>>MICHAEL BARR: Good evening everybody. How’s everybody doing? For those of you who haven’t yet met me- I’m Michael Barr, I'm the Joan and Sanford while Dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy. It's a real pleasure to see you all here. Alumni, students, new friends of the school, old friends of the school.

I really look forward to this event every year. It's a great chance for our alums in DC and our students to get together. And I know that the main event for most of you is gonna happen at seven when we have a reception and a little wine in a lot of good company and a chance to network. But between now and then, I'm gonna say a little bit about how the Ford School is doing. I'm gonna introduce our wonderful speaker, who I am, just a moment I'm a little befuddled about this week. I've been in North Carolina and Florida I was on the road from Sunday until now, so I did something happen this week. Is anything in the news?

It's been a busy week at all, so I... So I'm glad you're all here. Let me just say with thanks to many of the alumni who are in the room tonight and others who participated in this trip, you've done a great job helping us put together a wonderful event, and of course under the leadership of Jennifer Niemeyer, and Peter "bashi Casey salons, clear Davidson.

You've put together a couple of jam pack days of career exploration and networking for about 60 of our Ford School master's students, on this annual trip which I think... Is that a record?

It's really very high. Okay, I'm getting the nod... It is in fact a record.

So thank you, Jennifer, and your team and all of our alums for all your hard work.

[ APPLAUSE ]

Before I introduced John and he talks seriously about substantive topics, I'm gonna just give you a few updates on what has been going on at the Ford School. Those of you who are here in time saw a wonderful slide show of some of the great events that have been happening at the Ford School. Many of those have been associated with John Charis, work at the new Wiser diplomacy center established last year, with a 10 million gift from ambassador in U of M region Ron Wiser and his wife Eileen wiser, and we formally launched the center in the fall and it's been... I just did, I think modestly a big hit.

You can ask the students later.

And really, thanks to John and Zuzana Wiley and the other folks working in the Weiser Diplomacy Center. We hosted an incredible series of visits this fall, we had Hillary Clinton, we had Conde Rice, Samantha Power, Steve Hadley, Steve Biegun, and many more. Susan Rice just came last month. We have in the following month, Denis McDonough and the month after that, former Secretary of State and Treasury Jim Baker will be coming to campus. So it's just a crazy extraordinary line-up of public talks, but even more importantly, each of these speakers has been incredibly generous with their time and spent time behind the scenes with our faculty and more importantly with our students so talking to them about their careers and their advice. The Weiser Diplomacy Center is really in many ways. Just getting started at John and our colleagues are recruiting for professors of practice and international diplomacy. They're hosting policy simulations.

And again, I think more importantly establishing generous new fellowships and internships, opportunities for our students, as well as the chance for our students to develop their own ideas for what they wanna do in the world and get funding from the Weiser Diplomacy Center to go out and do them. From doing human rights work in Guatemala, to analyzing how to reduce civilian casualties in Afghanistan. Really all over the world and all different kinds of projects and we're able to do that because of the Weiser Diplomacy Center. And I think it's something I'm very proud of, and I hope that all of you is alumni and friends at school are very proud of. In other exciting news, we had our first cohort of our new Masters of Public Affairs, students arrive on campus. These are advanced students further along in their career. Some of them in the room today, joining for this great trip. And I encourage all of our alumni to connect with them as well, as with our MPPs during the reception. They're really an accomplished and inspiring group and we're really excited to see what they're gonna be doing at the Ford School and beyond. One faculty highlight from this last year, came in the form of Sue Dynarski being named one of nine of the inaugural university professors for - recognized for their Distinguished Careers and contributions to diversity and social transformation.

So Sue is one of the nine first professors at the University of Michigan recognized for her work and as many of you know, Sue is best known for her work. reducing inequality and inequity in higher education, and I think this recognition is gonna really allow her to continue that work.

We've also had other donors reengage with the Ford School to great positive effect Sandy and Joan Weill, who are very important in founding Weill Hall and in naming the Deanship of the Ford School, have re-engaged with Ford and recently this fall gave us a 5 million dollar gift.

Half of that gift is going to deepen our relationship at the Ford School with working with high school students in Detroit, and in surrounding communities helping them with career readiness, and advancement in career and technical education, as well as a college preparation.

And then half the gift is going to support the Ford School's contribution to the rack of married awards. This is one of our premier scholarships that helps us support our Ford School graduate students, and I'm really grateful for them for that.

We had a lot of fun at our alumni reunion. How many of you were able to make it to the alumni reunion?

