

TRANSCRIPT

AFGHANISTAN: WHAT IS SUCCESS AND HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Sunday March 16, 2008

Discussants: **The Hon. Haneef Atmar**, Education Minister, Afghanistan
 Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, Deputy Chairman, NATO Military
 Committee
 The Hon. Dr. Karl-Theodor Freiherr zu Guttenberg, Member,
 German Bundestag
 The Hon. Peter MacKay, Defense Minister, Canada

Moderator: **Mr. Steven Erlanger**, Paris Bureau Chief, *The New York Times*

STEVE ERLANGER: Good morning. I'm Steve Erlanger from *The New York Times*. I hope we're all not too fragile this morning. At least the hour's OK.

I'm standing here feeling a little bit like the Phil Donahue of foreign policy.

(LAUGHTER)

But my job as moderator is really to move things along, and that's what I'm going to try to do. So my intention this morning is to give you a little introduction. Not everyone is - has to be -- thank you -- *au courant* with everything.

And then I will ask leading questions of this fine panel, and then basically try to open it up to you. My general feeling in places like this is all of you have things to say, and in some ways you'd much rather talk than listen.

(LAUGHTER)

And you have questions that you want answered, so I would ask you to not be shy and let's have a dialogue and let's have as much honesty as we can.

As a journalist, I always find when arguments among allies break into the open, things are pretty serious. And when allies actually start shouting at one another, they're more serious than maybe is even healthy. Maybe things have gotten a little bit out of hand.

And so Afghanistan -- what really is at stake here? Nearly seven years after the Taliban fell, after the Karzai government was invented in Bonn, is there a dangerous slipping back to the chaos that made the Taliban necessary?



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the American, said NATO's facing a real test, we obviously need to share the burden and the alliance where everyone contributes.

Bob Gates, Secretary of Defense, warned of a line of cowardice in the alliance, some allies willing to fight, he said, and die to protect people's security and others who are not.

The former four-star in SACEUR, General James Jones -- now trying to save the Middle East -- warns of a failed or failing state in Afghanistan. In a report with Tom Pickering, he said, "Make no mistake, NATO is not winning in Afghanistan."

Now, normally this might be dismissed as media sensationalism, or to quote a phrase this weekend, even "media gibberish."

(LAUGHTER)

But these are not journalists who've been speaking. These are senior officials of the West's great alliance.

So they're two wars going on. We have a war against terrorism, but we also have a war to build a society. But friends in Kabul speak of growing insecurity, of a fresh round of targeting Westerners and aid workers; there are more suicide bombers, there's more opium production.

And the usual chaos of well-meaning aid organizations, a hundred different foreign organizations are spending more than \$100 million a year, and life remains difficult, in some ways deteriorating.

The status of women remains dire, with a million widows, 1 in 9 women dying in child birth; one of the highest suicide rates among women in the world. Sixty percent of marriages are forced marriages. There's much sexual violence. Half of brides are under 16 - - despite law against it. And the illiteracy rate among women is 88 percent.

Canada, whose Defense Minister Peter MacKay is with us, has threatened to withdraw its troops unless another NATO ally steps up to help in the violent south. Canada's lost 80 people.

Germany, represented here by Karl-Theodor Freiherr zu Guttenberg, a CSU, Member of the Bundestag is being criticized, not always so quietly or fairly, perhaps, for keeping its troops out of harm's way, as if soldiers were social workers.



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We also have with us the excellent Education Minister in the Afghan government, Mr. Haneef Atmar and Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry, who's been in Afghanistan, served there, and is now deputy chairman of NATO's military committee.

So, first, as I said, I just want to throw some questions out to each panelist, and then we'll see where we go.

I'd like to start with Minister Atmar.

Really, sir, first, how fragile is your government? How far does its writ run? Is there a chance, in your heart of hearts, that you're going to fail and that the Taliban will return?

HANEEF ATMAR, MINISTER OF EDUCATION, AFGHANISTAN: Well, first, thank you very much, you organizers of the Brussels Forum. We really very much appreciate this opportunity, especially that a respectable audience like this is focusing on Afghanistan.

The short answer is, no, sir, we are going to win. We have won already very many difficult battles. We've come a long way.

Those people who think that Afghanistan -- we might be losing in Afghanistan or we haven't made a significant progress need to think about Afghanistan six years ago or seven years ago. When they compared the Afghanistan seven years ago with what it is now, their assessment and judgment will be definitely a different one.

So based on our experience, based on the aspiration of our people and the commitment of our international friends, we have every reason to believe that we are going to win.

There are certainly challenges, and some of these challenges have been adequately addressed already.

Number one, seven years ago, Afghanistan was a threat to the global security and a threat to the security of its own people. It's no longer that threat.

Seven years ago, Afghanistan was ruled by Al Qaeda and Taliban, the most barbarian regime on Earth, in the history of Afghanistan. It is not being governed by a democratic state.

Seven years ago, we didn't have any kind of democratic institutions in that country. Afghanistan is probably now governed by the most democratic institutions of governors in its history.

Seven years ago, Afghanistan was an entirely difficult place to live in. But if you compared the living conditions of people now -- I mean, true, some people are complaining about the fact that there's been little progress made in the living conditions of our women, but you should also be looking at the fact that over 2 million girls are now going to school. Afghanistan has never had a health care system reaching our women, and in the most remote areas ever in our history.

ERLANGER: Can I ask you just to say then -- I mean, you say that you have big challenges -- What are the ones that worry you the most, the sort of two things that keep you worried at night?

ATMAR: Actually, there are three rather than two.

(LAUGHTER)

ATMAR: First is security. Second is narcotics. And third is governance. And, obviously, governance, security and narcotics will also generate another challenge, which is how to fight poverty in that country.

ERLANGER: Thank you.

Minister MacKay, I mean we want to talk a bit about NATO's challenge here too. And Canada has stepped up -- all of NATO stepped up with Article 5, and now I think probably wonders why.

When you are speaking at home, when you go to Quebec, for instance, what do you tell people about why Canada is in Afghanistan and what it's doing there and when it can get out? What do you say to them?

PETER MACKAY, MINISTER OF DEFENSE, CANADA: Well, those are big questions that we've had a real national consultation on very recently, as recently as this week. We just passed in our Parliament a motion to continue our presence in Afghanistan militarily through the NATO-UN mission to 2011.

I should have said at the start, Steve, I'm glad that you said Phil Donahue and not Jerry Springer.

(LAUGHTER)

ERLANGER: Or Jon Stewart.

(LAUGHTER)

MACKAY: But this issue has been very much a top of mind one for Canadians for some time. You mentioned casualties -- for a new generation of Canadians, this is a shock to their system to see this happening.

But I think it goes back very much to what Minister Atmar said. It pays to do a little bit of a retrospective in Afghanistan, to see the progress that has been made. There's a lot of positives that have occurred.

The security situation remains challenging -- and I'll come back to that -- from a NATO perspective. But kids in school -- 6 million kids in school. Girls able to get an education. Child mortality rates are down -- the vaccinations that permit for that; eradication of polio. Microfinance credit available now to women, so entrepreneurs are able to start generating wealth.

