

Program Information:

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My name is Craig Kennedy if you weren't here last night and I want to welcome you to the Brussels Forum. If you weren't here last night, you missed a great opening. Both the opening session with Prime Minister Verhofstadt and then the night owl session with David Ignatius and Javier Solana, was really the best of what we're trying to do here at the Brussels Forum, lively, interactive and provocative.

We are trying some new things this year. One is that while this conference usually gets characterized as a US/European conference, in fact, it's probably more appropriate to call it a North American/European conference, we're very pleased with the Canadian participation we have this year and I think as you'll see with this next panel, it's a very important part of the trans-Atlantic Alliance.

Second thing is, we added lunches this year. Now, this gives a lot of opportunities for wonderful discussion in small settings, but it also means that we have a rather careful ballet at about 1:30 or 1:15 this afternoon. And we're going to need a lot of cooperation and coordination to move all of you to 15 different sites and get things rolling, but I think you're going to find it well worth the time.

We've got a lot to cover this morning in these three sessions. I'd ask you in your questions and comments to keep them brief. Our very skilled moderators have been instructed to cut you off if you ramble on too long and we hope for really, really interesting and stimulating morning. So with that I'm going to turn it over to Philip Stephens, Philip.

I think it's appropriate that the formal sessions of the forum are starting with Afghanistan because if you think about it, this is the existential challenge for the trans Atlantic Alliance in coming years.

We're going to have a discussion this morning about what to do in Afghanistan, but I think I'm going to take us a given that we have to win the Alliance. The Alliance has to win in Afghanistan. I don't think it's worth having an extensive debate about whether we are winning or how, to what extent it's essential. The starting point for this Alliance is the existential challenge.

We've got a wonderful panel this morning. I'm not going to introduce them. We've got some questions you'll have seen them as we came in about the challenge in Afghanistan, the sort of issues, the obstacles, and the problems that the Alliance has had in Afghanistan and we're going to deal with those.

I'm going to start by asking, putting the question to each of the panelists and they're going to speak for two or three minutes each and then very quickly, I hope, we're going to pull in people from, pull in you as the contributors to comment and if you like to challenge the views of some of our panel.

I'd ask, as Craig said, for everyone to keep their comments or questions relatively brief so we can get as many people as possible to contribute. I'm going to start with Secretary General of NATO, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. I think the question for him is really the clear or the obvious one, how are we going to win?

This seems to be a fight that I've heard some people say or many people say, and I agree, we can't afford to lose, but many others say we're not winning at Rigor (ph) a few months ago, you I know, and others had some issues about the strength of the Alliance in Afghanistan, have we sorted those problems out? Are we winning and how are we going to continue? Let me start by saying and trying to define the 'we', because as we are sitting here, the 'we' is first of all the Afghan people. They own their nation, NATO doesn't own Afghanistan, but the 'we' more in general in my opinion is the international community. NATO is there, NATO is playing a very important role, an essential role in Afghanistan.

Who are the, only by concerted effort of the whole International community can we win and winning for me. That means not in the first place winning a war, but winning Afghanistan with the Afghani people. So, that's point number one.

Point number two that we have, has NATO now done much better than we did a year ago? We had problems with trying to get the forces we need in Afghanistan. We have done much better; we are not entirely there yet.

We've done much better now, between regions (ph) as we speak, we have generated nine, ten thousand more forces. We are now well over 35,000, but I say again, NATO is an enabler in Afghanistan. NATO can create and should create a climate of security and stability. Example, as we speak there's fighting going on in the South. Let me commend their Canadian Foreign Minister, Peter MacKay for the tremendous job Canada is doing there with the number of our other allies, suffering casualties and fatalities.

What is essentially is that, when we clear areas in the south of Taliban and other spoilers, the Afghan Army can hold. So my final remark will be, if we do solve the number of problems, can we train and equip the Afghanistan National Army and the Afghanistan National Police quickly enough so that they can do in Afghanistan what any normal Army and any normal Police Force does? (B), can we, but that's not in NATO's hands, can we find a solution for the immensely growing narcotics problem. Point number three, can we, in a more mature political dialog with Pakistan, find a solution for the big problem we're still facing in the South by people coming in across the border, coming in and doing their dirty work and going back to Pakistan again.

In brief, the 'we' is the International Community, United Nations, European Union, G8 and yes, definitely, NATO but a more concerted effort of the International Community is necessary and I think we are doing not too badly as we speak, but we are not far from there yet.

