 could, Alex, I have to tell you that requiring
2 a U.S. Army General Officer to speak without
3 PowerPoint slides is a violation of the
4 standards in the U.S. Army Field Manual on
5 interrogation techniques.

6 (Laughter.)

7 But I'll try to do my best without
8 our normal communications aids as we tackle
9 this important topic.

10 Afghanistan is obviously a topic
11 of enormous importance not just to the United
12 States as Ashraf made very clear, but to all
13 the Alliance Coalition countries in the world,
14 it is imperative that Afghanistan not become
15 again a sanctuary for transnational, violent
16 extremists. It was for that reason that the
17 United States took action in Afghanistan over
18 seven years and that basic objective remains
19 valid today.

20 The past seven years have seen
21 accomplishments and setbacks in Afghanistan.
22 There's been agreement on a constitution and

1 a government, increased access to education
2 and telecommunications, construction of
3 infrastructure, establishment of various
4 national institutions, improvements in certain
5 basic services, development of the Afghan
6 national army and so on. But we've also seen
7 reconstitution of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda and
8 other extremist elements, a corresponding
9 spiral downward in security especially in the
10 east and south, the emergence of considerable
11 corruption problems, the expansion until last
12 year at least of poppy production and numerous
13 challenges in developing governmental
14 institutions and local police that have
15 legitimacy in the eyes of the people. There
16 has been nothing easy about Afghanistan.
17 Indeed virtually every aspect has been hard
18 and that will continue to be the case in 2009
19 and the years beyond.

20 In my brief comments here this
21 afternoon, I'll seek to make three points:
22 first, that Afghanistan is not Iraq; second,

1 that the effort in Afghanistan will require
2 not just more U.S. coalition and Afghan forces
3 but also a more comprehensive and coordinated
4 effort than has been the case to date; and
5 third, that achieving progress in Afghanistan
6 will require a regional approach.

7 First, I said is the fact that
8 Afghanistan is not Iraq. We and our Afghan
9 and Coalition partners are in a tough fight in
10 Afghanistan and the natural tendency will be
11 to look to the ways in which progress was
12 achieved in Iraq for possible answers. In
13 this regard, it's important to remember a key
14 principle of counterinsurgency operations that
15 every case is unique and requires a carefully
16 designed approach that is appropriate to the
17 specific situation. Thus, while as Ashraf
18 pointed out, the principles of
19 counterinsurgency operations remain very
20 valid, concepts such as the importance of
21 securing and serving the population and the
22 necessity of living among the people in order

1 to do so. These principles nonetheless have
2 to be adapted to the unique cultural,
3 political, geographic and human terrain of
4 Afghanistan.

5 In examining this terrain, it's
6 abundantly clear just how different
7 Afghanistan is from Iraq. A few comparisons.
8 Afghanistan is more than 200,000 square miles
9 larger than Iraq with a population of five
10 million more and borders that are almost 2,000
11 miles longer than Iraq's which are plenty
12 challenging themselves. Dominated by the
13 rugged Hindu Kush, much of Afghanistan is
14 extremely harsh mountainous terrain while Iraq
15 outside the northern Kurdish areas is
16 relatively flat. The weather in Afghanistan,
17 of course, is much more extreme than that of
18 Iraq as well. Hence, our operations there
19 must always confront what our commanders call
20 "the tyrannies of distance, topography and
21 weather" that are much challenging than those
22 in Iraq and are aggravated further by the

1 relative lack of infrastructure in Afghanistan
2 as well.

3 In addition to the kaleidoscope of
4 ethnic, sectarian and tribal elements in
5 Afghanistan, other elements of the human
6 terrain are also quite different from those in
7 Iraq. Afghanistan has for example
8 significantly higher illiteracy rates and much
9 less of the well educated human capital that
10 exists in Iraq even after the sectarian
11 violence in Iraq prompted some two million of
12 their citizens to leave the country.

13 Additionally, while Iraq has had experience in
14 muscle memory, if you will, of a strong
15 central government, Afghanistan's experience
16 has been quite different within general much
17 greater autonomy exercised by tribal elements
18 and other local and regional strong men.