Alright, we had a handful of people, I think they had fun. They're not in their heads, they had fun. I had fun at the reunion. We had a couple hundred alumni come back to Ann Arbor for the celebration which marked three separate anniversaries, 10 years since our first BA students graduated 20 years since we were named for President Ford and 50 years since our very first Master of Public Policy students, entered the then Institute of Public Policy Studies.

Let me also say this year we're putting a lot of effort into a new leadership initiative, at the Ford School that I'm really excited about. Jennifer Niemeyer, and Associate Dean, Paula Lantz are taking the lead together in shaping this initiative, at the Ford School. We're building a capacity to equip our graduates with the skills they need, obviously, not only analytical skills, but also communication and leadership skills. I needed to be the best in their careers to lead institutions, and communities their teams all across the country.

When Hillary Clinton came to visit in the fall, she spent an hour on a closed or a group with our Ford School students, a packed discussion in which she was really focused on leadership being interviewed by Associate Dean, Paula Lantz, and she really shared a lifetime of leadership lessons. I will not repeat verbatim what Sue Dynarski’s daughter asked her, but those of you wanna go back and ask what she said was really quite fun. Not words I can say.

Speaking of leaders on the Ford School remains a destination for some of our countries great policy makers through our Towsley Foundation in public policy program. Javed Ali, who I think will be here later tonight, former NSC and FBI staffers been teaching counter-terrorism and cyber security policy for us and will return next year to do the same. One of those is a joint class with the College of Engineering, which has been a really great, fun experience for us, taught up on North Campus a joint College of Engineering and Ford School students. And a joint teaching between Javed and a College of Engineering professor, we have other policy Towsley Policymakers in Residence coming.

We're here, financial-tech expert Adrienne Harri,s Phillis Melos who's a senior fellow at the Kresge Foundation and the healthcare field, Sandy Levin former Congressman. Levin has joined our faculty as a professor of practice, and a Towsley policymaker in residence and has been mentoring and teaching in our school. Broderick Johnson, President Obama's Cabinet Secretary is coming to teach a course on mass incarceration in the fall that I'm very excited about. And Ken Lieberthal, some of you may know your alumni in the crowd is a former Michigan a faculty member and a member of the National Security Council, will be coming back in the fall to teach a course on U.S.. Chinese relations, a reasonably important topic in today's environment. Other news from Ann Arbor, we're launching a new minor in public policy- how about that? So we have 10 years, we've had the A major and we've decided to add a minor in Public Policy, getting a broader range of - here's Javed walking in the back now. Javed, you've been recently acknowledged. Thank you for being here. BA Minor will let us reach more students, more undergraduate students on campus, and I'm really excited about that.

We've got a new exciting time plan for this Fall, hosting the presidential debates. So the University of missing was chosen by the Commission on Presidential Debates, to be the second of three presidential date debates being held this year, October 15th, 2020, the Ford School has been taking a lead on organizing this debate campus-wide John Carey and the wiser diplomacy Center are gonna be taking a lead on an aspect of that involving a collaboration with the Commission on Presidential Debates, and the National Democratic Institute, bringing 80 leaders from around the world who are election experts democracy experts debate experts to share their own ideas with each other and with us, with our community. For the whole week of the debate. They're gonna be 3000, or so reporters on campus for about a week, opportunities for thousands of student volunteers to get engaged in the process, and we're doing a whole theme semester of programming on democracy and debate. Again, not just at the Ford School, but university-wide. So I think it would be great learning opportunity for everybody.

And we just decided last week the Dean of LSA and the Dean of School of Information and I, that we're gonna do a joint class across the three schools called “discerning truth” which is a topic that I think is in heavy demand right now.

So let me just close my welcome remarks with a message. In particular to our alumni, we're grateful for all the ways that you engage in the school you help us recruit students. Dozens of you made calls to admitted students last spring, making a personal connection and encouraging them to choose the Ford School. And it really helps. It really makes a difference to attracting the best and the brightest students to come to the University of Michigan.

You also hire our students. Jennifer, always admonishes me not to say that she places students anywhere she doesn't, but all of you alumni hire our students into wonderful jobs and I'm deeply grateful for you taking the time and attention to talk with our students to give them advice on and to hire them.

Many of you have served or do serve on our alumni board and you share your advice, and connections when you come back to Ann Arbor, if you are not doing any of those things yet, go see Jennifer after this, during the reception and sign yourself up because we really need you and it's a great service to the school.