So, we're getting better. NATO's an enabler, one among many. I'm sure in the session we'll deal with the coordination or lack of the coordination between some of the different institutions and agency in agencies in Afghanistan, but Richard Holbrooke that was, are you as optimistic as the Secretary

General?

First, Philip, I accept your stipulations. We are all here because we believe that Afghanistan is vital in it's own right and is also the ultimate test of NATO and I'm delighted that the Secretary General, who I think's done a tremendous job, is here with us.

I say that because I will say some things I don't think he can fully agree with, at least in public. A year ago when we sat here, Afghanistan was not getting much attention and I must say, with considerable personal annoyance that having just returned from Afghanistan at that time, I was criticized by several American officials for being pessimistic and defeatist, when in fact I was arguing the exact opposite, that it was vitally important.

And I agree with you that the last year has seen a focusing and a reemphasis of the resources and the importance of Afghanistan on the part of NATO and I commend you on your

leadership in that area and I share what you said about Canada, which has suffered the greatest casualty since the Korean War and is one of the very few NATO countries fighting without any National Caveats in Afghanistan.

And I hope we'll return to that issue later because I think National Caveats undermine the concept of an integrated force. But on your core question, it is impossible to say that in the race between this tortoise and this hare, we are making as much progress as we need to as fast as we need to. There is a massive waste of money in Afghanistan by the International Community, terrible this mis-coordination and an almost total waste of the money, of the billions of dollars, most of them American taxpayer dollars, being spent on the drug effort, while poppy seed production continues to increase.

And I say this with the greatest of regret and I look forward to your comments on this, I have heard increasingly in the last few weeks from Afghan friends of mine, both in Kabul and in the United States, that the government has simply lost its momentum and this is the factor that most troubles me. In the United States, President Karzai and Afghanistan are viewed as synonymous because he's such an articulate, eloquent, charismatic spokesman for his country. But Afghans I have met who have, who supported him universally are now talking about their disappointment with him, their concern that corruption is the cancer that will destroy the government, said that it's Afghanistan's own issue in the end to win or lose and therefore the effectiveness of this government in all the issues, education, drugs, women's issues, transparency and rule of law. All of these issues are going to be critical and I have and I can sense a tremendous deterioration in the standing of the government and I hope we'll hear more about that this morning. Fawzia Koofi, you're a member of Afghan parliament. Deputy Speaker, I think there are questions so far in that for you. Is the international community in NATO and the other organizations the EU giving Afghani's enough space to build a nation? And is the Afghan government, as Richard Holbrooke just suggested, losing momentum, losing its grip?

Thank you, I think it's very important to have an Afghan voice here in this forum. I will try to be an Afghan citizen, not an Afghan politician for the discussion, and also a woman who has been in Afghanistan throughout the violence of the 30 years conflict. I think we have had some great achievements in Afghanistan for the past five years. The five that we have the elected the most democratically elected President, the Parliament with a, 27 woman participation. The Constitution which is the most democratic constitution in the region is an achievement for the Afghan government and for our strategic partners in the country. However, what's important here in this process is not only the following of the process but also the effectiveness and the efficiency and being responsible and responsive to the people's need. Now, we are challenged with three main triangle challenges. We call it triangle challenges. The first thing is the security because without security you are not able to achieve anything. Security, unfortunately, has deteriorated for the past one year, especially in the border areas with neighboring countries.

The NATO and Afghan national army and Afghan national police are trying to put a force to establish security, but I think what's important here for NATO and for Afghan government to find the root causes for insecurity in Afghanistan. We believe the fight in Afghanistan is the fight against international terrorists, it's not only Afghan's being involved in this.

If anything happens, the whole world is responsible. The 911 attacks indicates that it's not only an issue of Afghanistan, so it doesn't only need to be enforced from Afghan side, also we need International Community support which the NATO, the U.S. and other strategic

partners and for that we need to identify the root causes first, in security.

We believe, as Afghan's, that the root causes for international terrorists and insecurity is not in Afghanistan, it's in the region, it's in the neighboring countries. And for our strategy partners it's very important to put pressure on the neighboring countries to identify the root causes it's not we cannot have two faces policy on the issue.

We believe in Afghanistan that most of our neighboring countries have a two faces policy toward the issues in Afghanistan. This is one, the second is the issue of us was indicated before, the issue of narcotics. It's also, again, it's not a problem within Afghanistan, it's a regional problem and we need regional cooperation on that.

