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WHAT NEXT IN AFGHANISTAN?

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AND KENNETH KATZMAN, PH.D.*

James Phillips:

On behalf of The Heritage Foundation, I'd like to welcome you here today to our panel on "What Next in Afghanistan?"

This has been a tumultuous year for Afghanistan, which too often has been called the cockpit of Asia. With the possible exception of the United States, Afghanistan has changed more than any other country in the world since the events of September 11. Afghanistan was the first battlefield in the U.S. global war against terrorism, and, in fact, the Afghan people are the first victors in that war in the sense that they have been liberated from the harsh rule of the Taliban.

Although the war in Afghanistan is far from over, I think it is fair to say that the U.S. did win a substantial military victory in Afghanistan. Now the United States and the world at large are grappling with the thorny issue of how to win the peace after that war—particularly, how to prevent terrorist elements such as Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist network and the ultra-radical Taliban regime, which bin Laden helped to prop up, from returning to roost in Afghanistan.

After being neglected for many years following the 1989 Soviet withdrawal, Afghanistan has returned to a position of prominence in U.S. foreign policy. Symbolically, Hamid Karzai, the chair-

man of Afghanistan's Interim Administration, sat next to First Lady Laura Bush at President George Bush's State of the Union Address two nights ago. Chairman Karzai has been a diplomatic whirlwind, moving through Washington earlier this week and New York City in the past two days, and we're very pleased to see this.

I remember that only three or four years ago, we had Hamid Karzai speak here at Heritage and had a much smaller audience than he's getting now. But today, Americans—and, indeed, the world—realize that international security to a large degree is linked to what goes on in Afghanistan.

This panel will examine the prospects for peace and stability in that war-torn country. We'll be talking about possible pitfalls and diplomatic mine

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fields that Washington and Kabul must navigate in order to advance peace and stability in that country.

Before we start, I should add one thing. One of our scheduled speakers, Haron Amin, the chargé d'affaires of the Afghan Embassy here in Washington, is not able to make it. He is accompanying Chairman Karzai in New York today. In his place, we're very grateful to obtain the services of Dr. Kenneth Katzman of the Congressional Research Service, who at very short notice has agreed to speak in Haron's place.

Our first speaker today is Dr. Elie Krakowski. He is a senior fellow at the American Foreign Policy Council. He is also a senior fellow at the Central Asia and Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins University. And in his spare time, he is the president of EDK Consulting.

Dr. Krakowski is a veteran expert on Afghanistan, and I first met him during the Reagan Administration, where he was serving as a Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy. He was specializing in low-intensity conflict issues, especially in Afghanistan.

Following that, he went up to Boston University where he was a professor of international relations and law from 1988 to 1996. He has lectured widely and testified before Congress on the conflict in Afghanistan and returned from the region last summer, not only from Afghanistan, where he met with Ahmed Shah Massoud, the martyred leader of the United Front, but also Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan. He has also had extensive discussions with diplomatic representatives of Russia, India, and China on the subject of Afghanistan.

—James Phillips is Research Fellow in Middle Eastern Studies in the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies at The Heritage Foundation.

FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR AFGHANISTAN FROM A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Elie Krakowski:

It is a great pleasure to be here with people that I know so well, including Tom Kleine, whom I haven't seen in a while. It brings back memories from the old days when we were able to accomplish a few things together, even if it was not as much as we would have wished.

Unfortunately, some of the culprits blocking things then still remain the culprits today, making things a little more difficult than they need to be. As it is, Afghanistan—or, rather, the problem posed by Afghanistan—is a fairly complex one. We have gone in a very short time from almost complete ignorance of Afghanistan to a situation where everybody seems to be an instant expert.

For those of us who have spent quite a bit of time on that, I have said that I am not sure what was more difficult, before 9/11 or after 9/11? Because before 9/11, we couldn't get anybody to listen. Now there are so many people speaking that it's even more difficult to be heard. So I'm not quite sure what is better.

A Unique Opportunity. However, what is positive is that for the first time in many years, there is a unique opportunity finally to do the right thing in Afghanistan. The situation and the circumstances are right, but if they are not seized, I believe that the consequences will be far worse than ever before. The reason for that is that when Afghanistan was abandoned after the Soviet withdrawal, it was abandoned outside the glare of publicity.