The infrastructure -- roads, water systems, dams, generators, electricity, basic of life that we take for granted, are occurring.

ERLANGER: So that's what you tell the people of Quebec?

MACKAY: Well, Quebecers need to see that in particular. We've just had a regiment, the Vingt-Deuxième Regiment, who have just finished a rotation in Quebec, and they tell the story better than any politician, quite frankly. The soldiers who were there, the aid workers, the diplomats who were there have seen it firsthand.

I've seen it firsthand, so it resonates.

But everyone needs to know that our ongoing presence is what is important, because we don't to see slippage, we don't want to see a return to a state, a failed state, where they can be exporters of terrorism.

And the global terrorism situation is one that focuses the attention very quickly...

ERLANGER: I mean, I certainly understand, no one wants to go back to a situation where the West took care of the Soviet occupation, left -- allowed chaos...

(AUDIO GAP)

... when your constituents (inaudible) when, how long? I mean, how long does Canada have to be in Afghanistan?

MACKAY: Well, we have to be there until they're a self-sustaining country that can protect its own borders, provide its security.

And this is the critical piece: When Mr. Atmar says security allows for so much of the other problems that have to be addressed, whether it's internal governance, whether it's issues around poppy eradication, development of a greater civil society, social networks, it all comes under the umbrella of security.

So therein lies the key challenge for NATO. Countries need a military. Churchill, who is quoted here often, said "every country has an army or somebody else's."

And if the world ever forgets that we need to band together -- NATO, in my view, is the best vehicle for us to assure our collective security. Everything in Afghanistan stems from that epicenter.

If we can push back against the insurgents, if we can allow for -- and this is my point, in particular -- we need to get the Afghan national security forces, army and police, to a point where they are able to at least propel the Taliban away from their villages and population centers. That allows for them to see the security perimeter to have greater development, greater project and program delivery.

That is the only way, in my view, we're not only going to hold the ground, allow for further democratic development, but ensure that Afghanistan can walk on its own. And that's the state that I talk about to Quebecers and to all Canadians. That's why we're there. And that's why we're going to continue to be there.

ERLANGER: Right. That's a good (INAUDIBLE) to General Eikenberry. How far are we away from this desired end state? And, frankly, how close are we to failure?

As I say, you have NATO allies screaming at one another. And, you know, if you could tell us in some ways in military terms how bad is it and what do you need to fix it?

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KARL EIKENBERR, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN
MILITARY COMMITTEE, NATO: Steve, the first thing I'd say is -- you had mentioned my tour in Afghanistan. I had three years of service there. I thought that I had come away with Afghanistan -- with a pretty good understanding of tribal politics until I came to NATO headquarters here in Brussels.

(LAUGHTER)

I'd come back to -- I'd come back to what Minister Atmar had said and the minister of Defense of Canada had said about baselines -- important to remember the baselines.

We've got some very beautiful photos up on the wall of women of Afghanistan. What wasn't said, over 20 percent of the Parliament of Afghanistan belongs to female



parliamentarians. There's women now who are entering the Afghan National Army and the Police.

Let me come back to what you're talking about, about how are we doing on the ground.

Important to come to baselines, though. If we go back to the mid-1990s -- let's think back to when NATO made the decision to go into Bosnia and Herzegovina, a very important step forward, a big step forward.

But here we are now in 2008, which was the great leap forward, going a strategic distance, far from Europe into an extraordinarily difficult expeditionary environment.

Now, who would have thought in late 1990s that NATO would have the capacity and the will to do what we're doing.

And then you think that in 2003 is when we picked up the UN mandate, NATO picked up the UN mandate, and it was restricted to the Kabul area. Within three years, NATO had expanded around the entire country of Afghanistan.

For any one nation to have done that would have been remarkable. But for a coalition of 26 in this unprecedented operation, that is a huge sea change.

We now have 47,000 NATO troops inside of Afghanistan; 26 NATO countries and 14 partner countries, a coalition of 40 all together.

How are they doing? Well, we have a good framework that's been established for international operations to take place. We have a framework for the government of Afghanistan to continue to try to expand its writ.

We have much more presence in Afghanistan than we had in 2005. I'll give you a specific example: Helmand province, one of the most troubled provinces in Afghanistan today, center of a lot of the poppy production, a center of Taliban activity -- against which we're making steady progress now.

In 2005, in early 2005, we had a total of just a bit over 100 U.S. special operations forces and civil military administrators in Helmand province. We had no Afghan National Army because the Afghan National Army hardly existed at that point. We had no Afghan National Police credible because we had no Afghan National Police program.

Today, we have a British-led task force with a very capable Danish contingent of over 5,000. We now have almost 2,000 Afghan National Army forces inside of Helmand. We've got growing police capability inside of Helmand.



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Very frankly, one of the problems that we have as NATO expanded, we didn't have previous to the NATO expansion -- as we look back in hindsight now, we did not have enough international military force presence. And so...

ERLANGER: I've heard that said about somewhere else.

(LAUGHTER)

EIKENBERRY: If I could go back in time and look at decisions made, but in hindsight, I could say that, yes, in certain parts of Afghanistan, in southern Afghanistan, we and the Afghans did not have enough presence...

ERLANGER: Can I ask you another question, which perhaps is awkward for you, but in some ways, in security terms, isn't the answer to Afghanistan in Pakistan? I mean, if Afghanistan is the question, isn't Pakistan the answer?

EIKENBERRY: The broader war against extremism and against international terrorism, it cannot be won in Afghanistan alone. There is a very serious problem that extends into Pakistan.

Now, there are a set of problems that exist within Afghanistan that have to be addressed as well. There's problems of governance. There's problems of narco trafficking that the Minister's been clear on.

But, yes, Steve, you talked about the two wars. There's obviously convergence and an overlap. But when we talk about the war of international terror -- against international terrorism, which poses a strategic threat to everybody in this audience, yes, you can't confine it to -- within the borders of Afghanistan.

ERLANGER: OK.

Freiherr zu Guttenberg, I mean, talk a little bit about NATO and Germany and where it wants to be. I mean, Germany, obviously, it did an offensive operation in Kosovo for the first time, and it was a lot of back patting. And it has gone into Afghanistan, but in general the criticism is that Germany has stayed safe and it refuses to go to the south and it refuses to actually engage in any sort of real combat.

And is this fair? I mean, obviously, you're CSU/CDU, so perhaps your views may be stronger than others. But talk a bit about the problem of this in the larger sense of the alliance.



I mean, obviously, Merkel has a coalition problem, which is clear. But, I mean, is this criticism unfair? I mean, does Germany feel a sense of unfairness about it, or do you feel actually it's time for Germany to get over some of these complexes, at least in Afghan terms?

KARL-THEODOR FREIHERR ZU GUTTENBERG, MEMBER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, GERMAN BUNDESTAG: Back patting, first of all, doesn't help. And the back starts to hurt rather sooner than later.

And is it fair or is it unfair? I think we have to -- first of all, we have to look into the mirror as Germans and ask ourselves is our communications strategy, is it sufficient? And I would say very bluntly we have failed in our communication internally and externally.

