

Brussels Forum

March 20, 2016

Plenary #8: Degrade and Destroy: Countering Terror Abroad

Announcer: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Counselor and Senior Advisor on Security and Defense Policy at the German Marshall Fund, Mr. Derek Chollet.

Mr. Derek Chollet: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to day three of the German Marshall Fund's Brussels Forum. Over the last three days, we've covered many components of the world of disorder, but I think to all of us the most concerning is a threat of terrorism and we're going to dig into that question from many dimensions this morning, starting with our first panel, which will look at what we're doing to fight terrorism abroad in two parts.

First, with a perspective from the west, from the United States and Europe and how we're taking the fight to terrorists, especially in the Middle East, but then the second part of the panel will be a discussion from what it looks like on the ground in Iraq.

We will end our discussion of terrorism with thinking about the very difficult tradeoffs that all of us are facing when it comes to our values, holding up our liberties, but also the very difficult decisions we have to make when it comes to our security.

This is something that is very much on our minds in the last 48 hours starting with Friday night's dramatic events here in Brussels, with yesterday's terrible suicide bombing in Istanbul that killed two Americans. So with that, I'd like to turn it over to one of the best journalists we have who's covered these wars from CBS, my friend Cami McCormick, but we'll start with a short video introduction. Thank you very much.

Video: The threat of domestic terror on both sides of the Atlantic is palpable. The ongoing evolution of the tactic, scope, and organization of terrorist groups requires equally dynamic policy responses that include both conventional and unconventional options. Transnational financing, trafficking and criminal activities, state sponsorship of terrorist organizations, threats from failed and failing states and the role of climate change must all be addressed.

The United States has been at the forefront of military efforts to degrade and ultimately destroy terrorist activities abroad. On the European side, France has been a key actor as evidenced by French operations in Mali and throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

More broadly speaking, transatlantic partners have consolidated efforts through sanctions, maritime patrols and military support and applying diplomatic pressure on regional powers. Are the current toolkits

and policies sufficient to address terrorist threats? How effective are military responses and what are their limitations? Is there an overreliance on military options?

Ms. Cami McCormick: Hello. This is quite a crowd for a Sunday morning. Thank you all for coming [audio skip 1:26:06:12] so we'll start with a couple of issues that have just happened recently. I'll introduce you to the panel first. On your left here, we have the Honorable Youssef Amrani who is Head of Mission for the Royal Cabinet of Morocco. Next to him, we have General Gratien Maire who is the Vice Chief of Defense of France. The Honorable Didier Reynders, who is the Minister of Foreign Affairs and a Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium and U.S. Senator Jeff Sessions so thank you very much for being here.

We want to remind you that you can use your app, your Brussels Forum app, to submit questions if you'd like. If you're on social media at home, you can use Twitter, #brusselsforum. [audio skip 01:26:50:06] possible there are a lot of people here and a lot of issues so thanks again for being here.

Before we get started on the issue of the day, we want to talk to the Foreign Minister about what happened here in Brussels on Friday. [audio skip 01:27:16:10]. I know he is been questioned by authorities, what you hope to learn from him, and we've heard from French authorities that this investigation could grow, the network may actually be bigger than was first thought. Also, if you could address critics who wonder why it took so long to find him here in Brussels.

The Hon. Didier Reynders: First of all, I want to say that Bruges is not only a movie. It's also a city. It was a prison and is a jail so it's very important because we are very proud of the actions of the special force in Belgium because it was possible to take such a guy alive and it's very important for the families of all the victims of the terrorist attacks in Paris because we will go to a real jurisdiction and it will be possible in the near future to organize a trial with such a guy alive and that is very important.

Of course, it was very long to find a way to organize (inaudible) due to what, it's very difficult to know where you want to go, outside Belgium, to Syria. We receive many informations and many people have seen Salah Abdelsalam in France, in Germany, in the Netherlands and in many other places, true or not, but now after many investigations, first of all from the intelligence services it was possible to find him in two phases.

First, investigations from some days ago in a specific place in Brussels to find some weapons and we have found a lot of weapons but without an indication of the presence of Salah Abdelsalam there and due to a lot of investigation in such a place it was possible to have indications about his presence in Brussels. And due to that, some days later and on Friday, it was possible to find him in a new operation.

So now we start the inquiries and there are many possibilities not only for the Belgium authorities but also in joint teams with the French to start the discussions with such a guy but, of course, with a lawyer and we have seen that from the beginning it will be very difficult because the first reaction of his lawyer was to say, we don't want to go to France so you know that this may be a specific situation in Europe because we have a so-called European mandate so at least in three months we need to send him to France so we will have (inaudible) but we start the investigations now and we will receive a lot of comments.

The first comments coming from Salah Abdelsalam was yesterday that he want to go to the Stade de France in Paris and he was to be a suicide bombing, but he stopped. We don't know why, but it stopped and the next informations are that he was ready to restart something from Brussels. And it's maybe the reality because, I said, we have found a lot of weapons, heavy weapons, in the first investigations and we are seeing a new network of people around him in Brussels. So it was so difficult. I don't want to mention all the kind of research from many other peoples, sometimes very famous, but [audio skip 01:30:39:13] not only with maybe members of his family and people with the same ideologies as himself, but there are so many links between the so-called terrorist and the criminals. They are using the same tools. They are using the same cars, the same apartments, the same locations and there are many links between some criminals not only in Brussels. We have seen it in Paris after the terrorist attacks. It was possible to find some apartments with the same kind of relations between criminal guys and terrorists. And so now it's the next step to see if it's possible to find other people from the same network after the terrorist attack in Paris, but maybe also to try to find others. And the reason why we have seen them in Belgium, we have a different level of threat. And we have explained to the population that we are still at the same level of threat, now than before the devastation.