19 Afghanistan also lacks the
20 incredible natural resource blessings of Iraq.
21 It does have significant mineral resources and
22 could certainly be an exporter of significant

1 quantities of certain agricultural products as
2 well. But these pale by comparison by the
3 potential wealth of Iraq's resources. As a
4 result, while Iraq this past year generated
5 nearly \$60 billion in oil export revenue
6 alone, Afghanistan's total revenue generation
7 was well under \$1 billion.

8 Finally, although Afghanistan has
9 achieved progress in certain basic service
10 provisions since 2001, it still lags well
11 behind Iraq in provision of electricity,
12 drinking water and education particularly in
13 the rural areas. For all of Iraq's
14 shortcomings, it does have relatively mature,
15 if poorly maintained, infrastructure that has
16 been and is being rebuilt while Afghanistan
17 again has very little by comparison. In
18 Afghanistan, it is important to remember that
19 we are helping the Afghans construct basic
20 infrastructure not reconstruct it.

21 Having highlighted those
22 differences between Afghanistan and Iraq, now

1 let me turn to my second point and highlight
2 the need for our commitment to be sustained,
3 comprehensive and coordinated. After a trip
4 to Afghanistan in September 2005 to evaluate
5 the Afghan security force development effort,
6 I offered to Secretary Rumsfeld an assessment
7 that Afghanistan would likely be the longest
8 campaign in the Long War. Developments in
9 recent years appear to have validated that
10 conclusion. As such, achieving progress
11 needless to say will take time and our
12 commitment including our combat forces,
13 enablers, training teams and others will have
14 to be sustained.

15 Our commitment must also extend
16 well beyond the security realm. To be sure,
17 it's vital that the Coalition and our Afghan
18 partners arrest and then reverse the downward
19 spiral in security. Doing so, however, will
20 require progress not just in the security
21 arena but in a host of other areas as well, in
22 development of infrastructure and building

1 governmental capacity and reducing corruption
2 and other practices that undermine
3 governmental legitimacy and in development of
4 the rule of law that Ashraf also highlighted.
5 And in the year ahead, of course, we'll also
6 have to help our Afghan partners conduct and
7 secure national elections that are seen to be
8 legitimate by the people of Afghanistan.
9 Voter registration for which, by the way, has
10 gone relatively smoothly so far in the first
11 three of four phases, albeit, with
12 registration in the toughest areas soon to
13 begin.

14 These many challenges will require
15 not just a comprehensive commitment but also
16 one that achieves unity of effort between
17 Afghan and Coalition elements and together
18 with international and non government
19 organizations. Certainly, as I noted earlier,
20 we'll need more Coalition and Afghan security
21 forces including the additional training teams
22 to help develop and enable the Afghan national

1 army and the Afghan national police. But we
2 will also need more civilian contributions and
3 greater international involvement to enable a
4 whole of governments approach that is unified
5 and coordinated between all of those involved.

6 Now just as we can't focus on only
7 one line of operation, we also can't focus
8 just on Afghanistan. It's not possible to
9 resolve the challenges internal to Afghanistan
10 without addressing the challenges especially
11 in terms of security related to Afghanistan's
12 neighbors. A regional approach is required.

13 A key element of the regional
14 approach, of course, is Pakistan's recognition
15 that the existential threat to Pakistan comes
16 from the violent extremists operating in the
17 federally administered tribal areas in the
18 northwest frontier province. There is an
19 increasing recognition, in fact, that this
20 threat poses a much greater challenge to
21 Pakistan than does that from its traditional
22 rival, India. Indeed Afghanistan and Pakistan

1 have in many ways merged into a single problem
2 set and the way forward in Afghanistan is
3 incomplete with a strategy that includes and
4 assists Pakistan and involved India.

5 Beyond Pakistan, the Central Asian
6 States must also be part of regional strategy
7 for Afghanistan. Certainly, no state in the
8 region wants to see Afghanistan harboring and
9 exporting transnational extremists and the
10 nexus between the Afghan insurgency and
11 narcotics smuggling presents a regional
12 security threat as well. The Central Asian
13 States share the concerns of all about
14 extremism and drug smuggling in Afghanistan
15 and they also can provide a northern line of
16 communication should that prove necessary and
17 we are exploring that as you might imagine.
18 So they clearly must be part of the regional
19 approach as well.

20 Finally, as an aside, there are
21 even common interests between Afghanistan, the
22 Coalition and Iran, though there are also

1 major conflicting interests needless to say.
2 But I'm happy to leave that element of the
3 regional approach to the diplomats and policy
4 makers.