Internally, why? Because we allow ourselves -- it's a remarkable amount of shyness when it comes to the question, what do we really do in Afghanistan and why do we do it.

And the first attempt that we have seen by Former Minister Struck that we defend our German security at the Hindu Kush has never been a successful phrase, to be very honest. And if you repeat that phrase at the very moment, you still create, let's say, astounded faces in Germany.

I'll just answer that by reflecting that our security has defended in Hinderland, which is a tiny little village in Bavaria, and not at the Hindu Kush. And that's certainly not the answer, as well.

Communication as such, what does it mean? And the shyness was that we tried to formulate defensive approaches when it comes to our commitment in NATO. Never the less, I think we have profoundly expanded our commitment in -- especially when it comes to ISAF during the last couple of years.

But the shyness reflects to the outer world, as well, and to our partners.

And just to give you an example, when I was in Washington just before the security conference in Munich, I was amazed that whenever I asked partners and friends there what is your expression what Germany does in Afghanistan, then the answer always was, well, you're in the north and you're doing more or less nothing to help us in the south.

And nobody reflected to our decision we have just made in Germany to take over the quick response force from Norway this year. Nobody responded to the efforts we have done during the last couple of years when it comes to reconnaissance all over Afghanistan with the Tornados. Nobody responded to a decision we have made to expand our airlift capacity also to the south.



Nobody responded to our efforts to implement a solidarity clause -- I think that's the key word for all of us, solidarity -- a solidarity clause in our mandate in Germany to help in case of emergency also in the south; and not only by back patting others, but also by using combat elements.

So I do know that this is a slow way in comparison to others, Minister MacKay, but I think it's a remarkable pace, nevertheless, in respect from where Germany came from '98 on during the last couple of years and where we have to bring our population, as well.

So that's maybe a reason for the shyness. It's not an excuse, definitely not. But we do have to communicate more openly and more creatively what we are doing and that we are not sticking to the north, but that we are going step by step to an all-over solidarity, let's say movement as such.

ERLANGER: Good. Good. Thank you.

Yes, sir?

MACKAY: I fully acknowledge what has just been said, and I think that other countries are similarly looking at how they can deploy, how they can make other contributions, if you will, whether it's equipment, whether it's this emergency response element.

And there are realities. We recognize that -- as a NATO country, we recognize that there are constitutions, although there's sometimes constitutional constipation, it seems, in some countries, including our own.

There's also coalitions and there's caveats. And we have no caveats, but we do have contingencies now. Let's say, we need a partner in the operations that we're conducting in Kandahar province. We need a battalion, a maneuver battalion of a thousand troops to complement our own.

And what I said at the last NATO meeting is, you know, come up with a thousand troops and you get to keep 2,500.

So there's elements of this mission that take on a very real and very immediate or urgent matter, and that is when you have a spring insurgency, as we may face, we don't want to be losing ground. Because having said that there has been a lot of progress made just moments ago, there is still this steady flow, that you referred to, of Taliban across the Pakistan border, into the south, predominantly, although there's other areas of the country that are also vulnerable.



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And this is a dangerous neighborhood. It's not just the Pakistan border we have to be mindful of. There is a lot of external influences.

This is a country that has experienced such volatility over the years, the more we expand out into the territories of the south and hold ground militarily, ultimately it has to be held by Afghan security force. And their own domestic policing is a big, important part of that overall stability and confidence building that the Afghan people will need.

And further to that, I would say that the justice system, while education is critically important and I think it's going to be transformative for a generation of young Afghan women, in particular, having a justice system that is fully functional, that allows for fair and open trials and transparency in their justice system; there's issues around prisoner treatment, detainees. There's issues around that justice system.

We can't, for example, have countries in the West lose confidence either because of things such as the punishments that are meted out for downloading of certain things off the Internet. That is a show-stopper for a lot of countries when they don't see the progress being made. And it's back to your question: What are we fighting for?

ERLANGER: Can I ask you whether you had assurances from your allies that those thousand troops will be forthcoming in Bucharest or sooner?

MACKAY: I'm confident we'll have a complement of a thousand...

(CROSSTALK)

ERLANGER: Good. I like confident ministers. That's great.

(LAUGHTER)

I'm going to ask all of you now to participate, please. This is, after all, meant, to satisfy your curiosity, and not just my own.

So I will take as much -- we've got plenty to of time.

So, Carlos, please.

And could you, as usual, identify yourselves, please.

CARLOS PASCUAL, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION: Carlos Pascual (OFF-MIKE), and thank you all for your presentations.

And Minister Atmar, again, thank you for, as usual, being very forthright about this critical problem, that nexus of drugs and governance and security that you mentioned, the impact on poverty.

And if we could come back to that, because in many ways if you look at that issue, one could argue that that has gotten worse, that if one looks at the percentage of illicit trade within Afghanistan, and particularly drugs, that a share of GDP has actually increased and it's somewhere between a third and half.

And if it's growing, one would argue that something isn't right yet and what needs to change in the strategy.

And if I could come back to you and ask you from an Afghan side what needs to change and the strategy to break this knot and to deal with the issues of corruption, in particular.

And if you could also comment on what needs to happen from the international side to be supportive of that strategy. And maybe in the context of that if you wouldn't mind also commenting on the difficulty that is presented on issues related to eradication. Because, obviously, you can destroy a crop in one day but actually building the networks to build alternative livelihoods can take years.

And so have you managed this incredibly difficulty problem, and some of the issues that you have work through?

ERLANGER: I thought -- if you don't mind, we'll take a couple questions and -- Wendy?

And, again, introduce yourself please.

WENDY SHERMAN, ALBRIGHT GROUP: Hi, Wendy Sherman from the Albright Group.

There are two big -- many big things that are happening outside of Afghanistan that may have an impact on Afghanistan, but I wanted to ask the panel about two of them. One is the political changes in Pakistan and what impact, if any, that will have on the future of Afghanistan.

And the second is if the Democrats take over the White House, which I personally hope happens, there will be a withdrawal, probably a very thoughtful withdrawal from Iraq. But what impact will that have on the future of Afghanistan?

ERLANGER: And, John, I saw your - and then we'll go back to the panel.

JOHN KORNBLUM: John Kornblum. I work in investment banking in Berlin.

I would like to draw -- since we have military experts and politicians here, a connection with the very interesting panel that took place yesterday called "Who will write the rules of global economy in the 21st century?"

The Secretary General made some remarks yesterday tying NATO to global security. He said, we're not going to expand globally, but we need to have partnerships.

Afghanistan is a very good example of a country which is very important to us which has gone through an inhumane phase of its history, which needs our help. And there are probably -- well, we know there are a number of others in the world.

Especially perhaps the two elected officials from the West on the panel: Is a Western role in writing the rules of security, of trying to help failed states around the world, is that a politically viable situation?

I have a feeling it's going to be necessary, but is it politically viable?

ERLANGER: Thank you.

Mr. Atmar, you were first addressed, so why don't you answer.

ATMAR: Just for the colleague's information, we also get confirmed by the Parliament of Afghanistan, so in a way we are also elected in that country -- which is a great change, obviously.