If you have other ways that you want to engage that I haven't listed please feel free to reach out to Jennifer or to Elizabeth or to the team. Let me focus on one particular way that I'd like to ask you to help. And that's through financial contributions now I know not everybody is in the same place being able to contribute financially to the school, and I don't have any expectation that all of our alumni will give in anything like equal amounts, but I would really appreciate it if every alumni and all of you in the room who are alums and those of you who are students can get started. Now, any amount, any amount is appreciated. If you wanna make a 5, contribution as a student to get in the habit of contributing back to the Ford School, we deeply appreciate it and right now we're midway through a major effort to build our alumni giving network, and we have a generous match on the table from some of our alumni. So our goal is to reach 500 alumni, donors, again, making gifts of any size. And once we hit that 500 mark, we'll unlock $50,000 in additional contributions to the school.

And right now we're a little bit past halfway so more than 250 alums have contributed we've unlocked the first $25,000 an additional matching funds. And I would love it if we could hit that second target both because it provides more resources at the school and because it's an indication of the connection that you have to our community. Those of you who are in the back, feel free their seats up front, and I won't think it's rude. Just have a seat feel comfortable. And so it would mean a lot to me if we could even try and get closer to that number tonight, if you want to make a contribution tonight, you can find Elizabeth, or really any other staffer and they'll tell you how. There are multiple ways you can give right now, we have a laptop set up if you wanna do it online, right now, we have paper forms. You could make your gift from your seat on your phone, while I'm talking. Not doing John’s talk, but during my talk, you can give right now. And remember, this gift is about participation. It's not about the amount. So, alumni gifts of any amount would really be very much appreciated.

So now to the main event. So tonight we're really fortunate to be joined by Professor John Ciorciari. One of the Ford School’s, I think, very best teachers, scholars, and leaders, he's an associate professor of Public Policy, he's the faculty director of the International Policy Center and the Weiser Diplomacy Center, he teaches courses on politics, political institutions post-conflict law, and transition. John has an undergraduate and a law degree from Harvard, a Master's degree and PhD and international relations from the University of Oxford. As I mention in connection with a presidential debate this fall, John and the Ford School team will be hosting an NDI symposium on democracy around the world.

I think John is really one of the real leaders at the Ford School, always bringing that extra ounce of effort to the table to help not only in his own work, but community-wide to make the Ford School, a stronger, better, more vibrant and exciting place. And those of you her students and alumni who have worked with John know, that he is always there for his students, and so I'm deeply grateful to John and please join me in welcoming into the podium.

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> JOHN CIORCIARI: Thank you- it's wonderful to see so many of you whom I haven't seen for years and everything. Michael said about how much we appreciate the alumni contributions to this school. I'd like to echo. I'm gonna talk about a path forward in Afghanistan. There we go.

It's not the most upbeat topic, I could have chosen for your reunion address, but it's very important and that's the reason why as part of our development of programming around the wiser diplomacy center job at... And I worked with Phil Potter, a former Ford School professor now, at UVA and Captain Ryan van, we who's an excellent Ford School and MPP candidate now, to put together a forum on Defense and diplomacy, in Afghanistan a few months ago here in Washington.

And a lot of the thoughts that I'm gonna share a draw from that and from a few pieces that job at Ad I published with Phil and Ryan after the forum.

There's a mood right now, a frustration. distrust exhaustion with Afghanistan many Americans, and many of its political leaders wanna pull the plug on what's been a long and difficult operation and we started with a little turn toward history, and we've seen this pattern before we saw it in the mid-1970s, the iconic shot of the last helicopter flying away from Saigon and the quick collapse of the US-backed governments in Vietnam and Cambodia, when the US support for those administrations in 1975 and the fear that we have about what's happening surrounding Afghanistan now, is that developments in that country could look a lot like what happened next door to Vietnam in Cambodia, when in April 17th of 1975, Kerr revolutionary streamed into the capital city and exacted a very harrowing retribution on their civil war adversaries. And so, the subject of my talk is going to be not so much the question of whether the United States should be in the mode of trying to phase out of Afghanistan, or not, but how that transition can be conducted responsibly to minimize the risk of this type of configuration.

So I'll say a few brief things about how we got there. For those of you who aren't as familiar with the history of Afghanistan a few comments on the dangers of what job and I have referred to as a precipitous withdrawal meaning a very quick cessation of military and economic support, and then a few possible paths forward.

