



## *South Asia Regional Security Project*

# **The Henry L. Stimson Center Asian Security Luncheon Series**

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## *Implications of the Afghan Crisis on South Asia:II*

**Dr. C. Raja Mohan  
Commodore Uday Bhaskar**

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*On October 17, Dr. C. Raja Mohan, Strategic Affairs Editor, The Hindu, and Commodore Uday Bhaskar, Deputy Director, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, gave the second presentation in a Stimson Center discussion series entitled, "Implications of the Afghan Crisis on South Asia." Below is an edited transcript of their opening comments and the question and answer session that followed.*

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**Michael Krepon:** ... We are all here for the same purpose, and that is to learn from folks who are living and breathing the air of South Asia, to get their sense of where this on going story is heading. The purpose of this series of meetings is to look ahead and we seek the guidance of our visitors in where this story is heading and what are its implications for South Asia, and the U.S. relationship to India and Pakistan. Last week we were fortunate enough to have a visiting Indian delegation that was led by K. Subrahmanyam and we heard from them. This week we have equally good fortune to have both Raja Mohan and Uday Bashkar. We all know who they are and we all know of their good works. We are eager for a visiting delegation from Pakistan so we can also here from them. As an interim measure, we will invite some Pakistani-Americans who are in the states to talk with us on November 1st. On October the 24th, we will here from our Visiting Fellows, Khalid Banuri, from the Strategic Plans Directorate whose in that corner, and Rajesh Basrur from Bombay who is over here. We will introduce them to you and hear their thoughts about where things are headed. Raja the floor is yours.

**Dr. C. Raja Mohan:** Thank you Michael, thank you very much. I was looking forward to a conversation rather than a long presentation by me and my colleague Uday Bashkar. I thought I would just make three or four points and then we could move on. I think the first question about the conflict itself, [is] I think the American strategic community had been talking for the last few years that the new conflicts that the US would face would be asymmetric ones, that no nation has the power to challenge the US in the traditional role, which is why the US is so strong. While everyone was expecting an asymmetric conflict, I don't think anyone would have predicted the way in which things actually emerged. Look at this whole war and its image, that the world's strongest superpower that the world has ever seen is fighting the weakest state, perhaps the weakest state the world has ever known. A country that is virtually close to [the] Stone Age because of its own internal dynamics has today become the lightning rod for drawing the deep reserves of anti-Americanism, the advances of the West, not just with the US but the Western world as a whole. All that has been brought out by this one primitive, unknown force.

So how is it that the first conflict in the millennium that the US faces is one in which it has to deal with something like the Taliban in Afghanistan? I think that while Taliban is a primitive force, I think it is important to understand the big idea it is working with and I think that is the central challenge and problem for the world as a whole. What bin Laden said, that the world is divided into two camps, those who believe and those who don't, you've seen variation on this theme in the past, such as the Marxists, that said the world is divided into two camps between socialism and capitalism. Or even some of the nice guys in Asia who said democracy is not an Asian value that we have our own style of doing things, so don't bother us with all this. But none has driven it to the point with such utter clarity that there is an irreconcilable conflict between Islam and the West. And that is the battle, and that gives the Taliban and bin Laden the opportunity to expand the conflict into an arena all across, while the US tries to limit it, to keep it focused on Afghanistan and on defeating Taliban. You have the Taliban and bin Laden expanding the terrain of the conflict in terms of posing it fundamentally as a conflict between Islam and the West. And I think precisely for that reason that this has become such a difficult and time-consuming conflict that the international community will have to deal with.

And I think, where does this big idea come from, and again, as it turns out with a renewed focus on South Asia, and [the advantage of] a lot of geography lessons being given out on CNN these days is that you are figuring out where these people are. And, I think in that context that South Asia has been in fact, interestingly, the breeding grounds... The fact that the Taliban draws much of its inspiration from the Deoband school of Islam, which is not too far from Delhi... That this is, of course, linked up with the extremist forces of the Middle East and the Gulf, which has become so powerful in its image. No matter what you might think, no matter how much you might deny that it is a clash of civilizations, the other side believes that there is a clash of civilizations, believes that there is an irreconcilable contradiction, that the West is incapable or unwilling or reluctant to address the grievances of the Muslims across the World. So it can tap into these accumulated grievances all across, and I think that is why it is going to be a problem to deal with.