The issue of are we making progress with poverty reduction in Afghanistan, the answer is yes -- significantly.

Seven years ago, we had to literally feed the humanitarian --

LOSS OF SOUND-

but if you look at the significant uplift of the poor people throughout the country, it is so promising. It's economy is growing. Family incomes are increasing. And the number of people living on a \$1 a day is significantly reducing.

But has there been increase in a poppy cultivation and in the drug economy?
Yes, sir, unfortunately.

Why? Because the policy was not properly formulated nor was it effectively implemented. That as the problem. People focused on other issues more than on narcotics. So as a result, then there was a great deal of reductionism in the policy thinking about this problem.

Some focused only on eradication and others thought that interdiction will be the best strategy forward.

But Afghans largely said that, "This is our problem. Let us handle it ourselves. All we need from you is support."

So therefore you often hear these days that Afghanization is the key policy change that we would like to see happen in Afghanistan -- Afghanization of security, Afghanization of governance, Afghanization of counternarcotics, and Afghanization of the development of reconstruction processes.

Why is it so important? Because Afghans know about their problems. They need to formulate that policy. And what we need from the international community is, number one, a sustained commitment, number two, a respect for that role of Afghans to carry out their Bonn policies, and, number three is appropriate support there.

Eradication could be a disincentive for some, but this is not going to be a sustainable response to -- in terms of counternarcotics.

A sustainable solution to this problem is self-restraint by the people of Afghanistan. And self-restraint will have to be first supported by an effective public communication, two, effective law enforcement, three, effective alternative livelihood strategies, and four, effective interdiction.

Is there any hope that we will be able to do all of these? I think what gives me that hope is the political will on the part of the international community and the government of Afghanistan, and the people of Afghanistan at large.

But what concerns me the most is that the political will is there, but there is this horrible bureaucracy in the way, which actually reduces the effectiveness of that political will.

Hence, our call on our partners: You need to support us more effectively on this policy. We are ready, as the government of Afghanistan, to be held accountable on, number one, counternarcotics, number two, governance. But we would very much like to be appropriately supported on these issues.



ERLANGER: I mean, do you think just that you don't get enough support or that the West is pushing you around too much?

ATMAR: The problem with the support, with all due respect, sir, to the excellent contributions made by our international partners. I mean, we were -- just talked about Germany. It surely should not only be appreciated in terms of security but also in development areas. This is a great nation and doing a great job in Afghanistan.

So we very much appreciate the amount of support given to Afghanistan, but there are two challenges with that. Challenge number one, it's not sizeable enough. Some people would argue that some of our international partners think that they can win in Afghanistan on the cheap. This is not going to happen. It is going to be costly.

Second, it's the way in which aid is given to Afghanistan. It has been our argument for the last couple of years that the best way to give aid to Afghanistan and to make sure that this is coordinated and it is effectively applied is through the budget, government budget.

But the argument was, "Well, the government has not demonstrated enough accountability and transparency." And we said, "OK, let's look at a joint system of accountability and transparency. Then we said, "OK, let's look at a joint system of accountability and transparency. We are ready to be held accountable for what has been given to us to invest in the best interest of Afghans."

I think that is a challenge facing our international partners and they have to respond to it.

ERLANGER: We have two other very substantive questions on the tables, so if General, please.

EIKENBERRY: Steve, what Minister Atmar had said in terms of the international community and what our expectations have to be, if I talk about what we might have gotten wrong. And here again, I would say our Afghan friends with us got wrong in the early 2002 is we were very clear on the destruction to the physical infrastructure that occurred. The destruction to the bureaucracy that had occurred.

What we weren't clear on and we underestimated is the effects of the destruction of human capital. Through two to three decades of warfare and two generations without education, terrible depredations upon the people of Afghanistan during that three decades. The flight of human capital.

So as we entered into 2002, I think we underestimated, INAUDIBLE may have underestimated the cumulative impact. If we are going to succeed in the war against

narcotics, we have to be clear among the amount of time that is going to be required here and the level of effort. I think the international community has seen one major success in the world, Thailand.

Thailand began with a much higher level of in their economy. Much higher level of social capital. And even then it took about two decades and the problem wasn't as severe as it is in Afghanistan. What we have seen in Afghanistan is a correlation between where the government is able to impose reasonable security and alternatives in the economy.

In order to do that to where the places that are most affected by poppy right now and by the trafficking of narcotics. We require more Afghan National Police in order to achieve that. The Afghan National Police Program is behind the progress of the army. The program really didn't begin in earnest until late 2005. So the program is several years behind.

In order to pick up the pace of the program, more trainers are needed. More money is needed. And the more investment that takes place from NATO in terms of providing trainers for the Afghan National Army that will allow other countries to shift trainers from the Afghan National Army over to the police.

And the final point I'd make is that you can have a good police force. But police don't equal justice. And a justice system equals police, it equals correctional institutes, it equals courts. And so a singular focus on police will also not allow the Afghans to succeed and I think Minister Atmar was clear on the need to think comprehensively about justice. Police in the absence of the other pillars will be a security force, but it won't be a sustainable security force.

ERLANGER: Minister?

MACKAY: Well I think there is quite a smorgasbord of questions there. Just quickly to comment on the development and the reconstruction side. Our experience and Afghanistan's our number one aid recipient, has been just what Minister Atmar alluded to. Having the Afghans themselves participate in the actual reconstruction projects, for example, we have found to be very rewarding, you know, when those big pieces of infrastructure whether they be bridges or roads are actually constructed by Afghans there's a tremendous, excuse me, ferocity of defending that infrastructure of embracing those programs. So the close cooperation and the actual delivery and completion of projects by Afghans I think is consistent with what the Minister has said.

On the subject of Pakistan, there's no question that that boarder remains perhaps the single biggest valve to the continuation of the insurgency and the ongoing challenges

around instability. Until we are able to mount a sufficient effort to really put in place some kind of boarder control that, by necessity, has to include Pakistan's full participation.

The impact of the political instability, if one was to say, "Is it having an immediate effect?" It probably is in the sense that Pakistan is looking inward now more than ever before and perhaps, if I could put it this way, somewhat distracted. But ultimately they're going to have to get their act together, work with the international community to see that they're addressing insurgencies and extremists within their own country.

I mean, the Taliban can be a cancer on Pakistan just as they've been on Afghanistan, just like that.

ERLANGER: Do you think Pakistan wants a stable Afghanistan?

MACKAY: I think for the most part, they do. I think that there is clearly elements in Pakistan that would prefer to see their neighbor continue to have, experience problems. But I think you're seeing now a greater degree of acceptance within Pakistan that they need to get along. And I think, if I could say so, President Musharraf is again focused on some of his own problems as opposed to his neighbors.

On the American elections, far be it for a Canadian to ever comment on such things. That's for the American people. We do like NAFTA.

ERLANGER: How do you feel about fingerprints?

MACKAY: There was a question from a gentlemen here about democracy. I think if there was one thing that we could point to, you can list the static's of impacts on children and health and education. But I think democracy has taken root now in Afghanistan, in a relatively short time when you consider the spectrum of countries and their experiences with democracy. I would say that in such a relatively short time, really an eye blink, in terms of world history. It's deeply rooted now.