5 In the end and in conclusion, much
6 of what we're trying to accomplish will
7 revolve around relationships and involve the
8 human terrain, another point that Ashraf just
9 underscored. We must to seek to build and
10 support relationships at every level of
11 endeavor, local, provincial, national and
12 regional, and as we go forward, it will be
13 incumbent on all of us to demonstrate that the
14 United States and the Coalition of Countries
15 engaged in Afghanistan are reliable,
16 determined and consistent partners. Again,
17 partners, not occupiers, another point that
18 Ashraf underscored.

19 As I've sought to convey in my ten
20 minutes here this afternoon, such partners
21 will have to keep in mind that Afghanistan is
22 not Iraq. They will have to demonstrate

1 commitment to sustain comprehensive,
2 coordinated approaches and they will have to
3 develop and execute a regional strategy that
4 includes Pakistan, India, the Central Asian
5 States and even China and Russia along with
6 perhaps at some point Iran.

7 The United States and the other
8 members of the Coalition have important
9 national interest in Afghanistan, Pakistan and
10 their neighbors. The common national security
11 imperatives highlighted by 9-11 and by
12 subsequent attacks in a number of other
13 countries still exist. Sanctuaries in which
14 transnational extremists recruit, train, plan
15 and organize for operations cannot be
16 permitted. This security imperative though
17 requires a comprehensive, coordinated and
18 sustained approach that reflects an unwavering
19 commitment to the region, one that if properly
20 executed can help promote security, stability
21 and over time growing prosperity.

22 Thank you very much.

1 (Applause.)

2 MODERATOR THIER: Thank you.

3 MR. VENDRELL: I will omit the
4 usual -- I will skip the usual courtesies
5 because they will eat into my time which is
6 apparently only ten minutes.

7 Let me first say what I think
8 Afghans want and I think the first thing
9 Afghans want is security and a modicum of rule
10 of law. I think Afghans want food security
11 which they don't have at this moment. They
12 want employment. They want better governance
13 at the center and in the provinces and
14 districts. Afghans want radical measures
15 against corruption and an end to the culture
16 of impunity.

17 Afghans once welcomed the
18 international military presence in the belief
19 that it would provide security and an end to
20 decades of misrule. Starting with the U.S.
21 support or lack of interest in removing the
22 warlords and commanders whom the Afghans have

1 come to hate for their misrule in the 1990s
2 and continuing with the spread of the
3 insurgency and the number of civilian deaths,
4 Afghans increasingly question the value of the
5 international military presence and are
6 beginning to blame it for the country's ills.
7 The initial welcome as Mr. Brahimi very
8 rightly pointed out, the initial welcome is
9 turning to impatience and even downright
10 hostility.

11 The objectives pursued by the
12 international community and by the Afghan
13 government appear unclear, not to say
14 confused, to many Afghans. One day they hear
15 the military solution is impossible. The next
16 day they hear that the Coalition is rising up
17 bombing villages. The following day they hear
18 the president insist that he wants to
19 "negotiate with Muammar" only to hear the same
20 government call the Taliban terrorists. No
21 wonder the Afghans end up believing the
22 wildest conspiracy theories. Rightly or

1 wrongly, the Afghans see us foreigners as
2 complicit in the errors and wrongdoings of
3 their government.

4 What needs to be done? A review
5 of the strategy being pursued needs to be
6 conducted, centered in meeting Afghan
7 grievances and aspirations. A military surge
8 if it is to take place at all needs to be part
9 of a broader new strategy. It also needs to
10 encompass Pakistan and Iran and other
11 countries in the region including India.

12 It is necessary to drastically
13 reduce civilian casualties even at the cost
14 of risking that insurgents in a town or a
15 village will escape. Otherwise, we are
16 creating more recruits for the Taliban and
17 greater opposition to the Western military
18 presence.

19 So a status of forces agreement is
20 needed. It is better to negotiate it now when
21 it can be done in an amicable way than after
22 the Afghans demand it in parliament and it

1 becomes a hot issue in the country. It is
2 essential to redouble efforts to build
3 security, but also rule of law institutions.

4 The issue of food security needs
5 to be urgently addressed if it is the three
6 priorities agreed at the Paris conference in
7 June, namely, agriculture including, I might
8 add, perhaps, why not, subsidies to farmers
9 who grow legal crops. We do it in Europe.
10 You do it in America. As well as models of
11 priorities, irrigation and electricity.