What we have seen in Afghanistan, and partly in Pakistan as well, in the last twenty years is... Really, in a point, I'm trying to blame the West. In the final years of the Cold War, in order to defeat the godless Communists, it was nice to throw the holy warriors against them, but the holy warriors as it turned out to be more anti-Western, more anti-modern, more anti-everything that all of us in this room stand for. While the American universities were debating post-modernism, you have a very simple, pre-modern ideal that takes root. And I think then those forces developed a momentum of their own and that today the challenge is how do you cleanse the structure in Pakistan and Afghanistan in both of the places. That is the real question, because the Taliban could not have risen without the support it got from the Pakistani Army and the Pakistani society, where you created these whole range of forces. So, at the military level, you saw the combining of the traditional low intensity conflict with the big idea of the jihad. That insurgency counters [inaudible] is well known, but what you have here is the combination of traditional low intensity conflict with the religious ideal, and therefore you have a force that is much more difficult to deal with. And, while the West turned away from this whole issue by the late eighties, this has developed a whole momentum all of its own.

The biggest challenge I think is how do you clear the environment, the conditions that have given rise to this, and I think that is where the real problem is going to be. And I think for South Asia then, if the immediate focus on Afghanistan can be broadened to deal with the larger sources of extremism and violence that have taken hold in the subcontinent, is the US capable of sustaining the effort or will it turn away one more time when something happens: whether you find bin Laden or smash Al Qaeda... Does the US have the capacity to sustain a long term, a prolonged fight or will it be driven by immediate political considerations? My own sense is that the US in its own interests will have to be in the battle for the long term, because the sources of strife are not going to disappear any time soon. I don't see how the US can declare victory, declare that the threat is over, because the conditions that create bin Laden are still there.

I am not trying to juxtapose the immediate problem versus the long term: that is the root charges vs. the immediate threat. I don't think when you have a raging bull charging at you, you are going to ask who fed it, who did all that, but you've got to kill the bull, but after that you have to handle the larger questions. That is where the real problem will be in the long term. The implications for

South Asia: There is no question that this is a defining moment for us because issues and concerns that have been important to us for the last twenty years, both in India and in Pakistan, have become international concerns. You have an opportunity for the first time to put the threat of extremism in the subcontinent behind us, and a threat that is expanding its scope and reaching the entire world. So, I think that it is in India where we have no problem of the cleaning up of Afghanistan, of the replacing of the regime with another regime, and going for the long-term engagement with Afghanistan that transforms the country into a relatively modern, modernizing state. But there are problems of the short-term strategic concerns of the US affecting the long-term goals, specifically the American enlisting of Pakistani Army to achieve the immediate, tactical, short-term objectives. If it is purely tactical, of course, Indians are not going to complain, this phase is not going to be too long. If the necessity to keep Pakistan and Pakistani Army in the game begins to effect American military and political strategy, that's going to be one big question: whether the US for the sake of Pakistan believes that there is still a substantive segment of Pakistan which is invaluable. That might make it easier for the US to finish this and get out, but is that the way you want to proceed in the future?