Most of you who aren't familiar with the region may not know that Afghanistan was actually an oasis of peace, a place where people traveled for exotic tourism in the 60s and 70s where traditional values co-existed on the streets of Cobb with Western forms of modernity, and you may also know that in the 1970s, a communist regime took over in that country and when it began to waver. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 to prop it up the presence of atheistic, Communist troops in a country that is predominantly comprised of develop Muslims. A mix of reaction some of which were violent resistance, most notably in the form of the Mojave who organized around the mountainous areas, on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and was a decade-long resistance to the Soviets in a lot of ways. This was the sort of the cradle for the modern term movements that we see disseminating around the world and also a cradle for some of the groups, that later would become the Taliban, the US government, the Saudis, the Pakistanis, and others supported them. Who you deem to bleed the soviets in the 1980s as part of the second Cold War, but at the end of that war, when the Soviet tanks turned around and left and defeat the United States and its partners dumped Afghanistan unceremoniously, and I left a vacuum that several different warring factions, including what later became known as parties to the Northern Alliance, as well as radical "soest groups associated with what would later be the Taliban, fought to fill that vacuum. This is cobble in the mid-1990s.

And it was in that context in the civil war that the Taliban Rose under the shadowy leadership of Mule Omar. Omar and his colleagues presented the Taliban as a way to restore order and reassert traditional values in the country that had been utterly torn apart. You all know what happened when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan there were tremendous human rights abuses suppression of women's liberties in particular and also a hosting of "Alida and subsequently a refusal to assist the United States in locating or capturing or some Bin Laden after 911, and so the US launched Operation Enduring Freedom in the fall of 2001. in the background of this photo, you see the plumes from the bombs falling from us... 52, this is the battle of Tora Bora in December of 2001, an iconic photo of the battle in which Osama Bin Laden reportedly slipped through the grasp of the coalition forces across the border into Pakistan, where he would remain for years thereafter.

The geography of the conflict help us understand why it's been so difficult for the US and coalition partners to be effective on the battlefield, but also, why it's so challenging politically. The green area is the area occupied primarily by ethnic Pashtuns, that's the ethnic community from which the Taliban grew. And other shades red for "Hazara yellow for use brown protege represent the other major ethnic factions in Afghanistan, rather ups in Afghanistan.

Notice that red line dividing Afghanistan, Pakistan, the so-called Durand line negotiated in 1892, between the Amir of Afghanistan and a diplomat from British India through the heartland of the costume community and therefore the post, the Taliban warriors have been able to use areas, in Pakistan throughout the conflict as a way to shield themselves from for our life forces.

But you also notice how many other countries in Central Asia, the Middle East, and even South as are implicated in this by their proximity to Afghanistan and by the fact that they have co-ethnics living on either side of the border. We'll come back to that in the early phases of the conflict. There was a sense that, although the US entered Afghanistan saying it wasn't going to engage an expansive nation-building it quickly came to the view that that was a necessity that if the coalition was gonna be successful in its goals that would have to engage in Strengthening Institutions, setting up democratic structures, rebuilding the economy, promoting human and women's right and another right and I... This was emblematic of the high point in that effort, has dropping his envelope into the ballot box in 2004 when he was elected President, I worked down the street at the Treasury Department at that time, and covered Afghanistan and there was a sense of that period that things were headed in a largely positive direction. The government was controlling more territory, the Taliban seemed to be a fading at least to some extent, as a military and political force inside of Afghanistan.

But as you all know, the slag got harder over the years.

A drum beat of suicide bombings like this and other attacks, increased number of casualties and to date, there have been more than 240 US service personnel killed in the 18-year war more than a 1000 coalition partners about 160000 Afghans including 43000 civilians have died during the grueling 18-year conflict and it's taken its toll.

There are also, of course, been mounting costs by most reasonable estimates the US spent over a trillion dollars on the conflict in Afghanistan and the number grows further. If we think about the long-term cost of things like veterans care that will follow about 10. years ago, the Congress set up a Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction. John SOCA who's pictured here, to report on the use of US reconstruction assistance because of mounting concerns of corruption mismanagement and misuse. And as you know, if you've been following the news and the recent released by the Washington Post of the so-called Afghanistan papers there's plenty of evidence that significant shares of those Trillion Dollars have in fact been either poorly used or the outcomes of projects have been reported back as being more positive than they were in fact... And it has contributed to the sense that many Americans are simply ready to pull the plug.

The President has said more or less that that, is what he wishes to do here he is in Thanksgiving, visiting American troops in Cobble, you see, President, Gannet his right from where you're sitting and the President has said when he was campaigning, has said... Repeat de-thru administration, he has got a goal of bringing the troops home, he repeated that in the State of the Union, a few days ago, as you've heard.

And if you've been listening to what the Democrats are saying, and foreign policy, a portions of the debates on the campaign trail, there's a fair amount of support for the same... For the same course of action within the Democratic Party. There's also support for it within the general public or more than half of Americans now oppose a prolonged continued US presence in Afghanistan.

