South and Central Asia Security Challenges

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Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies

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THE INTER-UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR TERRORISM STUDIES

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Introduction

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Since the division of the subcontinent in 1947, South Asia has continuously been facing multiple threats to peace, stability, and economic development. Regional countries -- India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan -- have experienced various forms of intolerance, extremism, and violence. Suffice it to mention organized crime, terrorism, insurgency, periodic flare-ups, armed skirmishes, and outbreaks of civil and external wars. An ongoing critical security concern is the unresolved conflict between India and Pakistan over the control of Kashmir. Indeed, this challenge contains the seed of a potential nuclear escalation that might drag the entire region to the brink of an unprecedented disaster.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the academic community worldwide has closely followed strategic developments in South Asia for decades. For example, the Institute for Studies in International Terrorism at the State University of New York (SUNY) cooperated in 1968 with educational partners in India to hold an international conference in New Delhi dealing, inter alia, with communal violence as an obstacle to peace. Similar academic undertakings were co-sponsored with numerous institutions in the region and elsewhere in Asia, including China, Japan, Indonesia, and South Korea.

It is noteworthy that prior to 9/11, the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies (administered by the International Center for Terrorism Studies at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies and the Inter-University Center for Legal Studies at the International Law Institute) had initiated an interdisciplinary research project on "Counter-Terrorism: National, Regional, and Global Perspectives." This collaborative effort with Asian academics resulted in the publication of a book titled "Combating Terrorism: Strategies of Ten Countries" (Michigan University Press, 2002). This study, edited by Yonah Alexander, included an invited chapter on "India" authored by Professor Ved Marwah, a distinguished scholar and former senior government official. Among his conclusions was that "the Kashmiri conflict between India and Pakistan is not a territorial dispute but an important part of the Islamic jihad being waged by Islamic fundamentalists . . . ."[1]

Indeed, Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qa'ida's leader, declared in 2014 the formation of a new branch of his global terrorist movement in India, to be headed by Sheikh Assem Omar. The aim of the group is to "liberate occupied Muslim lands," such as India, and ultimately to establish a "caliphate" under the strict interpretation of the sharia. Such a vision was also announced with the launching of the "Islamic State" in Iraq and Syria (also known as ISIS and Daesh).[2]

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[1] Yonah Alexander, ed. *Combating Terrorism: Strategy of Ten Countries*. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2002), p. 336.

[2] Yonah Alexander and Dean Alexander. *The Islamic State: Combating the Caliphate Without Borders.* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015).

Thus, in January 2015, ISIS announced the expansion of the "Caliphate" into a region known as "Khorasan" that includes India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Hafiz Saeed Khan, the former commander of the terrorist group Tehreek-i-Taliban in Pakistan (TTP) was nominated to serve as the governor of the new "province." Subsequently, the ISIS branch in Pakistan launched a suicide attack killing some 60 worshippers at a Shiite mosque and causing a large section of the building to collapse.

Also, in April 2015 an ISIS-affiliated group, ISIS Walayat Khorasan, killed at least 34 people and injured 125 in a suicide bombing in Jalalabad, the capital of eastern Afghanistan. The victims were mainly government employees waiting in line for their paychecks outside of the New Kabul Bank. There is still speculation among analysts as to whether ISIS Walayat Khorasan is indeed an additional ISIS regional branch, or simply a group that has pledged allegiance to ISIS. If the attack was carried out directly by ISIS, it will mark the operation against civilians farthest from its regional headquarters in Iraq and Syria.

In the face of expanded terrorist acts perpetrated by numerous theological, ideological, and nationally inspired groups in the region, concerned governments unilaterally, bilaterally, and multilaterally have developed political, legal, diplomatic, law enforcement, military, and educational measures to bring the dangers down to manageable levels. For instance, Pakistan, in the wake of the massacre of some 150 students and teachers in a Peshawar school in January 2015, has undertaken a National Action Plan that included banning terrorist groups such as the Haqqani network, arresting numerous suspected terrorists and clergymen spreading hate speech, executing terrorists, providing emergency training to schools, and increasing counter-terrorism cooperation with Afghanistan.

In addition to governmental actions in combating terrorism, civic societies in many countries in South Asia and beyond have also been increasingly involved in this effort. On September 19, 2014, for example, some 126 Islamic preachers, scholars, and academics sent an "Open Letter" to Ibrahim Awwad al-Badin (also known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-declared head of the "Islamic State" and its fighters and followers) in which the signatories offered their views of what is permissible and what is impermissible according to Islam. Among the 24 specific items, the letter asserted that "it is forbidden in Islam to declare a caliphate without consensus from all Muslims."

Clearly the role of religion is a critical element in understanding strategic developments in Asia. Other aspects such as the role of history, society, politics, economy, diplomacy, and war are equally significant in this process.

The purpose of the current report on "South and Central Asia Security Challenges" is therefore to provide a broader context for regional security assessments and their global implications. This publication resulted from a seminar held on June 18, 2014, at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies. Moderated by Professor Yonah Alexander, speakers included General (Ret.) Alfred Gray (Twenty-Ninth Commandant of the United States Marine Corps and Senior Fellow and Chairman of the Board of Regents, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies); Ambassador (Ret.) Ronald Neumann (Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and U.S.

Ambassador to Algeria, Bahrain, and Afghanistan, and currently President, the American Academy of Diplomacy); Dr. Richard Weitz (Director and Senior Fellow, Center for Political-Military Analysis, Hudson Institute); Professor Amit Kumar (Adjunct Associate Professor at Georgetown University); Ash Jain, JD (Former U.S. State Department official and currently Advisor, International Law Institute); Lieutenant Colonel Chyngyz Kambarov (Kyrgyz Interior Ministry); and Professor Robert F. Turner (Associate Director, Center for National Security Law, University of Virginia School of Law). Slightly edited versions of selected presentations are incorporated in this report with the hope that further research in this field of security concerns will be encouraged.

Finally, some acknowledgements are in order regarding the publication of this report. Special thanks are due to Michael S. Swetnam (CEO and Chairman, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies); General (Ret.) Alfred Gray; and Professor Don Wallace, Jr. (Chairman, International Law Institute), for their academic guidance and support of our work.

The intern teams at the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies in 2014 and 2015, coordinated ably by Sharon Layani (Research Associate), provided useful background material. The teams included Cristina Alston (University at Albany, SUNY), Genevieve Boutilier (University of Maryland, Baltimore County), Dillon Bowman (University of Rochester), Andrew Coley (Quinnipiac University), David Daoud (Suffolk University Law School), Andrew DuBois (Trinity University), Stephanie Emerson (University of Chicago), Tyler Engler (Georgetown University), Gabriella Gricius (Boston University), Ilana Hale (Arizona State University), Avioz Hanan (University of Maryland), Ryan Hendrickson (SUNY Oneonta), Uri Lerner (American University), Frank Randall (St. Francis College), Benjamin Schaefer (Hofstra University), Thomas Turner (University of Virginia), Sonam Virk (University of the Pacific), Anikh Wadhawan (University of California, Riverside), Jacob Westerberg (University of California, Riverside), and Reed Woodrum (Princeton University).

