THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
THE ELLIOTT SCHOOL
OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS AND THE SECURITY POLICY STUDIES PROGRAM OF THE ELLIOTT SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AT GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY PRESENT:

"AFGHANISTAN, FOUR YEARS LATER: PROGRESS, PROBLEMS, AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE"

PANEL I – PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS: TAKING STOCK

MODERATOR:
KARL F. INDERFURTH,
JOHN O. RANKIN PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, DIRECTOR OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS; FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS

SPEAKERS:

JAMES DOBBINS, DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY CENTER, RAND

BARNETT RUBIN,
DIRECTOR OF STUDIES AT THE CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

NAZIF SHAHRANI, PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY, CENTRAL ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES, INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2005

TRANSCRIPT PROVIDED BY
DC TRANSCRIPTION & MEDIA REPURPOSING

GORDON ADAMS: Good morning. We are going to get started, thank you very much for coming. I am Gordon Adams, I am the director of security policy studies and the professor of the practice of international affairs here at the Elliott School of International Affairs at the George Washington University. It's a long title, but I'll be brief.

My job here is to welcome you on behalf of President Steve Trachtenberg of the university, on behalf of Dean Michael Brown, who is the dean of the Elliott School. We are delighted to have you here this morning and we are delighted, too, to cosponsor this event with the Center for American Progress, which has sort of risen into the universe at a speed of a phoenix – or not a phoenix. I don't know what it is that goes that fast, but something that moves very fast into being recognized as one of the more influential and used and quoted think-tanks in the Washington area on issues of national security among others.

We at the security policy studies program and the Elliott School believe very strongly that there's an important place in Washington, D.C., for an institution that brings together the worlds of analysis and research and academic work and the world of public policy – those who make and practice and implement decisions in Washington, D.C. We are a bridge institution and that makes us even more happy to cosponsor events here with the institutions that are in the think-tank world in Washington, D.C., which is an immense resource for us as an institution both in terms of the knowledge they produce, the speakers they produce, and for our purposes the part-time faculty they often produce who teach our students in our programs.

So the university and the school and the security policy studies program that I represent are very happy to welcome this panel – these two panels and this event here today. They say sometimes that history often repeats itself first as tragedy and then as farce. I'm not sure they were at the farce stage with respect to Afghanistan and Iraq, but the lesson there will be learned this morning as we try to figure out where we stand in Afghanistan and where our policy is going with respect to events in Afghanistan, and hopefully we are not at the farce stage.

So you will get a chance to learn all of that with this panel. We will elucidate it. We will clarify it. We are happy to have it elucidated and clarified here at George Washington University in this wonderful facility from the School of Media and Public Affairs. I want to thank Bob Boorstin, Caroline – wherever she is, who was so important in organizing this event; and our own staff, Dan Melleby, Kathleen Riley; and the staff of the public affairs office at the Elliott School who helped organize it as well on the logistical side here.

So welcome and we hope that we all learn a great deal. Thank you.

ROBERT O. BOORSTIN: Good morning, I am Bob Boorstin. I am the vice president for national security at the Center for American Progress. Let me begin by thanking Dr. Gordon Adams and all the people here at GWU for setting this up today. We really appreciate it. And also to our panelists who have come from various places around the United States to be with us.

We are here today really for three primary reasons. First, Friday is going to mark the fourth anniversary of the beginning of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan that led to the removal of the Taliban regime and began to scatter al Qaeda's leadership. It seems like a good moment to us to think about where we are here and what's actually going on in Afghanistan to pay a call, as it were, on reality, which is something that this White House does not often do, and that's what our first panel will do today.

Second, we believe that in the next few months Afghanistan will be at another critical turning point. There has been significant progress in building government institutions and holding elections, in creating security forces, improving access to education and health, and we take stock of that progress in the report that we've distributed to you by the Center's Caroline Wadhams, which is called, "Afghanistan: Four Years After The Invasion."

Caroline, maybe you'll stand up and identify yourself to the crowd. She has done some great work here on compiling where we are today and I recommend that to you and those of you who want to find it on our website that's www.americanprogress.org.

In the report, we assess progress and offer recommendations in four areas: improving security, strengthening governance, curtailing the drug trade, and building the economy. And the report makes for pretty sober reading. It assesses the progress, but it paints a picture, ultimately, I think, of a country with an uncertain and fragile future that poses significant challenges not only for Afghans themselves but also for the United States and the international community.

Let me just give you two statistics from this report. Of the 199 U.S. military casualties in Afghanistan since the invasion, 25 percent of those casualties occurred in July and August of the year 2005. Another: Afghanistan today produces 87 percent of the world's illicit opium and that's compared to 12 percent that it produced in the year 2001. And how best to deal with an economy that seems to be dominated by narcotics is one of those topics that we will discuss this morning.

Third and finally, we are here because we think that discussion about our country's progress in what is alternately called the global war on terror, the struggle against global, violent extremists and so forth – in any case, our country's progress in attacking global terrorist networks must go beyond Iraq. I'm not saying that Iraq is unimportant, by no means, and the Center last week put out a plan by Larry Korb and Brian Katulis about how we strategically redeploy our forces and hopefully reach some kind of a good conclusion in Iraq.

But we must look at other things that are going on in the world and at other efforts to eliminate what are potential safe havens for terrorists, and certainly Afghanistan could be at the top of that list. As former President Clinton said last month, “We cannot lose in Afghanistan. We cannot let the Taliban come back. We cannot let Karzai fail. We cannot relax our efforts to try to keep undermining al Qaeda because that’s still by far a bigger threat to our security than Iraq.” That’s the focus of our second discussion today and I’m interested to hear if our panelists agree with that assessment.

Now we’ll get directly to the first panel and I’ll introduce Ambassador Rick Inderfurth directly to my right here. Rick also has a long title, he is called the Rankin Professor of the Practice of International Affairs and director of the graduate program in international affairs here at George Washington University, and my guess is that it doesn’t fit on a business card. Among many, many posts that he has served in in government, Rick served as assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs from 1997 to 2001, and I am going to turn it over to him to lead our discussion on internal developments in Afghanistan.

Thanks for being here, Rick.

KARL INDERFURTH: Thanks very much, Bob and Gordon, for opening up the program and welcoming everyone here. Let me add my welcome: I’m delighted you’re here. Hopefully, you’ve had some coffee and everybody is awake for what I think will be two great panels that you’ll be hearing this morning.

It’s my pleasure to be moderating this panel on Afghanistan and the subject of “four years later and prospects for the future.” I think that most of you are aware that this is a very important time in the post-Taliban era in Afghanistan. We’ve just had the recent national elections, September 18th – the elections for the lower house of the parliament and the provincial councils. And what this does – and this is very important, it signals the end of the formal Bonn process, the Bonn accord that was signed in December of 2001 that mapped out a transition from the Afghanistan’s rule under the Taliban to a democratically elected government and that transition has included, as called for in the Bonn Accord, the adoption of a new constitution, the presidential election last October. And these elections that have just taken place bring that process to a conclusion with when the national assembly is installed.

I’ve passed out outside this yellow sheet, which actually shows you Afghanistan’s road to self-government beginning with the ousting of the Taliban in October of 2001 to where we are today, so the fact is that this is a remarkable story. Four years later, this is a remarkable story and indeed an inspiring story of all of the Afghans that have been participating in this process, but as I think that you’ve already heard from comments by Bob and that you will certainly hear from the panelists, the work in Afghanistan is not done by any stretch of the imagination. There’s a great deal of work to do on security issues, great deal of work on governance, on issues of economic development,

reconstruction, the narcotics trade. All of these things require international attention and I think that's what we will be discussing with our panelists.