So all of the wins are pushing in that direction, but it's very dangerous for the United States to withdraw quickly. When Job at, I and others talked about this at the forum... We identified at least three core interests at the United States in Afghanistan. One is macro stability within the country and in the surrounding region remember that there are a lot of powder keg surrounding Afghanistan whether it's neuron India-Pakistan Western China Central Asia. So one of the goals is stability and although the US effort in Afghanistan has certainly not been fully successful, in stabilizing Afghanistan, one can make a reasonable case that it's avoided some of the worst possible deterioration of security in the country.

Number two is to its safe haven Afghanistan has become a very difficult place for Isla and their affiliates to do business. If the US pulls out quickly that will change doesn't necessarily mean that "tagus will successfully reassert themselves but it certainly is a high possibility. And thirdly, right, there are a lot of brave Americans, who have sacrificed parts of their lives or their lives to promote democracy, and rights and development in Afghanistan with all the problems that that's encountered. It's important to remember that there are also many, many Afghans who have stood shoulder to shoulder with them in defense of things like women's rights and democracy and free speech those communities are in grave danger if the United States withdraws quickly from Afghanistan several months ago, the US government stopped reporting on areas of the country. They wonder Taliban control or government control and there are some legitimate reasons for that. It's very difficult to calculate exactly what counts is it. Who controls it by day or night, is it who controls the town or the surrounding countryside? But by most reasonable estimates by military analysts, the government only controls a fraction of the district and an awful lot that are contested. There's a real possibility that this could go swiftly in a negative direction if the US were not there to support Afghan forces.

So what are some paths forward?

Here's the Macola the African-American diplomat, who's leading the negotiations in Doha and he's trying to negotiate a deal with the Taliban. And coming back to another thing that Joe and I have discussed the deal needs to have a number of features for it to be workable from a US and Afghan government perspective. It needs to have a durable Cease Fire in place. It needs to involve some kind of political power sharing, it probably will necessitate some form of constitutional reform to reflect the demands of the Taliban for changes to what is a highly progressive in a constitution in some respects it will certainly require renunciation of terror links by the Taliban and it'll require a really difficult process of Security Sector Reform trying to create an integrated national security force out of erstwhile adversaries. All of this is a really, really tall order, and they all depend on the Afghan government, which right now is dead, locked in an electoral dispute between the incumbent president gone, and his his friend of me a dual-who is alternately cooperated with and contested with him for political power for many years. It's difficult to know exactly who in going forward is going to be speaking for the Afghan government, but it's vital that they have a voice. Because as you heard me going through what a peace deal would need to include most of that is not a matter of Americans in the Taliban as a settlement between the Afghan parties.

Of course, a deal also depends on the Taliban being willing to engage in some kind of pluralistic political process. Here's the Taliban leader labor and there's really no indication that I've seen no reason to believe that the Taliban are in fact committed to sharing power to engaging a democratic process. One indication of that is, the Taliban insistence that the United States completed troop withdrawal, before they commence talks with the Afghan government.

Okay, for all these reasons, there's probably not going to be a good deal on the table soon. And in that sense, the fact that we're entering a campaign season in the US a period when it's harder to make compromises on things like this might be a blessing in disguise, it might actually provide a sort of a forced-elongation of the process, which is all explain, I think is necessary for this transition to occur, responsibly. It's a real problem that the US government has signaled repeatedly to the Taliban that it intends to withdraw forces with her without a deal.

The US government has said that in different forums in the recent past, imagine the kind of implications that has for bargaining leverage since in fact that's the main lever that the US has as its disposal.

So what needs to happen during this process of negotiations which inevitably are going to be very difficult one is to come up with a manner of sustained or sustainable military engagement. At its peak, the US had 100-000 troops and coalition partners had about 70 or 90000 in Afghanistan. Now, the US is down to 12-000, and plans to go to eight and a half.

Present gone says that that's okay, that Afghanistan can work with that. And the motivation for that is quite clear. He's trying to make this cost on the US bearable so that the US doesn't withdraw more, drastically or cut a hasty deal with the Taliban that sells out the government.

Other needle allies are concerned.

They're wondering whether they too should be drawing down forces and in particular, both the Afghan government and the NATO partners are concerned not so much about the numbers of US troops but the nature of US support for military operations, things like medical evacuation teams transport aircraft maintenance troops, intelligence satellite imagery and so forth, and of course, air power, all of those things, the US provides are vital to the Afghan forces and coalition partners to be able to fight by the way, the Afghan Army also needs the Americans money. It's budget every year is 5 billion, that's twice the country's annual revenue.