Ambassador (Ret.) Ronald Neumann

Formerly Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and US Ambassador to Algeria, Bahrain, and Afghanistan; currently President, the American Academy of Diplomacy

Your subject today is really gigantic. Security in the whole region. And this is, if you're not awfully careful, this becomes an invitation to sort of roam across the whole place saying something about everything but I'm afraid at the end of that one may have said nothing about much of anything. I would like to be able to set out for you some glowing and brilliant conceptual approach to the area from the Northern Indian Border to the Eastern Border of Russia. Unfortunately, I do not have one. In fact, I do not believe there is one. Because this is a period of really intensive instability and of new multiple challenges coming from multiple directions and tearing people's attention from one corner to another. This is not just true of Washington, where there is a certain resemblance in the higher levels of policymaking in Washington to small children playing soccer: that everybody rushes for the ball at the moment and nobody plays any other field. And we are experiencing that right now. So first it was Syria, then it was Ukraine, now today it is Iraq. We have a policy statement on Afghanistan that apparently has a new focus. And so we snap back and forth and we are in such a period now.

But what I will try to do is sketch out a few what I would call base points or reference points, around which one might try to organize thinking about the security prospects in the region and to talk just a little about the idea of regional stabilization, regional agreements, both economic and political, about which I think one has to be extremely cautious not to exaggerate what they can do or how quickly they can do it. Or whether they can do it at all.

The future of Afghanistan is one of great question marks, it is one on which people do not agree, including Afghans. It is highly confused because of the lack of clarity in American policy. And that infects everybody else.

I want to come back to talk about American policy in a minute because we are in so many respects the large elephant in the room. The result of America being as powerful as it is that to some extent we influence everybody else's actions. Friends, enemies, neutrals, all, to some extent, take positions based on what they think the United States is going to do. When they do not know what that is, then they make assumptions. Those are usually worst case assumptions from their own point of view. And so the results of uncertainty and insecurity are often unfortunate.

Let me come back to that in a minute. But as you look across the region, you have a either a new or a reinvigorated Russian approach to Central Asia. And it is very evident from people are now looking at Georgia in 2008, the Ukraine, the Crimea, being swallowed up now, pressures on the Eastern Ukraine, the pressure on the Central Asian states to join an economic unit, and there is a question about how far does Russia intend to go in pressing other states into, not back into a territorial embrace— I don't think that they are not trying to recreate the Soviet Union—but they clearly intend to dominate politically in areas close to, that which they so charmingly call the "near abroad". And that is making the Central Asian states and a lot of others, and Eastern Europeans (but fortunately that's not my subject for today) but it is making

people nervous. And it is drawing their attention away from other areas to focus on how bad this pressure is going to be. And that is particularly true for instance in Kyrgyzstan, where you have the only other democracy functioning, I say the "only other" because now you are beginning to have one in Afghanistan. That is a huge sweep of territory but one is critical of whatever the blemishes are in these democracies. To think that from the Northern Border of India to the Western Border of Russia, these are the only two more-or-less democratic states. And I exclude Pakistan because of the role of the military which excludes the civilian power from dominance in so many of the most critical issues.

So you have Central Asia looking over its shoulder at Russia. You have Russia slightly schizophrenic about United States in Afghanistan: they do not really like us being there in the sense of the challenge it poses in Central Asia, but they also really, really do not want an unstable Afghanistan and a rebuilding of an Islamic fundamental (fundamental is a lousy word, but an extremist), Islamic extremist movements coming up against the borders of Central Asia. And so, because of what they do not want, they have been very helpful in a variety of things: rescheduling the huge Afghan debt; the growing amount of transport of military supplies across Central Asia, relieving pressure which at one point they were putting on airbases in Manas and Uzbekistan and allowing freight to go across. At the same time, they have never allowed munitions to go across, so it is all combat equipment but not anything that shoots. Nothing goes bang comes in by the Northern Transportation line, it all comes by air over Pakistan, and that is also an important point.

So, you have got Russia, slightly schizophrenic, pushing into Central Asia but not wanting us to lose, not wanting us to be too big in Afghanistan. You have got a Pakistan which is itself somewhat unstable, I do not believe it is anywhere close to collapsing, but which is engaged increasingly in a major war with its own Islamic movement and yet trying to maintain support for others in Afghanistan. It is very unclear what Pakistan's long-term policies will evolve to. There is a lot of discussion about changes in Pakistani attitude and I have seen some of that discussion in terms of "oh my god we do not want real breakdown in Afghanistan, we do not want to deal with the refugee flow again, we have got enough economic crisis." But I have to say that none of that discussion over the past year or more seems to have been evidenced in an actual change of policy or action. I think there was a period of considerable enthusiasm where we began to hear these sorts of discussions. And that has kind of cooled because it did not allow much.

Now, you have had the election of a civilian government, you have had a peaceful transition of power which is pretty important, but it is not at all clear that that government has the ability to change major Pakistani policy vis-a-vis either India or Afghanistan.

It is also, I think, important to understand that Pakistan's policy is heavily influenced by what it expects the United States to do. I think this is true of all the countries but it's particularly clear here.

Americans often say about any number of situations "well, what is *their* vision"; in Afghanistan "what is their vision of what the future should be?" It is important to stop and understand that that comment is intensely, inherently American. It comes out of being part of a very strong state with enormous power. Because underneath that statement of "what is *their*

vision" is the idea that you can have a vision because you have enough power and enough strength to bring about a vision if you want to put that energy into it. That is not the starting point from which the vast majority of states in the world address foreign policy. They address it from "what is the situation with which I have to deal?" And within that situation, particularly the dangers, "what can I do about those dangers?" And then there may be an element of vision but it is within the context of "what is it that I cannot do anything about that I have to deal with?"

So for the Pakistanis, one key starting point for that view of the world is the belief that we are going to move out of Afghanistan too early and let it collapse. As General Kayani, the former chief of staff, said to General Allen at one point, I think he said it to others, "I expect you will leave too early, you will underfund the Afghan security forces, they will collapse, and we will deal with chaos." So to say to them in that condition, "Don't you see how important a stable Afghanistan is?" is sort of like saying "wouldn't it be nice if you could fly?" Well, yeah, so what? It is an irrelevant statement from the power position of just dealing with the situation. Now, you might argue their policies are wrong, they do not give them the stability they want and various other things. But the starting point is that you have to change the world that they think they see if you want them to change their view of how they deal with it.

I won't go into India but you have a new government in India and obviously how it approaches things will also be difficult. Two base points, one about China, one about India, because I do not want to spend all the time just sort of making the circumference.

China has considerable interests in Afghanistan. I think it is clear that China is worrying more about Afghanistan. It is worrying about what will happen if you have an Islamist connection there that connects to Chinese insurgents. That worry does not yet translate into any particular policy of action. And I do not think it will, maybe it will eventually, but I see no evidence of it now. I was recently at a conference in Beijing and one Chinese professor somewhat ruefully summed up Chinese policy, he said "I believe China's policy in Afghanistan will remain cautious passivity." And I think that is what you have got. So I think one should not build any theoretical or policy frameworks on the assumption that you could get China to play a much larger role in Afghanistan. In many ways I wish it were true, because I do not think they're a particularly hostile force for any of our interests, but I do not think it is true.