What we now have is tremendous attention to Afghanistan and its problems—so much attention that there are billions of dollars that have been pledged for its reconstruction. However, if the situation in the country is not addressed properly, we may end up with a situation in which Afghanistan will once again be abandoned, but this time very much in the glare of publicity.

If that happens, it is doubtful anyone will want even to hear about Afghanistan again for a very long time because if you have money that is poured into the country without the proper methods and procedures and without the proper context, the only thing that will happen will be conflict at a much higher level. All that money will end up paying for more advanced technologies to support the fighting.

As we speak, two opposite trends are manifest. One is more positive, where people are paying attention, wanting to do things, wanting to set things right. The other, as we all also know, is in essence the chaos that threatens to return, accompanied by the fighting that we see already occurring among a number of people that the press insists on calling warlords.

I have a problem with the term, because it is so emotionally laden with negative connotations that don't really describe anything. In fact, what we are dealing with are simply tribal leaders and ethnic group leaders who are fighting with one another in a typical struggle for power—not something altogether surprising when what passed for central power collapsed without much thought being given to a replacement beforehand.

My point in addressing, as Jim said, the regional situation is a rather simple one: The key to a solution in Afghanistan lies not within the country, but outside of it.

The Regional Perspective. The preoccupation that everyone has with reconstruction, with the formation of a government, with making life livable again for the Afghans after so many years of tremendous tragedy—all of that cannot occur unless the regional context is addressed and addressed seriously. That means, in essence, that the conflict that we have seen in Afghanistan for over 20 years was encouraged and sustained by the surrounding states, each with a differing agenda.

We don't have the time now for a detailed review of these agendas. Suffice it to say that over the course of the second half of the 20th century, there were what could be described as two major strategic thrusts through Afghanistan. The first, as I have written in an earlier monograph, was the southward thrust of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989. With the collapse of that southward thrust came an attempted northward thrust by Pakistan, which has, from very far back, sought not just to influence, but also to control Afghanistan. That second thrust collapsed with the Taliban and its Arab al-Qaeda masters.

One of the things that I believe is not widely understood is that the Pakistanis had chosen extremists as proxies in Afghanistan. First, they selected Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and then the Taliban, for a very simple reason: Extremism in Afghanistan has never been popular, and extremist leaders have never had much of a following. Hekmatyar, who has recently resurfaced in the news, depends almost entirely on foreign support for his continued existence.

Pakistan assumed—not entirely correctly as it turned out—that Afghan extremists would need them not just to seize, but to hold on to power. This also meant that Pakistan was quite willing to contemplate a fairly unstable situation within Afghanistan. Picking popular Afghan leaders as Pakistani proxies, on the other hand, would have meant that they would have been bound quickly to reassert their independence once in power.

The other states have also had nefarious designs, which were essentially to block Pakistani control and deny control to anyone else, even if that meant conflict. We are referring here to Russia, Iran, and some of the other key Central Asian states. This explains what is happening in the region even today. When we look at the so-called warlords or the tribal leaders competing with one another and fighting one another, we are looking at a situation

that really could not exist for very long if it was not encouraged from the outside.

The Iranians are backing, as we now see, certain groups in the west of the country. The Afghan Uzbek, General Dostum, for instance,

would not have as much influence were he not to have the backing of the Uzbeks, the Turks, and the Russians. Why the Turks would choose to support him is a good question. Whatever else it may mean, that choice is illustrative of the fact that everybody makes mistakes on something like this.

The United States does not have a monopoly on that. I have to say that whatever mistakes we have made pale in comparison to those of others. So I think that the United States, regardless of its faults, still stands tall above everybody else. And I don't think the Europeans have any grounds to criticize the United States; this is something not often said that needs saying.

In any case, when we talk about a settlement for Afghanistan, what we must aim for is something that will be agreed upon or at least underwritten, even if passively, by the surrounding states. The travel that Jim alluded to was undertaken for that very purpose: to try to verify an hypothesis I had, that there was, indeed, common ground among the various countries.