12 Now we have agreed that there is
13 no military solution possible, but we have yet
14 to define what do we mean by a political
15 solution. On reconciliation it is urgent that
16 the government of Afghanistan defines its
17 framework, establish a central point in the
18 president's office to direct contacts reports
19 with the Taliban. It is also essential to
20 define who in the Taliban one will be talking
21 to, perhaps I would believe starting with the
22 field commanders. It is necessary also to

1 define redlines for these talks. The linking
2 the Taliban leadership from Al-Qaeda may not
3 be easy and it will certainly be hard to
4 verify.

5 It is also essential that we
6 decide what and the government of Afghanistan
7 decides what price the Afghans will have to
8 pay for reconciliation with the Taliban. Will
9 it mean the abandonment or curtailment of the
10 objectives agreed at the London conference or
11 in the Afghanistan Compact?

12 On elections, let's be very clear.
13 Credible elections this summer would further
14 stabilize the country and it is hard to see
15 how security can be maintained in a way that
16 such credible elections would be possible. It
17 is also important to nurture and support
18 reformist political parties in civil society
19 organizations. We should be supporting
20 platforms, alliances and programs rather than
21 individuals. A regional framework that
22 addresses the unresolved Kashmiri problem both

1 in the interest of India in terms of it's
2 minority and in terms of encouraging the
3 Pakistani military to look west rather than
4 east is also extremely important.

5 We need to rebuild an
6 international consensus around Afghanistan
7 that to some degree was achieved at the time
8 of Bonn. Talking to Iran which played a
9 helpful role in 2001 - 2002 could be one step
10 and it could be just the one topic on which
11 some understanding may be reached.

12 This dialogue should recognize
13 that Afghanistan, sorry, that Iran is original
14 power and that it has legitimate national
15 interest in Afghanistan. Narcotics, for
16 example, could be a useful issue to start the
17 discussions on. I think the U.S. should no
18 longer prevent Afghanistan from signing or
19 reaching a nonaggression pact with Iran and it
20 would be excellent if the U.S. were also to
21 make it clear that it is not seeking long-term
22 military bases in that country.

1 Finally, about Europe, it will be
2 a hard job to do even if at the beginning
3 there will be a willingness by Europeans to
4 listen to the Obama Administration in a way
5 that they didn't listen to the Bush
6 Administration. But the more Americanized the
7 war becomes the less likely it is that you
8 will find European countries with the
9 exception probably of the U.K. willing to send
10 more forces or to have a greater commitment in
11 the country. And finally the U.N. needs to be
12 kept in mind. The U.N. should be the central
13 coordinator of our efforts in Afghanistan.

14 Thank you very much.

15 (Applause.)

16 REPRESENTATIVE PERRIELLO: Good
17 afternoon. It is an honor to be on this
18 panel. Thank you very much for the
19 invitation.

20 My original, my first trip, to
21 Afghanistan in 2005 came because a survey had
22 been done, a quantitative survey, in the

1 country asking Afghans what was the top
2 security threat and well over 80 percent of
3 Afghans said corruption, not the insurgency.
4 I was sent in essentially to debunk this study
5 by running a qualitative survey with a 60
6 person team of Afghans covering every district
7 of the country and what came back very clearly
8 was in fact an overwhelming majority of
9 Afghans felt that corruption was the single
10 greatest threat to security and stability, not
11 that the insurgency wasn't, but that it was
12 corruption in fact that enabled the insurgency
13 to rebound.

14 If people are offered a choice
15 between a legitimate, strong government and
16 the Taliban the Taliban will lose that choice.
17 If it's between what's perceived to be a local
18 narco-trafficking warlord or the Taliban, the
19 Taliban actually does much better in that
20 choice. So we cannot in any way disaggregate
21 the challenges of an anti-corruption agenda
22 with that of fighting the insurgency.

1 The break, there are many points
2 that we can look at as turning points in the
3 situation in Afghanistan, but most on the
4 ground I found that during the trips in `05
5 and `07 felt like the parliamentary elections
6 to some extent in 2005 was the turning point.
7 When there was an opportunity for a vetting
8 process where many Afghans risked their lives
9 to call out by name some of the most corrupt
10 elements, those who were most associated with
11 atrocities in the past and other things and
12 that list for vetting was eventually whittled
13 down to next to nothing. At that point, many
14 people lost faith in what they saw as a
15 democratic process backed by the U.S. that
16 people had such high hopes for for such a long
17 time.