Of course, since three four years, we've had an increase in the terms of poppy cultivation and trafficking but this year, with international community support and with putting some more pressure on border countries we have a reduction in terms of poppy cultivation.

Now, coming back to the question that we are lost, I don't think that we are lost, I think the fact that we have land and compact, which is developed by Afghan's people, the fact that we have capacity that we have developed the paper for ten years indicates that Afghans haven't lost.

Of course, there are some mistakes done during the process maybe more attention was paid to Iraq rather than to Afghanistan. At the beginning there was a lot of attention, more financial assistance, more military presence, but then for the past three years we forgot Afghanistan almost. That was not on the top of agenda.

Now that more attention is given to there, I hope that with the establishment of the Parliament as a democratic institution for oversight and for making the government responsible, we will find a track the system is the most responsible, the most democratic system. Maybe the person here and there we need to bring some changes, but the whole system is a responsive system.

Well thank you. Thank you very much. Two big among other problems, there are Pakistan, you were talking about neighbors and I assume we were talking about Pakistan and the drug problem and we're going to, I'm sure, come back to those in our discussion. Thank you. Peter Mackay, Canda's contribution to Afghanistan has been very, very significant. Sometimes I think, certainly on this side of the Atlantic, rather understated, as it were. There was talk back in the NATO summit in Riga of a two-tier alliance. The countries that were ready contributing up front, the countries that were putting in some troops but were not prepared to see those troops put in harm's way.

From your perspective, have we sold solved some of those problems? Do we have a single alliance now fighting in Afghanistan?

Well, I guess I'd answer it this way. We're getting there, and I think the alliance has to be indivisible. Canada's commitment has been significant. As was stated, we have taken the most casualties since the Korean conflict.

But Canada views our international responsibility very seriously, as we always have. And I don't think I need to remind Europeans of the contributions that we've made in previous conflicts.

We celebrated the 90th anniversary of Vimy Ridge, which some have described in our country's history as the defining moment when we became a nation. Since that time Canada has always been a promoter of democracy, a promoter of human rights. We are a conglomeration of peoples from all corners of the globe. And so therefore we see ourselves very much as participants in international affairs.

Now I want to come back to just the significance of having a female member of parliament

here from Afghanistan, a Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. That in of itself is evidence in Afghanistan.

Not only could women not vote and walk the streets safely just five years ago, but to have a female member of parliament here now participating fully, demonstrative of the change that has taken place in that country is remarkable, and I am really honored to be here with you today.

There's been a lot of talk of the various elements of falling back in Afghanistan, or where we're not perhaps making enough progress. Security is chief to our ability to accomplish all of the development that has to go on.

We're seeing millions of children in school. We're seeing micro-credit finance that's now being accessible by women predominantly. Roads infrastructure, schools, hospitals, medical clinics being built. Vaccinations for children, programs which will allow for vocational training, all of those benchmarks that are outlined in the London Compact are being achieved incrementally.

But if somebody says give us one good reason we should be in Afghanistan so girls can go to school and get an education so that they can participate fully in society. Those are reasons enough. And democracy comes in many forms, and it's often slow and ugly and incremental, but it is happening in Afghanistan.

And an unshakable commitment to Afghanistan and democracy and those principles is what Canadians believe in. And I truly believe that we are winning every day. Every day that we're making progress on those compact benchmarks, every day that we're increasing the security perimeter in places near the Pakistani border and other parts of the country, addressing the drug problem. It's going to take time.

But when you look at where we were five years ago, and the credit that is due to the alliance and the commitment and the leadership of people like Mr. de Hoop Scheffer and others who have looked ahead and said this is where we want to be. And we are now pulling together in greater numbers getting the commitment through meetings like we had just yesterday in Oslo from our NATO allies.

Burden-sharing is still a bit of an issue for us in Canada. We want to see further equipment in training and in the necessary troop commitments. But it's happening. And it's happening now at a pace that I believe is going to allow us ultimately to get to the place where Afghans will be able to walk on their own. And that's the winning formula.

That's where we want to be when Afghans can take control of their own borders, have their own social services, a government in place that's committed to the welfare of the people.

And Canada is very committed to achieving that goal.

Thank you. Well that's a more optimistic note in some respects. I'm not sure that everyone in the room will share that optimism. I think everyone shares the ambition.

But we've heard in four excellent contributions from our panel some of the problems that are clearly going to be faced; drugs, Pakistan, the question of whether NATO is acting as one, the question of coordination between the civilian and the infrastructure building in Afghanistan and the security dimension. So I'd like to bring people in now if as I say if people would like to make short comments or questions. And if they could identify themselves first and we'll start here.