So, the last thing I want to mention there before talking a little bit about Afghanistan itself and about the region there is the role of Iran. And again, very complex subject, we've got all kinds of other issues with Iran, but I think there are a couple of base points. Iran is potentially a minor political problem in Afghanistan but not a strategic threat. Afghanistan in Iranian eyes is extremely different from Iraq. And since we have so much experience with Iran in Iraq, which is negative, particularly as they built shape charges and blew up our vehicles and killed our people, one needs to understand the difference. Iraq historically for Iran is a strategic threat. It has been the source of strategic threats since the eighth century battle of Karbala, it has never changed. When I served in Iran in the 1970s before the Revolution and I served up in Tabriz in the West, every year Iranian forces in Western Iran Kermensha, and the western provinces drilled an exercise premised on the Iraqi invasion of Iran, falling back, regrouping, blunting the invasion, and counter-attacking. This was their regular paradigm in the 1970s under the Shah. They fought an eight-year war with Iraq. They do not have an interest in a stable Iraq. They have an interest

in Iraq which is not in total chaos, they do not want it dominated by hostile Sunni Islamists, but a stable Iraq will ultimately be in all probability an Iranian threat. And that includes a Shia Iraq, because a Shia dominated Iraq which is really stable and which does not need Iranian support desperately will also be an Arab Iraq. And that will be the same Iraq in which the Shia fought as members of the Iraqi Army for eight very bloody years without any major defection.

Afghanistan, in contrast, is not a strategic threat to Iran. The last time it was a strategic threat was probably when Ahmad Shah Durrani took the treasure that Nader Shah had after his assassination in 1747 and went off and made himself king. Afghanistan is a source of minor threat. Iranians worry about us in Afghanistan, they are very sensitive about what we do on the border. They tend to impute various motives to us which make them very nervous. I think it was a mistake that we cut off communication with them in Afghanistan. I had perhaps the last conversation with them in Afghanistan that was officially sanctioned and then I was told to shut that down because of nuclear pressures. I think that was a mistake because it just made them more suspicious about what we were doing. We have overlapping interests in Afghanistan. They have a huge narcotics problem in Iran, both trans-shipment and a problem of addiction. Most of the narcotics that cause that come from Afghanistan. There is an area of common cooperation there, they cooperated extensively with us in 2001 both in the overthrow of the Taliban and in the negotiations that followed. To say we have overlapping interests is not to say the interests are all the same. Those two statements should not be confused. But the point is we do have things we can cooperate with. The Iranians will always try for influence because they do not like threats and because that is the kind of natural primordial relation of most politicians except those who think the twenty-first century is different. But otherwise, it does not mean they are striking and striving for hegemony. Those are issues much more of the Gulf and of Iraq than they are of Afghanistan. So there is potential for cooperation.

So, to just close out that before I go off about three minutes more, I hope. You have bifurcated Russian policies. You have Central Asian states which are concerned about what happens in Afghanistan but do not see themselves as having, by and large, the power to actually influence it. And whose attention is increasingly taken by pressures from Russia. So they are not likely to be the source of large actions or daring actions. You have China which is largely inactive. You have Pakistan which is more negative than positive. Iran which can be worked with but is not pushing hard for anything in particular.

The overarching element in this, perhaps I should say it's more like the hole in the donut because it's conspicuous by its absence, is US policy. What is our policy toward Central Asia? How much does our desire for democracy, support for democracy, which irritates the hell out of the Russians, how does that balance against our need for Central Asian support in Afghanistan which requires a certain measure of Russian acquiescence at least? If we cannot sort out, that does not mean one has to always have priority, but if we cannot find a way of expressing the balance between those policies, everybody worries that whatever it is they don't like is what we're doing.

In Afghanistan you have this constant tension between the commitment of forces and the establishment of dates which undercut things because Afghans are thinking things will fall apart and therefore look to their own survival instead of to larger issues of building the state or

building the army. There is a lot of success right now. I think what one can say in the aftermath of the second round of the elections, but we still (cross your fingers) have to get through a vote count without major battles over fraud, but basically the army has performed well in security. There is much too much that has been done to say nothing has been done as some critics do. That is nonsense. But what has been done is not sufficient to ensure success and it is not sustainable without continued American, particularly financial support, but some degree of military involvement which, for the Afghans is also key psychologically. So that it is also nonsense to say that you are on some glide path to success. You are neither. And you are neither, in a war which is so complex it reminds me of Vietnam in a sense, if you have a really strong view about Afghanistan, as was true in Vietnam, you can go to the country, you can find the pieces that will support the argument you brought with you, you can then go back and write the article and say "I was there and this is the way it is" and then somebody whose view is completely and totally opposite can go there and do the same thing. And that of course makes it a little difficult to have informed policy discussions. But the bilateral security agreement will be signed. I have absolutely no doubt about that, and I think it will be signed probably within the next three months. We will have troops there at least until the end of 2016, it would be nice if we had more clarity of policy beyond that because the expectations of what we will or will not do affect what Pakistan does. They affect what Iran does. They affect how Afghans relate to their own state. They affect the degree of risk people will take to build that state, guys line their pockets and expect to run away.

Unfortunately, we are not answering those questions. We are particularly not answering them with the latest decision that all troops will leave after 2016 and our security advisory presence will fold back inside the embassy. You should, by the way, understand this is a very plastic statement; you could have quite a large security training presence inside the US Embassy. In Saudi Arabia we have a two-star command with a large training mission and then one almost as large made up of former US military training the Saudi National Guard under contract. So, in fact, saying you will have an embassy presence does not really tell you what you are going to do, it is kind of a way of hiding it. But it scares the hell out of the Afghans.

The timeline also suggest to people who we send in uniform that we need you to go and accept a certain degree of risk but by the way we do not really give a damn whether you succeed or fail because we are going to end the mission anyway. That is a very bizarre way in which to inspire your forces to take risks.

So, two final comments on regional strategies. I would say that there has been a lot of discussion about the need for regional strategies in two respects. One is the neutralization of Afghanistan and the other is to build regional economic ties. Neutralization in the sense that Afghanistan has had its longest period of stability from 1929 to 1979 basically when it was essentially neutral, and so many people dream of recreating this. And it may be a good idea and someday it might happen. But it will not happen soon. It cannot happen soon because it cannot, in my judgment, obviously these are judgmental questions, but it cannot in my judgment happen until you have a government in Afghanistan that is strong enough to keep basic order. As long as you have other forces contending violently for power, they will inevitably draw in other foreigners to support them. And if Afghanistan begins to break down from what it is now, if American support really goes away, then you will have a much larger foreign presence. And it

will not be because people expect to win; it will be because they think it is critical that their allies not lose. So the Pakistanis will be even more heavily invested in the Islamist insurgents because they want, at a minimum, to control the areas around their own border and they fear Indian building a threat to Pakistan. The Indians will be involved because they fear that those areas will become again the training ground for terrorists as they were in the past with Lashkar-e-Taiba and other groups. The Iranians will become involved because they do not want a group of fanatics on their border and they remember that their diplomats were massacred in Mazar-i-Sharif when the Taliban took it. The Russian will become involved because of the same reason—they do not want a fundamentalist Islamic state on the borders of Central Asia. None of that drawing in will lead to victory. It could give you something that looks like the Lebanese Civil War, which lasted for 15 years and Lebanon is much smaller and there were fewer outside parties and they were not as nasty (that is a pretty comparative statement). So this is really something to worry about because it has the potential for enormous instability. Until you have reduced that potential by the strength of the central government in Afghanistan, I do not think you can get a regional cooperation agreement. Now you could get an agreement but it would be an agreement on paper, it would not hold, and it would not, in the old saying, be worth the paper it is written on.