I'm not just arguing this from the point of view of the Indians, but leaving some extremist elements in play, what does it do to Pakistan itself, what does it do to India, as well as what does it do for the whole world. We understand that there is an overlap between the Taliban and the Pashtun community at this point, but how do we then find a way... You can't build an alternative regime without a large presence of the Pashtun community, but do we read that as actually having part of the Taliban, or do we get non-Taliban, or Taliban that are willing to renounce their ideals, so where do the benchmarks lie? In current sets of concerns, in India, I think what we have is if the US is going to agree to let Pakistan trade its cooperation in Afghanistan for a free hand in Kashmir, I think that is the principle worry in India. That look, here is a situation in which the US wants Pakistan, needs Pakistan, and that Pakistan would help in Afghanistan and would divert this whole struggle onto Kashmir, that is something that the international community may not like but would have to live with. I must say that Mr. Powell in his clarifications in Delhi has tried to reassure Indians that the struggle against terrorism is a long-term one. But operationally, in the next few weeks, we would like a little more clarity on this.

Next, the question then in relation to Pakistan and Afghanistan. I think it is in our interest, as well as the interest of the people of Pakistan and of the whole subcontinent that this cancer of extremism and violence and terrorism that has bred in Pakistan and Afghanistan which has an effect on a large community in the subcontinent, that this is a battle that must be fought for the sake of everybody. It's not a sectarian interest of India or one or two other groups in Pakistan, because if you're talking about Islamic extremism today, thirty percent of the world's Muslims live on the subcontinent. That much of this battle against extremism and fundamentalism, while the American focus might be on the Gulf, will likely have to be fought and won in the subcontinent. I think that is an important thing we hope the Americans keep in mind. And that you cannot ensure your interests in the Gulf and hope to leave some extremist elements for tactical considerations in this part [South Asia], because what we've seen in the last few years is the type of linking up between the Wahabbis and Deobandis and in terms of the funding patterns you've created a structure that today links the Middle East and the Subcontinent through the new ideas, through the extremist forms. And I think that is something that both the US and the leadership in the Subcontinent will have to deal with together.

Another set of issues, I think, really relates to the issue of proliferation. Many of us in India and similarly in Pakistan dismiss the problem of proliferation, that this is a Western problem, that it has nothing to do with us, that the Americans want to keep us down, don't want us to have nuclear weapons. Of course they didn't want us to have nuclear weapons, and we got them despite the fact. But there was a fundamental political-ideological rejection of the threat, that proliferation was a threat. Because we were trying to get into the club, we were trying to say, look, any argument that was made to say that proliferation was a danger we dismissed it, we rejected it.

Today, I think, seeing what is happening in Washington today, and seeing what happened in India when the plague broke out and generated the type of panic among the people, that very low intensity biological weapons, WMD threats can create extraordinary social consequences, and I don't think anyone is prepared to deal with this. My urge to my friends from the nonproliferation

community that are here is, look, you need to change the framework as well. It is no longer the question of who's in the club, who's out of the club, but seeing what we can do together on a full range of nonproliferation charges -- from cooperating on ways to prevent the spread of this terrible stuff, or actually militarily having to deal with a proliferating situation. You need to shed the old paradigm here, and let me put it fundamentally, you have to make a differentiation of who are the good guys and the bad guys. If you can't make the differentiation, and make it a Wilsonian, rule-bound, normative approach and that anyone that doesn't subscribe to it is beyond the plane, I think that approach is not going to work. I think we need to do a lot, lot more together on this whole set of issues relating to non-proliferation, and I think that is, I don't want to go into much detail, that we have to work together. Not just on the chemical and biological stuff. I think India, Pakistan and the US too will have to work on the nuclear issues now, with the concern about the stability of Pakistan, with the question of who will gain control of nuclear weapons in case of the meltdown of the Pakistani state. And again, this can only work together, with India and Pakistan, the US and India, and the US and Pakistan.

Your concerns about stability, non-escalation that is something that India and Pakistan too will have to address without linking it too much with any other issue. Because I think the issue of nuclear CBMs on the subcontinent remains a fundamental issue on its own, whether we talk about Kashmir or trade. But this is something in our own interest to do. But unfortunately it has gotten caught up in so much rhetoric on both sides. We should be prepared to move irrespective of anything of maintaining military stability and the nuclear CBMs. I think it is an absolute priority and as far as I can understand I think India would be prepared to move on the stabilizing measures, as a separate basket, irrespective of our position on questions of Kashmir and other bilateral issues. Nuclear CBMs and preventing escalation is something that has to be done on its own.