My name is Josef Janning, Bertelsmann

Stiftung, I would like to ask Richard Holbrooke who has hinted at a point that he would very much like to make is about, what would you recommend to put in place in terms of integrated forces providing security.

You were hinting to the point that National Reserves and National Caveats by some NATO members were not helpful. What would be your advice? What would your kind of structure for a security regime be in Afghanistan?

If I may, I'm going to take three questions and then perhaps come back to one.

Got it, OK, Congressman Darrell Issa, from obviously from California. Maybe a provocative question that splits the panel here a little bit, NATO inherited everything that came before that.

So for a moment my question would give a pass on the problems of NATO's coming assuming the lead role, I think all facts considered, it's the first time every outside of Europe.

And there's a lot to be said that's positive even if we could talk about what hasn't happened.

But looking at the other side, you're a Member of Parliament, but you're a Member of Parliament in a democracy that we orchestrated, the United States. That mandated women's positions in addition to women's rights. Something that is not mandated in the United States, we don't have quotas that you have to elect so many people of a particular gender or religion.

And how do you feel that impacted this emerging democracy? And both for Ambassador Holbrooke and for yourself, if the Afghan people in the border regions are unwilling to assist either NATO or the United States and in fact are complicit in border crossings then what is Afghanistan going to do about that?

That's not a matter of dollars or military training. That's a matter of political will that Afghanistan clearly has shown it doesn't have. And in fairness Pakistan has also shown it doesn't fully have.

All right, I'm going to take one more from the back there and then I'll come back to you in a moment.

Ken Wollack, with the National Democratic Institute, the panelists have talked about building democratic structures in Afghanistan. What role do you see in this process for the warlords? Are they part of the problem or are they part of the solution? And what is the relationship of the international community with the warlords both in Kabul, and throughout the country?

OK I'll take each of the panel, and so we've got three challenging questions. I'll start with Richard Holbrooke.

First of all on National Caveats, I would defer to the Secretary General on detail, but it's an integrated military alliance. And when countries say we'll send you airplanes like the Germans but here are the rules. And the rules become micro managed by the INAUDIBLE. That puts unbearable additional strains on the alliance.

And since Afghanistan, everyone in this room agrees is a common cause of vital importance to all of us and it is the defining issue of NATO in the modern age. I think the Secretary General and his Commanders on the ground should be able to have all the troops as available as the Canadians.

And as the Canadian Foreign Secretary has just made clear, the inequality of this is causing an additional burden to Canada. Because Canada is taking a disproportionate casualties precisely because they're living up to the highest ideals of the alliance while other countries including I say with great regret Germany are putting too many restraints on their troops.

Now in the much, much bigger question that Congressman Issa raised, I want to briefly address it and then I think you should talk about it. First of all Afghanistan is the most extraordinary country I've ever been in and I've been in a lot.

It is compelling, it is mysterious, it has this ancient history. It appears divided and yet there's never been a separatist movement Dari, and Pashtun and Tajik and Hazara and all the other groups all feel that part of this nation that always resisted outside invaders from Alexander the Great on and we're now faced with this extraordinary problem.

We're trying to help Afghanistan build itself up and yet history suggests that time is not open-ended here in the country, plus there is the question of domestic pressures. Although, I

think so far, at least in the U.S., Afghanistan has been bipartisan issue. So, I feel of all the issues I've seen the most compelling to me personally is the issue of women.

I think the Bush administration deserves great praise for legislating this group. I know that you sat with Mrs. Bush at the State of the Union message two years ago in the balcony and the whole Congress rose and applauded you and it's very moving to see.

At the same time, when I was in Herat with my wife, we went to the burn center and the immolations, the self-immolations of young girls being told to burn themselves to death by their own families because they had disgraced the family. Because they had been seen alleging talking to a man in the market place in Herat and I mean all over the country, it happened to be Herat, was terrifying to see.

Giving women an opportunity, which is essential can only be done if the men are taught that what they do and the way they treat the women is unacceptable and I don't see enough of an effort and so there is it seems to me a backlash and the, who does the, the backlash is coming from conservative men.

I talked about the burka with the woman. Why do you, do you wear the burka and one woman, one of your colleagues, made a very eloquent statement to me. She understands that to the West the burka is a sign of an inferior composition for woman. She said you don't understand. I make my daughter wear the burka because it's her defense.