There is enormous potential for regional economic cooperation but, as the old Kurdish leader Mullah Mustafa Barzani said to me once about another subject "I have often heard of this bird but I have never seen it fly." There are a number of reasons for that and I won't go through them all. The benefits of regional economic cooperation are huge. The impediments are also large, some of it comes out of people's mentality. It was enormously interesting to watch the Central Asian states gradually accept the idea of sealed cargo passage across Central Asia with our military supplies going to Afghanistan. This is something we have talked about for years, it is essential. And you see these trucks on the road that say TIR, Transports Internationaux Routiers. It is an international system of sealed cargos moving around so that you can ship goods easily across countries. This system is not accepted in the East, it is a whole new way of thinking. And there is a certain amount of "oh, that is what they meant." But it is still very, very new. So there are all kinds of impediments. I hope it will develop. Certainly the economic case for it is very strong. The economic case for it is also irrelevant, in large part, to overcoming the political obstacles. Irrelevant may be too strong a word but I wanted to give you a sense of the difficulty of this. I think there is an enormous amount of room for academic, what people often call track two discussions, of regional economic cooperation because it is something that should happen. But it needs to move beyond praise for how good it would be to a much more detailed examination of what the problems are. Because people's minds and government are not open to that yet. So there is a very fertile field to be explored there about how do you do customs regulation? How you would make it in a way that you have faith and you are not just opening the doors to smuggling. How you would handle your border controls. What you would do about letting drivers from other countries pass across your country. And that is just three issues out of a myriad of technical issues. But those all need discussion because on the day when some of this becomes more possible and more realistic, those questions will need to be answered. And the only place they're going to be discussed now is outside of government because the government is not ready to discuss them seriously. So I think there is a fertile field there for that, but it is also not yet.

So, I leave you with this thought that there are all sorts of contending forces, it is very difficult. If we really screw it up it could be much worse, which ought to be an incentive to remaining involved even though it has been a long war and we are tired. There are hopes for the future but they are not immediate and they need work, and they need diplomacy, and they need attention.

Dr. Richard Weitz
Director & Senior Fellow, Center for Political-Military Analysis, Hudson Institute

I am giving an overview of the issues involved but will focus on the two countries that I know best: Russia and China.

The Russians are clearly cross-pressured, like the Chinese, over how they are looking over what happens in Afghanistan. You see a lot of unease no matter what the US does. When the Obama administration came in, there was an initial surge of troops. The Russians were very concerned that the large number was greater than you would need in what they thought was a counterinsurgency campaign and they were worried that the US was basically trying to establish a major foothold in the heart of Eurasia for other purposes and they were very cautious about keeping track of efforts by the United States to maintain permanent bases in the region.

And you saw this previously with their mixed approach to what was happening with the US bases in other countries. So as far as I understand it, they played some role in encouraging the Uzbeks to ask the US forces to leave in 2005. And our former Ambassador to Russia, McFaul, confirmed what we have heard in the open sources that there was a kind of bidding game between the Americans and Russians over how long the Pentagon could remain in the Kyrgyz Republic. Well, we have a Kyrgyz expert in the panel so I will let him talk about it.

Clearly the Russians on the other hand have not been unhappy to see the United States engaged in fighting the Taliban. That is what they would tell you. They would rather have us do it, rather than them. So it is convenient for us to go and fight the enemies of Russia, so long as we do that and then leave.

Now that we are leaving, the complaint is a bit different: it is that we are leaving too soon. I have not seen much reaction to what is happening with President Obamas recent announcement, but what little I have seen is exactly what we heard before when they thought the United States forces would leave this year, 2014, as opposed to 2016, which is that it is premature, the Afghan forces are not able to manage the Taliban threat without a sense of NATO assistance, and there is already a major problem with regional terrorism, narcotic trafficking, and other sources of instability effecting Central Asia and Russia; this withdrawal will make it worse.

I was in Moscow last month when the Ministry of Defense has their annual international security conference. They had their expert brief us on what their military intelligence thinks is going to be the likely results of Afghanistan. They saw a one out of three chance that the country will be able to pretty much look as it does now, even with a reduced NATO presence. But they also thought there was a good chance that it would fall apart, the Taliban would gain control over much of the country and then use that as a base of operations to export social revolutions elsewhere. And then the third possible outcome, which I will get to later, is the possibility of the country breaking apart in ethnic conflicts and ethnic enclaves.

The Russians have adopted a multitude of lines of action to deal with this threat. The first is they have developed their own economic and military ties with Afghanistan. Because of what

happened during the Soviet occupation, neither they nor the Afghans wanted the Russians heavily involved in the country – when Karzai was named President, he first made sure not to go to Moscow, but he went pretty much everywhere else.

The Russians, though, in the last two years have become more involved. Initially they were testing the waters with the joint counter narcotic operations with US forces. Since then, they have become more involved in rebuilding some of their old Soviet factories, they are helping to provide helicopters and rifles and other weapons to the Afghan armed forces, and so on. Karzai, as he is in the process of leaving office, has indicated that he was very enthusiastic about ties with Russia, as he has been alienated from the Obama administration. He has turned to Russia as the Russians have turned to him. As you may recall, Afghanistan is one of the few countries that has recognized Moscow's annexation of Crimea, which shows how deep their ties have become.

In addition, the Russians have been expanding their military bases in Central Asia. They have an extensive base and military complex in the Kyrgyz Republic, though I will defer to our colleague on that. They have also been developing security ties with Tajikistan, helping to reestablish the Afghan-Tajik border defenses, selling subsidized weapons to Kazakhstan, and so on. And all of these governments are very alarmed by what is happening in Afghanistan and, as the Ambassador said, they are looking at Russia to provide them with security assistance.

The third line of action that Russia has been trying is building a regional security architecture to manage the threat. This is focused on the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the CSTO, which has been very involved in some kinds of counter terrorism and counter narcotics activities. Its members are developing their collective capacity to intervene, not in Afghanistan itself, but in a Central Asian country which might become threatened from Afghan based insurgents. But that is pretty much a work in progress, and they have not been able to do what they would really like to do, which is to get NATO to cooperate with the CSTO. NATO's position is that this institution is a tool that Russia uses to maintain dominance of the region; NATO members prefer to deal bilaterally with Central Asian governments.

The Russians have also been trying to build up the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Early in the Obama Administration, the US made an effort to engage with the SCO, to see if it would play an important role in helping to provide some support in Afghanistan. In 2012, they gave Afghanistan special observer status. But so far, the SCO has made a lot of declarations, but has otherwise not really done much; where it could be useful is helping to integrate Afghanistan into the regional economies and it has yet to do that.

