

# BRUSSELS FORUM 2009

## *Afghanistan and Pakistan: What Will it Take to Get it Right?*

**Craig Kennedy**

**President, GMF**

We've asked Lyse Doucet of the BBC to be the moderator. She is someone that knows that region exceptionally well, and for those of you that were with us at our conference before the NATO summit in Bucharest, I think it's fair to say she moderated one of the most interesting, even at times electrifying, conversations on Afghanistan that I've seen in a long time. So, Lyse, you can bring out your panel.

**Lyse Doucet**

**BBC News**

Hello and welcome. I am Lyse Doucet. I am a presenter and correspondent for the BBC. I've been working in Afghanistan for the past twenty years. I was there when the Russians were trying to get it right in Afghanistan, and now the Canadians are trying to get it right, my own country, with a few extra Americans, of course, as well!

The title of our session - Afghanistan, Pakistan, how to get it right? What will it take to get it right? Even the title of our panel suggests that something has changed, that there has been a rethink. For nearly eight years we have been coming to sessions on Afghanistan. Now I think there is a broad understanding that, if you are going to tackle the problems of Afghanistan, that Afghanistan and Pakistan are both problem as well as solution.

The second part of our title - what will it take to get it right? For years now, the international community and Afghans have been arguing. Is it a success, is it a failure?

Is the glass half-empty, or is it half-full? Is it significant that five million Afghan children are going to school, or is a failure that five million are not?

From Washington to Whitehall, to [wula swalis] districts across Afghanistan, everyone is now asking, why didn't it work out the way that we had hoped? An urgent review is underway, and some of the questions that are coming up in those reviews will be the topic of our panel today.

And what a distinguished panel we have brought together. First of all, of course, the Honourable Richard Holbrooke, a great -- long distinguished career in many of the world's trouble spots, he's now taken on the very difficult job of Special Representative for the State Department on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Even before he got this job, he was a regular visitor to the region. He's having some problems with that now, of course, with some of the things he may have said, but the fact of the matter is that he knows the region and cares about it. Richard Holbrooke, welcome to the panel.

Zelmai Rasoul is the National Security Advisor in Afghanistan. He has been a constant aide to President Hamid Karzai since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. He trained as a medical doctor, but he's a man who cares a lot about security. Even his telephone number is 007007. But don't bother calling it, he never answers it!

And on the other side, Radek Sikorski. What a long way Radek Sikorski has come. Twenty years ago, in what was the harshest winter in memory in Afghanistan, Radek Sikorski was outside Kabul in the hills, freezing with Mujahedin fighters, waiting for the government of President Najibullah to fall as Soviet troops departed. Now, of course, he has -- is now the Foreign Minister of Poland. He has also served as Defence Minister in his country, and is also one of the region's experts on Afghanistan. Welcome, Radek Sikorski.

Ruprecht Polenz, who is from the German Bundestag. He is head of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He's just come back from a trip to the north of Afghanistan, to Kunduz, where German troops are based, also to Faizabad and to Kabul. Germany, of course, is the third largest troop contributor to Afghanistan, 3,500, but of course whenever anyone talks about more European troops to Afghanistan they take a long hard look at Germany. Germany defends itself very well.

Last, but not least, Ahmed Rashid, an old friend, and everyone here, I am sure, knows about Ahmed's new book, *Descent into Chaos*. Last night Craig, when he said hello to Ahmed, he said to Ahmed, "Ahmed, your book is on the best seller list," and Ahmed's eyes opened wide. And Craig said, "Yes, the best -- top -- number one in the best seller list on American military aircraft." He said, "I flew back from Afghanistan and every single American soldier on it was reading your book." He's also the author of *The Taliban*, and also *Jihad*. Welcome to you, Ahmed Rashid.

Richard Holbrooke, let's start with you. Afghanistan and Pakistan is now the area that you have to concentrate your mind. It's being concentrated on now in all of the institutions of the American government. How do you see the scope of the crisis that you are confronting there?

**The Hon. Richard C. Holbrooke - US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan**

First, let me thank the German Marshall Fund for continuing this terrific conference. And just saying that, I appreciate your introduction, Lyn, but there's nothing that I've ever written or said about Afghanistan that I think is causing me any problem. I sat on this stage and had very intense arguments and discussions about it in the past, and there's nothing I would take back.

The situation is bad today, when it shouldn't be, because the international community, including, I regret to say, the United States, perhaps especially the United States, prematurely decided that they were doing okay and refocused their attention on Iraq. That has proved to be a historic mistake. Twice in the last twenty years the United States has turned away from Afghanistan, in 1989 and again around 2003. We cannot make that mistake again.

The core point I think we need to begin with is why Afghanistan matters. You correctly cited that my title was Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, so that's the place to begin. I am hesitant to talk about Pakistan with Ahmed Rashid on the panel, since I think by any criteria he is one of the ten or twenty leading journalists in the entire world, and on this subject I think the leading journalist. And he's recently sent me a memo which said that no matter what you do, it's going to be a mess. So thank you, Ahmed. Thank you for telling me the job's impossible!

But let me be clear on something. Let's start with the macro point. The international community has 60,000 or more troops in Afghanistan now, and more are on their way. The US is sending an additional 17,000, there are other countries in this room that are going to increase, and I hope they will do so, and we have a vast increase in civilian resources underway. But the actual people who pose a direct threat to the countries represented in this room, the people who planned 9/11, who killed Benazir Bhutto, who committed the atrocities in Mumbai, who were terrorising Swat, who probably were associated with the attack on the cricket team in Lahore, who are associated with daily outrages - they are not in Afghanistan. They're in Pakistan. In the western so-called tribal areas, although it also extends down into Baluchistan.

This is a tremendous dilemma, because the troops are fighting in Afghanistan against the Taliban, but the Taliban are like the outriders for the international terrorists, Al Qaeda and its supporters, who pose the direct threat to the international community. So we cannot ignore Pakistan and we must recognise the inexorable link. This does not mean the Taliban can be ignored, because if they succeed Al Qaeda will come back into Afghanistan and have a much larger and freer terrain in which to operate.

So while we pursue the battle against the Taliban, which must be done, and which will be completely refocused in ways we can discuss later, we must recognise that the heart of the threat to the United States, to the European Union, to Australia, to many other countries in the world including India and, I stress, including Pakistan itself, comes from western -- the people in western Pakistan. When they take over Swat, they are less than 100 miles from the capital, Islamabad, and every Pakistani and many Indians I know in the educated classes goes -- used to go to Swat for vacations. So that's become a very personal thing. It's no longer these remote, allegedly lawless tribal areas. And we cannot ignore the problem.

So the starting point for the new administration's approach to the region is going to be to treat it as an integrated whole, a single theatre of war, with very different rules on each side of the border, and therefore I hope this discussion will stress Pakistan. It's so interesting to me that you didn't mention Pakistan in your introduction once. That's not how we would begin the discussion. We'd begin by saying Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### **Lyse Doucet**

That is the title, sir. Thank you very much. Let me -- Ahmed Rashid, then. So they are looking at Pakistan and Afghanistan as an integrated theatre, but it comes at a time when the situation in Pakistan is steadily deteriorating.

### **Dr. Ahmed Rashid - Journalist and Author, Pakistan**

Well, certainly Pakistan is facing a huge political military crisis. You have the reluctance of the military to take on the Taliban -- Pakistani Taliban, on its soil. There's still an obsession with dealing with India. 80% of the army is deployed against India rather than against the threat that Ambassador Holbrooke spoke about. On the other hand, you have a very fragmented political leadership.

But I would still be urging the Obama administration and the Europeans, NATO especially, that no matter what the political crisis is, we do not want another military intervention. We -- And despite the fact that you have a fragmented political elite, you have to deal with this political elite. It's going to take three or four years, perhaps, to settle down this elite and to have regular elections and to have a regular political process. It's fragmented. You have to talk to everyone. There's no one man there who can deliver anything to you, either NATO or to the Americans. You have to talk to all elements of the political spectrum, to civil society, to the middle class. They are all stakeholders and they all have an opinion. And more than that, they all have relative power. The army, of course, dominates still foreign policy, but the only countervailing force to the army is not American intervention, is not NATO, it's going to be building up the political class and the political elite.

**Lyse Doucet**

Zalmai Rasoul, this is something the Afghan government has called for in a long time. The way it's moving, is this something the Afghan government feels it's being consulted on?