The ANA, the Afghan National Army has about 180-000 troops on the books. But in practice, in terms of who's fielded its considerably smaller and the Pentagon recently released a report saying that that the attrition is outpacing recruitment. 50000 can soldiers have been killed, since 2014, and a good number of additional troops have retired or left their posts. And recruitment has been tough for all of these reasons. Experts doubt that the Afghan security forces would last very long, in a fight with the Taliban which has similar numbers but which has a higher degree of cohesion and in some respects, fighting capacity.

So the US needs to be there is support Afghanistan in a way that sustainable militarily ideally with a shrinking footprint over time that focus is almost exclusively on training support functions and counterterrorism. But a presence nonetheless, if this is a deal breaker in terms of a peace agreement with the Taliban Soviet development assistance Afghanistan in the foreseeable future, is going to be heavily, heavily reliant on foreign assistance. It's annual budget is 11 billion its annual revenues or two-and-a-half billion corruption is a huge problem. And so there's no getting around the fact this is gonna be frustrating and difficult to provide continued reconstruction assistance. There's a good reason why folks on Capital Hill are exasperated about the use of reconstruction assistance and so of course there need to be re-doubled efforts to monitor assistance to cut off agencies or projects where there's clear evidence of waste to try to force adjustment by moving money away from some loaded sectors of the government toward other sectors that are more I needed resources to channel funds toward NGOS is a way of policing the government, rather than to fund a government agencies that are the officials of which are lining their pockets. But despite all the frustration, the US can't cut off Afghanistan entirely there also needs to be an effort to... Because the government would quickly collapse.

There also needs to be an effort to enfranchised communities in the south and east of the country, where the Taliban are strong, and that's why I have an image of this pipeline. So-called "Tapi pipeline, the Turkmenistan Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, pipeline that is an unlikely grouping of countries to be engaged in a joint development project, but everybody is interested in trying to get the immense reserves of natural gas from Turkmenistan to energy needy cities in South Asia, including in India and projects like this. Hold out at least the prospect of aligning incentives around stability in Taliban controlled areas, none of those four governments involves once including Pakistan which is often properly regarded as the Taliban supporter. In some respects, none of them wants to see this thing blown up, by Taliban units, none of them wants to see more generally, the kind of insecurity that would make this kind of project impossible to pursue in the future.

And so what it means is, this isn't a photo of America's best friends in foreign policy, but it is a group of people whom the United States is going to have to figure out how to work with pragmatically because if we go back to a map of Afghanistan and we look at the situation that it occupies geographically, we can try to identify some common interest that these players may have with the United States.

Eran is concerned about the Taliban, resurgence and radical SUNY extremism. It's also concerned about the drug flow through heat and other cities in Western Afghanistan Turkmenistan and the other central Asian states are concerned about the treatment of their co-ethnics in Afghanistan. They're also concerned about things like those energy projects and they're concerned about general stability in the region. China is concerned about the implications of extremism for its rest of western provinces and it's also concerned about the implications of instability in Afghanistan. For its belt. And road project and its East-West Corridor Pakistan traditionally has looked at the Taliban as a more or less tolerable force in Afghanistan because it provides strategic depth is India, but that logic doesn't work, if there's a war in Afghanistan that is demanding Pakistan's attention and that is also causing flare-ups between Pakistani Taliban and the government, the Pakistani government wants to focus on its larger historical adversary of India and strategic terms and therefore also has an incentive to promote some degree of stability, in Afghanistan, naturally India is also interested in stability for a variety of reasons in Afghanistan, and so there's no concert of powers that's going to happen here, but there are ways to think about convergent interests and to be able to try to build pillars that support the conditions for peace in Afghanistan so that the United States can be less central, as support for Afghan security and development going forward.

One example is that the World Bank issued a recent report on Afghanistan and we noticed the word China wasn't in it. That's a problem that needs to change. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, is exactly the kind of vehicle that "US officials should be trying to link to in an Afghan context, not only because it mobilizes resources and because it helps to develop an interest on the part of China and others to promote Afghan stability, but because multilateral institutions provide a much easier on your amp. For the engagement of India for example, normally a bilateral engagement with India, causes all kinds of stress in the relations between Washington and Islamabad doing these things through multilateral vehicles can be a way to get around that. And so, linking to the BRI and the AIB... Is one area we identified as a possible promise and more generally, there's a broader shift needed in the foreign policy orientation toward Afghanistan.

The President has made it clear over the last few years that his preference is to deal transactional and bilaterally and handling a lot of sensitive diplomatic issues.