Russia has also been seeking to strengthen its ties with the Great Powers and regional powers and I will go into that in a second. But the fallback Russian strategy is, and this has been pretty obvious in the last few months, that they have prepared to go back to 1990s, to start re-carving spheres of influence in Afghanistan. They would have, what the Russian Defense Minister called, territorial formations. The military intelligence person that we heard in May at the conference said that there is a thirty-one percent chance Afghanistan would break up. What they are thinking of is the Tajiks and Uzbeks and some others in the North of Afghanistan could serve as a buffer from the Pashtun-dominated Taliban in the South.

India has been the most receptive partner for Russian diplomacy regarding Afghanistan. The Afghan situation has renewed the Indian-Moscow alliance that we saw in the Cold War, which has faded in recent years, with the Indians trying to diversify their ties. But Afghanistan is helping to revive that. We saw recently an interesting deal by which the Indians will buy arms for Afghanistan from Russia and the Russians deliver them, plus whatever training and so on, and this circumvents the problems India has with the lack of territorial connections for Afghanistan and concerns about Pakistan and how they might retaliate. If you do it through Russia, you limit the extent through which the Pakistanis might retaliate, they think.

Iran has so far remained aloof from Russia and vice versa, but the logical reconstitution of the 1990s Northern Alliance ties would involve Iran, India and Russia backing the Northern Alliance. So we might see that now that we have a more receptive Iranian government.

Where Russia has had difficulty, as have we, is with China. The Chinese, as far as I see it, have four interests involved in Afghanistan. Working outwards, the main interest is to buffer what is happening there from affecting China itself, in Xinjiang and narcotic trafficking, against Islamic militarists, and support for terrorists groups in Uyghur-dominated parts of China. The Chinese have been very vigilant against that. More positively, they have been hoping that, by reintegrating Xinjiang back into the regional economies of Central Asia, they will help raise prosperity and improve conditions there.

The second main interests are Chinese economic interests in Afghanistan. As you know, a few years ago the Chinese started buying potentially valuable deposits of copper and oil and so on in Afghanistan. And the thinking was, the Chinese saw an opportunity that other countries did not want to exploit because of the security conditions and the Chinese would be able to benefit from that. That has not really occurred; those projects still remain on hold, because it turns out the Chinese managers are just as fearful as Western managers about putting their safety at risk in a country where security is unsure. And there have been some delays in the Afghan legislature ratifying necessary legislation. So those projects are still on hold but potentially it is an economic benefit for China if they get stability there.

And more broadly the third interest would be Central Asia and Pakistan. The Chinese security and economic interests there are greater than in Afghanistan, but they understand that Afghanistan, if the situation deteriorates so badly there, it will make it more difficult to protect Chinese interests in Central Asia and Pakistan, particularly since the ties with Pakistan have been frayed already by links between the Pakistani government and terrorist groups, some of which have been active in China, according to the Chinese

The last core interest, which is decreasing, is not to upset the United States. The Obama Administration came in and made clear that Afghanistan was their one of their most important foreign policy interest. The Chinese have not been confronting the United States over this policy in Afghanistan. They have not contested the United Nations mandate that has authorized forces there. A lot of the earlier years, we saw containment, encirclement and so on. Under Obama they have not really stressed that, but they are really very concerned about United States withdrawal. You talk with the Chinese and you get the impression, which is shared by the Russians, that we

are basically pulling out and leaving the problem with them. We broke the country and now we are leaving and they are going to have to figure out how to deal with that.

Logically Russia and China cooperate well in Central Asia; they have got a good relationship in which Russia encourages Chinese development regionally and economically and the Chinese defer to the Russian security preeminence; but that might change. The Chinese are a bit unsure about whether the Russians have the capacity to maintain security in Central Asia and contain whatever problems arise in Afghanistan by themselves. If they fail to do so, the Chinese will face some difficult questions ahead regarding how deeply involved they want to be in the region.

Professor Amit Kumar
Adjunct Associate Professor at Georgetown University

I am going to lay down some observations that I had and we can have assessments later more in detail and a more fleshed out discussion. Firstly, since my specialization is terrorist financing and terrorism, I am going to focus a little more on what the Ambassador said and what Richard echoed as well, but more on terrorist financing and terrorism and also on how that really relates to the geopolitical and the strategic picture in the region.

Firstly, the al-Qa'ida-Taliban nexus remains. Most people tend to say that the al-Qa'ida-Taliban nexus in Afghanistan has been ruptured and we have the UN splitting the combined al-Qa'ida and the Taliban Lists into two separate Lists—the Al-Qaida List and the Taliban List respectively three years ago, which I find a little bit amazing and unrealistic. Yes, the core al-Qa'ida has been decimated to a large extent, but the al-Qa'ida associated groups in Afghanistan, namely Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, the Afghan Taliban, HuJI [Harakat-ul Jihad Islami], as well as others still remain and they fight alongside the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network against the coalition troops. So that is something that needs to be kept in mind. When we say the al-Qa'ida-Taliban nexus has been ruptured, that is not really a truism and that does not reflect the ground realities.

Secondly, we have this artificial distinction between the Afghan Taliban and the Pakistan Taliban. Now interestingly enough, both the Talibans on both sides of the border are close to each other historically, they have ethnic ties, they have cultural ties, they crisscross the border and help each other, and just because the Pakistani Taliban is against the Pakistani government and the Afghan Taliban is against the Afghan government we tend to make more of an artificial distinction between the two. In reality, they are pretty close actually, they are ethnic Pashtuns on both sides of the border and it is a porous border as all of us have been reading and knowing for a long time.

Thirdly, when we talk about select targeted strikes against the terrorists in Waziristan, we hear about Pakistanis going only after the Pakistani Taliban and a bit of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, which is linked to the Uyghur rebellion in China's Xinjiang province. There are the Lashkar-e-Taibas of the world, the Jaish-e-Mohammeds of the world, the Harakat ul-Mujahideens of the world, and the HuJIs of the world, the Haqqani Networks of the world, which are pretty much part of the terrorist mix. When we say that we will extirpate terrorism in Pakistan or elsewhere, we need to deal with all of the groups concerned and not selectively target the Pakistani Taliban. So that is the reality that has to be factored in in terms of seeing the threat from terrorist groups, the existential threat, I would add.

Also, the Indians are really worried about the threat from all these terrorist groups, the Haqqanis, the Lashkar-e-Taibas, and the offshoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba in India, the Indian Mujahideen, actually being very active once the coalition troops leave at the end of 2016 or even sooner. There are increasing infiltrations into Kashmir already, so that is something that the Indians are already concerned about and the Afghans are concerned about also. Once the coalition troops leave, what is to become of them? They face this threat from the Haqqani

network, they face this threat from the Afghan Taliban, which because of the power vacuum and the strategic vacuum caused by the exit of coalition troops, will become more bolder and will compromise the strategic interests and the peace, stability, and security of both Afghanistan and India.

Also, I already mentioned about the ETIM, or the East Turkestan Islamic Movement threat to China and China is really concerned about that, in its own way. Also Uzbekistan and the other Central Asian republics are concerned about the threat from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, or IMU, or its offshoot the Islamic Jihad Union, they might become stronger as a result of the exit of coalition troops as well.