**The Hon. Zalmai Rasoul - National Security Advisor, Afghanistan**

Before starting, I would just bring the profound gratitude of the Afghan people for all those countries that have contributed, led by the United States, to liberate Afghanistan. We are profoundly grateful for that.

On the issue of the glass half-full, half-empty, we need to concentrate on half-empty. We know about the half-full, but half-empty is most important. I think we have -- My impression is we have the right diagnosis at the moment. So having the right diagnosis the treatment will be much easier than before. I fully agree with Ambassador Holbrooke on the issue of what's going in Pakistan. That's something that we are arguing for the last four or five years, but I am very happy that this regional context of what's going on in Afghanistan is fully understood and I am confident that, knowing now the problem, we can solve it.

**Lyse Doucet**

Rup Polenz, of course Germany has followed, like Britain has, in appointing their special envoys to Afghanistan and Pakistan, but it presents difficulties because you don't have -- you need a whole new set of instruments to deal with a regional issue like this.

**The Hon. Ruprecht Polenz - Member, German Bundestag**

I think one should not overestimate the possibilities of a country like Germany, or even the Europeans as a whole, to deal with a country like Pakistan. You described the problems in this country, and probably the Europeans don't have real leverage to solve these problems, but we can be helpful.

We have founded this association of friends of Pakistan, together with some Emirates, with China, with other states. We have some kind of influence in Pakistan, in special areas of this country, and I think this is an approach where Germany and the Europeans can be helpful, of course, also with foreign and foreign help, especially in the tribal areas, to encourage education and so on and so on.

This is what we can do, and we appreciate very much the more regional approach of the Obama administration, because if you analyse the conflict about Afghanistan you have three layers. You have the inner Afghanistan, struggles between the tribes and so on, you have the global dimension with Al Qaeda and you have a regional dimension. And this regional dimension so far has not been addressed, and with this neighbourhood conference, or a contact group, or an idea like that, it could be possible to include all the neighbouring countries, including Iran, I would recommend. And I

appreciate very much that the Americans invited the Iranians to this conference in Den Haag.

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

And can I just footnote that Japan will host a Friends of Pakistan and a donors conference on April 17, which I'll represent the United States at. Germany will be a very big participant, and we've been in -- also been talking extensively to the Chinese about this issue, because China has been completely ignored by the western alliance, even though China has a common border with Afghanistan and Pakistan and India, and has very high strategic interests which, if you analyse them, are parallel to ours. And I agree with what was just said about Iran as well.

**Lyse Doucet**

Radek Sikorski, Rup Polenz has mentioned, of course, how Europe wants to play a part in this new realignment of strategy toward the region. We are waiting, of course, for this high level review of American policy to come out next week. Where do you feel Europe can play the best role in terms of being a partner in this new approach, if you like?

**The Hon. Radoslaw Sikorski - Minister of Foreign Affairs, Poland**

I think it's useful, first of all, to define what we mean by "get it right", and I would put to you that our interests in the region are negative, that there is nothing much there, either in Afghanistan or in Pakistan, that we want, except to deny the territory to the terrorists and to be able to withdraw from the territory eventually, while handing it over to its rightful owners, the people of Afghanistan and the people of Pakistan. That is our objective, to be able to withdraw with honour, leaving a stable situation behind us.

So I believe that our objectives should be less messianic and more limited, more manageable. And I agree with Mr. Polenz that Europe doesn't have that much leverage, but as the West as a whole, we don't have that much leverage. The responsibility for managing these territories should be primarily on the heads of the two governments. And let's recall some of the --

**Lyse Doucet**

Pakistan and Afghanistan, you mean?

**Radoslaw Sikorski**

Of course. Let's recall the sequence of events in the 80s and 90s, because the time when I was with Mullah Azat on the outskirts of Kabul and we were lobbing mortars at Kabul, and you were there, and I'm glad to be on the same side with you right now, was actually not 92, it was 89. 15th of February 89, which was when the Soviet Army withdrew. And the Communist regime lasted until spring 92. In other words it lasted

longer than people anticipated, and it only fell some months after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

And western assistance to the Mujahedin actually continued after the Soviet withdrawal, and there were -- we wanted to install a friendly government in Kabul. It was when the Afghans themselves tore themselves apart, and were unable to form a stable government, that we lost interest. And I think we should remember that lesson, that it was the Afghans themselves that failed at that time.

And the scope of the problem is now alongside the Afghan-Pakistani border. We have about 3% of the population of Pakistan living in the federally administered tribal areas, and we have the five provinces of Afghanistan in the south, where the Clausewitzian centre of gravity of this conflict lies. And that's the scope of what we have to deal with. But I believe that introducing regular administrations, honest and capable administration by Pakistan and Afghanistan, is the solution.

### **Lyse Doucet**

Very -- Let me pick up on two points, where you mention of course not -- the whole thing about not abandoning Afghanistan, and Richard Holbrooke has mentioned, again, that the international community is very aware of trying to stay the course in Afghanistan. But you mention the goals.

If I could come back to you, Richard Holbrooke. I appreciate the survey is only coming out next week, or the review, but there has been this debate, and it's been leaked to the media, and Senator McCain spoke about it [and of it]. Is it going to be minimalist goals? Is it going to come down to basically security and counter-terrorism, or is there going to be a broader set of goals that the international community will have in working with the Afghans to achieve in Afghanistan?

### **Richard C. Holbrooke**

I'm not sure how to answer that question, because I don't know what minimalist goals mean.

### **Lyse Doucet**

More focused on security and counter-terrorism.

### **Richard C. Holbrooke**

That's not -- People can talk about anything they want, but you can't separate the civilian and the military aspects of the war in Afghanistan. And you can't succeed in Afghanistan if you don't solve the problem of western Pakistan. I agree with everything my friend Radek Sikorski said, and in the end he made a very important point. Let's go back to it. At the end, our goal is to hand the country back to its people.

Well, the only thing I would quibble with, Radek, is that we don't have the country. We're helping them. Afghan history has a very strong historical narrative, which I'm sure everyone in this room knows, and that is that foreigners don't last very long and they don't do very well there. And that goes back to Alexander the Great. And now we have to find a way, and this is where Dr. Rasoul's comments are so important, and he and I are very close collaborators. We have to find a way to convince the Afghan people that we are there with the goal of departing, but departing in a way that does not repeat what happened before, in this tragic, unlucky but extraordinary country. You've been there, many people in this room have been there. It's a -- We all know the unique nature of Afghanistan.

And we need to devise programmes which improve the Afghan government's capability to defend itself, and that means considerably strengthening the Afghan National Army, the ANA, and the Afghan National Police, the ANP. Now, I have said, as a private citizen, and I'll say as a public official, that the Afghan National Police are an inadequate organisation, riddled with corruption. There's now a new Interior Minister, Mr. Atmar, who was a brilliant Minister of Education. He was responsible for educating millions of young girls in Afghanistan, which is a revolutionary thing to do, and he is committed to improving the police, and we have high hopes that that will be a successful venture.

And one of the main things that I am hoping will come out of this new focus on Afghanistan which you mentioned, and you mentioned the special envoys - my British counterpart is in the room right now, Sherard Cowper-Coles, the former British ambassador to Afghanistan. He and I have been talking about this, and talked to Javier Solana about it - a major effort to increase the size of, and improve the quality of, the police.

So we have a vast array of issues here. So the word minimalist, that's not the --

### **Lyse Doucet**

It's not my word, it's words that have been used in the American --

### **Richard C. Holbrooke**

Well, yes, America -- A lot of free speech in the United States! But I want to be clear, there's nothing minimalist about trying to help a country protect itself against a group of people who are in turn the outer rim of an international terrorist movement, which - - whose target was New York, it was Washington, it was London, it was Madrid, it was Mumbai, and it could well be this city. And it's a daunting task. And let no-one underestimate the difficulty of it. The people of Europe, and the people of the United States, have to decide whether it matters, to make this effort.

And what this conference in The Hague is about, on March 31, which the United Nations will oversee, and which Hillary Clinton will lead our delegation to, and President Karzai is coming, if I'm not mistaken - isn't that right, President Karzai will



be there? What this conference is about is to, to use Vice-President Biden's phrase in a different context, is to reset the international community, and refocus our efforts, and, on a vastly restructured effort, to create the conditions that allow us to do what Radek Sikorski talked about.