Finally, I think that this crisis is an opportunity to transform the subcontinent and in particular Indo-Pak relations. If you are agreed on the long-term goal that you need a modernizing, prosperous subcontinent, that you need to have a fundamental decompression of Indo-Pak relations, I think that with a smart careful strategy, in which everyone understands the game, we could move towards the situation where India and Pakistan could begin negotiations in an atmosphere free of violence, but with some speed of Kashmir and the other issues, so all pieces begin to move on the bilateral relations. And finally, India and the US, let me conclude on that. We can work together to bring prosperity and modernity to the subcontinent. For the first time, the forces of globalization offer us the opportunity to integrate the subcontinent economically, to break down the independent, socialist policies that India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, everyone, had followed. Using the broad trend of globalization on the economic front to link the economies, to expand trade within the region itself, to do trans-border projects, to harness the rivers, to let people move and work with a greater economic interests in all the countries, so that we have a different subcontinent that's going to emerge. For this regionalization of the subcontinent to work, we will have to deal with this new globalized force of terrorism and its many sources on the subcontinent itself.

**Michael Krepon:** Raja, thank you very much. Now it's my pleasure to hand the table over to Uday, and then we will open it up to comments and questions.

**Commodore Uday Bhaskar:** I would like to thank Michael and the Stimson Center for making it possible for us to be here this morning. It is an occasion to meet and greet many friends, with whom one has not been in touch over the years. There is an advantage to following Raja Mohan, and everyone around this table either reads Raja or hears Raja, there is a sort of magisterial overview which he does in 1,350 words or fewer words. And I think he has already covered many of the points that Michael had flagged. September 11th is going to be a very significant punctuation when these events are recorded. My own work is more obscure and modest and is more in theoretical terms. And I will try to address the three issues that Michael had suggested: That September 11th, or rather post-September 11th, where is it going, where are we going, and to focus perhaps more specifically on the region, that is India and Pakistan, which has been the traditional frame of reference as far as Washington is concerned in terms of South Asian policies. I'll make three or four propositions, and perhaps we can toss them around later.

In terms of September 11th, and its relevance, my own sort of proposition is in a way it has fundamentally altered the entire discourse of security and stability. We had a certain radiation, for

the lack of a better phrase, of a dominant discourse about security in the Cold War. It was very state centric. There was a sense that after the Cold War there would be a different interpretation, a framework, but there was a grope in terms of what would be the contours of post-Cold War security. And I think that many of these have been answered in a reasonably definitive manner by September 11th. I often argue that both state security and socio-eco tranquility have been altered in a very dramatic way, and perhaps we are not able to access the quantum or intensity of this because we are still at one level in the immediate aftermath. Today is only the 17th of October, so we are only at roughly week six following September 11th.

But in terms of where it is going, and where we are all going, post-September 11 because of the forces that have been generated, there are many ways to look at this, many perspectives, and for some time I have been toying with this possibility of looking at this in what I would describe as a political-theological context. To say that at the root, and this is perhaps an inappropriate or less than adequate way of describing it, but if we were to examine the many interpretations as to why Sept. 11 happened, Osama bin Laden, Taliban as the principle suspects at this point in time as far as Washington's perspective. I think that at root is this whole grapple, or less than satisfactorily correlation or interaction with what might very largely be described as modernity, for want again of a better term, and everything that can be brought under the umbrella of modernity: globalization as one example, and various other socio-cultural norms, benchmarks and practices that have become synonymous with the post-Cold War world. And I am suggesting that one way of perhaps looking at this is to see this as a sort of interface with the Islamic world, which is a very loose sort of an expression, because I think when we talk about the Islamic world one can talk from the Magreb in north Africa through parts of large swathes of Southern Asia right up to Indonesia, as one classification. But we also have fairly recognized Diaspora of the Islamic world, which is almost global in terms of its spread. And that this comes in many variations, and what we are looking at is the tension, the interface between one cross-section, one constituency of Islam and its social and political variants and how they are identifying this sort of interaction with modernity and everything else that goes with modernity and what may be perceived, whether rightly or wrongly, as a less than equitable arrangement. And when we talk about a less than equitable arrangement, it could straddle political, social, economic, various aspects of the post-Cold War endeavor in the same sense.