Ms. Cami McCormick: What about borders?

The Hon. Didier Reynders: But because we are knowing that there are many other people in the streets, maybe in Brussels or in other cities, with the same ideology and after the terrorist attacks in Paris, I said to one TV channel in the U.S. that we were searching around 10 people [audio skip 01:32:12:12] and we are sure that, for the moment, we have found more than 30 people involved in the terrorist attacks in Paris. But we are sure that there are others so it's very important to go further with the same kind of approach.

And again, we are very proud of such an action from the Special Forces. It's very visible on television. [audio skip 01:32:39:09] more people in the street because if you went to organize some control, some verification of identities, you need to have information. So the most important thing I'm asking that in NATO, but I was asking that in the European Union since some years, we need to exchange information.

Just to give an example, if you have a foreign fighter leaving his country to go to Syria or Iraq, he would come back, but not necessarily in his own city or his own country. The first terrorist attack committed by a foreign fighter was in Brussels, 24 of May in 2014, the Jewish Museum, [audio skip 01:33:37:04] the people. It was a French guy leaving France to Syria and coming back for [audio skip 01:33:44:19] about such a situation from one country to another one. It's very difficult to manage and I must confess that it's improving. We are seeing more and more capacity to exchange informations with many partners in Europe, with the U.S. and inside of NATO just to give a large example with Turkey. In Turkey, it's a very important partner to us to find a way to stop some foreign fighters trying to go to Syria or to Iraq, but we start to receive information about those guys coming back. It's a transit country and we have organized since some years trilateral meetings with Turkey so I'm sharing information with my colleagues of Foreign Affairs, Justice and Home affairs in Turkey and so we are together all the time and the services are together to try to exchange information.

But again, it was very difficult to organize such a (inaudible) of such a guy alive, but this was very important to do that and I'm very proud that this was possible. But to go further, again, we need to exchange more and more informations among the different services.

Ms. Cami McCormick: And I'm sure that will come up again in our discussions because there are so many countries working on the problem of countering terror abroad from North Africa to the Middle East to Europe. We've got a real global challenge now of terrorism that keeps spreading. We're conducting air strikes. We're conducting drone strikes. We're sending in Special Forces to various places. It sometimes seems as if this chase will never end and we're throwing a whole lot of money at this problem. So I'm wondering to get your thoughts, your broad views on what's happening now strategically and we'll dive into more specific detail after your initial comments. But I know it's a very complex situation, but are we succeeding in what we're doing right now? And let's start with you on the left, Mr. Amrani.

The Hon. Youssef Amrani: Well, [audio skip 01:35:47:06] countries in the southern Mediterranean, the European countries and beyond the transatlantic in America and elsewhere. I completely share the views expressed by Didier, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, about the necessity of what I call the security approach, exchange of intelligence, military intervention in conflict. It is important to face the terrorist activities and to combat Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and others, but it's not sufficient. We need a comprehensive approach. Of course, I'm speaking from a southern perspective, from Morocco, who has been chairing the Committee on Foreign Fighters with our partners from Europe. We are cooperating very closely with Belgium as far as dismantling cells and we have great experience in this issue and we'll continue, but we feel that today we need to have a comprehensive approach towards terror.

How? I think we need four fundamentals and parameters. First, the political development in our region because the Arab Spring has opened new prospect but, in fact, what happens today in our region is more insecurity, more fragmentation and because of lack of political development. When I say political development is implemental of democracy, good governance, respect of universal values because, at the end of the day, we share the same values.

The second fundamental parameter is the economy because, at the end of the day, what is important is how much jobs you create to face the expectation of the young generation. It's essential to promote growth, to create jobs and this, we know the tools, openness, free trade agreements but also we have to do our own homework internally and when I say internally it means at the level of the countries of the region. We should build up coherent (inaudible) integration schemes. The (inaudible) for example, as Didier knows, (inaudible) for Morocco is a priority. We could build it up to (inaudible), a regional coherent gathering, face the terrorist threat, try to solve the Libyan conflict where we were very much engaged as Moroccans in the (inaudible) I will talk about Libya later on, to create jobs, to connect networks, transport, energy. This is the way.

The third one is cooperation in the field of intelligence, dismantling the cells. This cooperation should be (inaudible), should be on a daily basis. And the fourth parameter is the deconstruction of the narrative, of the extremist narrative, and we can help in this because we are all targeted, the countries of the Maghreb and the Sahel and last year we were talking here and we were warning our colleagues, watch what is happening in Mali.

Thanks to the French intervention, that time we were in the (inaudible) council and we helped for the resolution. We were able to face and to chase the extremist, but we have not solved the problem and last year, we warned here that watch Boko Haram. Today, we have even attack [audio skip 01:39:44:01] through a new narrative because today these bad guys, they control internet. They have access to financial means. They tackle the young generation and other generations, too, so we need to have the tools and Morocco, we have embarked [audio skip 01:40:14:08] this approach and would like to [audio skip 01:40:18:17] to Imams, men and women, but to an Imams it's only on the fundamentals of this tolerant (inaudible) up in Islam because today, Islam is being hijacked by a minority who promote culture of hate and exclusion. And that's why we need, like in Morocco, these (inaudible) to have a new discourse, you know, that is consistent with our shared values of human morality and democracy.