**Lyse Doucet**

Ruprecht, let me bring you in here, because there has been, for the last few years, a clear trend in the opinion polls in European populations, including in Germany, where people don't feel it's their war, that what's happening in Afghanistan matters as much as I think everyone here in this room, I think, would agree, should matter. This presents a problem, then, for politicians who are thinking about making more of a contribution, whether it's through aid or on the military or police side.

**Ruprecht Polenz**

You are right. Immediately after 9/11 we could easily explain to our public that we are in Afghanistan to prevent that 9/11 could ever happen again, because it was planned from Afghanistan and the people were trained there. If you are quoting this phrase of our former Defence Minister Struck, Germany security is also defended at the Hindu Kush, at the moment people are smiling at you. They don't understand it. And I think we have to undertake all the efforts necessary to convince our people that yes, still, until today, our security is depending on success in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Because otherwise we would not get the necessary support for strengthening our efforts, especially when we are facing the huge [pressure] from the economic crisis which is coming additionally to our politics. So --

**Lyse Doucet**

You see it as a political problem, then?

**Ruprecht Polenz**

It is -- Obviously, it is a political problem, but it takes political leadership and our Chancellor, our Foreign Minister, they both are standing together and trying to convince the public, the parliament. We have a broad majority in the parliament, about 75% or so, but in the population more than 60% are against our engagement in Afghanistan. And fortunately the leading newspapers and public broadcasting is still in favour, but this can change, so it is an effort for our political leadership.

**Lyse Doucet**

Let's go look, then, at some of the different aspects of this, what has to be a multi-pronged approach, looking at various issues and sectors in Afghanistan and Pakistan that have to be dealt with. Let's start with the issue of the troops. We believe, but it's not been officially confirmed yet, that 17,000 extra American troops will be going in, possibly more contribution --

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

No, that has been announced.

**Lyse Doucet**

It has been, now?

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

The President -- President Obama announced that two and half weeks ago.

**Lyse Doucet**

So it's definite now?

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

They're on their way, and they're going in as fast as they can be deployed. And their initial mission will be to assist in making sure that the elections are safe and secure. They're scheduled for August 20, with a possible run-off in early October. And other nations, I think, are also going to increase their troops.

**Lyse Doucet**

Zalmi Rasoul, are more troops the answer? On my recent trip to Kabul a few weeks ago, almost every Afghan I spoke to was unhappy -- not convinced that more troops were the answer. These are -- just in the Afghan public. What's your response then, as the National Security Advisor?

**Zalmi Rasoul**

I do not agree. I don't know which Afghans you have seen, but definitely we welcome the surge of troops. Because it's going to help, first, on the bringing of security in those areas that elections could not happen, if we don't have security. Number two, a lot of these troops are going to be used to train Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, which we need badly. And thirdly, I believe personally that more troops means less civilian casualties. It's one of the reasons, because there are less troops, so there are not enough people in the ground, and that makes more civilian casualties.

But the end game is to train more Afghan national security forces, so we will take over one day, hopefully soon, security, and we need our friends, led by the United States, as a strategic partner, to help us to maintain the security and sustain it.

**Lyse Doucet**

What about level? The levels that are being suggested are levels that the government believes are the right level?

**Zalmai Rasoul**

I am very happy that the concept of increasing the number of Afghan National Army is accepted. I think a lot of discussion is going on for the Afghan National Police, but increasing the number, training and equipment of these two forces, it's very good news.

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

Let me give you a figure on the police which might be useful to your -- this audience. The number that was on the drawing boards when the -- Barack Obama became President was an increase from 78,000 to 82,000 National Police. In other words, no increase at all for the next three or four years. Now, everyone we talk to, without exception - Afghans, insurgency experts, the government, American military - everyone agreed that was not sufficient. So we're looking, in conjunction with our allies and friends in the Afghan government, at a very significant increase. It seems necessary --

**Lyse Doucet**

For the --

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

For the police. But here's the problem. The police aren't very good right now. We know they're the weak link in the security chain. So we have to figure out a way to increase the size, and make them better at the same time, in order to create the conditions in which the international military presence will do its own job and not replace the police. This is very difficult. Particularly in a country where literacy is so low.

**Lyse Doucet**

There was a report in the New York Times that said that you're looking at a figure for police and army combined of 400,000, which is a huge increase.

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

Yes, I read that piece, and I thought that the numbers were not exactly the ones that will be ended up with. I think they were speculative. They may have come from people in the bureaucracy, who are working with it, but the President has not made final decisions on that, nor have we had final discussions with our close friends and allies, with NATO and with the government of Afghanistan. But a significant increase, for sure.

**Lyse Doucet**

Ahmed, you've written about this issue of the -- both the number and also who finances this huge increase.

**Dr. Ahmed Rashid**

Can I just make one point to my colleague there. I think one thing that the European governments have failed to do is to educate their publics about the terrorist threat that Europe faces today. In 2001 Al Qaeda had virtually no cells in Europe -- major European countries. Today, Al Qaeda has [MIRO] type cells in every single country. Nobody here from any European government can say, we have not arrested extremists on our soil. You all have arrested extremists on your -- You've foiled attacks already.

Now, unfortunately I think Al Qaeda is targeting Europe. The next attack will be in Europe. And one of these attacks, that you have been foiling so far, are going to get through. So I think the public needs to be educated on that. Governments have not educated their publics, and this -- One of the reasons you are in Afghanistan is to stop the terrorist threat in Europe, precisely.

And I know for a fact about Germany, you have something like 50 extremists who are from Germany, who are not just immigrants, but white German converts. You've got the same in Denmark. You've got several hundred, maybe thousands, in Britain. I think this is a really major threat that has to be dealt with.

Let me just say one other thing on the way this Obama plan has been presented. I think the media sometimes got the wrong end of the stick, although I am from the media. The media's talking about a military surge. What Obama is talking about is a comprehensive surge.

**Dr. Ahmed Rashid**

Now that is what is critical. Now what does that mean? It means economics, reconstruction, rebuilding, police. It means everything, and that's where I think the gap between the US and NATO can be bridged, because what NATO should also be involved in, if we talk about a comprehensive surge some countries will not now give troops. Okay, so those countries should cough up the money or they should cough up [technocrats] or trainers or agricultural experts or whatever.

But if we talk about a comprehensive surge I think it'll be much more understandable to the Afghan people. It'll be a much bigger threat to the Taliban and I think it'll be a much greater help in the region to muster support in the region. The idea of a troop surge that these American troops are going to pour in and hundreds more are going to be killed and there's going to be real bloodshed now, etc., etc. I think is the wrong impression.

**Radoslaw Sikorski - Minister of Foreign Affairs, Poland**

I couldn't agree more, except that I believe that on security issues politicians shouldn't look just to the opinion polls, because if we did we would never do any military operation at all, because military affairs by their nature in a democracy aren't popular, because they are risky and expensive. So we as politicians sometimes have to go

against the grain of public opinion. And when you have a NATO operation we all voted unanimously to invoke Article 5, because our ally, the United States, was attacked. So this is a NATO operation, unanimously agreed, and we have to win, because we need to maintain the perception in the eyes of our potential adversaries that when NATO goes to war, NATO prevails. And therefore, we need to give the commanders the tools, the troops that they need, and also the procedures that they need.

This counterinsurgency should be managed on the basis of military logic, whereas we've created these national provinces; we are, as Poland, responsible for the Ghazni province. We have 1,600 troops, eight helicopters. We are considering strengthening our commitment for the crucial time, this year and next, when we have the presidential and parliamentary elections. But really NATO troops in the theatre should be used where they are needed and not where the parliaments have sent them.

And I agree with Ahmed that if you can't give the troops, at least give the money. Europe is the largest economy on earth. We are a developmental superpower. In the current financial perspective, which is to say until the year 2013 we have something like 40 billion euros for all our external activities. We just had our European Council and we looked at some of the figures. At the moment we are spending 160 million of that on Afghanistan per annum. That's not going to do the job. We are spending ten times more on military activities than we do on civilian activities. And there have been huge improvements, 4,000 kilometres of roads have been built in Afghanistan in the last few years, but it's not good enough. We need to surge militarily and surge in the civilian fashion. And then, of course --

**Lyse Doucet**

[But what about] this context of a financial crisis and Europe is suffering from this? The kind of resources that you're talking about in a comprehensive surge and even take the police in which Germany and the European Union are playing a key role [inaudible]

**Radoslaw Sikorski**

But the money is there in the budget. If Afghanistan is a priority --

**Lyse Doucet**

Is it?