18 Our military has done an excellent
19 job and NATO has done an excellent job. But
20 we are working still in a fairly and
21 increasingly toxic political environment that
22 presents great challenges. In that sense with

1 the conversation right now about additional
2 battalions in Afghanistan, there is almost no
3 question that it is an important and crucial
4 part of stabilizing the situation there.
5 However, doing so without fundamentally
6 changing the political dynamics on the ground
7 could well be fuel on the fire.

8 What we need is to couple an
9 increased international and U.S. troop
10 presence with what I would call an
11 accountability offensive. We need a serious
12 accountability offensive in Afghanistan and we
13 need it not just in sort of creative governing
14 solutions like a civilian embed program and
15 local and regional governance modeled on the
16 very successful military embed program that
17 has been going on there. But I mean at least
18 considering some higher risk, higher return
19 efforts at challenging the fundamental issue
20 of corruption. We need to keep in mind with
21 the warlordism which I would admit is an over-
22 generalized term is nonetheless more of an

1 exogenous than an endogenous presence in
2 Afghan governing structures.

3 We do need to look to empower
4 jirgas, ummahs, other parts of the local
5 governing structure. The answer right now is
6 not to empower them by militarizing them, but
7 by removing the threats to their power namely
8 some of these systematic elements of
9 corruption that are going on.

10 While I certainly agree with
11 General Petraeus' remarks and that there are
12 strong, strong differences between the
13 situation in Afghanistan and the situation in
14 Iraq, there are also some similarities.
15 Again, there is a potential drive wedges
16 between domestic and foreign elements. There
17 are opportunities for a high risk civilian
18 protection effort that would be greatly
19 appreciated by Afghans and go a long way in
20 shoring up perceptions of the United States
21 and we face a legitimacy gap less of our own
22 presence than our association with existing

1 particularly local governing structures and
2 while that legitimacy gap exists there are
3 severe limits on what our military is capable
4 of doing and accomplishing in those
5 situations. So there are some similarities in
6 those ways.

7 And I would mention one other
8 thing as a political remark having taken the
9 step from non-profit work into politics
10 recently. While there are many great things
11 about the Iraq surge in 2006, I would say my
12 biggest complaint with it, with all due
13 respect, is calling it the surge and it's
14 accompanying phrase at the time of doubling
15 down on the strategy in Iraq. I think, in
16 fact, what happened was a substantial and very
17 intelligent break from the doctrine preceding
18 it. So where you saw decline in what you
19 might call the Bush doctrine or an era or
20 failure of arbitrary power you've seen the
21 emergence of a doctrine of smart power and I
22 think after two election cycles where the

1 American people have expressed great concern
2 with the situation in Iraq, I think we need to
3 prepare them for what may be sustained effort
4 in Afghanistan and one that gets worse before
5 it gets better.

6 And part of doing that is to give
7 the American people a sense of ownership over
8 this shift. The fact is there was a response
9 to what voters said in 2006 and 2008. We have
10 seen the emergence again of what I would
11 consider an era of smart power. That smart
12 power is defined in part by understanding in
13 the 21st century one of our greatest weapons
14 is that of legitimacy.

15 I was involved in the showdown
16 with the dictator Charles Taylor in Liberia
17 and I was the special advisor to the
18 prosecutor that issued the war crimes
19 indictments against him and when we had issued
20 those indictments it was not a risk free move.
21 Many felt like we were backing him into a
22 corner while the LURD rebels were moving on

1 Monrovia and I was getting sad phone calls
2 from them every day. But what we knew was
3 that we were also creating a new option which
4 was the possibility for a regime transition
5 based on legitimacy and the rule of law and
6 eventually that happened through a great
7 combined effort of U.S. troops, regional
8 diplomacy and the legitimacy of that
9 indictment.

10 I think we exist now at a moment
11 where we have a much expanded tool chest of
12 our options. There is more than simply
13 economic sanctions and military options. I
14 think what we saw in Iraq and what is becoming
15 more clear is that that expanded tool set was
16 engaged and I think that was a reflection not
17 only of the reality of security on the ground
18 but also of the political processes. I think
19 we're looking at a move from sort of a-head-
20 in-the-sand approach to an-ear-to-the-ground
21 approach since 2006 that has been crucial.