On the theological front, I would like to advance this as an argument for discussion later, that if we look at least at some of the major religions that are distinctive to Asia or the developing world, that perhaps Islam has not gone through its own cycle of reformation and modernization that some of the other religions have gone through. This is a slightly tenuous proposition, so I am skating on thin ice here. But, if we look at the evolution of Islam itself, in terms of the long cycle of history, there has been a sort of struggle with the forces of modernity and they have released certain undercurrents and how in terms do we address this. What this is really done, I think, the manner in which this particular grapple has served erode and in its worst case puncture the ozone layer, and this has been punctured in the past when different constituencies, we describe them as non-state actors, have resorted to terrorism and violence as a means of whatever the aspirations of their setup. That this is one way of looking at the fallout of September 11th.

As a security analyst, since one has been looking at September 11th has been looking at the response of the United States and the global community, we have been looking at the asymmetric nature. Raj made a comment about how the United States is the most powerful nation of the world militarily, and in every other sense, and that it is currently pitted against Afghanistan, and one could not find a more asymmetric relationship in terms of sheer military capability. Again, I think around this table, most people have followed this particular debate that asymmetry has both its advantages and its pluses and minuses. I think this morning that the record was that 10,000 or 100,00 targets had been identified [by the United States Department of Defense]....

[Tape change]

...Perhaps there is also a need for us to critique or interrogate our own semantics about military strategy and tactics. To the extent that we have the Cold War as a point of reference, that there was a sort of correlation between the political and military objectives, or that if you had a certain military objective, there was a sense of being related to political umbilical. It wasn't always coterminous, we have since the War of 1991, the war for Kuwait, and after a certain movement on

the military dimension, that perhaps the political correlates did not work out the way they were intended, and with hindsight one could make a better examination of that period. And my perception is when we look at the September 11th and where do we go, that we have to review the semantics that we have had or the vocabulary we have used in the past. And I think even terminologies like victory and defeat will have to be revisited, and largely because of the overlap between state and society, as being participants in this asymmetric warfare. And I think one word that has to be revisited with greater candor is what constitutes deterrence in the altered context. Because we were fairly happy and comfortable with deterrence in the Cold War, it did have certain determinants and there was a very clear and rigorous techno-strategic logic that drove the world towards identifying deterrence in a certain manner and it was possible to both interpret and pursue it in what ever context one was placed as far as the Cold War was concerned. And I think that many of these concepts will have to be revisited, and we might have to do a certain amount of appropriate introspection of both terms and objectives as far as this is concerned.

I have another six to seven minutes, Mike said to limit it to 15 minutes, and perhaps I will change gears here... What is the relevancy and what is the impact that the event has had on the region? I think we have already seen many of the tangibles, but I would like to draw your attention to one of the [items] that may have not been noticed: pre-September 11, when we talked about the view from Washington, for a long time, we talked about the hyphenated relationship, Indo-Pak, but at a slightly higher level there was sense of talking about this as South Asia. And the United States always had a South Asia policy, which looked at India and Pakistan as the principal players, and the other neighboring countries, but by and large it was SAARC, in terms of the construct. But I think post-September 11, we have in the past tried to suggest that when we look at security and strategic issues, I think the invalidity of South Asia has already been established. We in the past, and when I say we, I mean those of us who have looked at the issue, from Delhi in particular, have talked about southern Asia, as being more representative, and I think that particular acknowledgment had already been there. But I think, post-September 11, without acknowledging it, we have moved from South to southern Asia because of the fallout of September 11. All of the strands that go with it are being addressed in terms of southern Asia, instead of South Asia.