You should have received, as you came in, a brochure that has the bios of the panelists, but I'd like to very briefly say a few words about each. To my right, Dr. Barnett Rubin is the director of studies at the Center on International Cooperation at New York University. Now, that's his formal title. We all have our formal titles. Most importantly, Barney Rubin is clearly one of the world's foremost authorities on Afghanistan and its neighborhood – I'll put it that way; also, conflict prevention and conflict resolution, peace building. He is a prolific writer and commentator and I can personally attest a prolific e-mailer on all of these subjects and I think he knows what I'm talking about with his listservs. He is frequently called upon to be an advisor to the U.S. government as well as the United Nations, and it was in this capacity with the UN that he served as special advisor to Lakhdar Brahimi, who was Kofi Annan's special representative for Afghanistan during the negotiations that produced the Bonn Accord.

Our second panelist, to the right of Barney is Ambassador Jim Dobbins, who also played a key role with the Bonn Accord. Immediately following September 11th – the attacks on September 11th, Jim was designated as the Bush administration's representative to the Afghan opposition. He then helped organize the Bonn conference and he was the lead U.S. representative to that meeting. Also, very symbolically, very importantly, on December 16th, 2001, Ambassador Dobbins raised the flag over the newly reopened U.S. Embassy in Kabul. I had a special thought on that day because I had been there during the Taliban period with Ambassador Bill Richardson and at that point the embassy was boarded up and not used, so when Jim was there raising the flag, I thought this was a very symbolically important moment.

Now, having worked with Jim at the State Department, I was not surprised that he was chosen for this job dealing with Afghanistan. He has handled numerous crisis management assignments at State and at the National Security Council, including on Somalia and Haiti and Bosnia and Kosovo. I think that it's fairly clear that Jim has been a 'go to' guy when there are crises not only for the Bush administration, but several administrations including the Clinton administration.

He now directs RAND's International Security and Defense Policy Center. He is also the principal author of a two-volume RAND study on the history of nation building and the lessons learned, both good and bad. And I think that that – Jim, if you can summarize that two-volume down to a few key points, I think that will also add to our discussion with this panel.

Our third panelist, Dr. Nazif Shahrani, also brings great experience and perspective to the discussion. He is a professor of anthropology, Central Asian and Middle East studies at Indiana University. He is Afghan-born and has conducted extensive field research in Afghanistan and in Afghan refugee communities in Pakistan and Turkey. He is also currently working on a book entitled *Post-Taliban Afghanistan:*

The Challenges of State-Building, Governance and Security. If I'm not mistaken, that's sort of what this panel is about as well, so I'm delighted that he is with us this morning.

So these are the panelists that you'll hear from. I'd like to ask Barney Rubin to start off because literally, he has just returned from his latest trip to Afghanistan. He told me that he is a little jetlagged, but I saw him having a couple of cups of coffee before we began, so hopefully you are revived, but he does have the freshest on-the-ground perspective that he can share with us. So I'm going to ask him to start off – cover the major points as he sees them including the recent elections that were reported in the paper today that the election count has concluded. Now there'll be a period of challenge before these election results are officially announced.

I also saw, by the way, and I think this is very relevant to our discussion, that Secretary Condoleezza Rice will be traveling to Afghanistan next week. I think this will be her second trip there in her new capacity as secretary of state and I think that that's a further indication of the importance and indeed the prominence that Afghanistan continues to receive from the administration.

So Barney, if you would begin. Do I need to shake you to get you –

BARNETT RUBIN: No, I'm fine.

MR. INDERFURTH: Okay, he is good and he will speak for about ten minutes and then we will have James and Nazif follow.

MR. RUBIN: Okay, thank you, Rick. What I've chosen to do is to deal with a number of different topics very superficially and then we can discuss them in greater length later.

First, on the elections. I think the elections show and people's reaction to the election show that democracy is not being imposed on Afghanistan despite the will of the people. The people of Afghanistan want a representative government that is accountable to them, but I think that the turnout for the elections and the result of the elections show that many – probably most – Afghans feel they're not getting such a government. The turnout is far lower than it was during the presidential election and the main vote-getters are people who are largely opposed to the government.

And here I would single out for attention, not so much the well known people from the Mujahideen parties or other figures who are well known and have a lot of money. You could expect them to win on that basis. But, for instance, in Kabul, tied for second place is a man named Ramazan Bashar Dost, who I met in 2002 when he was a recent law graduate in Paris, who won because of his very outspoken campaign against corruption and waste in the reconstruction program. And on that basis, he won extremely large vote in Kabul. I had people on the street telling me that he was the best man, and he won across ethnic lines. He did not wage an ethnic campaign at all and he had no money, so I think that that is very key to understanding people's mentality; that is, the feeling that

whatever is being accomplished in Afghanistan in the interests of the United States, other countries, and a relatively small elite has not benefited; average Afghans and certainly not in the way that they expected.

I recently spoke to a very senior member of the Afghan government who visited the province of Ghor in Western Afghanistan. Ghor is one of the poorest provinces in Afghanistan, which means it is one of the poorest places in the entire world. I'll come to that in a minute. And he said there's nothing there. The people live with nothing there for hundreds of years, although about a thousand years ago they did conquer India. And he – but they have been led to expect more than nothing and so far they haven't received it. Their view is that the parliament is the last stage of the Bonn process and if the parliament doesn't produce anything for them, then they will lose faith in the process, which doesn't mean they will join the Taliban or al Qaeda, but it does mean that they will lose any inhibition that they may have had thus far into turning the province into a huge transit corridor for drug trafficking between northern and southern Afghanistan, which they could very easily do and they've been – they've done it to some extent, but they've been somewhat restrained.

Now, let me just make a couple – one point about what Afghanistan is. There's a basic – some basic points about Afghanistan that seem to get lost because of the discussion about democracy, counterterrorism, and so forth. Afghanistan is one of the five or six poorest countries in the world. Forty percent of the world population does not get enough food to eat in order not to be hungry year round. If the other 60 percent does get enough food, that is largely because of the income from growing opium poppy. The rate of literacy, life expectancy, health in general, especially maternal mortality is not comparable in any way to any other country in Asia. If you just looked at the statistics on Afghanistan, you would think it was one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The government in Afghanistan currently is estimated to mobilize 5 percent of the country's GDP in taxes. That is the lowest amount in the world for any country on which data is available.

The drug economy, on the other hand, mobilizes about one third to 40 percent of the entire economy, so you can see that it's quite an uneven battle between those two. The aid economy maybe is about half as large as the drug economy, but much of that – perhaps most of that – does not reach Afghans since it has a very large overhead cost.

Now, the task ahead, therefore, if we want to make this effort successful has to focus on enabling Afghans to build an economy that they can live on – something that we don't hear that much about here; that they can live on legally that would provide the basis for building a form of government and a state that could actually implement some of the laws that might be passed by a parliament and that would be accountable to them.

That is also the key to dealing with the drug problem, I might say. The United States pulled back from an extraordinarily dangerous counternarcotics policy last year, which would have started with massive eradication including aerial eradication and I credit the government of Afghanistan and also some help from the U.S. ambassador to

Afghanistan in stopping that in favor of a policy that is trying at least to win over the peasants while going after traffickers, but I must say there is nothing in this policy that this policy is not remotely of the dimensions that would be required to deal with this problem. It's still treating as if this is a marginal phenomenon in an economy where it is the largest sector. You cannot have a policy for destroying – a nation-building policy on the one hand and a policy for destroying the largest sector of the economy on the other hand.