And this fourth priority, I think, today is important and we are doing this also with France and we are training French imams. There is this kind of specificity, but today religion is essential and then, from that, one important aspect is the reform of education in our countries. That takes into consideration our

specificities, yes, but also gender equality, human rights, openness to the other religions, to other cultures and this is [audio skip 01:41:17:07] of King of Morocco today.

We are working on this four-track dimension strategy to combat terrorism, the political development, (inaudible) democracy, economy, job creation, comprehensive security and intelligence and for the deconstruction of the Jihadist narrative. But proposing an alternative narrative, which is consistent and in conformity with our shared values.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Thank you, General.

The Hon. Youssef Amrani: First of all, let me express my most sincere congratulations for the actions taken by Belgian forces. On the subject we firstly addressed, I think it was a long time and now we come back on this question of short-term and long-term but it's a long-term effort. This was successful as it was mentioned, the fact that this guy Salah Abdelsalam was taken alive is something that for the family of the victims, it's very important so thanks so much for what you have done, Sir.

Just a few words, perhaps, to start with and coming back to the threat, being a military, we try to understand our adversaries first to see what we should do. And I think the terrorist threat today, and especially the one led by the so-called ISIS, ISIL or Daesh organization, has some very specific characteristics compared to others, perhaps, and because we have seen terrorism in history for longer. The first one, as they claim territory--and they do have now a territory out of bedrock and this is something very important in the way we should address this threat.

They have a territory so far in (inaudible) as big as some of most European countries, about 10 million people. They have economic resources. They have gained some treasure and (inaudible) during the first actions in Iraq, in Mosul. We all know that. They have really an unprecedented level of financial and military resources and means [audio skip 01:43:42:03] they do have, and it has been said, a totalitarian ideology, that they are able to disseminate widely around the world, thanks to the technology now. And they really enjoy high power of production within our own societies. So this is the second one, totalitarian ideology widely disseminated.

Three, they have strategy. They have a strategy and, for us, military is very important. Their strategy was a direct [audio skip 01:44:17:25] and they have also an indirect approach aim at the periphery, trying to target our societies, our countries, the soft belly, if you want, in our countries. And this war theory was written--I'm sure you all know that in that book published in 2004 [audio skip 01:44:42:09] by Abu Bakr (inaudible) [audio skip 01:44:45:20] you have the strategy of Daesh today.

So understanding that, what should we do? And from a military perspective and certainly I would totally share what has been said earlier. First of all, military action, and we may come back on this later on, it's

trying to stall a momentum. It's trying to contain. It would not be able to destroy Daesh with military [audio skip 01:45:21:14] is trying to dry up financial resources. And we have to do that. We could do that for military actions. We do that as we are speaking today, but with some international cooperation. So I think it's important, drying up financial [audio skip 01:45:49:17] major access I see in terms of doing things against Daesh. We have to hit (inaudible) itself, I mean, the--through internet for social media. We have also to hit the content. And this is the content propaganda I fully support.

We have also to stall the flow of foreign fighters. And again, it comes back to international cooperation. And finally, to be brief, trying to fight radical trends in our own societies. So this is the (inaudible). I mean, that's where we were talking about comprehensive approach. We've been talking about comprehensive approach for years. I think it's another step in comprehensive approach. And it requires a (inaudible) in all access and all domains, not only military.

And on the (inaudible) of this is the ability to not only to share intelligence, but how--and I fully (inaudible) how we do, use this intelligence. We are in the area of big data. We have big data. We have many (inaudible). How do we manage to take out of this big sum of intelligence the one that will be useful? The what--the one we need to know, and the one we did to give to the people on the field, on the street, to make sure that we will take the right action?

So those are big challenges. And I'm not bringing here a solution (inaudible) but just, you know, perhaps open doors for further actions against terrorism.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Thank you. Minister?

The Hon. Didier Reynders: I do want to add something about the military action, because I think it's needed to contain the progress of Daesh or ISIS in the region, and also other groups in the Sahara and other places. But we have some success now and we have seen it in Syria and Iraq in the last month. But when we have success, they are going to Libya, they are committing maybe [audio skip 01:47:57:21] more and more [audio skip 01:48:01:18].

The second (inaudible), because I have listened about the comprehensive approach, is to give humanitarian help. Because if you don't use a lot of money to go to the displaced people in Syria, it's possible--or in Iraq, but more than that, to go to the refugees in Lebanon and Jordan, because those countries are under pressure. And now, you've seen that we try to discuss, between European Union and Turkey, to have a lot of people in Turkey. You need to face another challenge. So many refugees coming to Europe and in the last month, it was a very difficult issue in Germany.

I want to say that this is a global issue. So I would be very pleased with a discussion at the UN level to organize not only repatriation of refugees in Europe, but in the world. And I've seen some efforts made by

the U.S., by Canada, by others, to try to receive a lot of people. But it's needed. To take part in such a process is very needed to provide (inaudible) help. But the most important thing is to try to find a solution for the root causes. And the first one, it's a political solution. And for the first time since [audio skip 01:49:24:12] I mean, the nuclear agreement with Iran, it's not possible to maybe have a chance, the opportunity, to put to--all together around the table.

And due to that, it's possible for Saudi Arabia to put pressure on the opposition in Syria to go to the negotiations. Maybe from Russia, and from Iran, specifically to put pressure on the regime of Bashar Assad to come to the table. And also goal to have a new transition in Syria, to have an inclusive government in Iraq with Shiites and Sunnis and maybe also some minorities. So have some evolution in Yemen, maybe try to keep the situation as it is in Lebanon, with the reparation of (inaudible). But without that, it's impossible to solve the situation on the ground. So, we need to put pressure so we have more and more capacity to go to a political solution.