And the Afghan people do not want to go back. And they certainly don't want to experience the atrocities and the lack of human rights and degradation that were happening inside their country. They will never go back. Now stability first, democracy and forms of democracy second. But I think that has been the biggest contribution. And NATO can take a lot of credit for that.

ERLANGER: OK.

FREIHERR ZU GUTTENBERG: I'm not tempted to talk about Germany's boarders to Austria now and certain elements of contacts we have there. Pakistan certainly is one of the key elements here and to be very honest I don't see any – any coherent

strategy or a coordinated strategy amongst our – amongst partners here. How to deal with that country at the very moment. And I would like to see more than in the light what happens in Paris and also in respect of the Bucharest summit.

And that brings me to a point, what do we have to expect from Bucharest now? Is it – will it just be another summit declaration or just a language that we’ve seen before. Or do we have a chance to produce a ‘plan’, in quotation marks, but really a plan of such. And there have been attempts and efforts made for doing so. And I must have been a German who invented the name or phrase Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan. Unbelievable.

ERLANGER: You need one more adjective.

FREIHERR ZU GUTTENBERG: In one word, yes. In one – in one word and they must have been very proud as well in talking – asking a German how he reacted to the value of bureaucracy. It’s just another task.

But – but nevertheless, I think the approach as such is important and that brings me to the question of John. And its certainly not – Afghanistan is certainly not and I refuse to say that Afghanistan is a little more litmus test but that doesn’t help anybody. But I think it’s a litmus test for the international community as such.

And the comprehensive approach is a euphemism that we have created for a construct that tries to combine institutional elements of the UN of NATO, of EU as well, with our problems we have with the connexus of the U.N. and NATO. And for instance the behavior of our Turkish friends at the moment and other things.

This approach could be a – could be a, not a blueprint, but an example of how to deal in the future with failing and failed states and other things. So I think we should put every thinkable effort in that very approach of a plan as such. Pakistan has been mentioned, I would not only mention Pakistan, when we talk about the neighborhood of Afghanistan. We tend to rule out Iran and because of obvious reasons and other things. But this is one of the few things where there is at least room for shared interests with Iran as well.

And where we have at least a, lets say, a platform for dialogue. And so to see the region as such must implement talking to Iran as well. I think that is also part of the things we need to talk about.

ERLANGER: General, could I actually press you to try to talk to John’s question also. I mean, my experience covering the American military is that it is very good at sweeping the table. And then not so good at setting the places again. You know, it’s very good at war fighting and it hasn’t been trained in nation building. And you know, it learns

because it's a big responsive organization generally. But, there's been lots of talk about, you know, whether we should have actually nation-building brigades and a different kind of – you know, almost like a Carabinieri force. I mean, is there an answer to what John asks or is it too much to ask the Pentagon to run that part of the world too?

EIKENBERRY: Well fortunately, I'm a NATO officer and I don't speak to the U.S. military now.

ERLANGER: A different breed.

MACKAY: NATO doesn't talk to the U.S.?

EIKENBERRY: Don't speak for.

MACKAY: Oh, OK.

EIKENBERRY: Don't speak for the U.S. military. Seriously, no, I think that in here I'm not just speaking for the U.S. military. For all of NATO there has been very, very significant adaptations that have been made over the last six, seven years based upon – I'll talk about Afghanistan, our experience there. NATO's experience there.

The Provincial Reconstruction Team. That was a, at the time, U.S.-led coalition innovation. Its genesis actually came from a British staff officer serving on the coalition staff at the time. Tremendous innovation to push out military civil teams combined with our foreign ministries and our state department with aid and development workers trying to extend the writ of the Afghan government into a very troubled areas and service a focal point for the activities of security and help where they could to coordinate the delivery of aid, I emphasize coordinate not to lead. And to assist the Afghan government in trying to establish a presence.

You look at the remarkable work that all of our military's have done in training the Afghan National Army, a huge success story, a huge success story. Which today is much more important for the Afghan National Army is not their ability to defeat Taliban, important as that is. It is a symbol of national unity, it's a political resource right now in Afghanistan. Delivered by all the nations or most of the nations that are sitting here today.

The Afghan National Police program could not be making the progress its making without the military's involvement. The military engaged in many different areas of assisting and supporting wherever it can in reconstruction and development programs. Our military's that are out there laying roads inside of Afghanistan.

So, no, I would say that one of the great strengths of an alliance like NATO is that we're a democratic countries. One of the strengths of our society is we're creative, we're

adaptive people. Our militaries reflect that attribute. And so I think, no, we've – are there things that are missing right now? Yes, there are things that are missing right now in the non-military side.

Quick 'vignette', as a commander in Afghanistan I frequently ask my commanders in the field if given a choice would you want another 100 infantry men or marines or would you take five agricultural experts. In a majority of the cases the answer would be we'd take five agricultural experts. I don't think anybody is saying that the army, any of our armies should start to develop a core competency in agriculture experts.

ERLANGER: Well if no one else will.

EIKENBERRY: Yes.

ERLANGER: Well let's take another round of questions. I have some names and I will take some more. Nik Gowing and you I've got. There's a guy in the back, right? OK.

NIK GOWING: Steve, I wonder if we can press the issue of what success is. You used the word end-state. The word victory has come up as well. But how do you define success in this current environment. Think back to what the Secretary General said yesterday.

He talked about the need for public diplomacy. Something he's been talking about for several months now to project some kind of achievement rather than the image that comes through people like us, I suppose, of the difficulties being faced. Particularly in the south of the country.

And I wonder if I could just press that point, particularly with the General about these new measures of effectiveness that you're considering and working on. In other words your trying to find ways now of creating the new lines and the new levels of achievement which then can be projected into the public domain. That as well as the what is going around in privately in circle talking about the exit strategy being the ANA and the ANP.

This is obviously a moving feast at the moment. But for people like me who have to question people like you and give an impression of what is happening, not on a daily basis necessarily. We are struggling to find out how we measure some form of success rather than victory or an end-state.

ERLANGER: OK, this woman here please. Microphone. And again, please introduce yourself. Thanks.



MARY SAROTTE: Thank you. Hi. I'm Mary Sarotte, I'm a history Professor at the University of Southern California. Thank you for taking time to be with us today. Defense Minister you quoted Churchill. Churchill also said that Americans can always be counted on to do the right thing in the end, after having exhausted every conceivable alternative first.

So based on that question, and also based on the fact that I'm actually going onward from here to U.S. Army base Baumholder, which during the cold war was one of the largest concentration of American troops based permanently abroad. I'm wondering about the rumors about permanent basing in the region. Does that belong to the category of the right thing to do? Or does that belong to the category of the alternatives?

In other words, put simply, what is specifically on the American roll, following up on your question. What is the right thing for America to do starting in January 2009?

ERLANGER: OK, let's take one more. There is a gentleman in the back who's been very patient.