You have to have an overall policy for making the licit economy grow very quickly, if you want to draw people out of that other – the illicit sector or, bearing in mind the levels of poverty and so on, they will defend their livelihoods and you will drive them into the arms of those who are supplying them with those livelihoods; namely, drug traffickers and the armed groups that may be allied with them more for opportunistic reasons.

Internationally, right now the UN in consultation with donors and the Afghan government is circulating drafts of a second agreement, what they're calling post-Bonn or Kabul agenda, which would be an agreement between the Afghan government and the international community that unlike Bonn, which imposed obligations only on the Afghan authorities, would impose obligations on all and which would focus on economic development as well governance and security and that is likely to be adopted in some version, maybe not a satisfactory one – I don't know at this point – at a conference in London sometime early next year. The Afghan government at the same time is working on what they call the Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

Now, a few words about risks. First, the insurgency is not going away. I don't know if there are more attacks. The coalition says not. What is certain is that the attacks are of a higher quality and that we see in this again more evidence for what General Odom, the former head of National Security Agency, said the other day: that the invasion of Iraq was the greatest strategic blunder of the century, because there's considerable evidence that al Qaeda in Iraq and others are now providing technical assistance to the various insurgent groups. They have higher quality IEDs, they are using tactics that have been developed in Iraq, and so on. And to the extent that it becomes much more tied actually than it was before into this global network, it will become much harder to deal with.

Second, there are a couple of very difficult contradictions to solve with Afghanistan. One, because of the weakness of the Afghan government and its troubled relations with virtually all of its neighbors, most Afghans have felt – and I think it is true – that they need a strong international presence there as a balance, and that is why there has been such high relative degree of acceptance of the U.S. forces and the rest of the international presence there. At the same time, those forces will someday leave and Afghanistan will still be located exactly where it is now with exactly the same neighbors. And therefore, for any program to be successful, it has to anchor Afghanistan in the region.

Now, the problem is that, especially given the policies of the current administration, the U.S. presence in Afghanistan is seen as threatening by many of Afghanistan's neighbors and there was a quite a reaction, therefore, on the part of many of those neighbors to the U.S.-Afghan strategic partnership, which was actually the initiative of the Afghan government, in particular President Karzai, but I think it shows a misreading of both the temper of the Afghan people and of the neighbors to think that having such a strong bilateral declaration before there is a multi-literal declaration would not cause a negative reaction. And in fact, the domestic reaction was partly evident in the demonstrations that were – you know, in which people were mobilized against the U.S. on the basis of the story in *Newsweek* about Guantanamo, but the question about U.S. bases in Afghanistan was raised at all those demonstrations.

The second contradiction is one I mentioned before: drugs. You can't build a stable, accountable, national state in Afghanistan while most the economy is criminal, at least according to international standards. You also cannot build a stable Afghanistan while you're destroying most of the economy. So, therefore, the policy toward drug has to be integrated into a stabilization and economic growth program that actually provides not only peasants – farmers with alternative livelihood, which means a lot more than just crops, it means comprehensive rural development. By the way, it has to happen in areas where poppy is not being grown as well where it is grown because it has moved now to all provinces of the country and people are now – have pretty much reached a conclusion that the only way to get rural development is to grow poppy, so it's important to reward the areas that haven't grown it as well.

And – but it also affects the urban economy. There is not a dividing line between the licit and the illicit economy. All the construction and business activity that Donald Rumsfeld raves about when he drives through Kabul on one of his daytrips is mostly financed by opium income as well as by contracting for the coalition. It's not financed by official assistance. So it creates employment, it pays for imports, which is the source of customs revenues for the government and so on, so I don't see any sign of a comprehensive macroeconomic strategy to replace the largest sector of Afghanistan's economy. We can talk about small decrease in area cultivating poppy later.

Second, I would say there is a problem of legitimacy because for a government to be fully legitimate in Afghanistan and sustainable, it has to be endorsed by the Islamic authorities and this government is – well, let's say the *ulema* have not withdrawn their grant of legitimacy to the government and to the international presence in Afghanistan. Partly – some of you may wonder why Chief Justice Shinwari has remained as – in his position as head of the Supreme Court, but he has another position as well and that is he is head of the Council of Ulema and in that role he has put a lot of pressure on the *ulema* actually to support the government, to grant it legitimacy, and to support the international forces. And he is actually, I understand, seen by many *ulema* as someone imposed on them by Karzai and the Americans in order to legitimate the current setup.

The *ulema* are having a very active discussion among themselves. They have ways of doing this that do not attract public attention as to whether the current setup is

Islamic and they rather suspect that it is not, although they have not reached a firm consensus. Now, they won't reach a firm consensus until such times as it is politically possible for them to bear the consequence of reaching such consensus, and that time is not now because people – whatever questions they may have about the current situation, they don't want to overthrow it. They're tired of war. They still have hope. They're hoping that the situation would get better. They really would like this to succeed if we can make it possible for them to succeed.

But it means that there is potential, if popular sentiment moves decisively in another direction, that the *ulema* could give a revolt Islamic sanction. They would provide a funding channel for neighbors who are unhappy about the U.S. role to support undermining the government. That is, of course, something that we learned how to do in the past as well. And they do have a nationwide network. Even if a majority of people didn't support them, they have a nationwide network. I won't go into the details of how it works. They can reach the mosques in every village just about, and it's – and that ability to do that at the grassroots is a very important source of their power. They can't make people do things they don't want to do, but if a consensus is reached they can help mobilize people. And thus far, they have been very much kept on the margins of the effort and not engaged.

Finally, if we talk of the relationship to people in the villages, and I might say also in urban slums – a very high U.S. official in Afghanistan asked me if I thought that the current effort was avoiding the mistakes of past international interventions in Afghanistan; that is, building a highly – an overly centralized, top heavy structure in Kabul that was not organically related to the population and the rest of the country that became more alienated from them culturally and didn't really provide them with any benefits. And I said unfortunately, I couldn't really reach the conclusion that it was very different at this point.

A lot of what is keeping the people in the rural areas calm is hope, some political participation, and narcotics income or opium poppy income. They have very active local governance institutions, which are organized around the mosque. It doesn't mean that the mullah controls them, but it means that the mullah is an important figure there and they finance those things themselves including from drug money.

However, those local governance institutions are outside of the official legal structure, which is totally centralized. And thus far, as in the past, there is a real lack of linkage and communication between those kinds of grassroots, self-governance institutions and the highly centralized ones that are being organized in Kabul. And that is – it's quite – it could be dangerous for the future of the country in a way for these grassroots institutions to be outside of and to some extent alienated from the national government, and yet the way to integrate them would be through development programs that more effectively reach the villagers, methods that strengthen the capacity of local governance rather than undermined it, and bring it into some kind of a national, political framework. And thus far, there are few programs in that direction, but still I think that the attitude that most Afghans, in my view, have toward the aid program is one that is

very similar to Ramazan Bashar Dost; that is, that it is very wasteful, corrupt, and is going to just a few people primarily in Kabul.

Finally, the security institutions, which are very key to any state, that are building have been built up – especially the army – largely on the basis of a U.S. conception of what Afghanistan needs for its security and a conception of some very – some Afghans in the government who are very close to the U.S. government. These institutions are successful in that they have – if you pay people $400 a month in Afghanistan, you can recruit a lot of them and many people in Afghanistan are quite happy to fight against the Taliban, especially getting paid $400 a month for it, but it is working now because of embedded U.S. trainers, connection to U.S. air support, and U.S. paying 100 percent of the salaries, which amount to – the total cost of which amounts to 17 percent of the GDP of Afghanistan. That means the structure that is now being built thus far is not going to be possible for Afghanistan to sustain out of its own revenues. We don't have a plan thus far from transitioning away from those embedded U.S. monitors. If we try to build up Afghan's capacity for air support and so on, that will be even more expensive, which Afghanistan – which, remember, has about the same economy as Burundi or Sierra Leone – will not be able to sustain.