And I agree, we need a comprehensive approach. And just to add two words. Of course, on the long term, we will discuss with Morocco, with (inaudible) to train the Imams on shared view that we need to have in Belgium. But in Europe, imams coming from the local communities and not coming from abroad with all the visions of Islam than the vision of the local communities.

But on the short term, we need to be sure (inaudible) to send a counter-narrative in collaboration with the Muslim countries, because it's very important in the coalition. We are more than 60. It's important that it's not the message coming from the western countries, like the U.S., or Europe, but it very important to send a message with a real collaboration of all the Muslim countries. And more than that, it's very important to have on board all the people having influence on the young generation (inaudible) community.

To be honest, it's (inaudible) to me to send a message to young people in Brussels. But they don't have my picture in their bedroom. I have to admit, accept maybe two or three, I don't know.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Are you sure?

The Hon. Didier Reynders: But I'm sure that they have some pictures of rappers, sport guys or women or some very influent people coming from the Muslim community. And we need to make some progress to take all those people involved [audio skip 01:52:02:03] a message to the young generation, coming from people from the same community, it would be more influent than coming from the minister of foreign affairs, of the intelligence services and others. And for the moment, try to work on that, but it's not easy. And I fully understand that there's a fear, of course.

It's not easy to speak about terrorism, to speak about fanaticism because there are some risks. But that is very important and sort of short term. Of course, in the long term, it's more problem for the education and



integration in fact. Not only to train the Imams, but to train all of the young people to have a job maybe later and to take part in the society. But that's very important to try to attract a lot of Muslim countries in the counter-narrative, but also to attract a lot of people coming from the Muslim communities in our countries to send a message.

General Gratien Maire: I want to add only one--

Ms. Cami McCormick: Very quickly, please.

General Gratien Maire: Very quickly. I was very brief. I think we need also, Minister, to reconstruct the international order. And as a partner to Europe, I want to take this opportunity to request you to have a more ambition policy towards the Mediterranean and towards the south.

As far as one of the key actors in the European Union, today we feel, from the southern perspective as it lacks ambitions of Europe, and I hope that the new communication of (inaudible) on the policy of security and defense will take this article into consideration because we have ambition to work with you, and it is on your interest because you're all targeted, to build up a policy that buys (inaudible) our region.

Also, I see some critics from NATO. NATO also has a new (inaudible) concept. And I think also you should seek to find the necessary coherence in the international arrangement for peace established in the region. And I think time has come, you know. We could have avoid this human refugee crisis if three years ago we were able at the level of the Security Council to find an outcome to the Syrian crisis. We were divided. At the time, Morocco was in the Security Council. Our United Nations Security Council on Syria. It was vetoed. But three years ago, there was no ISIS in Syria. There was only Jabhat al-Nusra who paid allegiance to al-Qaida. But ISIS was not a group of divided and were not able to act. And this is, I think, we should now look and seek for new arrangement at the level of Security Council to move forward.

It is, of course, a question of shared responsibility. We don't have to blame the others. We need to do our own homework, but we need to have you on board as our partners.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Okay. Senator.

Sen. Jeff Sessions: Well, thank you. Thank you, and Belgium and the French investigators who ran this criminal down and captured him. It is important that the long arm of the law be perceived as successful. And I think this is a blow to this inevitability or the positive message that the ISIL group wants to promote, that they're going to win and be victorious. Every time they lose is a blow that [audio skip 01:55:21:10] long run, it's something we've been talking about in the Senate, talking to some of my

Democratic colleagues, we believe that we can have a bipartisan agreement that will transcend the elections, and they can go on for a long time.

The witnesses that we've had before our committee say this violence spasm within a small part of the Islamic world is going to continue [audio skip 01:55:52:01] in a way that our allies would join in wholeheartedly. Our friends in the Muslim world would join wholeheartedly. We bring in all aspects of power.

It is important to deal with the fundamental issues. I recall a television program in the United States firing line. That sat in chairs in like this. Norman Cousins was the editor of "The Saturday Review," and the conservative William Buckley was asking questions. And Cousins waxed eloquently about peace and how nuclear war should be eliminated and we need to work with the Russians. And Buckley listened carefully for a while, and then he said, "well, Norman, I hope you won't mind if I preserve the Republic while you're working out these grand plans."

So we've got law enforcement and the [audio skip 01:56:53:17] years. It required cooperation. Intelligence-sharing worldwide, and we got better and better about it. A great deal of time was invested in that. So, what I would propose is that we do begin to look at this again, how we can develop a comprehensive approach. We use the phrase like the George Kennan containment strategy that contained the Soviet Union in the expansive communism for decades. We should focus on that. Not to contain our Muslim allies and friends in the region, but contain violent extremism that threatens the region, Europe, and the United States.

Their whole ideology is expansionistic. And we just simply have to confront that and defeat it. I believe we can do a lot better job of working together. I think Congress is ready to do so.

Ms. Cami McCormick: You know, what we're hearing over and over again is how long [audio skip 01:58:08:18] like Yemen and Libya. And there has been some success against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. They have lost some real estate. But when you consider the fact that the United States is spending \$11 million a day just in Iraq and Syria, it still has thousands of troops in Afghanistan. France has got troops in Africa, at home, and is also helping in the fight against ISIS.