This is not, I can't think of a way that this approach is going to facilitate a smooth and responsible transition in Afghanistan. It is not possible to cut a deal with the Taliban by laterally that would lead to a sustainable peace in Afghanistan nor is it possible to deal bilaterally with any single partner on its periphery, to develop the kind of balance of influence that could help to sustain peace in the country.

This is going to require a different kind of approach, and so that they're a pillar supporting Afghan piece. The last thing I'll say before we take your questions is that it's a good example of something. A number of our visitors have told us, who've come to the diplomacy Center in the last year.

The diplomacy isn't so much, at least in many cases, it's not so much about resolving problems as managing them, or another way of putting this is diplomats to work, that's every bit as important when they help mitigate downside risks, as the, when they appear before when they appear to receive an award for having signed a peace deal. In this case, in Afghanistan, it's unlikely that any approach, including the one I just outlined is gonna yield near-term shining successes, but there's still a tremendous difference between the best realistic outcome and the worst. And so with that, thanks for attention, I'd love to hear your comments and questions in John good to in a long time. So you started the beginning, talking about the Vietnam War and the draw and the US pull out of Vietnam, the way you described the shrinking US footprint being part of the being part of the plan for turning things back over the Afghans to Afghanistan and building some kind of sustainable framework.

How do you avoid creating a sort, I think for lack of a better term, like a reverse in BAN foo where you... You have some stake in the country, and you get drawn back in because suddenly the Taliban or some other force ends up targeting us? Personnel or US groups. And then you wind up re-joining a conflict that you were just in the process out of... And how do you also avoid losing your bargaining position? Because if you've already said that you're going to draw down troops you've given up some semblance how do you, I guess, how you're not, you're willing to come back without actually coming back.

Good question, a very, very good question.

So, I'll take the second one first. I think that, in speaking with the Taliban about the drop withdraw has to be based on conditions not on dates. Now that does set up the possibility, and I know that some people in the room are probably thinking, "But doesn't that lend itself to just an open-ended commitment that we don't want to make?

There's no way around that risk if you want negotiating leverage with the Taliban, it has to be a conditional withdrawal, it cannot be a set time table, because the Taliban will wait it out.

The tougher of the two questions in my view, is the question about how does the United States have a limited security role in the country and a relatively light footprint that is stable in the sense that it doesn't require large scale another surge for example, on American detect, nobody wants to see additional US or allied service personnel die in this effort, nobody wants to see in an Afghans. Did either of those could be a cause for reintroducing more forces?

That's more of a game between the United States military, and the Afghan security forces to try to... Obviously, training is important, the more that the Afghan National Army is able to handle the less likely it is that there will be this perceived need to re-engage large scale, but I also think it's important for this to be politically sustainable. We have to take political feasibility into account.

The American public is not interested in 100-000 boots on the ground in the foreseeable future, and Afghanistan.

The nature of the mission, the objectives have to be the type that are commensurate with the level of commitment that the US is willing to have.Counter-terror is probably at the core of that and protection of what are perceived to be vital interests in populations in the country, would be another more generally. Would there have to be some tolerance of some insecurity in outlying areas of the country? The answer would be yes, because I don't think that with 8500 or 4000 or 2000 troops, in the country that the United States can exclude that possibility.

Thank you, John, that was terrific. I work with a lot of retired. Four star, three-star generals who would agree with exactly the direction you're talking about who really believe in this is about mitigating a much more serious national security issue for us and that we have to invest in this way I also work though, also with a lot of international development groups that are very frustrated that the storyline is all about what isn't working and that there is also not getting out in the news about some of the real successes that have had about the health of the citizens of Afghanistan and the life expectancy.

And can you talk about what you have seen in terms of some of the positive impact of America engagement and of game Afghanistan over that 18 year period that never that story line never really gets told. And what happens is that there isn't a much of an appetite for America to stay engaged, but what happens also on that? And if we disengage... Yeah, I think it's a district-by-district story to some extent in areas of Afghanistan. If I were to go back to the map, areas that that are shaded white or certain of the areas that are great that are contested, but particularly in this part of the country if we were to look at health education childhood mortality particularly girls access to education and employment, it has gone up significantly. If we were to look at local infrastructure so the people can bring their food to market to sell, it's improved significantly, even if we look at the issue of corruption itself. There's a joint commission an Anti-Corruption Commission, called the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee in Afghanistan that has been unable to tackle the biggest fish, but has brought hundreds of written hundreds of reports that have resulted in disciplinary action against mid-level and lower-level officials. So even in the area, that is a subject of so much frustration. Their pockets of progress, there are also or micro-economies in Afghanistan that have done quite well but all the averages nationwide are dragged down by what's going on in these spaces where there is very little capacity to be able to act.