So there is a real danger that in coming years – and I'm told by U.S. officials that we can only count on this aid for maybe three more years – when that aid is withdrawn, that Afghanistan will still be in poverty, it will have a clergy that does not think the government is legitimate, government institutions that don't reach into the countryside and it will have a large well-armed army that it will not be able to pay, so – plus neighbors who think that the government has become too aligned with the United States, which is threatening them.

So I'm not predicting anything will happen. I don't think it is inevitable, but certainly there are enough trends in the current situation to create any number of scenarios of collapse, conflict, and so on and I think that the public image based on holding elections and a rather superficial democratization is giving a much to – is really ignoring some very major problems that we have to resolve in order to build a base for sustainable institution-building and stability in Afghanistan.

MR. INDERFURTH: Barney, thank you.

We are going to ask Jim Dobbins now to speak since he was there at – if you will, present at the creation when these institutions were first envisioned in Bonn in 2001. I would like for him to step back for a second and just perhaps reflect on what he saw as the challenges facing Afghanistan at that time and how he thinks that has gone since then and then talk about the challenges that he sees, if you will, for the next four years including on the security institutions and what lessons can be derived so far from Afghanistan for nation-building.

Jim?

JAMES DOBBINS: Thank you Rick. Well, the Bonn agreement negotiated just about four years ago today has been a remarkably successful roadmap for Afghanistan's political evolution in which all of its benchmarks have been met more or less on schedule. And I think it's useful to reflect why the Bonn agreement was so successful and why – as a point of contrast, why it's been so much more difficult to achieve the same kind of political evolution in Iraq.

I'd say the success of Bonn derived from several factors. One was, there were some extraordinary personalities involved in organizing and implementing the process including a first-rate UN team who actually drafted the Bonn agreement. This included Lakhdar Brahimi, Ashraf Ghani, and the person sitting on my left, Barney Rubin.

These are the people who actually drafted the agreement, which was subsequently modified and negotiated by the Afghan participants in the Bonn conference, but on the basis of a UN draft and under UN chairmanship. And there were other extraordinary personalities who have continued to contribute to the stability of Afghanistan; Hamid Karzai has proved to be an extremely adept politician; a moderate, modernizing figure; and one who has been very adept at co-opting a wide variety of political forces in his country.

The second factor war weariness. Afghanistan had been in the midst of civil war for something like 24 years when the Bonn conference occurred and there was a strong pressure on all of the Afghan participants in that conference from their constituencies, to the extent they had constituencies in Afghanistan, toward compromise and successful conclusion of that meeting.

The third factor was the presence of an internal resistance movement that had legitimized itself through conflict that had hung on and opposed the Taliban for years and which by the time the Bonn conference took place was actually in control of most of the country and so in order to derive a broadly representative government, one simply had to persuade that internal resistance to accept an admixture, and not a big admixture, of émigré figures in order to fill out its ethnic and geographic representativeness and create the basis for a government which had wide internal legitimacy and universal external recognition.

And finally, the last factor that was terribly important to Bonn was the attitude of the neighboring states. Probably the most signal achievement of American diplomacy in the aftermath of 9/11 was to persuade the states that had been tearing Afghanistan apart for 20 years, that the Great Game didn't have to be a zero-sum game; that they could all win by installing in Bonn a moderate, modernizing, non-threatening regime. And it was the success of American diplomacy in building a coalition involving Iran, Russia, India, Pakistan, who've been at daggers with each other for years, in support of the Bonn process; to encourage their participation in Bonn and to use that participation to ensure that the Afghans present were all getting compatible signals from their sponsors as they went into the various caucuses which produced the first Karzai government.

Now, when you look at the difficulties one has had in Iraq as a point of comparison, one sees that many of these conditions simply weren't present. Personalities – yes, there were extraordinary personalities, both Lakhdar Brahimi and Sergio de Mello participated on behalf of the UN in forming the first and then the second – that is, the Iraqi governing council and then the Iraqi provisional government, but they weren't accorded the same centrality or importance as they had played in Afghanistan and thus their ability to contribute was less.

There wasn't the same degree of war weariness. The war had – at least the immediate war that had overthrown Saddam Hussein had not touched the civilian population for the most part and you didn't have the same kind of pressures and you didn't have the same kind of welcoming of the international presence that you did have in Afghanistan.

Perhaps most importantly, there was no internal resistance upon which to build; that if one was going to put a government into Baghdad in the immediate aftermath of the American intervention, it would have had to be a purely émigré government with very shallow roots because they really were no other opposition figures.

And finally, there was no consensus among the neighboring states of Iraq in support of the emergence of a moderate, modernizing, non-threatening regime in Baghdad. And this was in part because the United States declined to try to promote such a consensus. When the U.S. went into Afghanistan, it went in with a fairly modest set of objectives. The U.S. did not go into Afghanistan saying it was going to make it a model for Central Asia and that once it had introduced democracy in Afghanistan it was then going to revolutionize every neighboring state. That is the declaratory basis for the U.S. intervention in Iraq and, needless to say, it didn't promote a lot of cooperation from Iraq's neighbors.

My instructions, when I was sent to Bonn to represent the U.S. government, said nothing about democracy. We did want a broadly based, representative government. That was our objective. The word democracy was actually introduced in the Bonn government text at the recommendation of the Iranian delegation. On the morning that the text first surfaced, the Afghans had gotten it around – I don't know, 10:00 at night, most of the international participants had gone to bed by then –

MR. RUBIN(?): 3:00 a.m.

MR. DOBBINS: Okay, got it at 3:00 a.m. I met in the morning with a couple of the delegations including the Iranian, I think it was, and the Italian and German, if I remember correctly. And so the four of us were having coffee and sitting around and chewing over this document. And it was the Iranian delegate – the deputy foreign minister – who said, "You know, this document doesn't say democracy anywhere. Shouldn't we add democracy? Isn't that something we want?" And the rest of us admitted that we hadn't caught that, but it was something that ought to be there.

(Laughter.) And he said, "You know, also it doesn't commit the new Afghan government to do anything about international terrorism. Don't you think we should have something in there about fighting international terrorism?" And we again admitted that that was something that probably ought to be in the document and those kinds of commitments were indeed introduced into the document.

But there was a real sense of solidarity among the neighboring states, a desire to make this work and to signal all of the Afghan factions that they were no longer going to receive external support if they blocked this. One of the most decisive moments, the Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah told me – he was not in Bonn. He was back in Kabul trying to rally the Northern Alliance to the emerging agreement that was being negotiated in Bonn and there was a lot of resistance there, including from President Rabbani who wanted to continue to be president and didn't see why he should turn power over to Hamid Karzai. And a decisive moment in their consultations occurred when the Russian ambassador came in and said he had a demarche from Moscow and the demarche was that if they didn't go along with the Bonn agreement, they should not anticipate any further Russian assistance.

And Abdullah said that was a fairly powerful, unequivocal statement and that statement was made at the request of Colin Powell, who called the Russian foreign minister and said, "We are at the decisive moment. We need to put this over the top and we need your help." So these were some of the factors that led to success at Bonn and the negotiation of a remarkably resilient agreement. Is this my three-minute mark? Good.

Now, what are the prospects from here on? Well, I mean I agree with everything that Barney has said. Democracy is great, but it's not enough. It's not going to solve Afghanistan's problems, although it can make a positive contribution. Clearly, what's needed now is security, capacity, and economic development.