These growing costs, these billions and billions of dollars, I think the latest estimate for the U.S. spending in Iraq and Syria is \$6.5 billion. And ISIS has lost a little real estate. I mean, you can understand why people would be a little skeptical about whether or not this military strategy is working when in fact, the General said they just move elsewhere. And they move to areas where we're not present [audio skip 01:59:03:09] Libya. We only have a small number of special operations forces on the ground. Yemen. Is this military strategy working?

Sen. Jeff Sessions: Good question.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Or is for domestic consumption only? Is it to appease publics at home that our governments are actually doing something?

Sen. Jeff Sessions: What our Democratic and Republican colleagues in the Senate believe is that we've got to be more careful about committing troops in a major way that's so exceedingly expensive and creates complications and risk that we don't need to necessarily do. So when I say we develop a strategy, it doesn't mean to invade, large numbers of troops, use first all these soft power, use sanctions, use diplomatic powers, and then we decide we need to step up with military, maybe using allies who are committed and then threatened more directly and support them in their efforts. Identify threats that really are serious. Threats that may not be that we can let burn themselves out without threat to the region. All of those kinds of things need the best minds.

I'm not there. And we need the best people with the best intelligence. We have to share that intelligence. And if we can reach that level of unity, I think we might surprise ourselves how effective we could be because this is a irrational, radical agenda that--it can't be sustained for too long. Although, the expert witnesses, Heritage Foundation, Brookings Foundation, defense department officials say we are likely to see violence and threats of violence out of the region for several decades.

Ms. Cami McCormick: And General, what are your thoughts on that?

General Gratien Maire: Well, I think that, you know, we are, in the world today, where everyone expect immediate result. If we look back in history, we have so many example of such situation that took years, decades, even [audio skip 02:01:05] years. One hundred years.

We are facing today a challenge. And we know that it will be long term, a long-term effort [audio skip 02:01:23] expectation in this world of immediate result. Everyone wants immediate result. Media, political sometime, for some reasons. And we know that it will take long time, so we have to be honest and clear with our population. I think that it will take time and it will cost money, for sure. We have to support that effort. From a military point of view, obviously, and as you mentioned, France is really now--I'll admit it, the French forces are really stretched, considering the level of our resources, the level of our manpower, to address all the issues we try to address, including, however, the French Territory.

But not only from a military point of view, as it has been said--and that's where we need to sort of invest resources to make sure that on all the different axis that we have mentioned, education in those countries, economic development, humanitarian aid, all those things, I mean, counter propaganda needs to be taken, as well. So for sure--

Ms. Cami McCormick: Because in the long term, that's cheaper than fighting a war.

The Hon. Youssef Amrani: I want to add one word, I think, in the case of Libya, for example. Let me say I completely share the transitions, the peace building will be long, will be complicated, be difficult. In the case for Libya, for example, we had, through the last year, the talks between all Libyan factions in Morocco with the support of our partners, the E.U. and Europe. At the beginning, they could not talk to each other, different factions. How could you, after the second of the military intervention in Libya, how could you build up something coherent, something consistent with two governments, two parliaments, no civil society, no (inaudible) parties. And we were able, after hours of hours and days and months of negotiation, to compromise on the formation of a government of national entity to move forward.

But when we came to implement the decisions, it was not the story. Still, because there are different actors [audio skip 02:03:47] we need not only to compromise on a practical solution and the respect of, I think, something essential today. And I think Didier would agree with me, the respects of the independence, the national unity of countries and the political transition and compromise to move towards a political solution.

This is the way how we should move, I think, towards. But this is--I think it will take time. The military is essential, intelligence is essential, you know, we need to work together and there are two faces of the same coin. They have to go together. The military, the intelligence security and the other block of political. Two faces of the--but--

General Gratien Maire: But we need to learn some lessons from the past. We have some success now on the ground with military action. It's true. But just after such a success, we need to organize a reconstitution of the cities and of the countries. We have seen that in Iraq and in Libya in the past. It was maybe a success with some military actions but without any capacity to rebuild immediately the country and to provide some services to the population. So it's quite important now in Syria and Iraq, the cities and the different places, and then to have real political discussions.

On the other side, as a different matter (inaudible) I want to say that we need to sort to try to send sometimes the same message to some partners. I mean between the U.S. and Europe. It's quite important to try to see what kind of dialog with Russia because we don't have only the situation in Syria. We are facing Ukraine for the moment. So how it's possible to be firm on some positions with Russia but to have a sort of dialog, to be open to try to find a way for a political solution in Ukraine, in Syria, in other places.

And more than that, I said due to the fact that we have had success in the nuclear talks with Iran, how it's possible to try to, if I may, put together Saudi Arabia and Iran in different doors, because we are knowing that there is a real find in the region between some powers. And so I'm sure that in the relation between

U.S. and Europe, it's quite important to find a way to send a common message about those issues, at least, to Russia on one side, but also to the two powers in the region, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Because without those, among those partners, it will be impossible to solve the situation, so we need to have a military action but we need to try to organize the transition and to learn, I repeat, the lesson from the past. Because, if I may, to be short, the military action in Libya was a success and then the day after. And now we are learning that but we need to do something the day after. And is the case for the moment, Syria and Iraq, we're trying to do the job. We try to come immediately with some capacity to rebuild the cities, to provide services, security, education, all the different services to the population.

But after all, we need a political solution and to have a political solution, we need to send a very clear message to some partners. If I may, Russia and the two major partners in the region, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Do you think Russia should be involved in the military coalition, or can they?

General Gratien Maire: [Audio skip 02:07:54] new resolution from the Security Council to work together against Daesh.