**Radoslaw Sikorski**

-- we need to prioritise the priority, which is to say concentrate resources [when] they are most needed. And we've spoken about this in another context, I think India is key because as Ahmed mentioned, 80% of the Pakistani army is still directed to face India. If we could get India to withdraw some of their troops from the border and we could get the Pakistani army to go into the tribal areas and to introduce regular

administration there for the first time ever that would put a lot of pressure on the Taliban and the terrorists.

### **Lyse Doucet**

Ahmed, how do you deal with the tribal areas if we're looking at the Pakistan side of this problem? Again it's been reported in the press, this idea that possibly the [predator] strikes could go further into Pakistan proper around Quetta. Is there going to have to be a significant change in the kind of tactics used in Pakistan, as well, to tackle this problem?

### **Ahmed Rashid**

Well, I think the argument from the Western side is that if the Pakistan army is not willing to do and go after this leadership, which is living in the tribal areas and in Balochistan then America and NATO have every right to do that. Now obviously there is a backlash to this, but I think this could be -- I would not like to see American troops on the ground in Pakistan. I think that really would be a disaster, but if these strikes are going to continue and in fact broaden then I think there has to be a balancing effect. In other words that there has to be an American strategy for Pakistan which is strengthening the civilian government, economic aid that we've talked about.

And by the way, I hope that this American aid that is coming through the Kerry-Lugar Bill, \$1.5 billion a year, is going to be matched by Europe. I think that's a very key part of where the funding should be. If the Americans are going to put down \$1.5 billion and if you can get other major donors like the Europeans and China, etc. to do the same, and that money is monitored -- I mean one of the tragedies was that the last administration gave \$11.8 billion to Pakistan and there was virtually no monitoring of it. Nobody knows where that money went. Clearly the money needs to be monitored well both on the Pakistani side and on the Western side.

So what I'm trying to say is that I think you need to balance off the predator acts, etc. with other things that Pakistanis can look at in a more positive light. That is missing at the moment.

### **Zalmai Rasoul**

May I add that there's two different things. One thing is they are fighting. The terrorists, al-Qaeda and Taliban in Waziristan and Bajaur area. Another thing is not supporting the Taliban. The [Quettasura] is not fighting. The [Quettasira] is sitting. The leadership of Taliban are there. The command and control is coming from there, the logistical support from there. So Pakistan should also fight, of course, against the terrorist but also stop or institutions in Pakistan stop the support the [Quettasura], which the leadership of the Taliban are sitting there clearly.

**Lyse Doucet**

Richard Holbrooke, is that where the seat of the problem is?

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

I think I agree completely with what Dr. Rasoul said. The heart of the problem for the west is in Western Pakistan. But there are not going to be US or NATO troops on the ground in Pakistan. That is a red line for the government of Pakistan and one which we must respect. So the dilemma is much greater in dealing with Pakistan than it is with Afghanistan. It's tough in Afghanistan. And secondly there's no success in Afghanistan if the current situation in Western Pakistan remains as it is. And the relationships between Afghanistan and Pakistan are also not what they should be. So there is a vast amount of area to be covered.

If you're looking for distinctions between the new administration and its predecessor, one of the most important is that we're going to try to approach this issue in a regional context and [Radoch] has mentioned India. India, of course, is the great power of the region, the great emerging in an international context and its views, its role are a critical factor. And so we consult India closely every step of the way and on my first trip to the region I went to India. After the NATO summit is over the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullin, and I will fly to the region and the Indians have invited us to come and visit them as part of that trip. They're not part of the problem the way Pakistan is but they're certainly a major factor in resolving it. And as I said earlier, I would add in China. And I would go further; I would say all the neighbours of Afghanistan have a role to play in helping fix this great challenge.

**Lyse Doucet**

It was interesting, Ahmed mentioned the point about how Europe doesn't see it as its war, picking up on the comments earlier. But it seems there is a problem, as well, in Pakistan is not understanding it is Pakistan's war. I think President Asif Zardari has tried to do something on that but it seems that the resistance to American military involvement presents a dilemma. It's how to balance the two --

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

Resistance to American involvement?

**Lyse Doucet**

In the Predator attacks, how sensitive they are in the tribal areas.

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

What Predator attacks? I don't see --

**Lyse Doucet**

It's a sensitive environment in which you operate.

**The Hon. Richard C. Holbrooke**

I don't see the problem that you're describing as a very big one. There are not going to be international forces in Pakistan. That's clear. What Ahmed said is correct, but the Pakistan government has to deal with the problem on its own soil. Meanwhile it has major political crises, a challenge between the two leading politicians to each other, a restive military which has just gotten out of politics and which is always tempted to return whether they want to or not, an economy which is in terribly difficult straits. The whole issue with the IMF and the loans which are going to come due, the next payments are coming due. A country which can't supply more than four hours of electricity a day to people in its largest cities. Karachi, the world's largest Muslim city, 18 million people.

So we talk about the tribal areas, that's 4.5 million people out of 175 million. Pakistan is a country in tremendous need of international attention and support for its own sake and for the impact it would have on the situation in Afghanistan.

**Lyse Doucet**

Let me open it up to some questions from audience and I'm sure there are many. This lady here with the [white] jacket?

**Gitte Seeberg - New Alliance Party, Member of Danish Parliament**

Thank you so much. My name is Gitte Seeberg. I'm from Denmark, Member of the Danish Parliament. I would like to touch upon how to deal with the Taliban. I just returned from a trip to Iran and Pakistan and we were discussing should we have dialogue with Taliban? Is it the right way to go? And what they told us, the Iranians, the Pakistanians was you can't talk to Taliban. There is no moderate Taliban. The one you consider being moderate Taliban, they will not be able to do anything with the non-moderate Talibanese, so therefore, don't have a dialogue with them.

And at the same time I felt well, in Pakistan, it was a bit strange because well we've seen what's happening in the SWAT valley. The Taliban have taken over the legal system and is going to take over more power and the Pakistani government is actually saying, "Yes, well you can do that if you can guarantee that we can have peace." Because that was at least the way that it was explained to us. So I'd like to hear your point of view on how to deal with Taliban. And I might add that from the Danish perspective we think that it is important that we have dialogue. We should have dialogue with all the people in Afghanistan and Pakistan who want to support that we can have a free democratic Afghanistan, but it seems at least in the region a lot of people disagree on that part. Thanks.



**Lyse Doucet**

Thank you. Zalmi Rasoul, is there a moderate Taliban?

**Zalmi Rasoul**

I think the Taliban is not a [monolithic] group, which can go and talk as one group. There are different types of Taliban. There are those who are very closely affiliated with al-Qaeda and terrorist groups. They are no reconcilable. You will not reconcile with them and they need to be fought. There are others which are not part of the terrorist group. For different reasons they are fighting.

And the concept of talking to Taliban came from the Taliban themselves, not from us. We have been contacted that for some of them this war is becoming useless, because in both sides Afghans are killed. If you burn a school the Afghanistan will suffer, a part of Afghanistan will suffer. So it's not very general but at least this concept has started to be discussed among them. So we need to leave a door open for those who stop fighting, drop their guns and accept our constitution. So far they haven't asked [in the contact], they haven't asked anything more than that. They want security when they come in but also some financial support because for some of them war becoming a source of money. They are paid \$100 to \$300 per month as a salary.

So yes, we need to bring on board those who are not ideologically motivated, those who accept our constitution and wants to come back. And those who are not doing, you need to fight this.

**Lyse Doucet**

Thank you. There's a huge number of questions. Let's take this lady here and the gentleman here. We'll take two questions, because we're not going to get through all.

**Mia Doornaert - Journalist, De Standaard**

Thank you, Mia Doornaert, newspaper De Standaard, Brussels. Mr. Rashid, you said and I think you're right that the European governments do not do enough to inform and educate the public opinions that there is still a terrorist threat. On the contrary, we hear very influential people saying that al-Qaeda doesn't exist any more and I've heard it compared by influential people to the old-fashioned fever thermometer, you know with mercury, when you drop it the mercury splits in small balls which are not interconnected. And so there is a denial that there is still an organised terrorist threat, so I don't know if you or anybody else of the panel would answer that?