What I found before 9/11 was surprising in terms of the extent of the willingness to cooperate

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with the United States, and actually to have the United States take a leading role in stabilizing the situation. This was true of the Russians; it was true even of the Iranians that I talked to. I didn't quite get to Iran, but I talked with Iranian officials in Tajikistan on my way out from seeing the then-head of the Northern Alliance forces, Commander Ahmed Shah Massoud. The Iranians I talked to were actually going into Afghanistan just as I was leaving it. We met in Dushanbe.

All the high-level officials and other influential personalities I met in the surrounding states conveyed a similarly strong message. The United States, they went so far as to say, was the only power that could break the existing logjam. Each of these states had its own agenda that was known and mistrusted by the others. Each of these states could not materially affect the overall outcome, and knew it. They knew they were in trouble; they knew only the United States could bring about change.

U.S. Policy and the Future of Afghanistan. The United States, unfortunately, did not quite see things that way before. Its policy on Afghanistan was, as I wrote in a recent article in *Middle East Insight*, a derivative approach, by which I mean that the United States never had a policy on Afghanistan. Whatever it did have was a reflection of Pakistani-defined concepts and requirements.

When I was in the government, there were a number of instances in which foreign policy officials would refuse to undertake certain initiatives on the grounds that Pakistan would object, often without even bothering to ask the Pakistanis. I call this anticipatory appeasement. That is a problem that remains, I think, with American foreign policy more often than it should. Let's face it: The United States is the sole surviving superpower, and I think it should behave as such. It has responsibilities, but that doesn't mean that we have to be arrogant. There's a difference between doing things quietly and letting people know that they need to be done, and shouting from the rooftops, then doing rather little.

A common ground exists, and it existed before 9/11. It became even more sharply delineated after

9/11, because all the countries in the world realized that when the United States had been attacked, no one else was safe any longer. If the United States did not win, everybody was at peril.

This is something we should remember as the United States develops its policy to deal with the various issues of the war on terror. The United States, therefore, must be centrally involved, and when I say "centrally involved," I mean that the decision-making should not devolve upon international bodies. The United Nations, of course, can have a useful role, but I don't think the decision-making should be put in the hands of U.N. officials; otherwise, we are asking for trouble.

Underwriting and Maintaining an Afghan Settlement. I have suggested that we go beyond informal consultations with these various governments and establish two types of bodies. One would be a small concert of states to underwrite and maintain an Afghan settlement. The second would be a much larger conference on reconstruction made up of donor states.

The main fear of the surrounding states is that the United States will withdraw as soon as it feels it has dealt with al-Qaeda and the manifestation of terrorism in Afghanistan. Everyone that I have talked to, from Indians to Turks—everybody—basically feels, as one diplomat acquaintance of mine put it, that when the United States concludes it's done with al-Qaeda, the American media will leave. Once the media stop paying attention, the government will do the same.

That, I think, is not as correct as it was a few weeks ago, because the United States has moved a little bit in a different direction. But there is still a very, very powerful pull toward—perhaps not outright disengagement, because there has been a strong rhetorical commitment to the contrary—but toward basically not being right there in the middle whether it is in terms of not having Americans as peacekeepers, avoiding a continued military presence, or avoiding a very direct, active leadership role.

So I think that the key ingredient to being able not just to put together an interim government, but

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also to stabilize the situation, move toward a transitional setup, toward reconstruction, is to create what I call a concert of states made up of the United States, the neighboring states, perhaps even India, because I think this would help in the Indo-Pakistani relationship. The idea would be to go beyond informal, haphazard negotiations to the creation of structures and more regularized meetings that would not necessarily replace bilateral discussions. Regular consultations within the framework of an Afghan settlement that everybody can live with would also allow more regulated and transparent involvement of the outside states.

People talk about noninterference in the affairs of states; however, that is nonsense. It does a disservice to everyone to continue pretending, at the rhetorical level, that things that can never be will come about. There is nothing wrong, even, with involvement of surrounding states in Afghanistan.

What needs to be done is to rechannel that involvement in a more constructive direction through this kind of concert being suggested. It would provide assurance to the surrounding states that no one would be excluded from participation, and thereby remove a major source for the divisive policies being pursued anew by these states. I don't have the time now to deal with the particular case of Iran, but I think that Iran can also be made to participate. There are a number of things we need to do with regard to Iran.