22 You know when I was in Kandahar

1 most recently, a year and a half ago, and
2 having conversations with some of the young
3 men there who were actively being recruited by
4 Taliban, the first hour would always be them
5 telling me everything they thought I wanted to
6 hear and breaking down or building up some
7 room for trust going forward. Many of them
8 had gotten to the point once we got into the
9 truth period of actually believing that Bin
10 Laden might be on the U.S. payroll. Now this
11 is because they have reached a point of not
12 understanding the dynamics on the ground and
13 being so frustrated with their local governing
14 structures.

15 Now what does this mean? This
16 means we have a chance right now because the
17 conflict is not fundamentally ideological
18 there. It's not anti-American sentiment.
19 It's people not wanting their homes blown up
20 and there's actually great room and great
21 appreciation for much of what the U.S. has
22 done. I think if we can expand that troop

1 presence to provide the security people want
2 with this kind of accountability offensive we
3 can see the situation shift.

4 My last day in Kabul one of the
5 security experts there said, "The insurgency
6 in Afghanistan could outpace the Iraq
7 insurgency in three to four years if we don't
8 get on top of corruption." But if we do we
9 can actually see a kind of stabilization not
10 just there but across the border and in the
11 region, a region that is of great, great
12 security interest to the United States.

13 I believe this is something that
14 is going to take the same kind of creativity
15 and investment that we have seen in other
16 recent conflicts. But again, we have to
17 understand that if we don't change the
18 political dynamics on the ground an increased
19 presence may do more harm than good. But if
20 we make that switch together, I think we will
21 see things turn back around there.

22 Thank you very much.

1 (Applause.)

2 MODERATOR THIER: Well, that was
3 not only a terrific discussion thus far but
4 well on time and so we are going to have a few
5 minutes for questions. I'm going to ask if --
6 We have a number of members of the media here
7 and so I'm going to take the first question or
8 two from members of the media if there is
9 anybody out there. I have in the far back. It
10 was this gentleman -- Okay.

11 MR. GRAY: Andrew Gray from
12 Reuters, this is a question in particular for
13 General Petraeus. You talked about common
14 interests with Iran when it comes to
15 Afghanistan. Could you outline a bit more
16 about what those might be?

17 GENERAL PETRAEUS: No. As I said,
18 Andrew, thanks for a great question. But as
19 I said, I'm happy to leave that to the
20 diplomats during a time of transition in
21 Washington.

22 MODERATOR THIER: That will leave

1 a lot more time for questions.

2 (Laughter.)

3 Over here.

4 GENERAL PETRAEUS: You have a
5 whole table of diplomats though.

6 MS. BUMILLER: Elisabeth Bumiller
7 from The New York Times. You talked about a
8 sustained commitment in Afghanistan. Do you
9 envision it as a decade as it's envisioned in
10 the book that was put out today? That's a
11 question for General Petraeus. I'm sorry.

12 GENERAL PETRAEUS: You know, I
13 recently did an interview with Foreign Policy
14 and at the end they asked a similar question
15 and I actually said I wouldn't hazard a guess
16 on it and I don't think it's prudent to do
17 that actually. Actually I thank the
18 Congressman for pointing out that there are
19 certainly, absolutely, similarities in both
20 the sort of theoretical, conceptual
21 counterinsurgency approach way in Afghanistan
22 with Iraq and also in some of the other

1 respects there in terms of if you talk about
2 political legitimacy and all the rest.

3 But there we tried to frankly
4 avoid looking out too far. If you look at the
5 joint campaign plan that Ambassador Crocker
6 and I developed a few months into the period
7 of surge we laid out a horizon of about three
8 years and that's about as far as we looked.
9 That doesn't mean that you don't have long-
10 term goals and objectives that are trying to
11 be achieved. But we laid out measurable and
12 measured objectives during that period and
13 that was the approach that we took there and
14 I think that's probably a fairly wise approach
15 to take while certainly having your eye on the
16 horizon and what it is that you're trying to
17 do but to very much focus on the core
18 objectives and then the very necessary
19 activities and tasks that have to be performed
20 to achieve those core objectives in route to
21 perhaps more expansive goals long term.