**Lyse Doucet**

Pass the microphone back here.

**From the floor**

Thank you. My name is [inaudible]. I've visiting from New Delhi. I thought Mr. Rasoul just now made one of the most significant observations about the problem in the region of [Pakia] and since this is about transatlantic cooperation and understanding, Mr. Rasoul, if I may quote you sir, you said the Pakistani establishment should stop supporting the [Quettasura]. And Ahmed also made another very important point, which is that Pakistan does not need another military coup. I think we've all visited the region in the last few months. So I thought maybe the panel could be asked to triangulate these two points: one, the establishment in Pakistan that's supporting the [Quettasura], and if the military takeover is not an option maybe Ambassador Holbrooke would like to share some thoughts on this. What's the way ahead, sir?

**Lyse Doucet**

Ahmed, do you want the first question on the Taliban?

**Dr. Ahmed Rashid**

Well I think al-Qaeda is still a strategic threat to the west. Al-Qaeda is the unifying force which brings together the Pakistani Taliban, the Afghan Taliban and the Central Asian Taliban in this border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Al-Qaeda is strategising. Today you go and attack Pakistan. Tomorrow you have cease fires with the Pakistan army and go and attack the Americans in Afghanistan, and we are seeing it's a very, very comprehensive strategy. I think many times it's probably more comprehensive and understandable than the Western strategy is quite frankly.

At the moment I can tell you al-Qaeda is strategising very much to meet the American troop advance in Afghanistan. That is why we're seeing all these cease fires in the tribal areas and in SWAT in Pakistan. This is not coming out of the blue. This is not coming out because a bunch of Pakistani tribesman have suddenly decided to have peace. This is coming out because there's a strategy involved there.

And secondly, of course, we've seen all the European countries have all had their citizens being trained or being given six weeks battle experience there, coming back or not coming back, going off to Iraq, going of to Chechnya or going off somewhere else. So I think al-Qaeda is very much there strategically.

**Lyse Doucet**

The Pakistan establishment?

**The Hon. Zalmi Rasoul**

Sir, I think we have a very good working relation with the elected government of Pakistan and there is really a well -- they understand fully what is the threat to Pakistan's existence by these things. We wish that this political [will] will go down to

the military and to intelligence. We are in contact, we are in [tripartite] -- a very good tripartite meeting in Washington. It's going to be continued. If this political will of the elected government of Pakistan go down to the military and we give to Pakistan the assurances for what they are worried about it, and if they act on stopping the support or not tolerate their existence, I think you will see in the ground a significant improvement of security.

### **Lyse Doucet**

Mr. Holbrooke, did you want to comment or do you want to leave it there?

### **Richard C. Holbrooke**

I liked the analogy about mercury, but I would point out two things about mercury when it breaks up: one, each little ball of mercury is still mercury, and secondly, if you tilt the glass a little bit it all comes back together. There is an al-Qaeda. Osama Bin Laden has actually increased the number of audiotapes he's sent out in the last few months. Perhaps, I'm just speculating, because he sees the tremendous impact that Barack Obama's having on the Muslim world as highlighted by the remarkable videotape that President Obama did yesterday for Persian New Year; an absolutely extraordinary thing, which I would draw everyone's attention to here, a personal greeting to the Iranian people on their New Year.

But whatever it is, Osama Bin Laden and his colleagues are still out there providing inspiration to groups that range all over the world. And I would also just make sure everyone here remembers what Ahmed Rashid said, he said it flatly. I've often speculated about it, but he just said it flatly, he said the next major terrorist attack will take place in Europe. And let us pray that there isn't a next terrorist attack but be cognisant of what he's saying.

Which brings me back full circle again to the core point; why are we doing all this? Why are we in Afghanistan, a remote and distant country which is the poorest, non-African country in the world? Important though humanitarian issues are, we're not there simply to help in a humanitarian sense. We're there because it's in the national interest of the American and European nations to help Afghanistan repel the Taliban because they are associated with people who pose a direct threat to the United States and to Europe.

And when you asked earlier about whether we can afford it because of the economic crisis that is the big question. And we have some very distinguished members of Congress right behind you there from both parties, and I will let them speak for themselves but we will be asking you to support it within a few days: Senator Bennett, Senator Casey, my friend and future colleague Ellen Tauscher; congressmen, we're going to be coming up to you with a supplemental request to do all this within a few weeks. And I hope we will be able to get European support for this, too, because every member of Congress I've talked to, I talked to three yesterday, they always say, "We'll do our part but we hope the Europeans will do more on their side, as well."

**Lyse Doucet**

Radoslaw, you wanted to come in too?

**Radoslaw Sikorski**

I'd like to go back to the question posed by our friend from Denmark; because I think it's a fashionable issue right now whether or not to talk to the Taliban. And I think we should make distinctions because not every person with a gun is a Talib, but there are some really nasty people out there. We've just lost a hostage, a Polish citizen called Piotr Stanczak who had his head cut off in an al-Qaeda style beheading in Pakistan in the [Arakzai] tribal agency and those are criminals, those are murderers. Those people should be either put before justice or tracked down and liquidated.

But then there are other people who could be a part of the political process. Most civil wars end with some kind of amnesty, with some kind of -- I mean look at [Ulster] for example. But the point is that it is not our judgment to make that. It has to be the judgment of the people whose stake is the biggest in the politics of the region. It has to be the judgment of the Afghan authorities and of the Pakistani authorities.

**Lyse Doucet**

[inaudible] two questions in the back, these two and we'll take three right here then. These three. No, no, sir; sir, here. Just these three here. Sorry. The gentleman with Edward Mortimer. Try to keep our questions short because a lot of you want to --

**Edward Mortimer - Senior Vice President, Salzburg Global Seminar**

Thank you very much. Edward Mortimer from the Salzburg Global Seminar. This is a discussion on the record with media coverage, and I suspect that is the reason that one word has not been mentioned so far, which is Kashmir. We've talked a certain amount about India, a lot about Pakistan, a lot about terrorist groups placed in Pakistan. Can we realistically discuss Indo-Pakistani relations and not mention Kashmir?

**Kenjiro Monji - Former Japanese Ambassador to Iraq**

Kenjiro Monji from Japan, former Ambassador [of] Japan to Iraq [and to] [inaudible]. Two points: first, Japan is doing quite a lot in Afghanistan. I'll go very briefly but we implemented about three-quarters of \$2 billion assistance pledged since 2002 and also we are going to provide [a half a year salary] of 80,000 police officers for now. And also, we are cooperating with NATO. We implemented 43 projects with NATO [PLT] and we did have the cost of the [DDL] follow up through NATO Partners for Peace Trust Fund.

**Lyse Doucet**

Thank you.

**Kenjiro Monji**

Second point is that the --

**Lyse Doucet**

Your question?

**Kenjiro Monji**

Yes, question. There are three elements of the situation improvement Iraq. Firstly the surge and the military build up of the Iraqi security forces, but that movement from [inaudible] alone would not be sufficient. The second element is the movement from the bottom. That is the [inaudible] tribal leaders started to cooperate with Iraq security force and coalitions providing information, the whereabouts of the [caches] or the terrorists. And third important element is the cease fire announced by the [Shia] militia.

**Kenjiro Monji**

My question is these second and third elements, can they be applied in Afghan context? If so, in what form?

**Jeanne Shaheen - US Senator from New Hampshire**

Thank you. I'm Jeanne Shaheen. I'm a Member of the US Senate. Ambassador Holbrooke, I'm not however going to speak to how we're going to fund the effort in Afghanistan.

You've all talked very eloquently about the need for a regional approach, about the importance of supporting military efforts there and rebuilding the Afghan army and the Afghan police. But can you also talk about what we should be doing to rebuild civil society in Afghanistan, about how to help them crack down on corruption within the government? About how to deal with the poppy trade? Because it seems to me unless we deal with those issues we're not going to be successful with all the others.

**Lyse Doucet**

Thank you. Kashmir; Ahmed, do you want to talk about Kashmir, the link?

**Dr. Ahmed Rashid**

Well, very briefly. It is absolutely that we get movement between India and Pakistan on Kashmir. Unfortunately the recent Mumbai attack has really set that back. Now you have elections in India, so we're talking about probably another six months before you get any good dialogue going. But part of the regional approach has to be that the Americans, the Europeans have to get involved in bringing the two countries together on Kashmir. That was the stumbling block after 9/11. President Musharraf promised a strategic U-turn for Pakistan in supporting the American attack on Afghanistan.