China and India both, as Richard mentioned, have strong investment interests in Afghanistan, the Chinese in the copper mines, and the Indians in iron ore and investment in roads and so on and so forth, namely the Aynak copper mines close to Kabul and the Hajigak iron ore mines respectively. So their investment prospects may be threatened by the continued presence of terrorist groups and terrorist threats, per se.

One thing more that most people mistake to note or rather do not really notice is that the threat of Talibization in Pakistan has already come to fruition actually. If you see what happened in Karachi, there is a presence of the Pakistani Taliban and the al-Qa'ida linked elements in Karachi as well, and millions of Pashtuns have migrated from Eastern Afghanistan and Southern Afghanistan, to Karachi. In Karachi, as we have seen with the recent attack at the airport and courts and so on and so forth, there is ethnic tension between these Pashtuns that have migrated from Afghanistan and the ethnic Muhajirs, who are those who migrated from the Indian side of the continent in 1947. So you have these ethnic tensions, you have provincial tensions, you have Shi'a-Sunni tensions in Pakistan, so there are a lot of things going on in Pakistan also, along with Afghanistan, and threats to India that need to be taken care of, actually.

I would say that there is also a pronounced threat of the intersection of organized and petty crime with terrorism and terrorist financing. You see the drug trafficking, that a lot of the speakers have already mentioned. Drugs are transported from Afghanistan in three ways, essentially. A good deal of the drug traffic goes to Iran, so Iran faces a drug threat along with the threat of migrants from the western part of Afghanistan. The Pakistanis take a huge brunt of the drug transport also towards their end. Recently in the Indian state of Punjab, which is situated on the northwestern side of India, there has been a lot of influx of drugs as well. Also, the Central Asian republics, as mentioned earlier as well, have been affected adversely by the drug flows. So the drug flow is essentially in three directions: towards Pakistan, towards Iran, and towards the Central Asian republics.

The South Asian states in general, and here I am also talking a little bit about the Central Asian states as well, but generally focusing more on South Asian states, are characterized by lack of political will, lack of technical capacity, porous borders, poor customs and border control measures. That allows easy transport of essentially three things: drugs, terrorists, and arms and equipment. That is something that the counterterrorism officials in South Asian nations need to be careful about and concentrate on, actually.

I would say another important problem, which is a systemic problem in Afghanistan, is the corruption element, with wide swaths of the political elite being very corrupt. One case in point is the inability on the part of the Afghan government to come with a real, solid anti-money laundering law, which would take care of the problems caused by the run on the Kabul Bank, where a lot of the political elites vanished with close to $800 million or so a few years back. Despite the Financial Action Taskforce, which is the international watchdog of the world when it comes to Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism measures, warning the Afghans to come out with an anti-money laundering law, it is only yesterday when the Afghan Senate passed the law and it still has to be ratified and signed by the Afghan president. For some reason or the other, the Afghan government has been dilly-dallying and the deadline to pass the law was Monday, actually. So they are right in the nick of time cobbling together a hastily framed anti-money laundering law, which may not be adequate really to check money laundering and to really make sure that the run on banks like the Kabul Bank is not repeated in future.

I would also look at the interests of Iran—drugs, migration—but also since Pakistan has been going through a lot of instability, the Indians, and the Russians, and the Chinese, want, I would say a path through Iran. Indians have been working on developing the Chabahar port on the southeastern tip of Iran. The Chinese always really play a confusing game. On one hand, they are trying to make sure that they have access through Central Asia and Iran. On the other hand, they have developed the Gwadar port in Pakistan also to have access to the Indian Ocean. So it is really important to note what the Chinese are doing. Of course, the Chinese are pretty active in trying to envision and create the new Silk Route, all the way from Central China to Xinjiang province in China, through Central Asia, and then Iran, Iraq, Syria, and so on and so forth. One reason why they are interested in the Central Asian republics, in addition to the shared terrorism threat alluded to earlier, is the fact that they want a free ride through Central Asia for transporting their goods, something like the customs union and more, to really make sure that Central Asia is used to their economic and commercial advantage.

I would end quickly by saying I completely agree with Ambassador Neumann that the progress in Afghanistan as far as we are concerned has to be piecemeal. You are very right in pointing out, Ambassador, that we must not go in for a peace deal, we must engage in a consistent peace process. We need to make sure that Afghanistan is secure, make sure it is stable, make sure it has democracy, make sure it develops and sucks in a lot of investment internationally, which really can result in its development, and is not diverted towards corruption. If we are not careful and turn our eyes away from Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and South Asia in general, we may have to repeat what we went through after 1988 when the Soviet troops withdrew and we did not look at South Asia for 13 years almost and see what happened. The Taliban rose, and the rest as they say is history, 9/11, and two wars and so on and so forth.

You are very right in pointing out that the strategy we employ in Afghanistan has to be careful, considerate, and has to be long term. When we talk about the bilateral security agreement, how do we flesh it out actually? What are the real contours of the agreement? Are we looking at only counterterrorism assistance, are we looking at Special Forces deployment, are we looking at advising and training? Obviously the Indians and the Chinese are engaged in training the Afghan national security officers also. So what kind of engagement do we have with South

Asia? Of course it cannot be military to the extent that it has been already, but in terms of counterterrorism, in terms of soft power, in terms of maybe investment. Similarly, in addition to Afghanistan, do we have to look at Central Asia also or do we leave Central Asia to the contrivances of the Chinese and the Russians? We have economic interests in addition to the geopolitical interests in Central Asia. For example, Turkmenistan is rich in natural gas and oil, so those are important interests to keep in mind.

Ash Jain, JD

Formerly US State Department official; currently Advisor, International Law Institute

I spent several years at the State Department, primarily at the policy planning staff, which gave me an opportunity to work with colleagues on a range of strategic challenges. This was during the end of the Bush administration and into the beginning of the Obama administration. Afghanistan, as we have heard already, since 9/11 has clearly been one of the most difficult challenges that the United States has been facing. And I think we have gotten a good sense of the challenges and the regional context of those challenges today. I would like to lay out a couple of alternative scenarios as to how the situation in Afghanistan might evolve over the coming years.

The United States has had three fundamental objectives with regard to Afghanistan since 9/11. One, of course, is to capture or kill senior al-Qa'ida leadership and those responsible for the 9/11 attacks and subsequent attacks. The second is to ensure that Afghanistan could no longer be used as a safe haven from which to conduct terrorist attacks against the United States or its allies. The third objective is to support a democratically elected government in maintaining control of its territory and defeating the Taliban insurgency. By and large, US efforts have been successful in meeting the first of these two objectives. Osama Bin Laden has been killed and senior al-Qa'ida leadership figures have been removed from Afghanistan one way or the other.

Secondly, the safe haven has been largely eliminated at least in terms of its ability to carry out direct attacks against the United States. The globally capable terrorist network operated by Al Qaida that existed before 9/11 has been decimated.

But it is this last objective that remains elusive. The Afghan government is still very much fighting to maintain control of its territory. The Taliban remains a formidable fighting force. At the same time the government has maintained control of a functioning central authority and just recently held a critical round of elections for a new president. But as we heard from the previous speakers, the competing political and military forces, violence, and instability today makes Afghanistan a very challenging environment.