Sen. Jeff Sessions: It would seem, from common sense, that we should be able to--

Ms. Cami McCormick: So Senator, the--obviously, all of us understand the need to help rebuild these countries that are being ravaged by war, but the U.S.--many officials in the U.S. has said repeatedly over the past few years, we're no longer involved in nation building after what happened in Iraq and Afghanistan. So, you know, how much resources and how many people do we now have involved in rebuilding a Syria, an Iraq? Are we not back to where we started with more a dozen years ago in Iraq trying to rebuild that country and failed, basically?

Sen. Jeff Sessions: We've learned a lot. Rebuilding a country once order has been destroyed, even a brutal order, often times is worse than what was before. Syria had a brutal dictator and we so much wanted to see improvement there, but when you end up with 200,000 perhaps killed, millions refugees, complete disorder spreading in the region, then we have to be very careful, I think, in the future. The United States is increasing our defense budget. We have \$3.4 billion for European reassurance. For several years now, I'm reaching the point that I want Europe to reassure me. I mean, do you care? Seventy-five percent of NATO is funded by the United States. We've got very large deficits. We have the Pacific region [audio skip 02:09:46]

Ms. Cami McCormick: --harder to get more involved. Financially, it [audio skip 02:10:19].

General Gratien Maire: We're trying to do that, but we are, for the moment, 62 members on the coalition and we are organizing the presence of a lot of European countries. We try to do the same with the Gulf countries. And, of course, about the financial help, you have seen that maybe in London it was possible to provide \$11 billion for the region, two-thirds of such a total amount is coming from Europe. From the European Union and the member states. So we try to put more and more money on the table.

It's true that, from the European point of view, it's more and more imminently inside. But just to say that-- to be sometime a little optimistic, you have had some success in the rebuilding of some states. With the Marshall Plan in Europe, it was possible to do that, but with one condition; A political revolution in the region and the European Union's coming from there. It's coming from the second world war. And because it was possible to build the European Union and through a peaceful and democratic process in Europe, it was possible also to rebuild the economy into a very strong countries now in Europe.

So that means that in the region in Syria and Iraq, result, a real political transition. It's impossible to solve the situation all just with a military action, all just with money on the table. We need to put money on the table, we need to have a military action but we need first to try to build a political transition.

And again, it was a success in Europe after the second world war to put money on the table and to have a military presence. But due to the fact that it was possible to organize in Europe a real regional integration and a real peaceful process after so many years and sometimes centuries, like you said, of wars.

And so in Syria and Iraq and Libya and other countries is the only one way. Result, a political solution and, right, we will be there doing many decades without a real effect on the ground, except some small progresses.

So military actions are needed, humanitarian help is needed but at the end, the only one way is to find the political solution for the different countries.

Ms. Cami McCormick: We're running sort of short on time here, so let's go to questions. There's one right here in the back. If you would state your name, please, and your affiliation.

Ms. Assia Bensalah Alaoui: Assia Bensalah Alaoui, Ambassador At Large of His Majesty, The King of Morocco. As we see ISIS losing ground in the Levant, we see it remerge everywhere else, and particularly in Libya because its central objective, as the General said, is to take roots and have a territory.

So my question, having taken note of what you have said about the longer-term approach, about the necessity of learning lessons, about what my compatriot said about the efforts deployed in Morocco for the political solution, what can be done, efficiently, to prevent ISIS from really taking root there, knowing that it has already assaulted Tunisia and its nation democracy being threatened by the twin threats, as you

know (inaudible) Algeria and Franc here, and ISIS in the east, and beyond, to take real and stronger links with the local terrorist groups in the Sahel and in Africa, which of course, are threatening the whole region and destabilizing, potentially, North Africa, which is the last stable place, you know, Morocco and Algeria. [audio skip 02:14:01:13]

Ms. Cami McCormick: Okay. Who would like this--

The Hon. Youssef Amrani: I will say we need to join our efforts to fight terror.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Okay.

General Gratien Maire: We need to work with the new government in Libya.

The Hon. Youssef Amrani: Yes.

General Gratien Maire: There is only one way. Maybe with a recognition by the United Nation but--and so without a real recognition, we need now to work with the new government in Libya and is the only one way. If it's possible to work with the new government, we'll start a process to rebuild a real country, and so to try to find on the ground against the terrorist groups. But the only one way now is to try to work with the new government of Libya. Is the only one way.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Okay. We have a question over here.

Mr. Christoph Von Marschal: Christoph Von Marschal from Germany. Some of the answers seem to me a little bit too easy and we are oddly dancing around the real problems. I mean, when I hear we need now to exchange more information about terrorism, I have heard that after 9/11, I have heard that after London, I have heard that after Madrid. Come on. Then we should talk why is it not happening if there is still a bigger need. So what are the obstacles? If you say, well, rebuilding immediately after, is there really a lack of willingness of the west to provide money or is it the conditions on the ground? And shouldn't we say the west is not a babysitter who has to bring all the people on the ground together. That's a responsibility of the countries first and we might give reconstruction money if the conditions on the ground are right, but this blame game, the west or--does not provide money or is getting out of a nation-building, there's a reason why those decisions have been made.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Can one person take this and make it very brief and right to the point?

The Hon. Youssef Amrani: I think we should to our own homework in the north and the south. We have to exchange intelligence and thanks to the cooperation, we have been able to dismantle a lot of cells in Europe, thanks to the information gathered and given. Now, if we need to do our homework internally and (inaudible), we need to have more--as I was saying, more ambitious new neighborhood policy in our-

-we know that we don't have the same political perspective as the (inaudible) partnership to join the European Union, but I think we can have some new instrument, a new arrangement to work together.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Okay, but--

The Hon. Youssef Amrani: But there is a commitment to work because--

Ms. Cami McCormick: General, did you want to say something?