There was no strategic U-turn, unfortunately, because the Kashmir [inaudible] Pakistani army did not conduct that U-turn. We still need the Pakistan army to actually strategically rethink what Pakistan's national interests are and that the real threat at the moment is the internal threat of terrorism. So I think Kashmir is absolutely a vital part of that.

Let me just say something on the economic aspect. I think part of the failure of the previous US administration was it utterly failed to rebuild or help rebuild the Afghan economy. Now it's critical to the comprehensive approach that I hope the Obama administration will take. It's not aid and development in the classic sense that you do in Africa and other places. We need to rebuild the Afghan economy even to the minimal way that it was back before the Soviet invasion, [which was what] and for that you need two, three essential things. You need infrastructure. Partly it's done but you don't have electricity in Kabul right now. Afghanistan has no electricity. Now in '78 you had a dozen major towns that had electricity, so you had a functioning kind of urban economy.

The second major thing is agriculture. 70%, 80% of Afghans live in the countryside. It was only last year that the administration actually committed money to agriculture. I'm not talking now about counter narcotics investment. I'm talking about real investment in irrigation, new seeds, new crops, new methods of teaching people what to grow, etc., etc.

And the third thing that will generate jobs. The real counter to the Taliban is to generate jobs. You're not going to generate jobs by setting up fake projects or duplicating projects. You're going to generate jobs by getting Afghans to work for the Afghan economy. That is what is critical and that has been missing so far.

### **Lyse Doucet**

Richard Holbrooke?

### **Richard C. Holbrooke**

Ahmed, did you read our top secret strategic review, because I am so glad that Senator Shaheen raised this question and Ahmed's answer. First of all on the drug issue, the United State alone is spending over \$800 million a year on counter narcotics. I have said publicly as a private citizen and I'll say it again today, but speaking for myself and my new job, we have gotten nothing out of it, nothing. It is true that some [hectare] of opium crop has been destroyed, but it hasn't hurt the Taliban one iota because whatever money they're getting from the drug trade, they get whatever they need whether we reduce the acreage or not and by forced eradication we're often pushing farmers into the Taliban hands. It is the most wasteful and ineffective programme I've seen in over 40 years in and out of the government. We are going to try to reprogramme that money. About \$160 million is for alternate livelihoods and we'd like to increase that. We want to re-examine it top to bottom.

Secondly, I have come to exactly the same conclusion Ahmed has independently, which is that it's an agricultural country and the Taliban recruit -- there's been a lot of talk today about moderate Taliban and so on and so forth. Most people fighting for the Taliban are not ideological supporters of Mullah Omar. They're young, unemployed men who get paid more in many cases than the national army pays them, and they're given guns and Afghanistan has got a long tradition of being a gun culture and they fight. And if they have alternate livelihoods, if they have decent jobs maybe the recruiting base will begin to dry up a bit. What the military calls drains the swamp. So one of the things we're going to ask Congress for, and I've already talked to our new Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, about this at length, is a very significantly expanded agricultural sector. About 160 million of it is for alternate livelihoods and we'd like to increase that. We want to re-examine it top to bottom.

Secondly, I have come to exactly the same conclusion Ahmed has independently, which is that's an agricultural country and the Taliban recruits - there's been a lot of talk today about moderate Taliban and so on and so forth. Most people fighting for the Taliban are not ideological supporters of Mullah Omar. They are young, unemployed men who get paid more in many cases than the National Army pays them and they are given guns, and Afghanistan has got a long tradition of being a gun culture and they fight and if they have alternate livelihoods, if they have decent jobs, maybe the recruiting base will begin to dry up a bit. What the military calls 'drain the swamp'.

So one of the things we are going to ask Congress for, and I've already talked to our New Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack about this at length, is a very significantly expanded agricultural sector job creation set of programmes.

Irrigation, farmer to market roads, market places, seeds - it's the largest per capita user of wheat in the world. But 60+% of the wheat is now imported and the locally grown wheat is very low in nutrients. This is an area for massive attention and the Agriculture Department has not been involved in it.

There is no central co-ordination of the US mission. The UN, the US and the Europeans have no programmes, the little programmes they have are not coordinated, this is an area of great promise. Rebuilding the Afghan economy is critical.

Now Dr. Rasoul mentioned the meetings in Washington and perhaps I could say one brief word about those. A month ago Secretary Clinton, Hillary Clinton and I assembled in Washington teams from Afghanistan and Pakistan for trilateral meetings. Not some kind of photo op with the two leaders, President Zadari and President Karzai did not come. But the two Foreign Ministers were there, Dr Rasoul was there, very importantly the two Chiefs of Intelligence, ISI and Afghan National Security came and General Kayani was there, and we agreed to make this at least a four times a year event and the next one will take place in Washington on the second week in May and this time, for example, we are going to have the Secretary of Agriculture Chair a

breakout session, just on the issue Ahmed talked about. And we are going to continue this in an effort to breakdown historic roles of distrust between Afghanistan and Pakistan so that we can cooperate.

We cannot have two intelligence services that barely talk to each other, that each hurl accusations at each other and ever hope to succeed militarily. So we cannot have a situation where the road from Peshawar into Kabul is in its current condition and inhibits economic trade, to say nothing of its challenge to the American military, NATO military logistic alliance.

We've a vast project ahead of us and I'm glad you've mentioned it. We are going to put a heavy emphasis on it.

### **Lyse Doucet**

Rashid, now do you want to [inaudible] the Japanese Ambassador's comments about everyone's talking about what happened in Iraq and what bits of it can be taken or not taken and the Ambassador mentioned three points.

### **Dr. Ahmed Rashid**

Yes I would because I think Japan is doing the right thing supplementing the salaries of Afghan officials.

If you have Judges earning \$60 per month, it is difficult for them to feed their families and temptations are great, and I think the efficiency and the honesty of State structures is key to the confidence of the population in the system. So we should do more of that sort of thing.

Then agriculture, as Europe and as the United States, we spend tens of billions of euros and of dollars per annum on agricultural support. 1% of that sum that we jointly spend would fix the problem. We could take all Afghan farmers on our payroll and still save ourselves a lot of money.

And the drug issue also, I agree with Dick that it won't be solved by traditional methods because they have failed everywhere. I believe it needs a more imaginative approach, we should look, for example, at the way that poppy production was eradicated in Turkey in the 60's and 70s. Or rather not eradicated but regularised, so that it is divorced from criminal activity.

### **Richard C. Holbrooke**

Can I just add one thing on Japan. I'm very glad that the Ambassador mentioned it. Japan has played a phenomenal role and to be very clear with everyone, for the next six months they are paying the salaries of the whole Afghan National Police Force. That is a remarkable gesture. They are hosting the Pakistan Conference, they are



increasing their aid, they've appointed a very major Ambassador colleague of yours as my Japanese counterpart and they must be acknowledged for that leadership.

And there is a country which really understands that there is a direct linkage between its security and what happens in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I am glad you got a chance to make your statement.

**Lyse Doucet**

Okay we are running out of time. I'm going to take, in the interests of balance of the room, three questions over here. The gentleman here with his hand up and the man in the pink shirt and the woman in front.

Lets keep the questions quick please.

**Patrick [Wilmners] - Aspect**

Mr. Rashid, there is an issue that's not been mentioned and that is how [Patu] nationalism has been perverted by Saudi money and Saudi influence to create the Taliban nation, the Al-Qaeda nation that we are seeing today. And Ambassador Holbrooke you won't be surprised at my second question since we last met in [Tablisee] during the August war, how difficult is it going to be to implement the policies that you are trying to do when we are seeing attempts that are being described by the Russian Federation to limit the access to Afghanistan by NATO and American Forces through central Asia, as most recently was shown by the closure of the [Manat] base in Kurdistan.

**From the floor**

Sorry, Peter [Durrell] from [inaudible]. You were talking about the narcotics. If you want public support and you communicate clearly the plan that will deal with the poppies and so on, you're much more likely to get a much stronger public support from every parent that is concerned with children and school. I mean one of the few things every man in the street knows is that Afghanistan produces 80% of the world's heroin.

**Lyse Doucet**

And one last one here, the woman in the front.