22 MODERATOR THIER: Let me expand

1 that question to other members of the panel
2 because I think the purpose of the book is not
3 so much to say the time commitment should be
4 one years, five years, ten years, but rather
5 to say that if this is a challenge of the
6 enormity and complexity that all of the
7 panelists have outlined that we need to be
8 able to think farther into the future about
9 what we want to achieve in order to get to the
10 sorts of objectives that I think the General
11 was just outlining and I'm interested to know
12 from the perspective of Afghan, European and
13 a member of Congress whether, in fact, we have
14 the ability to sustain a commitment to
15 Afghanistan in the long term and whether the
16 Afghans can sustain that commitment from us.

17 GENERAL PETRAEUS: Let me just
18 build on it because he's just laid out, in
19 fact, why I think it's logical to explain what
20 I just did and that is again you want to know
21 eventually where you want to go. Well,
22 obviously if you don't know where you're

1 going, any road will take you there. But you
2 also have to have some weigh points along the
3 way and that should be your focus. If you
4 want to get to those weigh points, certainly
5 you have to have the long term.

6 But what I'm really trying to say
7 here today and one of the points that I tried
8 to make is that this is going to take a
9 sustained, substantial commitment and that is
10 the key. And it will take a sustained,
11 substantial commitment not just in Afghanistan
12 but also in Pakistan and one that obviously
13 engages the regional actors.

14 And I didn't mean to be too
15 dismissive of the Iran question. It's just
16 that I don't want to get completely going down
17 that road because it's a very hot topic,
18 Andrew, as you know, as you tried to tease out
19 of me. I mean clearly there are both as I
20 pointed out some common objectives that no one
21 I think would disagree on, again as another
22 panelist pointed out that Iran is concerned

1 about the narcotics trade. It doesn't want to
2 see Sunni extremists running or certainly
3 ultra fundamentalists extremists running
4 Afghanistan again any more than other folks
5 do.

6 Having said that, as I also point
7 out, there are some pretty substantial points
8 of conflict out there as well in the greater
9 strategic context in which one considers the
10 common interests and, of course, those are
11 where I'm happy again to hand to that
12 diplomats and the policy makers to weigh those
13 very big issues that are out there, some of
14 those that we confronted in Iraq in fact.

15 But now let me hand it off.

16 MODERATOR THIER: Any of other
17 panelists want to comment.

18 MS. GHANI: The first point is in
19 comparative terms a successful
20 counterinsurgency has taken 10 to 15 years.
21 That's just a historical record and I think
22 one needs to take a horizon like that into

1 account. But having said that, the question
2 is what role does the international community
3 play.

4 GENERAL PETRAEUS: That's exactly
5 the question, yes.

6 MS. GHANI: Is it a capitalist to
7 build up on capabilities so they can get to
8 the act of solving our problems ourselves or
9 does it do the job? That is a major
10 difference because there are tradeoffs.

11 In terms of investing in Afghan
12 capabilities a shorter period of maximum
13 front-loading of investment will produce the
14 type of results that will sustain the effort
15 of that cause and I think one has to be able
16 to differentiate this clearly. This is what
17 did not take place between 2002 and 2005 which
18 was the golden open moment. Afghanistan was
19 not resourced. We were begging for resources
20 and nobody was coming forth. I reminded both
21 the White House and others at that time that
22 \$1 million debt would be equivalent to \$100

1 million five years later and that kind of
2 investment did not come.

3 Now in the last four years we've
4 lost substantial momentum and regaining that
5 momentum is going to require a massive
6 investment in effort at least for a period of
7 three years. But that could set the
8 conditions for the transformation that we
9 need. So international forces need not be
10 engaged with an intense degree of involvement
11 if the type of strategy is one of co-
12 production with --

13 GENERAL PETRAEUS: Yes, it's about
14 the character of the involvement.

15 MS. GHANI: Exactly.

16 GENERAL PETRAEUS: And again we
17 tried to make that same point in Iraq,
18 Elisabeth, as well and I think in fact what is
19 happening in Iraq now which is not Afghanistan
20 but what is happening in Iraq is that
21 character of the involvement is changing as
22 you heard from Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubaie earlier

1 today. There should be no question after
2 hearing him about the way in which Iraqi
3 security forces and Iraqi governmental
4 authorities have assumed not just a variety of
5 security tasks but a variety of other
6 responsibilities together also over the past
7 year, year and a half, in particular and with
8 the implementation now of the Strategic
9 Agreement even more so.