KNUT KIRSTE , NATO'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY DIVISION: Hi, thank you. Knut Kirste from NATO's Public Diplomacy Division. I'd like to come back to the notion of the need for better civil military cooperation. And while this comprehensive approach seems to have become the buzz word, there seems to me to be an intellectual vacuum on how to actually implement comprehensive approach and better coordination between the various trends of the international community.

And I was wondering while it also seems that there is very little appetite for creating new structures. Isn't Afghanistan also a manifestation of the adequate structures that we have at the moment for state intervention and nation building and bringing NATO, U.N., EU and all these international organizations together.

So in other words, do we need new structures and fundamentally reconsider the relationship between the various organizations and agencies involved. Thank you.

ERLANGER: OK, why don't we throw these to the panel. I think at this point if you answer whatever you can, because there are lots of people who have questions. But let's try to at least deal with all the questions if we possibly can. Minister?

ATMAR: Question that Nik Gowning asked, actually we need to look at the true part of the question. What is the measure of success. Success number one is that Afghanistan is no longer the threat to the global security. Part two is how to sustain that situation. So we have already succeed in achieving the first goal.



The objective now is to make sure that Afghanistan remains that democratic, secure and prosperous country. Now that is going to take time. And in order to measure our progress towards that goal, I would again invite colleagues to the Afghanistan compact.

Where we as the government of Afghanistan and the international community agreed on certain benchmarks. Now those benchmarks and agreements in the compact are the basis for our future collaboration. To measure progress we have to go back to those benchmarks. This is important.

But I also get the sense that some people are talking about an exit strategy. An exit strategy for everybody is a fiscally sustainable, effective accountable and transparent state in Afghanistan.

ERLANGER: Such states don't exist anywhere. So why should we get one in Afghanistan?

ATMAR: By the – you are right actually. I mean, sometimes we – we are favored in the sense that they want us to have a better state than they have.

ERLANGER: Aren't you lucky.

ATMAR: That's fine. I'm fine with that. Let's aim at that state. But that is the solution. If you don't have an effective legitimate and competent state and state machinery to deliver public goods including security, reconstruction, social services, et cetera, et cetera, Afghanistan will continue to rely on its partners.

But to come back to the issue of has the time come now for us to discuss the exit strategy? I don't really think colleagues that we need to be talking about that now. We need to be clear about the strategy. We need to be clear about years to come. But at the same time, we will have to avoid creating a situation in which people will expect quick fixes.

This is not going to be a quick fix approach. This is going to call for longer term engagement of both the international community and the leaders of Afghanistan.

MACKAY: Can I pick up on that one?

ERLANGER: Yes.

MACKAY: I think its, Sir, there's an international impatience at times on missions such as this. We live in a scratch and win generation where you're suppose to get the results immediately. But you know, nation building, sustainable peace in a place like Afghanistan

will take time. It's significant to think that a country like Croatia is contemplating or we are contemplating membership in NATO compared to where they were not that long ago.

Not to put too fine a point on it. But it does take time. Replacing some of the diminished human and natural resources in Afghanistan takes time. Five to six million Afghan refugees have returned to that country. When you think for example, of their agricultural challenges, we spoke last night, Minister Atmar, about a massive reforestation effort in Afghanistan.

Replacing the poppy obviously with alternative crops. Pomegranate, Afghanistan can be the world's greatest generator of pomegranate. What better for the health of the world and greenhouse gas emissions than to be, you know, putting sustainable crops in Afghanistan.

There was a question about the go-forward and when we get to Bucharest and one of the central questions will be a political military plan for the country. So that comprehensive strategy and approach will be very much on the table. How we'll come away from that with concrete deliverables remains the question and the challenge and I think Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer spoke of that as well.

ERLANGER: He says there's at least 10 more working days or something.

MACKAY: Well 14 now. But you know the long and the short of it is what are the alternatives. If not NATO then who. The world needs more NATO. NATO needs more of the world. There's just no getting away from it. That's an over simplistic perhaps analysis. But it's true. It's the best vehicle, the best enabler for all of the good things that we're seeing in Afghanistan.

And the military are in some ways that enabler. They're doing a lot of the reconstruction. But it's not to replace or to do this for the Afghan people. It's to allow them to ultimately to do these things for themselves.

And I'm very pleased to see a Member of the Afghan Parliament who has just joined us who was in Canada with us recently. Here is a living breathing symbol of the progress in Afghanistan. It's lovely to see you here.

ERLANGER: Please.

FREIHERR ZU GUTTENBERG: But it's also connected to the question, how to combine it with – how to effectively combine it with the civil elements and I think we shouldn't, we must not over stretch NATO's capacities here in that regard. And there is certainly room for improvement when it comes to that question.

What is a success Nik? I think the question is crucial. I think one success already is keeping a long term strategy alive. And this is what is being questioned in Germany again and again, this very fact. And we have some levels of success and one is certainly NATO. And whether we see NATO at the moment as a constant basis of disaccord and mutual finger pointing and other things. What we don't do at the moment right here, but which is being used as – which is being eagerly used by certain elements of the press and others of the media sceneries. So that's not the exit strategy.

Of course we do work with – in Germany with the argument that successful training is a first step to an exit strategy. And I do admit that for instance our responsibility for the police training during the last couple of months was not close to what we would define as a success. And there still has to be done more and we tried to achieve the goals we have reformulated.

On Knuts's question on the comprehensive approach again. Do we need new structures? I don't think so. We need to efficiently use the structures we have. And there's room now for implementing a super coordinator. This by the way is not a German idea, it could have been one. I think, it comes from our American friends.

EIKENBERRY: The new Germans.

FREIHERR ZU GUTTENBERG: We might need a new super coordinator who is in Germany for the different Ministries we have and other things. And how to tackle the challenges we have within the grand coalition. But super coordinator I don't think is the solution. We have elements within the structures we do have already, and within the institutions and we have to optimize those.

ERLANGER: Very good. And there was a specific question to you about bases, yes and also our historian's questions about facing forces.

EIKENBERRY: Oh, I forgot that question. I remember Nic's.

ERLANGER: Sorry.

EIKENBERRY: With Nic's question, we talk about a success strategy. It's not helpful to talk about an exit strategy. What will success look like? That will be defined mostly by the Afghan's. But I think a success strategy – what a success would look like? It's an Afghanistan where the government of Afghanistan has a presence throughout the country.

It has the security institutions in place. That's its able to deal with violence and challenges. It is not a violent free country. And there's a framework that has been



established for the government of Afghanistan with assistance to provide a reasonable degree of services to its people. The necessary services.

We think through this, that's got a military dimension to it and it has a NATO dimension to it and it has a large international non-military dimension to it as well to achieve this. The use of metrics. Metrics are important. Metrics are important to ensure that as complex as this campaign is, where it involves international community and actors nations NATO our Afghan allies, we have to have clarity on what are our mid-term, our near-term goals and objectives.

They have implications for resource mobilization and obviously we have to have clarity with our people about what we're trying to achieve.

With regard to timelines, the reason that we have to be very careful about timelines is here I try to think through from an Afghan perspective. The Afghans have a memory that takes them back to the dark days of the late 1970's, the 80', the 90's in which all of us left Afghanistan and now we're back.