One of the biggest frustrations and this goes back to the time when I worked at the Treasury is how does one think about as an American how does one think about trying to do development projects here? There was an experiment with provincial reconstruction teams for a number of years where development experts would go with the military to try to have an envelope of security, so they could create the conditions that I was describing in this part of the map and in a few cases, produce decent projects, but it was more challenging, in other cases there simply wasn't a local counterpart to work with.

Why I mentioned the downside, even though you asked about, the positive examples, is that I think it illustrates the argument that I've been making that when security conditions are reasonably good there are a lot of success stories to talk about in development, but when security conditions are very, very poor in the country, there's almost no uptake of development and reconstruction assistance to one reason why it's essential if in other words, one cannot say as the next step in our engage with Afghanistan. Let's get out of the business of Security, and just do development won't work, but if the country has areas that remain reasonably secure, then as you say, health outcomes Education Local Economies, infrastructure, there's plenty of good things to write home about.

>> PARTICIPANT: Hi I’m Pick Miller and ‘72, and I've had some international experience in a Asia her decade anyway, and I've been to places like Peshawar, Quetta and talk to the regional parliaments and pressed by how little law there was and how little respect for the law that did exist there was. But respect for law is the only way that some of this I think is resolvable. And is it possible to have a different legal structure in different parts of Afghanistan?

>> JOHN CIORCIARI: It's- I would say that right now in a de facto sense that there are different formally or through a through local traditional structures rather than the state. It's an interesting question to think about. Javed and I raised is, with a guy named Hammon who was a visiting scholar an Afghan American who came to the University of Michigan Law School who's an expert in the topic about Islamic law and Afghanistan. And we talked a little bit about what would it look like to have a power sharing arrangement or constitutional reform in Afghanistan?

And one possibility is that there would be some devolution to localities to be able to orient their -organize their legal system somewhat distinctly.

That's happened in other countries. Of course, you have the example in the region that you mentioned, in Indonesia with a... There was a discussion about the attendees having a Sharia law components that the central government recognized. It's conceivable that that could be one part of a package in Afghanistan. I think that the bottom line for the Afghan government and its international partners should be the respect for certain basic human rights, and obviously there's disagreement on exactly where the contours of that line, go but it is a possibility and I think that if one were to imagine it talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government going Well, I'm quite certain that there would be questions raised about the possibility of local variation in the legal system.

Okay, maybe just one more.

>> PARTICIPANT: I am Claudia Munoz MPP ’09 - and I've worked in the office of the Secretary of Defense with mostly security cooperation, but I've also supported the Afghanistan office mostly focused on the train, advisees is mission that you had mentioned and training advisors, to work in Afghanistan, and you had mentioned that the first the CGR reports that there have been many, many car reports that have shown that today's Afghanistan has been extremely wasteful, many of the TAA trained advisees investments were without long-term planning, the advisors weren't appropriately trained, it was extremely wasteful. So how do you... What would you recommend that could be done in Afghanistan to ensure that in the future, TAA efforts are more effective and that they're not as wasteful. Because in the past they have been extremely.

>> JOHN CIORCIARI: I hope that the transparency, the CGR reports and so forth, helps at least within the United States to within the Beltway, to have greater accountability about where the money is going and greater responsiveness. It's a hard question to answer. There will be forces on the other side that have very different incentives on how to use money and how to protect themselves and their families. This is not an easily soluble problem at all. One thing that has been done in the recent past is to try to focus assistance on units that seem to be performing well, and where there is for a mix of reasons, and a genuine interest in carrying out a public service mission, rather than rather than the engaging in corruption.

So some amount of selectivity, some amount of transparency and ultimately I think in the longer term, an effort to move toward a model of security provision in Afghanistan that is more fiscally sustainable.

When I was at Treasury and even as early as 2004, we were doing reports in the National Security Council process, about fiscal sustainability. You can't give somebody who's got revenues of 25 billion a year a military that cost 5 billion a year.

And so there needs to be a rationalization in terms of the kinds of training the kinds of support if the training and the support of are big dollar type approaches than the incentives to engage in corruption goes up, and I think that there needs to be serious reflection put in to a more sustainable training model for Afghanistan. It's not gonna be an army that looks like ours, but hopefully it'll be an army that looks like a good version of what's possible and sustainable and Afghanistan.

[ APPLAUSE ]

>> JOHN CIORCIARI: Thank you.