The second body we should create, the larger conference on reconstruction, would similarly encourage a longer-term commitment by donors through institutionalization of the type of activity we saw at the recent Tokyo donors conference. This is not something that can be left to a one-time thing, then trying to simply get the money and put it in some sort of a fund. It is imperative to keep donor states involved, not only so that they participate, but also so that they remain interested and follow through on the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The Afghans are perfectly capable of working things out on their own. I think they are perfectly capable of devising a system that will work. People talk about the center and the periphery, the regions. We have to remember, we're not dealing with taking down a centrally organized dictatorship. We are

talking about building from scratch, from the ground.

So you don't need to limit the power of the central government; you need to build a central government. The fact that the traditions in Afghanistan were heavily localized and regional in the past does not mean that in today's day and age, one cannot or should not perhaps move a little bit beyond those issues. I am not suggesting an overly powerful central government, but I am suggesting we remain open to the issue of a central government with more powers than in the past.

James Phillips:

Our next speaker is Thomas Kleine, Esquire. Tom currently practices law with the international law firm of Troutman Sanders, but in another incarnation, he was a key policy expert on Capitol Hill in formulating U.S. policy toward Afghanistan in the 1980s and early 1990s.

I see many people from Capitol Hill here today, and Congress is going to be very much involved in the Bush Administration's policy toward Afghanistan. Here at The Heritage Foundation, we think it's very important that we forge a bipartisan policy on Afghanistan. In order to explore some of the lessons we learned on the first go-round in the 1980s in Afghanistan, I thought I'd invite Tom back here to talk about his experience on the Hill concerning Afghanistan.

Tom served as chief legislative assistant for the Congressional Task Force on Afghanistan from 1986 to 1991. He was also a legislative assistant to the chairman of that Task Force, former Senator Gordon Humphrey from New Hampshire. I think many of you will remember that Senator Humphrey was one of the key Senate leaders on Afghan affairs, who was very sorely missed, I think, after September 11 because we don't have a lot of institutional memory on the Hill. That's one reason we brought Tom back to talk about this.

He was one of the leading experts on Capitol Hill concerning U.S. policy toward Afghanistan, congressional legislation concerning Afghanistan, and the various factions of the Afghan resistance. He's a veteran of the staff of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where he served as the senior professional staff member and chief counsel.

THE ROLE OF CONGRESS IN U.S. POLICY TOWARD AFGHANISTAN

Thomas Kleine:

I appreciate the invitation to come back here to the Heritage Foundation. It's been a few years, and it is, as Elie Krakowski mentioned, a reunion of sorts because there were a handful of us that really worked on this issue on a daily basis for many years, five to six years, on the Hill back in the 1980s. I see David Isby here in the front row, being one of them. I have also enjoyed all the new experts on Afghanistan who I see on TV every single night and wish I had known them back then.

When Jim called me a few weeks ago and asked me to speak on what Congress should be doing and what type of policies they should develop with respect to Afghanistan, it rang a bell for me. About this time of year for many years, I was always tasked by the chairman of the Congressional Task Force on Afghanistan to go out to the region and meet with the Afghan leaders, the officials of the U.S. embassy, and other congressional offices. I would get out to touch base with the U.S. government, the bureaucracy, and with private organizations such as The Heritage Foundation and develop some type of consensus in terms of what specific recommendations we should have with respect to what Congress should do on Afghanistan for the coming year.

I went through some old archives I have and found some old reports that we had prepared back in the late 1980s, outlining what some congressional objectives should be with respect to Afghanistan. I thought I would start there to see what it was that we were doing at a time when Congress was so deeply engaged. I thought it would also be news to many of you here who are now working on the Hill in 2002 to know the extent of the involvement and the extent of the bipartisan cooperation that actually existed on this issue back in the late 1980s. Hopefully, it will offer lessons for some things that we should do going forward.

Parallels Between Yesterday and Today. One thing that struck me was the number of parallels between what's going on today and what was going on at that other time in our history when we had what we thought was a great window of opportunity in 1989 as the Soviets were withdrawing or

completing their withdrawal from Afghanistan. I made a list of some of these examples, which I think is kind of striking. More than a decade ago, in 1989, the nation of Afghanistan, after having received hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. and foreign assistance, was in the process of ridding itself of an occupying force, so we hoped, permanently.