And so when we talk about timelines, and we're talking to the Afghan's about ways that we can do this more urgently. You want an Afghan mother and father to have their son commit to the Afghan army or police, their question is, "Are you going to be here three years from now?" Because that is an important question for me.

Do you want the Afghan farmer to dig an irrigation ditch because it's obvious, dig the irrigation ditch you'll get good return on investment on two years. Question, "Are you going to be here in two years." We want them to make choices politically now that have profound implications for their lives tomorrow and their sons and daughters lives. Question, "Are you going to be here."

So timelines do matter and in a paradoxical sense the more that we talk about urgency of the mission, the more in some ways that I worry that we set our Afghan friends and partners back.

One last point here, Steve. And this is a vignette, I'll be very brief with this. Two years ago, I had the opportunity to fly with our National Security Advisor, the US National Security Advisor Steve Hadley . We flew down to Gardez and we met with the Commander of the Afghan National Army 205th Corp, sorry 203rd Corp in Gardez. And there he sat, the commander in his green beret with his staff sitting beside him.

Steve Hadley had two questions for this commander, Major General Raufi. "What are you most proud of? What do you worry about the most?" He said, "what am I most proud of? Sitting right here. I'm a Pashto, my operations officer is a Hazara, my logistics

officer is a Tajik, my intelligence officer is an Uzbek”, and he went on, “all ethnic, all national,” and he said, “I’m proud of these guys. There’s a good team.”

And Steve asked the next question, “What do you worry about the most?” And he said, “I worry the most that you’re going to leave before it’s time.” I worked with the Afghans for many years at that point. I was sure that General Raufi, meant that we were going to leave before the barracks were built, the weapons are issued. Before you’ve got everything you need in terms of material.

But I was surprised because when he clarified it wasn’t about that at all. He said, “Why do I worry about you leaving before it’s time. Because I’ll go back to what I’m most proud of right now, my team, all ethnic, all national. If you leave before it’s time, this won’t hold because for three decades we’ve been fighting each other, we’ve been killing each other. We need you here to give us reassurance that we can bring ourselves together as a people and as a nation.”

That’s why timelines matter.

ERLANGER: Thank you. What I’m going to do is do another round and I would just ask you to – sorry?

CROSSTALK

ERLANGER: Yes, if you want, that’s right please.

EIKENBERRY: I forgotten.

ERLANGER: If you can, I tried. And thank you, ma’am.

EIKENBERRY: No, the question on basing that I am a NATO officer. That’s a – that’s for the U.S. and that’s any question of basing is for the Afghans.

ERLANGER: OK. That’s what I thought we’d hear. So, I didn’t push it too much. I would ask everybody now to be a little blunter and curser. It’s your time, but – and use it as you like. Ma’am, you were being also very patient, right here, thanks.

XENIA DORMANDY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY: Xenia Dormany, Harvard University. I’ll be very brief. There are elections in Afghanistan in a year, year and a half. What do we have to get done between now and then to ensure Afghanistan stays on a positive path?

ERLANGER: That’s good and brief. That’s great. You could be a journalist. And yes sir, you were also very patient.

LODEWIJK WILLEMS, FORTIS: Thank you. My question is to Minister Atmar.

ERLANGER: Could you introduce yourself again, I'm sorry?

WILLIAMS: Yes, I'm Wijk Willems from Fortis.

ERLANGER: Thank you.

WILLIAMS: Sponsor of this Brussels Forum. You came a long way, Sir, and nobody has given you the opportunity to talk about your own portfolio. Afghanization means education essentially. What are your hopes and what is your strategy? Thank you.

ERLANGER: And a quick question, right next to you, sorry.

DAVID FRENCH, WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY: Thank you. I'm David French, Westminster Foundation for Democracy. A question, if I may, for Minister Atmar and I'll be very brief. You've spoken of governance of being one of your three main preoccupations. Mr. MacKay talked about democracy taking root. If I write democracy as being rather better at taking root at the level of the villages at, at local level, and if that's a fair analysis, are there lessons that should be taken from those successes up to national level, particularly in relation to the coming elections?

ERLANGER: And I will just take one more, Pauline Neville-Jones.

PAULINE NEVILLE-JONES: Pauline Neville-Jones, UK Parliament. Could each of the panellists say what they think the best strategy is for the suppression of the narcotics trade and how it ought to be replaced economically? Thank you.

MACKAY: I commented briefly that I think complete eradication turns a lot of farmers back to the Taliban, unfortunately that has been the experience. So, it is crop rotation, alternative crops being offered, whether that means a greater donation of those crop seeds, farm implements. We have tried to have that impact, I know other countries have as well with direct aid contributions of alternative crop, and then working with the Afghans to help with the commercialization of their country and of their agriculture sector. I think that is in fact something that countries can focus on that would be an enormous contribution that is private sector investment in Afghanistan, because this isn't just going to come about as a result of the international communities' contributions. I think you are going to have to see a significant amount of private sector investment in the country, and not just agriculture, obviously, in a more diverse economy.

And I think the person best suited to answer the remainder of this question is Mr. Atmar.

HANEEF ATMAR: Thank you, Mr. Minister. On the issue of narcotics, again, as Mr. Minister said, we don't necessarily agree with the analysis that says that it is not poverty that drives narcotics. If it would be due to poverty, of course, it is exacerbated by security problems as well as governance problems. There is no way that that problem can be sustainably addressed as Mr. Minister said unless an alternative economy is built there, which will generate income, livelihood and then let people to sustain that situation. How to do that is not just subsistence agriculture, we need to look at new ideas.

Running the risk of coming up with these new ideas, one of the critical things is that the world markets, especially the regional markets need to open up for Afghan labor, and I as a Minister of Education need to train that labor. So that, number one, recruitments is denied to the Taliban, to the narcotics industry, and third that income is basically sent back as remittances to Afghans. Already, Afghans are taking advantage of that opening up, but we need to make it more structured, we need to have commitments from the regional countries, even Europe and North America.

The Afghan labor, to be effectively utilized there is perhaps one of the most strategic investments in uplifting the Afghan economy and providing an alternative to poppy. But again, I should say that alternative livelihood alone is not the answer either. There must be credible law enforcement interdiction, a credible judicial system to try these people. We often hear the call for naming and shaming these people, the people involved in the drug economy. I think colleagues we need to show some courage here. From the government side, I can assure you, we have our honorable MP in this room as well, we are ready to do that naming and shaming. But, we need your support on that one.

I won't go into details, some of these people that will have to be named and shamed were imposed on Afghan people, government ...

ERLANGER: And some of them are in the government or close to the government.

ATMAR: I said I won't go into details, but obviously, we need to deal with this. The human rights abuses, the corrupt officials in the government or outside the government, we have to show that courage, if we are to be trusted by Afghan people and our public -- your public at large. The reason I am emphasizing this, that the time has come for this bold action to be taken. Six years ago, it was a different story. We didn't want to rock the boat too much. Now, it is ready for a bold action like that.

ERLANGER: Don't forget local elections, please.

ATMAR: On the election?

ERLANGER: Yes, please.