General Gratien Maire: You just made very free, perhaps, answer, give some ways to answer your questions. We're not facing a static threat. The threat is evolving as well. So whatever force we try to do, and we do, when you say there is nothing that has been done or you may think that, there are many, many things that have been done. But in face of us, we have a threat, we have people that always change and adapt and address to what we do. So it's all the way the story--it's always the story of the, sorry, the old story of, you know, trying to protect and to attack. So we have to sort of understand that in face of us, we have people who are (inaudible) so we have to permanently address and do more. That's why when we say we need to do more, we've done a lot, but we need to continue, because if the face of us, we have a (inaudible).

Ms. Cami McCormick: There's a gentleman right with a red book, right to your left, yeah.

Unidentified Male: Thank you very much. My name is Mohammed (inaudible). And I would like to ask three questions as a Euro-Arab citizen.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Very quickly, please.

Unidentified Male: First of all, Mr. Minister, you spoke about the ideology of these guys, (inaudible). As a Euro-Arab citizen, as a cultural Euro-Muslim citizen, I tried to find to which ideology these guys belong. I find no ideology. And we have to distinguish between these people and the ideology of ISIS. You spoke about Muslim community and its soul. Which instruments have the Muslim community here in Belgium or in Europe (inaudible) to fight extremism and terrorism? If you have a child, your son is 18 years old, you can't ask him where is he going, what is he doing. If he leave your house, you can never know where he is living. The system here is--do not help Muslim communities and there is not Muslim community. Let's be clear about that. We have no Muslim community. We have Muslims here who are Europeans.

And the last question to Honorable Senator. You spoke about the cooperation between security services. I can't imagine two years ago how it had happened the suddenly, during one or two weeks, 50,000 ISIS jihadists appears in Iraq and your Secret Services and nobody saw them and spoke about the state. There's



a lot of things that, as a Euro-Arab citizen, I can't imagine. Who created ISIS? The role of (inaudible) in the integration of ISIS.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Okay.

Unidentified Male: Thank you very much.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Okay.

The Hon. Didier Reynders: Very briefly, some (inaudible) first maybe for the previous question about intelligence. I want just to say that the tradition for the intelligence services is to collect information, not to share. And so we need to--in terms of intelligence. And it's important, but it's not the perfect for the moment. We need to make some progress in that.

The second element, of course, there is an ideology. The ideology of ISIS is very clear. You need to read the different messages from ISIS about the Caliphate, about the way to have a territory, a population and to import a specific ideology to this population of such a territory. Of course, it's a fanaticism. It's a very small part of maybe the Muslim community, one or two people in one city that was involved in that. But it's a real ideology.

And, sir, of course, I've said communities. We have Muslim communities. And to be frank, in Belgium, if you look to the situation, we have a lot of Muslim people coming from Turkey, from Turkish origin. A lot of. We don't have--maybe two, three, no more. We don't have foreign fighters coming from such a community and going to Iraq and Syria. So there are many differences. So we need to work with the Muslims, but there's always the Muslim communities to fight against those fanatics. And without that, it will be a failure. It's impossible to work against such a lot of guys without the real participation of the different Muslim communities in Europe, but there's always some partners, like Morocco and others.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Okay. And we have a question right over here. We also had a question that came in online for you, Minister. Did Belgian intelligence--have Belgian intelligence services failed to integrate or to get into the Muslim communities here in the case of this recent arrest?

The Hon. Didier Reynders: We need to do more. We are learning that. But it's true in different cities in Europe. If you look to the suburbs of Paris, perhaps there's quite a same situation that in some part of the city in Brussels, we don't manage the presence of the communities in the same way. And Paris, it's more of the different suburbs. In Brussels, it's in the city, in some part of the city. But of course, it's quite different to enter in those communities. And, again, this was my answer. We need to work with the Muslim people in Belgium, like in other countries, to be sure that it's possible to have correct information

and to fight together against fanaticism. That's the real issue, and it's not easy. It's true, but it's not easy in many other countries in the world.

I have seen the terrorist attacks in the U.S. Terrorist attack in Turkey the last days. And, again, in Egypt yesterday. So, of course, we need to try to be more informed about this situation inside different communities.

Ms. Cami McCormick: Okay.

Ms. Kerstin Born-Sirkel: Thank you. Kerstin Born from CEPS. Let me play devil's advocate here and look again at root causes of terrorism. From what I know and read, al-Qaeda has come out of Iraq. ISIS has somewhat overtake al-Qaeda, has been founded by former army and police of Hussein after he had been taken down. So I listen to you, Senator, when you say, okay, we have learned so we know what to do before we take a state. But of course, looking at what now comes over to Europe, my question, to perhaps you and Minister Reynders would be, how do we justify that we cooperate with states like Saudi Arabia who, not officially, but through private foundations, fund ISIS? How do we justify cooperating with Turkey, who also support ISIS because they are combating the Kurds?

So what is the strategy behind bombing states like Syria, for example, where conveniently we have found a passport next to the attacks in Paris? And that was at least what has brought to us through the media as a reason to combat in Syria. But, again, my last point, and then I stop is linking up to what my--what the former speaker has said. What role does American intelligence have? Why do we not know of these beforehand?