Security is something that we still haven't been able to provide in a comprehensive way throughout the country, capacity in the sense of the capacity of the government to actually implement whatever laws the new parliament actually passes, and development of an alternate economy to the drug economy.

I think that I'll just conclude by reflecting a bid on the interaction between American interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, which have been mostly, but not entirely, negative in both directions.

I think as regards the interaction from Afghanistan to Iraq, there's still doubt that the speed and ease of the military victory and the quickness with which a broadly based, largely representative and broadly accepted regime could be installed in Baghdad gave the U.S. administration an excessively optimistic assessment about the degree to which a comparable process could be undertaken in Iraq. And for the reasons I've cited, that was not a well-founded assessment, but it was the assessment upon which the administration went into Iraq.

In terms of the interaction from Iraq to Afghanistan, there's no doubt that resources that could and should have been used in Afghanistan were siphoned off to prepare for and then to address the needs of the Iraq intervention. Afghanistan in its first two years was the least resourced of any American nation-building operation in the last 60 years. By a point of comparison, Kosovo, which had experienced only 11 weeks of air war with no ground war at all, received 25 times more assistance on a per capita basis over those first two years than Afghanistan did after 23 years of brutal civil war, and it received 50 times more security assistance in the form of international peacekeepers. That is, there were 50 times more troops in Kosovo on a per capita basis than there were in Afghanistan providing peacekeeping and security. And there's no doubt that the requirements to address the Iraq contingency limited initial American commitment.

Now, there are some positive aspects to this interaction. The administration has largely recognized and addressed the initial inadequate resourcing of Afghanistan; not to say that current resources are adequate, but we do have twice as many troops in Afghanistan today as we did for the first year and we are providing about four times more assistance this year than we did for the first year, so the administration has significantly stepped up assistance to Afghanistan.

The impact of Iraq is that the worse Iraq gets is, the more important it is to keep Afghanistan in the win column, and so I think the administration is genuinely committed to sticking with the commitments in Afghanistan and trying to make it succeed. It also has – Iraq also has the perverse effect of channeling allied assistance toward Afghanistan. That is, there's lots of American allies who don't want to put their troops at risk in Iraq and are therefore more prepared to commit them in Afghanistan. And I think that even the British and Australians, who have been among the most robust in Iraq, are beginning to increase their commitments in Afghanistan perhaps at some expense in terms of Iraq.

So I think that there is a commitment to Afghanistan and some prospect that the international community will continue to make significant resource commitments, although probably not on the scale that would be necessary to actually provide an alternative to the drug economy.

MR. INDERFURTH: Great. Thank you Jim. And, indeed, the point at which the level of the international commitment will become clearer will be at the international conference that Barney mentioned that will take place in either January or February. The Afghan government had asked for a postponement of the latest donors' conference until after the national elections took place and they get their thoughts about the next step in the Bonn process.

So we will now go to the third panelist; Dr. Shahrani. I've asked – in addition to his comments that he would like to offer, I'd ask him to give us a little more sense of what the Afghans themselves are thinking about this process. How much progress do they think has been made in these four years? How disillusioned or illusioned – I'm not sure if that's a word – they are with this process and what they see as the most important priorities in the months ahead?

NAZIF SHAHRANI: (Arabic phrase.) Good morning. Let me thank both the Center for American Progress and George Washington University for inviting me to this panel. I should also point out that, unlike my other colleagues who are around this table, I've not been a party to advising anything in the last four years that had to do with Afghanistan, so I have the liberty of sitting in Bloomington, Indiana, and being critical of things, as academics often do.

Let me start by saying that Barney Rubin certainly described or characterized what Afghan society is all about. It's a nation; poor, suffering from all kinds of maladies, and so on and so forth, but also I would like to add a couple of other things about that country. One is that the people are extremely patient. They have been repeatedly lied to and deceived and have been subject of deceit by their own governments. That is before. We shouldn't think that the Taliban were the source of all the problems in all the ills in the country. Previous governments, in fact before communist regime, also had made promises to the people of Afghanistan that they never delivered. The communists came in and made promises of all sorts; they also did not deliver. Mujahideen, who had also made promises during the struggle against Russians and communists made promises. They broke those promises. And Taliban, of course, also were making promises. They deceived the people of Afghanistan.

And now the Americans and Mr. Karzai and his team are in the country and we hope that they are not doing the same thing and certainly the people are patient and they will do their best. They will make due. They have done. But there is limit to all of these. And unfortunately, in my judgment, the developments in the last four years has not been following a trend or a pattern that promises that their hopes will be realized. And that's a shame because Afghanistan, having gone through 25 years of crises, was at a point with the help of the United States and international community to truly make a shift in the way it is governed, in the way that it could carry on into the future for – with something positive.

The other thing that I wanted to also say about Afghanistan is that Afghanistan, in fact, although we talk about governance in Afghanistan, that's actually misnomer because Afghanistan has only had rulers and subjects. The notion – the concept of citizenship in Afghanistan does not, in fact, exist in the language of discourse in either Persian or Pashto. We only have two terms in the language of the country; both of them translate into subjects. And that's *tabah* (ph) and *rayah* (ph). Both of them come from Arabic. There is no term and in fact the chapter of the new constitution of Afghanistan, although when translated into English translates the chapter as the rights of citizens, in fact it is the rights of subjects, and that's if it was properly translated into being that. And the reason for that is very simple: that Afghanistan has had a system of government based on rules of sovereignty; that whoever has run the country has claimed utter and total sovereignty. In fact, in the 1880s, 1890s, and even early 1900s, the kings who began this state claimed a kind of divine right to governance, very much the same as what European states in the medieval period were claiming their sovereignty from church and as divine kings and so forth. That unfortunately has not changed.

What that entails is essentially those who have claims of sovereignty have the right to appoint everybody and the basic pattern of appointment in a country that's multiethnic, that has a dysfunctional state structure such as nation state – what that means is that they appoint their own kinsman first, their cronies second, and then they sell the offices to the rest of the people who have the money to pay and this is not unique to Afghanistan, but unfortunately this was the pattern – remains the pattern in Afghanistan.

So if we only have elections to elect – and, again, the basic structure of this governance is also person centered; that it's the right person that – in sovereignty base and of course in the case of Afghanistan also capital centered or Kabul centered. These are the sort of the bundle of things that has been characterizing the country and it promotes really a politics of identity, politics that politicizes ethnicity, politicizes tribalism, politicizes everything about the society that's wrong and inappropriate in such societies. And unfortunately when we also went to Afghanistan, we have – and those who have advised them have – diagnosed the problem wrongly in some ways because the idea has been that Afghanistan was basically a failed state and it used to be a weak state. Only if we could have a strong state and if only if we could build the state back to it's strength, then everything should be all right, and the way to do that starting with Bonn was to look for the right people. And the right people; our people, that is, were found and put in place and maybe some of the not so desirables also came. Too bad, but we will get rid of them eventually. And in fact that's what is happening and people began to sense that there is a let down of sorts by the United States government, by the international community.

What should have been done – and of course this is a country that was in crisis. Much of the policy has been really crisis policy rather than thoughtful sort of care to make plans, and in the last four years maybe initially they had to do something such as the Bonn agreement to put a government together, but in the last four years we have had some very important opportunities which we have missed in making a difference, and that is the policies that has been put together have been put together by the right people. After they were found, then we counted on them to make the right policies instead of actually making policies and bringing as many different views in making that policy as possible, because Afghanistan is not one unitary country as much as anybody wants.