In terms of the two states, India and Pakistan, I again just want to make three or four broad observations. That southern Asia, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and too extent Iran also in Central Asia, are the most directly affect parties in their own way, but none more than Pakistan in terms of the immediate fallout. We have already seen the elements of the impact on Pakistan, for instance the very dramatic U-turn of Pakistan's Afghanistan policy. We have seen that already with Pakistan's relationship with the Taliban and what kind of an impact it has already had and is likely to have as far as society is concerned. And I think here is a validation of the point I tried to make earlier: that the relevance of civil society in the post-September 11th fallout, that from the Magreb in north Africa that we have had the kind of protests that Nigeria is a case-in-point, we have seen this, and I think Pakistan is going to face this particular challenge, in terms of how different constituencies who represent civil society in Pakistan, whatever may be their sectarian province, whether it is Shia, or Sunni, or Punjabi, or Pashtuns in terms of how we describe, that they relate to September 11th in a collective sense, and in particular those "special interest groups" who are more vocal, more militant than their peers in terms of this event. I think that this is going to be an important indicator as to where we go from here: Pakistan in the specific sense, and what I refer to as the ozone layer, from the Magreb to Indonesia and the diaspora, I think that will define the amount of political and diplomatic space that the United States and the coalition partners will have in terms of where they will go.

As far as India is concerned, what was very welcome augury, I think, as far as the region was concerned that towards the beginning of the second term of the Clinton presidency that the hyphen had been removed from the Indo-Pak relationship, and that there was the emergence of a stand-alone [policy] that US-India was being pursued on its own merits and US-Pakistan would be pursued separately. And personally, I would say this was a very desirable element given the responses on the ground. I think what will be very crucial is how will the United States define the contours of its campaign against terrorism. India's own concern with events in the valley, the patterns of what we describe as state-sponsored terrorism, and whether or not this would be addressed in terms of the genesis of such patterns of violence. There have been very interesting statements being made in India, but the obvious kind of comparisons that what bin Laden and Al

Qaeda are to the US, we have Maulana Azhar of the Jaish-e-Mohammad, and the Jaish as analogous kinds of entities, and this was triggered after October 1st, and the attack in Srinagar on the building. You also have a correlation with the regime. If you move from bin Laden to Al Qaeda to Taliban as one construct, you have Maulana Azhar, the Jaish-e-Mohammad, and the fact that they are getting support from the Pakistani military or the ISI. This particular pattern needs to be recognized from all sides, not just both sides, because I think that President Musharraf has gone on record as saying he will deal with the extremist groups, his home minister has gone on record with attempts. And I think it is also significant that Pakistan, for the first time that I can recollect, Pakistan actually condemned the violence of October 1st. Now why they did it, I don't think that is relevant, but we do have a statement there.

But this is where I come back, and I want to close on this as a sort of observation, that if we look at Pakistan and its own sort of evolution, there is a certain pattern that we might want to examine, that is the relevance of militaries to states and societies. I think we have a certain Asian experience, and if one is to go back for the last 300 years plus. Japan offers a unique example, and Japan is not alone, we have a number of states even in a post-1945, or post-colonial sense, where the military had occupied political space or it had tended to dominate the kind of prioritization as far as the elite and society are concerned, or the militarization of society if you will. And whether you look at Japan, Indonesia, Burma, Bangladesh, Pakistan. Each of them have had experiences in terms of the relevance of the military in terms of state and society. But if you were to look at the empirical records, records in terms of what has been the denouement of such developments, the purging of the military from the political space, or its impact on society, has by and large been marked by fairly intense bouts of violence has played out over different points of time. And I've raised this point in the past asking if in Pakistan's case it would be the exception to the rule. It is often said that the Pakistani military is the most credible institution. And President Musharraf has used this as an argument when he talked about why democracy had not worked in Pakistan. While simultaneously, I would argue that there has been a sort of vested interests in terms of the support to these forces we have spoken about in the beginning, about those who have followed a more inflexible patterns in Islam, who have pursued a path of bigotry, if you will, intolerance, and there has been a certain correlation in the last fifteen-twenty years. We have talked about short-term and we have talked about long-term, but I think what we need is to see this from a slightly different perspective and really ask questions about what constitutes victory post-Sept. 11, and how would it be pursued before we can deal with Sept. 11. I think I'll stop there.