Sen. Jeff Sessions: Well, it's hard to know. The enemy does not want you to know. They are in remote areas. They are using great skill and effort the kind of--as soon as you--the things that have been working they continually change their tactics. They do not desire to have a bomb land on them. So they--it's life and death to them. So they get better and better at their efforts. This expansion, this ideology is still in existence, however, and the intelligence is key. We've made some mistakes. After a bitter, costly effort in Iraq we created a government, a Parliament, elections. It was shaky, but it was there. I made the statement to British Parliamentarians that perhaps the greatest mistake of the 20th century was the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, and the British said, well, perhaps it was Bremer's disbanding of the Iraqi army. So we've made a number of mistakes. [Audio skip 02:24:51] number of troops in Iraq would U.S. NATO troops, I am absolutely convinced would not--it would have stopped the takeover of large portions of Iraq. So I hope that we can make--strike the right balance.

In Pacific, Japan and Korea were successful rebuilding their societies after a war. But it does appear that in the Middle East, we have a complicating factor and that it is it does appear that in short order,

American troops, NATO troops sent there to make peace become targets and become targets themselves. So it's a more complicated thing than just a marshal plan or what happened in Japan.

Ms. Cami McCormick: And we just had a second American killed in Iraq yesterday.

Sen. Jeff Sessions: Yes.

Ms. Cami McCormick: And her question about Saudi Arabia and Turkey?

Sen. Jeff Sessions: Well, we have to deal with the world as we find it. If you go--I went into Libya not long after this collapse of Gaddafi's government with Senator McCain and Graham and others. And there were huge apartment buildings being built. Chinese got the contract. Some of the U.S. people wanted the contract. They were building, building, building. Most of them not complete yet. Gaddafi had done better. He was investing billions of dollars in improving his country, and now what do we have? Total chaos. A million people, perhaps, in North Africa seeking to come to Europe. And all of these things have happened. So sometimes an imperfect order is better than chaos.

Ms. Cami McCormick: We have a question right here.

Ms. Kerry Buck: Thank you very much. Kerry Buck, Canada's ambassador to NATO. At NATO, we're grappling with modern deterrence, how to define it. So the question is, how do you deter terrorism? Do we have the right balance between military assets, police and intelligence or community approaches? Or are the words deterrence and containment even the right words for a phenomenon like this given that most of the [audio skip 02:27:10] recent attacks in Europe and Canada have come from our own citizens, cells operating in our own territories. So do we have the right balance between focus outside and focus inside?

Ms. Cami McCormick: Who would like to take that?

The Hon. Didier Reynders: Well, of course, we need to do both, but first of all, there are some action [audio skip 02:28:21] on a very short term. Now we need to dismantle a lot of cells, a lot of groups of terrorists, a lot of networks because they are there between (inaudible) [audio skip 02:28:59] new evolutions [audio skip 02:29:11], the new terrorist people in [audio skip 02:29:22] in the future and to do that outside to build new societies was a political transition. I don't want to repeat what I've said about Syria and Iraq, but inside, it's a problem of education and a problem integration. Is it possible to have a real success about integration of many populations coming from the world? And to do that, education, jobs and then the capacity to take part in the development of society. But it's a long process.

And there's a reason why I've said that we need to do that in a good collaboration with the Muslims, all of the different Muslim communities in Europe and in the different member states like in Belgium, but of course, it's a long process.

The Hon. Youssef Amrani: I had a political exchange with the ambassador of NATO a few months ago, with the NATO ambassadors. I think you give me the opportunity to request of you that NATO should look more south. And now we have these dialogues on the one-year meeting. We need I think from the Moroccan perspective more Interpol ability, more political dialogue. And I hope that we are now working under this new dialogue. We need you to see the Mediterranean and beyond south Sahara and Atlantic coast of Africa when today 30 percent of the cocaine and traffic is coming, to give it priority as a NATO ambassador. I think this is something you should look at it. I know it's difficult and there is some resistance, but this is the request of the Mediterranean partners.

Major General Gratien Marie: If I may just one short word. Rather than deter, I would prefer prevent.

Ms. Cami McCormick: A question right here.

Mr. Simon Fraser: My name Simon Fraser. I'm a former British diplomat. I have a question for the General, if I may. As a military leader, how do you evaluate the relative priority of terrorism as a threat, as a security threat, as compared with the more conventional threats we face or may face, whether it is Russia or even actually for the senator potentially China at some point and the other threats such as cyber security which are growing dangerous to us? I mean, where in the hierarchy of threat does terrorism really sit?

Major General Gratien Marie: Well, I would say that it's not that we're seeing the same--it's very difficult to compare. For conventional threats, we have in a conventional world, and you know there are rules, if I may say so, that we understand. With a terrorist threat, we are in a totally different environment, no more rules. I mean, violence is being used, ideology much more than the conventional (inaudible) type of conflict. So it's totally different first.

Second, I think it's a much more important threat to our own societies collectively. It's really the heart of our values that are threatened. And that's why I would put this on the far top on the thing we have to [audio skip 02:32:46.26] And again discussing about how to deal with this, it's very complicated. I would argue that the situation today in Syria and Iraq, tomorrow perhaps in Libya, is a very, very complex one. We all know that. It's very difficult to push on which button to push trying to solve the issue. But truly the terrorism is the one that has really threatened our societies, our values. So we have to really address this one on the forefront of our preoccupation.

Ms. Cami McCormick: I could not have asked for a better segue. We've got a forum. We're going to continue this security talk in a little bit and the topic is security or values. But there's something coming up next, so we want you all to stay around for that. Derek.

Dr. Derek Chollet: Well, thank you for a terrific opening.