There are certainly different interest groups, different regional groups, different linguistic communities, and so forth. All of them had interests and their interests should have been listened to and the policy should have been formulated in such a way that would have brought people together because those policies of sovereignty based, person centered rule also created huge amount of distrust: distrust towards government and mistrust of communities and groups with one another.

Right now, Afghanistan's true crisis is lack of trust and, in fact, that social capital that's so critical for democracy simply and utterly lacks in Afghanistan. The last four years should have, in fact, worked to improve that situation and bring about greater trust amongst communities within the country and that did not happen. So the policies that

have been formulated by the United States and condoned by international community and so forth, for the most part reflects really the desire of one Afghanistan, one community in Afghanistan, one group in Afghanistan, and not the rest of the country. And that is unfortunate in some ways because if we had, in fact, put the policy together and went out to find the right people to come and put that policy and implement that policy, we probably would have done a lot better and we have not done it.

So what we could have done should have been started with the new constitution of Afghanistan. In the new constitution of the Afghanistan, those who advised promoted the idea of a strong presidency and went against parliamentary system and certainly opposed any decentralization in community self-governance that would have transformed the country from the condition of subjecthood into citizenship, and by that what I mean is if we have indeed adopted in the constitution of Afghanistan a simple policy of allowing all political offices, at the national level, provincial level, district level, and villages to be elected – something we do in the United States of America – and then take away the privilege of appointments of everybody by the president or by ministers and given the – adopted the principle that those communities and elected bodies in each level should have the privilege of hiring people on the basis of merit through committees and commissions, so that it's not one individual who appoints everybody, but a community, a group, who hires professionals on the basis of their qualifications instead of appointing judges, instead of appointing police chiefs, instead of appointing a lot of other – something that we do here in the United States at various level of community. That's what democracy is all about. That's what transforms subjects into citizens and in Afghanistan we don't do that; that instead, everybody is appointed. And again we are back to the same condition of corruption, the same condition of abuse.

This was not done in the constitution of Afghanistan. We have now elections for provincial councils, but what are these provincial councils going to do? They are going to advise the government to implement its plans. The appointed people, that they have no right to legislate, they have no right to monitor – very little, really and in fact it's all left sort of vague, so that ultimately the government – the centralized structure that basically branches out of Kabul is going to manage everything and these councils are basically to say, well, we had elections and we had you know people express their views and their wishes, but in fact there is none of that.

And it's this opportunity – missed opportunity to truly transform the possibility of bringing governmentality in Afghanistan; governmentality in the sense of having management rather than rulers, that managing political affairs, the public affairs of the community and having truly civil servants in the sense of having people who have been hired by local communities to serve their interests. This would have indeed depoliticized the ethnicity, because I have worked in a remotest district of Afghanistan, which is the Wakhan corridor, that little panhandle with the — sort of pointing towards China. If the Wakhis had the right to essentially recruit their own judges, their own police chief, their own school headmaster, and so on and so forth. Anybody in Afghanistan could apply: A Pashtun could apply; a Hazara could apply; a Nuristani could apply. And if they are hired, the person will be responsible and accountable to them.

They don't have to hire a Whakhi. They may not even have a Whakhi to hire to begin with. Then the person would be responsible to them. Instead, when these people are sent from Kabul, what happens, of course, is that they are responsible to their masters in Kabul or the provincial capital or someplace else and that they are not going to listen, they are not going to do anything that would benefit the people of community. So this was a very basic American principle – for God's sake – that we for some reason seem to think that these rules should and could only work in the United States and could not work anywhere else. I am here to tell you that people of Afghanistan wanted and wished this – great majority of them did, but a few elite in Kabul or in Washington who are working closely with the State Department and with the American government, if they wanted the – the old sovereignty-based model of governance which the constitution presented to them, that may be so, but the great majority of people expected differently and that they have not been empowered. They have not been transformed into citizens. This is a problem that is not – again, also present in Iraq, present in much of the rest of the Muslim world, particularly in the Middle East, that they have not made these transition and transformation from conditional subjecthood and sovereignty-based rule, person-centered rule into governmentality, into the kinds of truly democratic system that they hope and wish and in fact aspire to. So in that sense, I think the people of Afghanistan have been let down.

And I wanted to also make one other point in this connection as time is running out, and that is the question of security. Security in Afghanistan and strong central government in Afghanistan essentially has meant building large army of 70,000 people and police force of over 62,000 people and maybe also other sort of security apparatus, amounting again tens of thousands of people. This year, two ministries – defense and interior – has spent 44 percent of Afghanistan's very little budget. Tell me, what's going to be left there to do for education, for health, for communication, for anything else? Is this the way to defend the country? Is this the way to provide security for the people?

What people fear is that Afghanistan is in the road to becoming a militia state in the service of maybe other countries and when – in the Muslim world, in other countries where people have large armies and large police force, they do not use it to defend the country against outsiders; they use it to oppress their own people. And once you have a military base given to a government, even if it's elected and they become the elected dictators. Is this what the United States means by state-building or nation-building or whatever? I hope not.

So there are – I think, we had the opportunity. Again, if we had adopted in the constitution, community self-governance at all levels, that we could have also adopted community policing and community self-defense units such as national guard. One could have done differently instead of disarming people of Afghanistan totally and completely, so that the only center has the means to do as it wants.

One particularly important point that I want to make is this: the support right now for this government – for Mr. Karzai's regime in the last four years and maybe into the

future is not because people are truly happy with the way he is conducting the government. Their fear – their fear is that if he was not there and United States was not there, Taliban will come back to the country. So this country, this government will continue into the future not because the people of Afghanistan are happy with its policies and its conduct, but because they think this is the only way to keep themselves from the tragedy of Taliban coming back in Pakistan and ISI coming back onto them. And that's a very important note to know: that fear – fear, not hope seem to be the reason for the continuation of this particular government and the policies and anything that's based on fear unfortunately is not going to have much of a future. And I have to shut up right now I think.

MR. INDERFURTH: Well, not to shut up. (Laughter.) Actually, what we are going to do now is turn to your questions for the panelists.

Let me call attention to one thing, one of the perspectives that you may want to look at. We had Ambassador Jawad, the Afghan ambassador to the United States, at the Elliot School on September 8th and on our website you can see the full text of his remarks. He had a perspective based as a government official, so it would be another one to add to the list here.

What I would like to do is, I think we have almost 30 minutes to start with questions and if you could identify yourself and your affiliation please, and also who you would like to address the question to.

Q: Yes, thank you. Tom Switzer, American Foreign Service Association. I will direct this to Professor Rubin, who – you said that in the recent elections one of the leading – winning candidates had won across ethnic lines. My question is, how pervasive is that phenomenon? Was it in the recent elections? Is that a growing phenomenon and how important is that? In the context of the last speaker, it would appear to be quite important if, indeed, a sizable number of voters are willing to cross the ethnic lines. I appreciate your comment, sir.

MR. RUBIN: Do you want me to answer that?

MR. INDERFURTH: I do, yeah. (Laugher.)

MR. RUBIN: Well, I think a fundamental point that Nazif made is the pervasiveness of mistrust in the society and it is that mistrust rather than ethnic ideology, which is at the base of a lot of the ethnic problems; that is, people stick with groups that they know and by through which they have some kind of kinship or locality-based social capital because of their mistrust of institutions and of people that they don't know.

Ramazan Bashar Dost's candidacy was based on mistrust; that is, he mobilized people's mistrust of the central government and the aid community and that mistrust crosses ethnic lines. So he successfully used a populous campaign to mobilize mistrust, but he did not build a positive political coalition based on interethnic – you know,

positive social capital, so if anything I think it unfortunately tends to confirm what Nazif said.