The leader of a newly formed Afghan interim government—does that sound familiar?—was making his rounds on Capitol Hill and in Washington, meeting with the President of the United States and talking about redevelopment and this new government that we were going to see coming to power in Afghanistan. A major international donors conference had been held in 1989, where the West European countries, Japan, and others came together. They all pledged to extend their cooperation and their contributions toward this new revitalized Afghanistan.

The United Nations at that time had appointed a respected international diplomat—does that sound familiar?—with close personal ties to the President, whose job it was to coordinate United Nations programs and contributions toward Afghanistan. I have a copy of that report from 1988 right here, talking about how we were going to redevelop this newly liberated Afghanistan.

At that time, as today, the policy on Afghanistan enjoyed great bipartisan support on Capitol Hill. The Administration had proclaimed it to be a stunning success. Pakistan, after having fallen out of favor with the United States in the previous Administration, was back in favor in 1989. Once again, economic and military assistance had been restored. Pakistan at that time, I believe, was the third largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance, and all the restrictions that Congress had imposed on military and economic assistance to Pakistan had been waived, once again, with respect to the nuclear program.

The newly appointed presidential envoy to Afghanistan—does that sound familiar?—had just been named by the President. His job was to go into the field and meet with the Afghan resistance and the Afghan leaders. He had to cooperate with them and try to develop what the program should be as well as what U.S. policy should be with respect to the Afghan resistance.

In the meantime, of course, our attention was also being diverted by events that were happening in Iraq and elsewhere. Haron Amin was canvassing Capitol Hill in support of the Afghan resistance at that time, particularly in support of Ahmed Shah Massoud.

I point out these similarities to those of you who weren't here, weren't involved, or weren't following the issue at that time because that was 1989. By 1990—here is an old *New York Times Magazine* about Afghanistan, and the cover story says, "Afghans, Now They Blame America."

A Narrow Window of Opportunity. My point is not that I see any lack of will in this Administration, or that American attention is going to be diverted any time soon, but my view is that we have an extremely narrow window of opportunity. That window of opportunity narrowed in the period from Soviet withdrawal in 1989 until the end of 1990. Then we had this continued downward spiral until we ended up with this horrible event of September 11. I'm not saying, of course, that there are absolute parallels between 1989 and 2001. Obviously, the situation is very different.

In 1989, the Soviets were engaged in, I believe, the largest airlift up to that date in Soviet military history, trying to prop up the illegitimate regime in Kabul. The Afghan interim government at that time, even though it had been proclaimed, was widely viewed by many Afghans as not being representative of what they had in mind for the future of their country, and also as having been concocted by outside forces.

I think today there is a consensus in this country that our failure to address some of these issues and to keep our eyes focused on Afghanistan does present a real threat to our national security. I think we've seen that, obviously, in a manner that is disturbing to all of us, particularly those of us who spent so many years working on this issue.

My concern is that, despite the stated policies of the Administration, or the fact that I think we've got the best national security team any country could have at a moment of peril, our President, our National Security Adviser, our Secretary of State, our Secretary of Defense, our Vice President can't

be full-time case officers on Afghanistan. Somebody ultimately has to run the policy on a day-to-day basis.

They'll set the tone at the top, but as we know all too well, sooner or later, there's going to be a crisis in another part of the world, and sooner or later, this war on terrorism will move to another venue. Our attention and our national focus will then shift to that new country. Every night we'll turn on MSNBC and Fox and see all the newly discovered experts on whatever that new country is in the world. Suddenly, we won't have the daily focus and attention that we now have, thankfully, on Afghanistan.

That's what concerns me the most, because that is when Afghanistan will be out of the limelight and it will be up to the bureaucracy and the people

whose job it is to manage the policy. You won't have the focus from the top that you should have to make sure that those objectives are being accomplished.

What Congress Can Do. That, I believe, is where Congress can come in, and that is where there's a precedent for Congress to have played a very active role, especially back in the 1980s. Because in the

1980s and in the 1990s, we had a great "stated" policy. The President enunciated it on many occasions as did the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Under Secretary of Defense, for whom Elie Krakowski worked.