So as I see it, looking forward, there are three scenarios as US combat forces withdraw at the end of the year. The first, is what I would call the status quo scenario, which is that the Afghan government largely continues to retain control of its territory but the Taliban maintains its ability to fight and challenge the stability of the government, creating a lot of havoc and violence and attacks that will continue to cause great distress to the civilian population. But at the end of the day the government sort of muddles on in its struggle to battle the insurgency and the status quo continues.

Then we have what I would describe as the worst-case scenario, which is the resurgence of the Taliban and its ability to expand its campaign of violence, which at some point results in the government losing control over large swaths of territory in which the Taliban are able to set up a parallel government -- or eventually even wrest control from the central authority in Afghanistan. The country would devolve into what one of the panelists mentioned of regional enclaves. This would be a strategic defeat for US policy because it could allow Afghanistan to

once again become a safe haven for terrorists, and all the effort, the sacrifice of blood and treasure that the United States has invested over the years would have been wasted. The unfolding situation in Iraq is playing out today as a precursor, I think, to the kind of worst case scenario that we might see take place in Afghanistan if the government is unable to maintain its position on the battlefield and prevent a Taliban resurgence.

The third scenario -- the best-case scenario -- would be one in which the Afghan government succeeds over time in weakening the Taliban and the other al-Qa'ida affiliated groups that have been mentioned. The hope would be that the Afghan forces are stronger and more cohesive than their Iraqi counterparts have demonstrated so far, which eventually forces the Taliban to enter into some kind of negotiated political framework where they agree to lay down their arms and accept the legitimacy of the government -- perhaps in exchange for some recognition of a political role in Afghanistan's future. Now that is the outcome the United States would obviously prefer.

At the moment, I would not say it is the most probable, at least not in the short run, but I just wanted to offer a couple of thoughts on what conditions would need to be in place for making this best case scenario more likely.

First, I would argue, is a continued and robust US military presence. President Obama indicated that he is going to retain about 10,000 troops in Afghanistan next year, which will dwindle down to 5,000 after that and entail a complete pull out after 2016. Even for this limited two year presence, it will require the new government in Afghanistan to sign onto a status of forces agreement. The purpose of these troops will be, first of all, to create a competent training and backup force for Afghan security forces, particularly if we see the Taliban gaining ground in particular regions. The second purpose of these forces is deterrence. A continuing US force presence makes it more likely that the Taliban will eventually decide it is no longer worth prolonging the insurgency. Unfortunately, President Obama's announcement that all troops will leave in 2016 is completely counterproductive and shortsighted, and it just gives the Taliban a target date in which to wait and regroup and begin a new assault against the government in the future.

The second condition that would make the best-case outcome more likely is one we have heard a lot about today -- and that has to do with cooperation from Afghanistan's regional neighbors, particularly Pakistan. The Pakistani government has to do more to prevent the border crossing of equipment and personnel, and strengthen its ability to identify those Taliban fighters to limit their ability to regroup and resupply. Continuing economic and political assistance from India, as we have heard, will be important as well as Russian support, which has been limited, but helpful in terms of economic assistance and weapons supplies. And finally, it is important that Iran stays out of Afghanistan and does not undermine the government for its own ends.

And finally, the third area where we have to see progress will depend on the new Afghan government itself. The election of a new president will offer an opportunity to create a more positive relationship with the West and the donor community than we have seen under Karzai. There is some hope with this first peaceful transfer of power will bring about the emergence of a competent, strong, and inclusive leader who can bring together the various factions in

Afghanistan and boost morale to take on the fight against the Taliban. Hopefully, the new government will limit corruption and expand trust in government that will engender an ongoing cooperative relationship with the United States and the West.

This is a tall order and a lot to expect, certainly in the short run. But I think it is still very much possible to achieve this best-case scenario – provided we have strong and steady US leadership in addressing this challenge. We will have to see how this situation develops over the coming months.

Chyngyz Kambarov, PhD
LTC of Kyrgyz Interior Police

Outline

Terrorism is both external and home grown in Central Asia. Many of the most active groups are linked, and many operate in the Fergana Valley, which takes in portions of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The groups that began there threaten the security of all Central Asia, and have declared their intention to overthrow the popularly elected governments. It is important to aid Kyrgyzstan security forces with financial support, technology and training to help stop the growth of radicalization in Kyrgyzstan.

A Brief Report on Terrorism and Extremism in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia

A number of fundamentalist organizations operate in Central Asia. Most of them were concentrated in Fergana Valley, which encompasses the territory of south Kyrgyzstan, east Uzbekistan and north Tajikistan with an overall area of 22,000 square kilometers and a population of 11 million. Islam has always had a great influence with most of the radical organizations in this area. After being identified and tracked by some of Central Asian governments, some of the radical movements resisted and later turned into terrorist organizations like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in 1996 and its off-shoot, the Islamic Jihad Union in 2002.

Conventionally, the **turning point for emergence of terrorism in Central Asia** is the terrorist attack in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) on February 16, 1999. Sixteen people died when IMU organized an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the President of Uzbekistan. Before this attempt was taken, the IMU fled from Uzbekistan security forces into Tajikistan. There the IMU joined and fought on the side of United Tajik Opposition in Tajikistan during the conflicts from 1993-1997. They gained experience there like many radicalized individuals do in Syria today.

After the February 1999 bombing in Tashkent, many IMU members fled to Afghanistan during the Uzbekistan crackdown on radicals. Some members of the IMU took attempts to penetrate into the south of Kyrgyzstan twice, in the summers of 1999 and 2000, and once there they began taking many hostages - releasing them after negotiations. Kyrgyz military forces pushed them out, but it took several months because of the terrorists' tactics and the mountainous area.

This event showed how difficult it had become to maintain security, not only of Kyrgyzstan but all of Central Asia. Later the **Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)**, first known to outsiders simply as the Islamic Jihad Group, organized suicide bombings in Uzbekistan in Tashkent and Bukhara in March and April 2004. They also claimed responsibility for coordinated bombing attacks in Tashkent on July 30, 2004 against the American and Israeli embassies and the office of the Uzbekistani Prosecutor General.

When the United States Armed Forces invaded Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, the invasion heavily disrupted the IMU members who were operating in in Afghanistan along with Taliban. But the IMU did not disappear. On the contrary, they claimed responsibility for an ambush that killed 27 soldiers in the Rasht Valley of Tajikistan in September 19, 2010[3]. IMU members also claimed responsibility for carrying out an attack on the Karachi's Jinnah International Airport of Pakistan in June 8, 2014.

Thus these two terrorist organizations, **IMU and IJU, remain the real external terrorist threat to Central Asian security**. As for the internal terrorist threat, every Central Asian country has local radical organizations, and many have possible connections to each other.

The **first homegrown terrorist group in Kyrgyzstan was Jaishul-Magdi (Army of Righteous Ruler).** It was formed in 2010 under the influence of a terrorist from Russian Caucasia.

The leader of Jaishul-Madgi was a Kyrgyz citizen, Sovetbek Islamov, to whom all members swore "bayat" – allegiance. All members were radicalized through the Internet, mainly from the websites of the terrorist organizations of the Islamic Party of Turkestan (which was really the IMU), the Islamic Jihad Union and other Caucasian terrorist websites.