MR. INDERFURTH: I have been told that we need to ask you that – who wants to ask questions to come to the mike here in the front, so if you could do that as we go to the next question.

Q: Thank you. Carl Robichaud from the Century Foundation. Ambassador Inderfurth, you mentioned that we are coming to a decision point which is the successor to the Bonn agreement and I would like to ask each of our panelists if you could recommend one or two discrete steps that you would like to see in the second Bonn agreement that would improve and build on what we have done in the first agreement.

Thanks.

MR. INDERFURTH: Jim, why don't you start?

MR. DOBBINS: Well, I think that the – we need to improve the international structure for support to Afghanistan. The arrangements that flowed from Bonn were rather weak and lacked coherence largely because at that time the U.S. administration was uneasy with the whole process of nation-building – didn't want strong international roles. I think their attitude has changed somewhat. They are trying to get NATO to take over responsibility for peacekeeping throughout the country, which I think would be helpful if the NATO is prepared to do that. And I think NATO needs a partner on the economic and social side. I think the UN can continue to play an important role politically, but the UN is not particularly effective in terms of delivering economic assistance and I think that the – there a stronger role for the European Union in that regard, as part of this new bargain, would be very helpful.

MR. INDERFURTH: Nazif, do you want to add a –

MR. SHAHRANI: Yes, yes.

MR. INDERFURTH: —couple of post-Bonn agenda items?

MR. SHAHRANI: Yeah. I think one of the very important things that post-Bonn agreement, at least the first one, has done is that Afghanistan ended up with not one government but at least three or four different governments, parallel at the same time. That is, UN office in Kabul became basically a government of its own with its own policies, its own budget, with its own way of doing things. And of course the American embassy for all intents and purposes was considered to be running the country with it – again, with its own army, its own policy, its own advisers and everything else. And then we had the so-called legitimate government of Afghanistan that was elected and so forth by Karzai, who had very little resources and not much of anything other than being a front. And I think we are – we are not to forget again NGOs, who were the fourth parallel government and they were running their own affairs in the country.

And we are about to have the – maybe the fifth one, and that's the Afghan parliament. It's going to be made up of communists, made up of Mujahideen. It's going to be made up of Taliban and made up of maybe people like Mr. Bashar Dost, who went from the West. And these are totally incongruous bunch of people and what we are going to expect from a parliament like that is going to be something that the Bonn agreement – the second one – should certainly think about.

And the other important thing, maybe other than the international side of it, which, you know, they should support and so forth, but there has to be some limits on what their role in governance in the country is going to be.

Another very important point is that it has been a serious mistake to bring regional leaders who have regional authority and regional following into the national politics. It should have never been done because these folks do not have national approval because of their ethnic connections, because of their previous maybe accomplishments as well as misdeeds. They are not acceptable to the whole country, but they are perfectly accepted and acceptable to their own people in their own regions. So dislodging Ismail Khan and bringing him to making him a minister was a serious mistake. It does not follow any understanding of Afghan political culture or Dostum (ph) to be brought into, you know, whatever office that he holds, which is meaningless anyway.

These people should have been encouraged and in fact allowed to stay in their own areas where they could do things positively to their own people because of the support they had and we should have, in fact, at the national level tried to bring people who did not have that kind of background and who were interested and also limit the – the power and authority of the central government. Some kind of division has to happen. There has to be areas where central government should be very powerful, in the area of foreign policy for example, the security of boundaries and so on and so forth, and regional governments should have been the implementers of laws and so forth, which has not happened. So there is a lot of rethinking and I hope that the second Bonn will think about these things. It's still not too late to remedy some of the things.

MR. INDERFURTH: Let's go to our next questioner.

Q: Al Millikan, Washington Independent Writers. After the Afghanistan constitution named Islam specifically, has this naming had real significance or do any of you see this designation as meaningless? I was interested in particular, does Islam have particular effective teaching that can be used in addressing drug production and trade and are any of you capable of making constitutional comparisons and realities with the other recently named – well, the new constitutions that have named Islam also, like in Palestine or Iraq.

MR. INDERFURTH: Barney, why don't you try?

MR. RUBIN: Well, I mean, first if it was not an Islamic constitution, then it would never have been accepted. It would not be acceptable to the people of Afghanistan. What that means is not – what is most important about, in a way, an Islamic constitution functions is less what it says about Islam than to whom it gives the power to decide what is Islamic, and this constitution gives that power basically to the Supreme Court, so that the effect of that on the constitution will depend on the competency, orientation, and so on of the Supreme Court. Thus far, that doesn't give much reason to be very optimistic, but the government does have to appoint a new Supreme Court after the parliamentary elections.

With regard to drugs, the government and the U.S. have tried to use this, but it has been quite ineffective because the religious authorities do not believe they are sincere. Because the constitution commits the government to struggle against the production, trafficking, and consumption of narcotics and all intoxicants – (foreign phrase) – which includes alcohol, and the government is not struggling against any of this things with respect to alcohol and certainly the United States is not. And recently, in fact, the Ministry of what we usually call religious affairs – of Instruction, Pilgrimage and Foundations called a nationwide meeting, I think at the behest of either the U.S. or the government, to – of the religious authorities, of *ulema*, to ask for their assistance in fighting against narcotics.

And I wasn't there, but someone whom I know quite well in Afghan was there and what he reported to me is that they said, "First of all, yes, we are against narcotics, but according to Islam alcohol is even worse so first you should abolish alcohol and then we will work with you against narcotics. Second, we know that if you abolish narcotics production in Afghanistan, since the demand is still coming from the developed countries and since the amount of money that is made by the developed countries is so much greater than the little bit that gets to the Afghans, all that will happen is that it will move to another country."

And behind this is basically the idea that if you want our help, you have to empower us. You cannot marginalize us, give us no authority, and then ask for our help on an agenda that you only define. That is, the Taliban were successful temporarily – I don't know that they could have sustained it – in almost abolishing opium production, not drug trafficking, in the areas under their control because they completely empowered the religious authorities in the areas under their control and were – could be quite ruthless about it and they also were equally strict against alcohol and other things, but the religious authorities do not see any similar reason to cooperate with the current government.

MR. INDERFURTH: Mark Schneider.

Q: I am Mark Schneider, International Crisis Group. To some degree, this raises the question, Barney, of your last comment. My question is, how do you see the next parliament and the next – the government in Afghanistan being able to withstand not merely the money that comes from drug trafficking, but the influence of drug traffickers

throughout the society? And the – if I could just ask a second question, Jim, you mentioned that you thought that the administration was planning to maintain its full commitment to Afghanistan, yet we've heard, despite the increasing violence prior to the elections, that in fact they are looking at ways to reduce the U.S. forces there by next spring significantly. Is it not a conflict or contradiction?

MR. INDERFURTH: Barney and Jim?

MR. RUBIN: Well, again, this idea of withstanding influence of drug trafficking: how do you withstand the influence of the larger sector of your economy? You know, it just – I don't understand what it's suppose to mean, because if anything is financed in Afghanistan by something other than foreign aid, the chances are it's financed by drug trafficking. But we shouldn't think that the drug economy in Afghanistan is controlled by a special interest group of criminals. Of course, there are some criminals who are involved in it, but let's just remember: it is the largest sector of the economy.