But when it came to the implementation of that policy, sometimes that was another story to the point where on one occasion, on a major policy issue involving Afghanistan, I believe it was Dan Rather who finally went to President Reagan in a live interview and said, "Mr. President, are you going to do this?" I think it involved an agreement to cut all aid to the Afghan resistance at the very beginning of a Soviet troop withdrawal, which was precisely what the State Department had negotiated.

The President looked at Dan Rather and said, "Why, of course not; I would never do anything of the sort." Of course, that's precisely what the agreements would have done had they not then been modified after the President's personal involvement.

[O]ur President...our Vice President can't be full-time case officers on Afghanistan. Somebody ultimately has to run the policy on a day-to-day basis.

My point is, that's where I think Congress and those of you here today who work on the Hill can play a role. Let me give you just a very quick history lesson on the precedent for there being an active role on Capitol Hill.

In 1984 and 1985, a bipartisan group of House and Senate members led by Senator Gordon Humphrey got together and established what was called at that time the Congressional Task Force on Afghanistan. They didn't go to the House or Senate leadership for official sanction, or ask for a new line-item appropriation. They simply got together as a group and devoted their time and attention to focusing and keeping the Administration's feet to the fire on the Afghan issue.

The Task Force included an interesting group of people. It included Claiborne Pell, who subsequently became the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee; Senator Fritz Hollings, who was a key member of the Appropriations Committee; Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a key member and former chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee; and other members.

This was a group that, interestingly, stayed together on this Afghan issue. I can't think of a time that I went to any of the members, when we had an initiative from the Task Force, where they just said, "I don't agree with you; I don't want to get involved." This group stayed together, and they were dogged in terms of reminding the Administration, "This is what your stated policy is on Afghanistan; let's see how it's being implemented."

Many of the members would frequently travel to the field—at that point, only to Kabul or Pakistan and up to the border with Afghanistan—and examine, on the ground, how the assistance was being provided. They would insist on briefings and hearings and keep the Administration focused on the implementation of the Afghan policy. The key role that this all played, of course, was that when the policy was drifting away from the stated objectives, we had a senior group of Members of Congress that could bring it to the attention of the President, the Director of CIA, or the Secretary of State.

Let me mention just a few of the broad range of initiatives that they pushed at that time. One of them was cross-border humanitarian assistance. The Administration would request a certain level of cross-border humanitarian assistance. Generally,

the Task Force would say that's completely inadequate, and year-in and year-out, the levels that were requested were doubled due to the intervention and the role of those key members on that Task Force.

The Department of Defense Airlift Program was developed to take excess humanitarian supplies to Afghanistan. There was a program to train Afghan journalists so we could document and have some record of what was going on inside the country.

There was legislation to withdraw most favored nation trading status. Believe it or not, after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and had been accused of a situation nearing genocide, we still traded and provided most favored nation trading status to that government.

There was a lot of emphasis in terms of redirecting and making sure that the military assistance that we were providing was the proper type of assistance. A number of accounts have been written describing that period, talking about Congress's role, particularly on the issue involving the Stingers. Also, of course, there were other programs such as making sure there was a Radio Free Afghanistan so that we were broadcasting into the country, encouraging the defection of Soviet troops, and so on.

But my point is that there is a history, and there was a group, and there was almost a legislative agenda from which Members of Congress would work. Sometimes the tension between the Administration and these key Members of Congress would escalate. Several nominations were held up for a period of time because Members of Congress felt that the Administration, notwithstanding all the assurances from the highest levels, wasn't devoting the attention that this issue deserved.

The best recommendation I could make today is that something like this, whether appointed by the Majority Leader and the Speaker of the House, needs to be revitalized. We have wonderful institutions in the House and Senate like the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where I worked for several years. We need an independent group of House and Senate members who are focused, dedicated, and will, from Congress's side, monitor the whole range of programs—not just the programs over which the Foreign Relations Committee, the Intelligence Committee, or the Department of

Defense has oversight, but a respected bipartisan group of members that can look at issues across the board, which is the model that I think worked very, very well in the past.

James Phillips:

Our final speaker is Dr. Kenneth Katzman, who has graciously accepted my invitation at very short notice to speak in substitution for Haron Amin, the chargé d'affaires at the Embassy of Afghanistan.