10 MR. VENDRELL: I think there is a
11 parallelism between European public opinion
12 and Afghan public opinion. Afghans complain
13 about -- I gave a list of the complaints of
14 the Afghans. These are in many ways mirrored
15 in European public opinion. When they see
16 there is enormous corruption, bad governance
17 and civilian casualties, this eats into the
18 support that Europe gives to Afghanistan or
19 for the Afghan operation.

20 There is also a Catch-22 situation
21 in terms of U.S. involvement. The U.S. feels
22 it needs to become more involved because we

1 Europeans are not going enough. But the more
2 the Americans do the more likely it is that
3 the Europeans will feel that this has become
4 an American operation. So we need to find a
5 way quite soon to cut the Gordian knot of this
6 dilemma.

7 GENERAL PETRAEUS: Well, in fact,
8 if I could build on that because one of the
9 efforts just in the recent months has been to
10 dual hat if you will, General McKiernan as the
11 U.S. Commander as well as the NATO commander,
12 and the intent is to achieve greater unity of
13 effort and because we had a very interesting
14 situation where you had certain organizations
15 that were operationally under him that were
16 reporting directly in fact to Central Command
17 and again that causes certain challenges in
18 terms of that unity of effort.

19 And I think you've identified a
20 challenge that the United States has as it
21 does go forward with the increase of forces,
22 the additional deployment into Afghanistan,

1 and that is at the same time to take even
2 greater, make a greater, effort to make it a
3 coordinated effort with our alliance partners.
4 It's the reason I've been in London, Paris and
5 Rome just in the past two or three months I
6 guess it is and going to Brussels and Mainz
7 and other allied countries as well.

8 So it is hugely important that it
9 again be a coordinated and combined effort and
10 I think that those of us who served in Balkans
11 actually have some experience with frankly how
12 that can be done and I would hold those
13 experiences out as reasonable examples
14 actually of cases in which, yes, there was a
15 substantial U.S. involvement, usually the lead
16 nation, but also very substantial alliance
17 contributions and everyone working together,
18 even by the way though there were still
19 caveats.

20 I mean we've had caveats all the
21 time and as an operations chief in fact in
22 Bosnia I had a matrix on my desk of what

1 countries could do what. You can work through
2 that and I'm not saying that we applaud those,
3 but I mean you can work through these things
4 and that's what we have to do.

5 REPRESENTATIVE PERRIELLO: I'll
6 just add quickly. I think if we view this
7 situation, if we see accountability and anti-
8 corruption efforts and other transitional
9 justice efforts as post-conflict strategies,
10 if we see them as luxuries independent from
11 the security agenda, we will not see a shift
12 for a long, long time. We can't militarize
13 our way out of this problem, particularly not
14 by continuing using more arms to some of the
15 local governing structures for that to happen.

16 If, however, we see these as a
17 primary leverage point for changing the
18 balance of political power and again I don't
19 mean this in sort of going after targets way,
20 I mean very tough accountability agenda
21 whether that would be for war crimes,
22 corruption or narcotics, you're going after

1 the same set of actors, that I think will
2 shift the balance of power in ways that will
3 be disruptive in the short term but create the
4 opportunity for a near-to-midterm turnaround
5 that would be significant. So we can't see
6 those as separate tracks.

7 I think again those coming out of
8 the Iraq situation understand that. I think
9 those of what I've seen on the ground
10 unfortunately in Afghanistan has not always
11 reflected that sense. So I think if we get
12 serious about going right to the root cause of
13 this that we can see a turnaround in the near-
14 to-midterm.

15 MODERATOR THIER: Well, I have the
16 unfortunate task of ending this panel because
17 I think we all wish we could hear more. But
18 it has been a long and I think remarkable day
19 and I'm going to turn it over to our Chairman,
20 Robin West, to give the final remark.

21 CHAIRMAN WEST: My final remarks
22 will be blessedly brief. I want to thank this

1 panel and I want to thank all the participants
2 who have been up here, but I also want to
3 thank all of you and finally I want to thank
4 again the staff of the Institute of Peace. I
5 think they've put on an extraordinary and
6 really unique production.

7 (Applause.)

8 (Whereupon, the above-entitled
9 matter was concluded.)
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