It's the only way she can go into the streets and the backlash is dangerous for the woman, it's dangerous for social progress that we all want and it also benefits the Taliban. So I think it's, I think this is perhaps the biggest social issue in this extraordinary country. On the drug issue, I just think we've wasted our money, Congressman.

We poured in billions of dollars. If we had spent that money, instead of on crop destruction, which only created more Taliban, and if we put that money into roads, which I think are the first item, President Bush has talked regularly about roads, but the road building program has not progressed. It would create jobs, it would give the farmers a chance to create alternate crops, and we ought to re-examine what we're doing in the drug program.

I know it's kind of fuzzy, Koofi to take a couple of those questions, then I'm going to take two or three more and come back to the Secretary General and the minister, so Fawzia. Thank you. Having healthy and bilateral relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan especially in the border area is in the interest of both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Let me speak about President Karzai's speech here, whenever he talks about Pakistan, he mentioned the statement. That for the past five years when the stability and securities in Afghanistan, in terms of business promotion. Pakistan was able to send, to export to Afghanistan with a high cost of thousands of millions.

So it's an interest of both countries. Now what is important here is in the border area, we always had this understanding that those border areas are traditionally tribal controlled area. Let me make it clear here that Pakistan, that traditional tribal structure is not there anymore. You -- its replaced with the parties.

You have (INAUDIBLE) party, you have other parties, so if the central government in Pakistan wishes to control, it is a political structure in the border areas that they can control it. When it comes to Afghanistan side, I think it's a fight between extremism and democracy. It's not a fight between which tribe and which region.

It's a fight between extremism and the new democracy in Afghanistan. (INAUDIBLE) giving any kind of privileges to terrorists and extremism means official recognition

of terrorists and that is what we don't want. Any kind of negotiation and discussion with Taliban Al Qaeda means official recognition and giving them an identity and giving them an identity means giving the terrorists an identity and that is not healthy and the situation of one, extremism promoted in the 30 years of conflict of the partisan to fight soviet invasion, by neighboring countries to fight soviet invasion.

Now mostly the bad consequence was on the woman. Horribly women were affected by victims of extremism during the past 30 years. Although Afghanistan culturally is not a country where it's extremism and violation against women. It's part of the history. No, it's not that way. Even during 1960s and 70s, we had women who were politically participating in Parliament. We have women who were Member of Parliament. We have a quota in constitution through which women participation is guaranteed, but let's be clear here.

Out of 27 percent women who should be in the parliament per quota, 17 women managed to get vote as open competition. In a very conservative area, () province, in my province I was the second in terms of the votes and gender seat, so that indicates the level of acceptance, the level of progress towards the woman is very good.

Now yes, we have fewer reports on violation, self-immolation, etcetera, etcetera, we look at it from two perspectives. One is that you have more transparency, more reports on violation and people are open to talk about it. We see it from that, that's why we have a lot of violation cases.

But also on the other hand, yes, because there is a gap between women who are living in big cities, who are living in the rural areas. More attention is paid to the big cities, and women who are living in rural areas somehow feel themselves deprived and detached from all this progress. So it's very much important that any strategy, any plan which is developed in afghanistan, we need to consider equal distribution of resources.

Two strong points that we must deal with the Taliban, give them credibility and we must push ahead with the equality agenda. Now I've got I think, one, two questions here, two there. This lady here first. This lady here.

Thank you very much. I'm Vesna Pusic, the Deputy Speaker, Parliament of Croatia. First something on the quotas. Congressman said that the women in the Afghan parliament were result of imposed quotas.

I don't think there's anything wrong with that. There was Scandinavians having proved the makeup of their parliaments by imposing quotas and now there's almost a 50/50. There isn't a 50/50, but let's say there's a 40/60, which is much better than anywhere else in the world. We in Croatia have imposed quotas for, or representations for minorities and its working. So I think, you know, in the beginning it's a shock but then people get used to these people like women or like representatives of other minorities being present in Parliament and actually making decisions and with time they decide to actually vote for them.

So I think it's not bad tactics, let's say. And I'd like to ask a question about the legitimacy issue that you've raised, because that from the Croatian and Balkan experience this is a very important thing.

Once the arrangement of the government starts losing its legitimacy, then the whole, you know, it loses its authority, it loses its capacity to act, it loses the strength to do something.

So is it Karzai's government as such, or is it the arrangement that you feel that Afghanistan is losing support and legitimacy among the people?