Ken is a veteran expert on Afghanistan and international terrorism in the Middle East. He is with the Congressional Research Service and is currently on loan to the House International Relations Committee's Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia.

AFGHANISTAN AND THE WAR AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

Dr. Kenneth Katzman:

Thank you very much, Jim. Just a disclaimer: I'm not speaking for Chairman Hyde, Chairman Gilman, or anybody associated with the committee. I'm not speaking for CRS, necessarily, either. I'm speaking in my capacity as a researcher and expert on the region.

Even though Haron Amin is not here, I would have to say I'm almost as optimistic about the future of his country as he probably is. It's very early in the game. One cannot go from the total collapse of a political structure to the construction of a new political structure overnight. It's going to take time.

I am very pleasantly surprised at the relative absence of violence to date, notwithstanding this apparent dust-up in Gardez today and some other face-offs that we've had. The reports of warlordism to which Elie referred, I think, reflect little more than the traditional culture of regional autonomy. Elie also referred to this as being the center versus periphery.

Afghanistan has a tradition where the central government traditionally is weak and power is decentralized. We're seeing a lot of that with Ismail Khan, Abdul Rashid Dostum, Haji Abdul Kadir in Nangahar Province, as well as some of the others, Shirzai in Kandahar, the provincial leaders, and tribal leaders.

Reasons for Optimism. Why am I optimistic? There's a debate around town right now. Some say that Afghans have always fought Afghans; the history of tribal warfare, internecine warfare, factional warfare, eventually will catch up, and the structure is going to fall apart again and degenerate into internal warfare. I'm not sure that's going to happen. There are two main reasons.

1. The various factions that would engage in such fighting clearly see right now that the majority of the Afghan people do not want more fighting. And I think that carries tremendous weight, because any warlord, governor, or commander that steps out of line is going to instantly be deemed out of touch with the desires of the Afghan people for peace after more than 20 years of war.
2. The factional leaders realize that they are under an international microscope the likes of which they have never seen before. Everything they do is being very carefully watched, especially by the United States.

It is no accident that we see leaks in the U.S. press that the United States intends to stay in the Central Asian region with force, to continue to have forces in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan. These intimations that we hear are a clear signal to the factions that may challenge the central government not to do so, because the implicit message is, if you step out of line, a U.S. combat aircraft is a ten-minute flight away. It is also a signal to the regional players not to interfere.

The Regional Players. The regional players around Afghanistan, in my view, are very badly discredited right now. For many years, they danced around each other, trying to figure out what to do about the Taliban. Even Pakistan, which had created the Taliban, clearly knew by 1998 or 1999 that the Taliban had gotten completely out of its control. Russia knew it, and China knew it. They had many meetings; they formed this Shanghai cooperation organization, the Six-plus-Two, in New York in 1997.

They all danced around each other but couldn't solve the problem. It took September 11 and the intervention of the U.S. from 7,000–8,000 miles away to clean up their mess, essentially. So the regional players have to step back at this point.

They have, really, very little credibility to act with any significance inside Afghanistan right now.

Obviously, we see reports that Iran is meddling or attempting to exert influence in western Afghanistan. This really is nothing new for Iran. During the Soviet occupation, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard helped train similar militia. In fact, they even named it after the Revolutionary Guard in western Afghanistan. They set up little proxies, little clones of themselves in western Afghanistan. This was part of the Persian Empire, way back, and Iran really never has given up the idea that it has sway over western Afghanistan.

So I'm not all that concerned about what Iran may or may not be doing in western Afghanistan. It really is probably nothing new. I would see it more as defensive, to ensure that Iran has some say over what happens on its eastern border. As I mentioned to Jim, I'm going to broaden my talk a little bit and talk more generally about the war on terrorism. Here again, I'm very, very optimistic—maybe too optimistic.

Why am I optimistic? For the first time that I can name, we have materially and significantly set back a terrorist organization with retaliation. Hizbollah took down the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983. No one has even been, to this day, arrested for that.

It is now proven that Muammar Qadhafi's henchmen blew up Pam Am 103. He paid virtually no price. There were some sanctions, a nuisance perhaps. My personal view is, had the United States taken down the regime of Qadhafi after it had developed evidence of Libyan complicity for Pan Am 103, September 11 would never have happened in the first place.