And, I mean, another thing that the *ulema* said at that meeting is that they know that everybody is involved, including the highest officials of the government. So it's a nonpartisan issue. It is a non-ethnic issue and it does not exactly generate its own special interests. And, in fact, many of the people who are now involved in drug trafficking do not – would not like to see their future as solely a drug trafficking future. They would prefer to have a legitimate future and they would support that if they saw a genuine opportunity to do that, so I think there are some people who – maybe at the very high level there are heroine processors and so on, who see the only future for them is in drug industry. Most of the people who are involved in the drug economy in Afghanistan, which is the largest sector of the Afghan economy, do not see their future only in terms of drugs but they need to have infrastructure, security, and all kinds of other things in order for them to see an opportunity for an alternative source of income.

MR. INDERFURTH: Jim?

MR. DOBBINS: Well, at the moment the U.S. is providing about 70 percent of the troops in Afghan and the rest of the NATO allies are providing the other 30 percent. Given that this was a – you know, given that the intervention in Afghanistan was an Article V NATO commitment, this is a rather unbalanced force and as NATO assumes fuller responsibility, I think the U.S. hopes that it will evolve toward a more balanced force structure in which the United States is providing maybe 40 percent of the force rather than 70 percent of the force.

I think the intent is not to reduce the number of troops overall, but to reduce the U.S. proportion within that and I think if the Europeans are going to assume greater responsibility and if it's – if this is going to actually be an alliance commitment, that's a perfectly reasonable objective.

MR. INDERFURTH: I think one of the elements of that was also the degree to which the United States is spending, I think, over the last four years $50 billion on the

military side of Afghanistan and about $5 to $6 billion on the economic and reconstruction side. Whether or not that – another imbalance, if you will, needs to be addressed in the post-Bonn period.

Ambassador Babbitt?

Q: Hattie Babbitt. This is another drug economy question that Barney's talked about a great a deal, but I'm going to direct my question to Jim Dobbins. I'm trying to feel optimistic that there is strategy for building an economy in Afghanistan ultimately, and I don't know much about Afghanistan. I know little bit more about Columbia, which is the third largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance, which has a long history of a democratic government and a real economy in addition to a huge drug economy.

My question to you with the nation-building experience is, what would a strategy be to replace the drug economy in Afghanistan given its geography, its neighborhood, and its otherwise lack of development?

MR. DOBBINS: Well, I don't really see a near-term strategy. I think that the drug economy has two pernicious effects. One is the export of drugs, largely to Western Europe, and the second is the potential of corrupting and undermining the possibility of reasonably representative and competent governments in the country. And I think our efforts have to be directed toward ameliorating the second of those rather than the first.

I think that significantly cutting the flow of drugs to Western Europe is probably beyond our capacity and to the extent we succeed in it, we would be conflicting with a lot of other goals in the country, but I think there are ways of trying to cut back on the degree to which this industry corrupts and undermines the possibility of representative governance in the country. It means largely focusing your efforts probably at going at the highest levels of trafficking and corruption rather than an eradication problem at the grassroots.

But given that Columbian drug production only represents about 5 percent of their total GDP, whereas Afghan drug production represents 40 percent of their GDP, the idea that you can find through alternative crops an easy or rapid transition doesn't strike me as very realistic.

MR. INDERFURTH: Final two questions.

Q: Richard White, Hudson Institute. I will address the question to Ambassador Dobbins, but I think all three panelists could make a comment on it if they wanted to. Earlier this year, Central Asia Caucasus Institute, SAIS, led by S. Frederick Starr, put out a report saying that U.S. policy towards Afghanistan could be improved if we treated Afghanistan and Central Asia's combined region. The authors felt that you could get synergies dealing with drugs, political, economic, and other issues that are concerning – affecting the region.

I wanted to know what you thought would be the pluses and minuses of kind of a more regional perspective, particularly bringing in Central Asia, and then the report itself lists a lot change that needs to be made in the U.S. government bureaucracy, particularly in the State Department, to make such a move effective, and I wasn't sure about the practicalities of that.

MR. DOBBINS: Well, it's interesting that the administration is, in fact, adopting that recommendation for whatever reason; that is to say, the State Department is reorganizing its bureau structure so that the Central Asia will now become part of the South Asian bureau. It would be interesting to hear what Rick thinks of that since he was the head of that bureau. I did find that the – Afghanistan was, you know, sort of surrounded by five different bureaus in the State Department, which made coordination of policy virtually impossible and I recommended to Powell that this be done several years ago and I'm glad it is been done.

MR. INDERFURTH: We're going to have to – quick response –

MR. RUBIN(?): Regional cooperation is one of the pillars of both post-Bonn agreement and the Afghan national development strategy, but the question is regional cooperation in who's interest? Afghanistan is a landlocked country. It needs regional cooperation. If it's regional cooperation in the interest of Afghanistan, probably the most important form of it, actually, is trilateral cooperation with Pakistan and Iran, complemented by cooperation with Central Asia.

If it is regional cooperation in the interests of the United States to make Afghanistan the center of a U.S.-dominated alliance which will stand – will try to separate Russia, China, and Iran, as some U.S. strategic writers have talked about, it will put Afghanistan in great danger because it will then create a threat perception among – an accurate one probably – among many of Afghanistan's neighbors and help to recreate the situation that got us in this position in the first place.

MR. INDERFURTH: Our last questioner.

MR. SHAHRANI: May I just want say one thing?

MR. INDERFURTH: Yes.

MR. SHAHRANI: This last weekend I was in Boston and Fiona Hill of Carnegie, I think, was there — I'm sorry, Brooking Institution – said that the State Department has decided to move Central Asia into it's South – Bureau of South Asia. So that probably is also a part of this Central Asia and Caucasus Institute report, but there are lot of other great policy papers that comes out of that particular institute which has encouraged the policies that U.S. is pursuing right now in Afghanistan as being the best and working and all the other things. And I think I have strong doubts as to the value of that.

MR. INDERFURTH: A ten second question.

Q: Yes, Joel Wishengrad of World Media Reports, WMR News. Gentlemen, you've spoken about this whole entire issue and you've talked mostly about a top-down government. What are also the influences, for instance, of Osama bin Laden, also the local communities, the warlords, and what – also to the north, Russia was mentioned here, just barely Pakistan, and also the Iranians.

(Laughter.)

MR. INDERFURTH: Well, all have influence. Pakistan, obviously, is clearly a key player there, but, Barney, do you want to have a 10-second response?

MR. RUBIN: I'm not sure, but I think Afghanistan is probably the one Muslim country where Osama bin Laden is not popular and his – so I don't think he is influential, but al Qaeda has networks that is helping people. Otherwise, you know, various countries around Afghanistan have their networks in place. They are – you know, hope that the United States – including Iran – hope that United States will help to stabilize Afghanistan. They know that the United States might fail to stabilize Afghanistan and therefore they are retaining those connections that will enable them to cope with that situation to their own advantage sometime in the future.

MR. INDERFURTH: Let me finish with this thought: we're looking at Afghanistan four years later, progress and prospects. When ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad left Kabul to take up his next assignment in Baghdad, he said that if you look at Afghanistan as a 10-mile journey for rebuilding and becoming a stable state, he said that as he left a couple of months ago that they had pass the four-mile mark. I believe myself that after these national elections you can say that they had passed the five-mile mark, but that means they are only half way there. So at least on a more optimistic note, because we've heard some of the concerns, that Afghanistan maybe halfway to where they would like to be and it obviously requires a great deal of continuing international commitment.

So could I ask you all to express appreciation to our panelists and then we'll move on to the next?

(Applause.)

MR. INDERFURTH: Bob, please take it.

MR. BOORSTIN: And also thanks to Ambassador Inderfurth for moderating this panel.

(Applause.)

We're going to take about a 10-minute break and then come back and discuss Afghanistan and implications for international terrorism.

Thank you.

(END)