**Margarita Mathiopoulos**

My name is Margarita Mathiopoulos, I am chairing the Trans Atlantic Forum of the Free Democratic Party in Germany, and thank you Dick, thank you Ambassador Holbrooke for honouring us and coming and speaking to us.

For me that was the most comprehensive panel I have ever heard on the Afghanistan issue and I will tell you why.

What you stressed, and I'm very grateful is that apart from the military means, education is a weapon against countering terrorism, and I think all of you said it very clearly, it must be very boring for journalists, but I think it supports solving the problem.

When we look into the figures and you said some of them in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan or Egypt, the male population between 15 and 21 or 22 who are unemployed, it's the best recruitment for terrorists. How, and very clearly you also said how do we educate our people, are we failing to educate our people, why it matters to be in Afghanistan, and I think you all gave the answer because it matters that not only with military means, but also with educational means, we need to counter terrorism.

Now how.

**Lyse Doucet**

The question please.

**Margarita Mathiopoulos**

Now how could you find an agreement and that would especially help us in Germany, I think Mr. Polenz and we have a lot of other parliamentarians from Germany here, how could we make clear that education in terms of financing will play a key role, because I think this will be, especially for Germany, a very good argument to support our cause in Afghanistan.

**Lyse Doucet**

Thank you. Thank you very much. Get to your point.

**Margarita Mathiopoulos**

And my last point, and I don't mean as a German burden sharing between the military.

**Lyse Doucet**

Sorry there are so many people who want to speak I'm afraid. Thank you very much for your comments about education.

Maybe I'll go to Mr. Polenz about her comments about education and the importance of the Europeans in making sure this is a priority.

**Ruprecht Polenz**

In the German aid policy towards Afghanistan, education has played a great role. We have restored about 300 schools, we have educated teachers in four academies. We reconstructed so we are fully aware that education plays a crucial role, not only women's education but also education of young men of course.

And what we unfortunately see is that the Taliban see that this strategy is relevant to their goals and therefore they are trying to kill teachers to destroy schools and therefore we can see also in this regard that we need a real comprehensive approach, providing security and strengthening education. We need both.

**Lyse Doucet**

It's going to be a problem with implementation though, we've seen particularly in Kandahar and Helmand the difficulty of getting out of the PRT's, the aid agencies who are based in these places operate under heavy security, and even - I was in [Konduce] recently, a lot of people are afraid to go out from the base just simply because how do you implement these projects if the security environment is so difficult?

**Ruprecht Polenz**

It's probably the best way we are now trying, we have been trying before, enabling the Afghan police and the Afghan army to provide security because otherwise if you are trying to do it with foreign troops, foreign policemen, we will seem as an occupying force sooner than later. And therefore this is the right approach and I really appreciate how Richard Holbrooke described the new strategy for Afghanistan because I really think this is the way we can have success.

**Lyse Doucet**

And what about the question was asked about literacy.

**Dr. Ahmed Rashid**

The literacy campaign in Afghanistan we should remember has been one of the real success stories. And it is the largest literacy campaign in the Muslim world ever, ever. And it's been carried out with very little money. I don't know what the totals are but its very little and seven million kids are in school.

Let me compare that with Pakistan. We have a literacy rate of around 54% to 55%, which was the same literacy rate at partition in '47. What have we done with literacy, we have just managed to keep up with population growth, which is very high, and then we lost East Pakistan so I mean that substituted for.

So we have the same literacy rate as we had in 1947. Now that is an enormous - there is an enormous need to convince the Government to put money into education and for foreign aid to come in for education.

As far as Pashtun nationalism is concerned, yes you're right, I mean it's a very dangerous threat, but at the same time you have got in Pakistan, and in Afghanistan you've got the alternative to extremist Pashtun, Islamism, Nationalism, however you want to describe it.

You have an expression of secular Pashtun Nationalism. In the Awami National Party in Pakistan, which was voted into office with a huge vote last year and is now ruling the North West Frontier Province, and is now a major target for assassination campaign by the Taliban. The Taliban know that these secular Pashtuns are their real threat, and the same goes for Afghanistan. I mean not all Pashtuns are part of some Islamised you know Pashtun Nationalist Movement.

You have secular Pashtuns like the President himself and like others who are standing for democracy and for all the values that we believe in.

So I think you know again, what is needed in the political process is to be able to bolster these moderate, secular moderate, pro-democratic Pashtun forces.

### **Lyse Doucet**

Thank you. Richard there was a question about Russia.

It's going to be a problem with implementation though, we've seen particularly in

Now how could you find an agreement and that would especially help us in Germany.

### **Richard C. Holbrooke**

I'll mention Russia briefly, but I want to return to the education issue that Margarita raised.

On Russia, General Petraeus has been in constant contact with all the countries who might provide an alternate route for re-supplying the troops in Afghanistan.

If you look at Afghanistan it is the single most difficult logistical re-supply problem in the history of the United States military bar none. Why are you laughing Ahmed it's your - it starts in Kharachi, but you know that's true and the route it follows has a story and extraordinary history, because its up through the Khyber and it's the longest distance the US has ever fought from its supply routes. It's the furthest inland, and NATO, so it's a tough problem.

But it's a solvable one and look what happened in [Khuzestan] should not be read as a metaphor.

But Margarita talked about education and Ahmed made a very important comment and I would footnote it by noting that if you divide literacy by gender, you get an even more extraordinary story because female literacy is, I don't know, half of what it is among men. And if you go to the tribal areas of Pakistan, literacy goes down to single digits. So it's a very big issue.

But there's one thing we haven't discussed at all here today and it's the question of public information, or if you wish to call it by another word, war time propaganda. If

you look at the Taliban's potential appeal to people, they will try to rally people around roughly three types of ideas.

Their view that the world should return to a kind of 14<sup>th</sup> Century medieval state where women can't be educated and dancing and music are banned. That's not going to be terribly appealing to people, but it is the core of their philosophy and it's what Mullah Omar has repeatedly stood for and we all know what happened during the black years in Afghanistan.

But that's not the way they gain adherence. They gain adherence through arguing that the international forces are occupying forces, and thereby play into that great historic narrative for Afghanistan which we discussed earlier.

And secondly, they use intimidation tactics. And in the last few years this has gone absolutely unchallenged by the International Military Coalition. And if I were to single out major gaps in our efforts this would be right at the top. Case in point, Mr. Fazoola, the mass murderer terrorist who has taken over parts of SWAT in Pakistan.

Every night on at least 150 illegal low wattage FM stations, he is broadcasting the lists of people he's beheaded or going to behead. Now those of you with any memory of Rwanda, know that this is exactly what [Radio Mil Kolheen] did in 1994.

And at that time brave private citizens like Alison De Forge who just died in a plane crash in the United States, desperately begged the Pentagon to take action to jam those radios, to do some counter. Nothing was done. And right now, Fazoola has carte blanche to go ahead and broadcast from these sites.

[Batoola Massoud] who was one of the most odious people on earth and who is allegedly responsible for 90% of the current major terrorist attacks and may have been involved in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, has similar free reign down there in the Miran Shah and Northern [Ballustratan] areas.

And what are they saying - they are saying that the international forces are there to occupy your land forever, which isn't true but we aren't countering it. They're using terror propaganda.

We need, when you talk about education Margarita, you're talking about two different things. Education Ahmed talked about, but also a major effort must be done in my view, to counter this and that also will be part of the efforts that we are trying to put forward as we move forward.

In sum, without worrying about how many additional troops may or may not ultimately be required, the question that does not have any - which we can't address today. In sum, the failures in the civilian side from drugs, to agriculture to police, to information, the failures of the international effort, and by this I specifically include

the United States, are so enormous that we should at least hope that if we get our act together, and when I say we, I mean the US, the Europeans, Japan, China, other concerned countries, all of Afghanistan's neighbours, that if we pull it together and that's where this Brussels Forum is so very valuable because so many key people are here, we can do a lot better.

But the challenges are enormous. It's easy to identify the problems, coming up with effective solutions is not so easy. But that's what this Administration is committed to doing.

### **Lyse Doucet**

Thank you very much. I'm afraid, given the show of hands shows how much interest and hopefully commitment there is to help to try to - whatever walk of life you come from to dealing with what is certainly a very complex problem and I think what we've heard today is that it does require comprehensive solutions.

I think it was you, Richard Holbrooke, who said that there was no magic solution, there was going to be no date in, but I think let us just hope that when we meet here next year that there will have been progress on some very key areas.