I'm also optimistic because, in my opinion, radical Islam in general is in full retreat. That type of puritanical Islam is not welcome in regions where it's not traditionally practiced. Now, in some places, it is. In Saudi Arabia, for example, there is a very long history of traditional Islamic practice, tribal customs, so there's not as much pressure there.

But in places where there's not such a tradition, like Egypt—I would even say Kuwait, other Gulf states, Bahrain, et cetera—the radical Islamic fun-

damentalists are very much on the defensive right now. In Pakistan, we instantly saw the demonstrations wither away to virtually nothing after the Taliban fell and everybody saw how incredibly rejected the Taliban was by the Afghan people.

Bin Laden's Message Discredited. Another point I would make is that the United States has thoroughly discredited Osama bin

Laden's core message, his core objective. His overriding objective was to get the United States out of the Islamic world. This is what he has sought after since al-Qaeda was formed in 1988. Yet what has happened as a result of September 11 is that the U.S. is now military more involved in the Islamic world than ever.

The United States was not in Afghanistan prior to September 11; we were not in Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, or Kyrgyzstan. We're in all of those places now, so Osama bin Laden has brought the U.S. into the Islamic world in a way that it has never been before. Not only does the President say he's evil; he's also stupid, obviously, because he has accomplished the exact opposite of his objective.

The state sponsors of terrorism are now shivering; they are shivering in Damascus, Baghdad, Tehran. They are worried that these groups they harbor will get out of their control and do something which these state sponsors may or may not authorize or even like. However, because these groups have some autonomy, they may do something that will bring the U.S. wrath down on them.

The President, in his State of the Union speech, left virtually no doubt that if a group under, let's say, Iran's, Syria's, or Iraq's purview does something, anything remotely like September 11, the weight of the world is going to be brought down on these countries. I don't think there's any doubt whatsoever.

The President's speech also left open the possibility that even short of that, the world may be brought down on them. The President's speech on Tuesday, I think, put Iran in particular on notice that episodes like the *Karine A*, the arms shipment to the Palestinian Authority, or if the Bushehr nuclear reactor project that Russia is building on Iran's coast goes hot and some evidence turns up

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that it's being misused in violation of Iran's NPT obligations, I think the President pretty much left no doubt that facilities like that could be in the crosshairs of a potential U.S. action.

The President used the term "Axis of Evil," and to my mind, that implies some degree of cooperation among Iran, Iraq, and North Korea that, quite frankly, I have not seen evidence of, and I think maybe that it was a little strong to imply that.

What to Do About Iraq? Let me end by talking about this debate over what to do about Iraq, which basically has been on the table since September 11. We have really no firm evidence of Iraqi involvement in September 11, no evidence that Iraq was behind the anthrax attacks. We do, on the other hand, have a more than ten-year record of Iraqi non-compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions, to which even Iraq agreed, and that it at some point started to comply with and then ended its compliance.

We also have some thinking in Washington that perhaps the 1991 combat was unfinished: that Saddam should have been taken out. There has been some hand-wringing that he was not taken out, and maybe some see a second chance to finish that work. In my opinion, the Arab world and the Iraqi people—and they do count to some degree here—

probably would not see a U.S. military move toward Iraq as justified at this time.

My personal view is that if the U.S. were to move robustly against Iraq right now, the Arab world and the Iraqi people would say, what did Saddam do? I've been watching him; he's been fairly quiet. What did he do to bring this on? And I think that matters. Clearly, the United States is powerful enough.

As Plato said, justice does not mean the might of the stronger. Do you want the U.S. to do things simply because it's strong and it can do it? I tend toward the opposite view. I think one could make a case that there might be a problem with that; if one were to take action, would one need a clear and compelling justification for one's actions. I'm not sure we've seen that yet. I think many of our allies have said clearly that if the U.S. were to take these steps, it would probably be alone.

Obviously, if the U.S. took action and it succeeded, many people might be happy and pleased with it. Yet part of me says, without a clear and compelling reason, there might be a strong debate about it. So I think the Iraq issue is still very much unsettled.

My analysis right now is that the U.S. will probably not immediately extend the war to Iraq. But that's a debate that still has yet to run its course.