ATMAR: The things we need to do in order to prepare for the elections, number one, to agree as to how many elections should we have, or the timing of the election, the Presidential, the parliamentary and the local election, and that is going to happen pretty soon hopefully. Number two is a significant scaling up of our investments and security. If we are unable to hold elections in at least four or five provinces, that election will not have any legitimacy. It will not contribute to peace and stability. We need to make sure that Afghan men and women are able to go to the poll stations.

Third is obviously a significant progress in the lives of people. People -- well, we have a limited experience with election. People need to ask one basic question, why do I need to elect this person or that person, or is it a relevant issue to my life? I think that relevance will have to be demonstrated through an effective government program of delivery of public goods. On the issue of education, thank you, I need -- I have limited time, but the three big objectives that we have for the years to come, number one is to expand access to education, especially to the 45 percent -- up to 50 percent of Afghan children that have the school age but are still out of school, and this is especially true of our girls. We have made significant progress, but still 70 percent of our school aged girls are out of school. Now, that depends on, number one security, number two female teachers, number three school facilities and distance to school.

Second objective is to reopen some 500 of my schools that are closed down by the terrorists and hopefully the coming year, most of these schools will be opened again. And third objective is that colleagues, whether we like it or not, education if it is of the wrong type is not so innocent. It could be producing terrorists and suicide bombers. And we in Afghanistan need to provide an alternative broad based, faith based education as the answer to the terrorist type of education. Thank you.

ERLANGER: Thank you. Mr. Guttenberg?

FREIHERR ZU GUTTENBERG: Not much to add on the poppy cultivation question. I think everything has been said and I agree with the substance here. I think one of the best signals of this morning was actually a question by Pauline. And if a member of a lead nation asks the others of how to proceed, I think that is the best -- it is the best signal or sign we can now put a future now to succeed in the future and just talking and asking each other. And Pauline, therefore, I was grateful for your question, thank you.

ERLANGER: Answer it.

FREIHERR ZU GUTTENBERG: I refer to the others.

ERLANGER: You OK?

EIKENBERRY: Yes, BRIEFLY on the elections, from a security perspective, what Minister Atmar had said is important, how a permissive environment will exist during the 2009 election, how many of the 398 districts of Afghanistan will be able to conduct fair elections. And I would point out that, over the past year, 2007, 70 percent of the violence -- reported violence in Afghanistan has been restricted to 10 percent of the districts, about 40 districts, which comprise 6 percent of the entire Afghan population. Still, that will not be good enough, I don't think, for 2009. But, the Afghan national security forces, they continue to improve. We continue in our -- I think in our skills in partnering with them. So, I think we should do better by 2009.

The second point about the elections will be what is the overall threat, what we can define it in security terms, but I would come back once to what the Governor of Kapisa Province, the then Governor of Kapisa Province had asked -- responded when I asked him what is the biggest threat in your province. And he said the biggest threat in my province is unemployment. So, it is not just a military task.

Lastly, with regard to counter-narcotics, let me add one other point here, and that is that it is true Afghanistan produces 90 percent or perhaps more now of the world's poppy. It is the fifth poorest country in the world and I assure you, it consumes far less than it produces. We as wealthy societies have to look ourselves in the mirror and say we have a demand problem.

ERLANGER: Absolutely. We have an Afghan MP with us, Fawzia Koofii, who would like to make comment. So, if I could have a microphone down here for her, thank you very much.

FAWZIA KOOFI (Member, Afghan Parliament): Good morning everybody and I am sorry for missing the two very important days and come late. I know how important these days are as a participant of last Brussels forum. I would like to shortly take the point of Defense Minister, I am glad to see you again, of the world impatience toward Afghanistan. I think it is not only the world that is impatience, it is the Afghan nation also that is getting more ambition and the fact is that six years back, more expectations -- great expectations were raised both by international community and by the people of Afghanistan, by the government of Afghanistan of the great changes that would happen in Afghanistan, and that process of nation and state building is a long process, even in countries that you have hundreds of years of democracy, still the debate of having a nation is a challenging debate.

So, in Afghanistan, we -- I think that was a wrong approach to create the greater expectations. Now that we are faced with these challenges that you in a way tackled security, the poppy and weak governance, those are the three challenges that are -- seem to be weakening our infrastructures day by day, but still the hope is there. The expectation and

the hope is still there. The enthusiasm is still there and that is something which is keeping up going forward.

On the issue of security, what is important here as I see all these very important people is coordination, coordination of all level, not only among international community and Afghan forces, but among international community themselves. But the fear in Afghanistan is that Afghanistan may change again to a place where different nations, different countries would go for their own interest rather than for Afghan nation interest. So, this is very important point that we should actually kill it in the first step before it raises again, by having a stronger coordination among ourselves and also with the -- among the international community and with the people of Afghanistan.

On the issue of narcotics, we don't talk of the -- all these good things that Afghan people have. We don't talk of the karakul, we don't talk of the local resources, we don't talk of the pomegranate that the Minister was referring to, and all the local resources that we have in Afghanistan. But, we take this poppy, which -- it is important to be mentioned that Afghanistan is not a demand country. We are rather a supply country, and the demand is somewhere else. The demand is either in Europe or in our neighboring countries. So, for that, we need the regional cooperation, regional cooperation of our neighboring countries, cooperation of the world to take this -- President Karzai always keeps saying that this is something -- a black thing on our forehead, and that is true. So, we need regional cooperation and we need to strengthen on local resources that Afghanistan has and as our Honorable Minister says, His Excellency, and to open market for those things.

Karakul, I think Afghanistan has the -- is the only country that has karakul. Karakul is this hat of our President, President Karzai. And in 1970s, that was one of the most important product Afghanistan had. Lapis lazuli, Afghanistan is the only country that has -- one of the third countries that has lapis lazuli mines. We need to start developing that, and we need to start building on those good things that Afghanistan and the nation has. Thank you.

ERLANGER: Thank you very, very much. I am afraid we have run out of time, and I wanted to thank everyone. I would sort of end with -- I have learned a lot, I hope you have too. I still find a lot of vague questions about benchmarks and so on. I mean, when is it over, when every Taliban is dead, when every Afghan has a visa card, I don't know. But, I worry a bit even NATO is suffering from some imperial overstretch and we can see it in Kosovo too, where everyone is trying to figure out how to end something we have started. And I just want to thank you all, I want to thank you for your patience. I am sorry I didn't get around to everyone who had a question, but a round of applause please for our panel.

CRAIG KENNEDY: And thank you, Steve, that was a really fine session. Thank all of you, we really appreciated it. We are now taking a coffee break and then we will come back and have the second session of today focused on the Middle East. I think it



promises to be very, very interesting. I want to thank the person who spent more time on an airplane getting here than anybody else, 72 hours I think. I think that is the record this time. If there is anybody else that spent more time, we will recognize you too. And yesterday, I neglected to say thank you to one group, part of what we have tried to do as we have been changing some of the economic program here is working with the Breugel Institute and they were very, very helpful in putting together both of the economic panels yesterday and I just wanted to recognize them for their assistance.

Coffee break out there, we don't have lots in cookies today, so you won't suffer from too much butter. But, it is still good. And then we will see you in half hour.

[END]



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