Because it does matter to us and indeed to the world. Thank you very much.

## *Press Conference*

### **From the floor**

[Question inaudible]

### **Radoslaw Sikorski**

It's not the subject of our conference today, but in Poland we do have a sense of the criteria as to who we believe would be the most effective leader of NATO.

We believe that the subject of today's conference Afghanistan, it should be NATO's top priority and therefore we believe that NATO needs a quasi War Secretary General. Someone who will lead the Alliance to success in this emergency.

And we also believe that like in any organisation the EU or the UN that there should be some regional balance, and we of course traditionally have an American as the Supreme Allied Commander, we have an Italian, I think, as the Chairman of the Military Committee, so it would be natural for the Secretary General to - now that

Central Europe has been inside the Alliance for 10 years literally as of this month, it would be natural for someone from our region to be seriously considered.

We also think it would be good to improve the relations with Russia because west Europeans often think that we are over sensitive about Russia and we have some historical reasons for that, but if they really want us to be constructive and even more open towards Russia than we are, then what better way of reassuring us that we are safe than to appoint someone from our region.

As regards Ukraine, Georgia, we maintain the Bucharest Consensus, namely that these countries may one day join, but they have to fulfil the criteria. And in Ukraine of course, I am afraid the argument that Mr. Laverof mentioned today that the fact that the majority of the Ukrainian people don't yet support membership of NATO is a valid argument. We are an alliance of free nations and we don't drag anybody into the Alliance against their will.

So your leaders have to make up their own mind and then they have to persuade your people.

#### **From the floor**

One more question Mr. Sikorski. Newsweek. I have a question what you think about invitation of Mr. Lukashenko to the Eastern Summit in Prague. Don't you think that there should be conditions at least liberation of all political prisoners before he is invited as a sign of democratisation of the country?

#### **Radoslaw Sikorski**

Well I see that we have only the easy ones today and we are going to be polite towards our guests and keep to the subject of our conference and of our panel.

But we have opened up to Belarus. One of the reasons for Eastern Partnership that has just been approved by the European Council with serious financing, is to allow the 10 million Europeans in Belarus to also have the hope of closer relations with Europe. The summit which will take on the 7<sup>th</sup> May, we don't yet know where, is the responsibility of the Presidency of the EU which is to say Czech Republic.

This is a valid question but not to me, to the Presidency.

In Poland we are still considering our decision on this issue, our view, and will make this judgement on the basis of the treatment by the Belarusian authorities of their opposition, of the national minorities.

I do believe that the Belarusian authorities need to do more to be fully accepted in Europe and in that light we took, what I hope you regard as a sensible decision at [inaudible] last week, namely we extended the sanctions on Belarusian officials by 12 months, but at the same time we've suspended them for nine months. So longer than

the six months before. So we've sent the signal, you're doing better than in the past, but you need to do more.

**From the floor**

So I want to ask a question to Mr. Holbrooke.

Hi, I'm [inaudible] I'm from Turkish Press here. So I want to ask a question about Turkey's contribution to Afghanistan.

President Barack Obama will be at the beginning of the next month in Turkey, so expect also that the American side will articulate some expectation from Turkey. So can you say what are your expectations from Turkey in Afghanistan.

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

I'm really glad you asked that question because we didn't get a chance to talk about Turkey.

Turkey is a major factor in Afghanistan because of the Turkmen minority, because of Turkish role throughout the region and because of Turkey's central role in Afghanistan and in NATO.

I have talked to Foreign Minister, Ali Babacan about this. He sent a letter of very strong support to Secretary of State Clinton and a separate one to me. I will leave it to him to describe the contents of a confidential diplomatic exchange, but his letter was an expression of support and a readiness to consider doing more in the civilian sector, and we are going to consult Turkey extremely closely on every aspect of Afghanistan.

And when I was in Kabul a few weeks ago, I made sure that I saw the Turkish Ambassador in Ankara so that he would be able to indicate to his Government in Ankara how important we consider Turkey.

**From the floor**

Yes, Mr. Holbrooke, Eleanor Beardsley with National Public Radio. I have a question about NATO and Afghanistan and the Europeans.

Will the US be pushing the Europeans, and in particular maybe France re joining the NATO structures for more troops? And what if they don't give more troops, can we see a divide, a split between US and EU in NATO - and I've even read that NATO would be upstaged in Afghanistan by Coalition of the Willing, people who will put troops. How will this work? What if the Europeans don't give troops, who could give them?



**Richard C. Holbrooke**

I don't want to - I don't know I haven't heard the phrase Coalition of the Willing recently. That seems to me to be a phrase from a previous chapter of this story. We're working through NATO, we're going to strengthen the UN role very substantially, the conference in the Hague next week will be chaired by the United Nations. This is not a pledging conference, we are not coming to Europe to hammer on about additional troops. Each country has to decide for itself, but additional troops will be needed not just from the United States and I hope other countries will contribute more troops.

Many of the countries at this conference have, in fact, said that they are going to send more troops, or are considering it, you just heard Foreign Minister Sikorski talk about Poland in the larger session.

Polish contribution is enormously important and if they choose to increase it during the election period or beyond that would be most welcome. But I think the idea of the US going around and demanding from other countries what they should do, that's not the way we ought to do foreign policy and that era is over.

**From the floor**

Yes, [inaudible] Pascale [inaudible] from LTBF. My question is could you tell us the main line of the new strategy in Afghanistan and a definition of what is a moderate Taliban and are there going to be negotiations.

And then a quick comment on Belgium just announced that they are going to try and increase their presence in Afghanistan. Can we have a quick comment on that. Thank you.

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

We welcome the Belgian indication to increase and I look forward to meeting with the Foreign Minister of Belgium on Monday.

On the question of moderate Taliban, it's a phrase which you will never hear me utter. If you're a real follower of Mullah Omar you're not moderate by definition.

But as I said in the other room, the vast majority of people fighting for the Taliban are not people following the presets and values and beliefs of Mullah Omar. They're doing it out of a sense of grievance or because they consider it a job.

And finally your first question was on what?

**From the floor**

The strategy.

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

Oh strategy. Well we are in the middle of a strategic review and we haven't yet come out with all the details of it. But I think I indicated in the other room what some of the main lines are.

Afghanistan in a regional context that involves Pakistan as an equally critical issue. No success possible in Afghanistan unless the western areas of Pakistan are dealt with more successfully than they have been up to now.

Involvement of all the neighbours, and when I say all the neighbours I mean all the neighbours. And a significant increase in our civilian efforts there. Now when I say 'our' I don't mean the United States, I mean the International Coalition.

I draw your attention to what the Japanese Ambassador said in the other room.

**Pasacalle [Molay]**

You just confirmed that the strategic review by your country is not over, but on Monday you are going to I don't know, consult or inform.

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

Consult.

**Pasacalle [Molay]**

Basically it will be an exchange of views on the lines that have been already developed and as my colleague mentioned it seems that there is a slight disagreement between some countries on who should lead the pack for training more and more troops and police.

Could you confirm that effectively the US are asking for, lets say, 2,000 to 3,000 trainers for both police, as a [Jarndamarie] as a kind of Military Police and re-train at the same time, but that some people within EU are asking that the EU should organise that rather than NATO military people.

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

As I said in the other room, we all agree that the police are critically important. That we need to increase the number, increase the quality and improve the training.

The Europeans have been discussing a significant increase by the European union in this area. The US has been discussing it also, the next task is to mesh the two proposals into one larger proposal.

We are just beginning to identify this issue and figure it out. I talked to Javier Solana about it this morning. I talked to [Jean Louis Devit] about it along with General Jones the other day.

The French have appointed an outstanding envoy to work with me, Pierre [La Luche], who I have known for close to 40 years so I'm very happy to be working with him.

But you are looking for differences or disagreement. I don't see it. I see a common problem, a common challenge and now we're working out the details of how to work together.

I don't think it would be good to have two separate police training programmes and we all agree on that. So we'll work it out as we go along.

**Noah [Prin]**

Mr. Holbrooke you emphasised the role of India in solving any problems in Afghanistan. But do you think solving the problem of Kashmir is essential for India and Pakistan to cooperate on this? Thank you.

**Richard C. Holbrooke**

I hate to disappoint you but that's an issue which I'll leave to the Indians and the Pakistanis to work out for themselves. Sorry, but that's all you'll get from me on that issue.

Thank you.

[End]