The end goal of Jaishul Magdi was to overthrow the "apostate" regime and establish a Caliphate in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. To achieve the goal, Jaishul Magdi organized terrorist acts that resembled common crime – carrying out robberies and murdering civic people and policemen.

Jaishul Magdi posted videos on the Internet where they declared Jihad in Kyrgyzstan – hoping to draw attention and financing from international terrorist organizations. Members of Jaishul Magdi conducted recruiting activities at the same time to enlarge the organization and disseminate radical ideas among the youngsters in Kyrgyzstan.

There are now 13 terrorist organizations officially recognized in Kyrgyzstan, but about 80 percent of the radical movements are members of the Hizbut-Tahrir (HuT) extremist organization. Though HuT officials declare that they do not use violence, there is still a very subtle line between this extremist organization and terrorist organizations. For example, the terrorist group "Akromiya," which operated in Fergana Valley, was established by Akram Yuldashev and his followers - all former members of HuT. Adherents of HuT privately recognize a willingness to use any violence in reaching their goal – the overthrow of the secular government and the establishment of the Caliphate.

Involvement of Women

An analysis by the Kyrgyz Interior Ministry found that while religious extremist groups in Kyrgyzstan had 1.1% women in 2005, by 2013, women made up 23 % of the groups. Most are

[3] Roughly, two dozen high-profile religious militants who escaped from a Dushanbe prison (Tajikistan) in August 2010 based in Rasht Valley and were able to kill officially 27 Tajik soldiers (unofficially about 80) during the operation of apprehension.

wives or relatives of men who espouse extremist ideas. The leadership of HuT is now actively working to coordinate women in its activity. This new approach is also being implemented in the neighboring country of Uzbekistan.

An increasing number of women from Kyrgyzstan between 18 and 25 years old are being radicalized and recruited by various terrorist groups to join terrorist groups in Syria. At least 10 women from Kyrgyzstan are known to be part of the religious extremist movements in Syria.

Although there are many shortfalls in the counter terrorism ability of Kyrgyzstan security forces, they have thwarted many plots. Police started to deal with terrorism and extremism about 10 years ago. **There was a thick wall between Police and Intelligence** in the beginning in terms of sharing information in combating terrorism and extremism. However it is much better today when cooperation between these two agencies started to become more collaborative. Nevertheless they are in need of more financing and technical support. There is also lack of strong experts in theology. Even so, security forces have had some success in combatting terrorism and extremism in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan went through two coups in March 2005 and April 2010, and research shows that extremist organizations are able to take advantage of political instability for their own purposes. Maintaining political stability is vital, as well as a willingness to fight against terrorism and extremism. If another coup occurs in Kyrgyzstan, extremists may be able to take over parliament and seize state power, causing a further deterioration of the situation in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia.

Professor Robert F. Turner
Associate Director, Center for National Security Law, University of Virginia School of Law

I want to thank my old friends Professor Alexander and General Al Gray for your excellent comments and also for putting together another outstanding panel. I am not an expert on the region; I have written about Southeast Asia, but most of that was 40 years or more ago.

I want to talk a little bit about America. I think America is going to be an important part of the end of this. Whether it is a good end, or a bad end, we are either going to play a positive role or we are going to watch bad things happen in the region. Sun Tzu reminds us that the acme of skills is not in winning "100 victories in 100 battles," but rather subduing the enemy without fighting. We are talking about *deterrence*. Deterrence is a function of two perceptions: strength and will. No one in the region doubts that America has the *strength* to beat any country in Asia. Certainly (if we are not counting China), it is not close. The problem is, since Vietnam, there have been great doubts about our *will*, and we have made a lot of mistakes that have contributed to that perception.

Ash made the point that announcing in advance that we were going to pull out troops out of Afghanistan in eighteen months was not a helpful move. Indeed I thought at the time that it would almost guarantee us defeat in the area. We told our friends—who remember what the American did in South Vietnam when we got tired of the war—and we told our enemies: "Hey, 18 months? You can hold your breath for 18 months. Just hang around and when the Americans leave you can terrorize the country again." I think the President announced we would pull out in 18 months in an effort to appease the left wing of his own political base, but he should have realized the world was also listening. Announcing to the world that America did not have the *will* to protect the victims of tyranny for more than 18 months was a terribly foolish move, and I only hope I am proven wrong in my fear that it would lead to a Taliban victory.

This is an unusual war. It is a war that depends upon two things. First of all, it depends upon intelligence. There is no question in this conflict about whether our armored divisions or our carrier battle groups can defeat al-Qa'ida or the Taliban. We are stronger than they are. The issue here is one of perceived *will*. And I think on that aspect, one of the most important things America needs to do is to stand united. We must understand that we got into this conflict as a country, and we will win or lose as a country.

There was a man named Arthur Vandenberg, a US Senator from Michigan in the 1940s, who embodied the term "bipartisanship" during the Truman administration. He said that "politics ought to stop at the water's edge." It is a tremendously important principle. Thirty some odd years ago I was the acting Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs. There was once a time when I thought that only Democrats were partisan. That was until Jimmy Carter became President in 1977, and I watched as Sam Nunn threw down the knife with which he had been metaphorically trying to gut Gerry Ford, and Republican Senator John Tower promptly picked it up and went right after Carter. It just goes back and forth. There are Republican leaders in Congress today who, when Bush was President, said the War Powers Resolution was unconstitutional and irrelevant. But when President Obama used force against Libya pursuant to

a resolution of the UN Security Council, these same Republicans said he had violated the War Powers Resolution. If we cannot get rid of this partisanship, if we cannot convince our politicians that politics ought to stop at the water's edge and the security of the nation is more important than the future of either political party, we are not going to play a positive role in the struggle for peace around the world.

A few weeks ago, when we traded five of the top Taliban detainees for one apparent American deserter, we also sent some very bad signals around the world. We told our enemies that either we are very weak or very foolish. We told the whole world basically that we are trying to tidy things up so we can abandon that part of the world and see how the game plays out. And without our participation, that game is not going to be played out in a positive way.

Our enemies can read the Gallup polls. When we went into Afghanistan, 93% of Americans supported the move. The latest polls show a majority of Americans think that was mistake. We have an *education* role; we need to convince the American people that, mistake or not, we have an investment in south Asia. If we once again abandon our commitments to resist tyranny, no one in the world is going to take us seriously and all this strength that we have spent trillions and trillions of dollars building up will be ineffective. Because effective deterrence requires both perceptions of superior strength and the will to use that strength. If our enemies believe we have tremendous strength but we lack the *will* to use it, America is not going to be a force for deterring violence, aggression, and other bad things and upholding the rule of law.

Academic Centers

Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies (IUCTS)

Established in 1994, the activities of IUCTS are guided by an International Research Council that offers recommendations for study on different aspects of terrorism, both conventional and unconventional. IUCTS is cooperating academically with universities and think tanks in over 40 countries, as well as with governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental bodies.

International Center for Terrorism Studies (ICTS)

Established in 1998 by the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, in Arlington, VA, ICTS administers IUCTS activities and sponsors an internship program in terrorism studies.

Inter-University Center for Legal Studies (IUCLS)

Established in 1999 and located at the International Law Institute in Washington, D.C., IUCLS conducts seminars and research on legal aspects of terrorism and administers training for law students.

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