**Audience Question:** Raj, the transformation you foresee may be underway, because I find myself at an alarming level of agreement with you, which you know is uncharacteristic. Your point about transformation: in a more candid way, and that is the extent to which the two governments in Islamabad and Delhi are interested in the transformation. For what its worth, for me, over the last two weeks, hearing from both ambassadors in Washington, I'm struck by, frankly, the opportunistic approach by both governments, not necessarily to achieve a transformation, but to achieve some political capital domestically. That's not surprising and not limited to governments in that region, including ours. But there are some signals that have been sent that don't suggest to me that the transformation that the governments are ready to deal with, at least yet. The return of George Fernandez, to the Ministry of Defense: If I were sitting in Islamabad, or I dare say at the US Embassy in Delhi, I would be a little alarmed about that. And I say that because there is a very small group of personalities in both governments, who are very visibly attached to positions on all of the issues you have talked about. I don't see much evidence yet, and perhaps it is still too early, that the people that count in those two governments are likely to be counseling different approaches. I'm not just picking on the Indian government, I haven't seen much more positive coming out from the government in Islamabad.

That said, your assumption about transformation also assumes that both those governments will decide or have decided that the transformation is in their interest. Then, I think there is something to their point, but then there is the question of whether or not both governments are likely, for different reasons, to be very disappointed by this series of events, because it is likely to interfere with other things that were going very well. The rapprochement with Delhi, I think, at least from an Indian perspective, may be off track, in a way that will be different to put back on the track, at least in the way that they defined it. Ambassador Lodhi has been quite correctly very candid about lessons learned, and as you suggest, don't solve the problems and then leave. She has been very

candid about those relationships as well. So, my question to you is, if this transformation is going to occur, what kinds of things would you expect the governments in Islamabad and Delhi to signal to persuade you that they were serious about transformation?

**Dr. Mohan:** I think there are two levels that you read different signals from the government. There is a moment that fundamental change takes place, governments are trying to scramble to find ways in which their position is improved, and on the other side that your adversary does not take too much advantage. And that is a natural course of events, and that is how the US, too, responds to different situations. It is not that you have to look for signals from the Indian side, that an Indian Prime Minister goes to Lahore, against much advice, nine months after the test. I think India has been interested in a transformation, in fact six months after the tests the two Prime Ministers, Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif meet in New York and say they will have a bus, and that bus will run between the two sides irrespective of what is happening, the war, sanctions, etc. From the Indian side, the decision to go to Lahore as well as invite Musharraf [to Agra], who we see as the perpetrator of Kargil, rightly or wrongly, shows that we are interested in a transformation, that such a transformation would be good for us, in our interest, that that is something that does not depend on George Fernandez coming in or coming out of the cabinet.

I think in the last week, there has been a concern that the Pakistanis will get the impression from the Americans that since now they are a frontline state in the battle against terrorism, they would use this to step up the activity in Kashmir. I think from the Indian side, the message is, don't take our restraint for granted, don't think because you are part of this coalition that you have a free hand in what you want in Kashmir. And it's also a message to the United States: understand the consequences of your new relationship with Pakistan, what a revived relationship with Pakistan means to peace and security. I think that the US itself is that we need a more careful balance, and hope that the larger point is understood in the US that look, you need to reduce violence. And that does not mean that India is not going to do anything about Kashmir. Here is a Prime Minister of India who is saying that one of his key objectives is to solve the Kashmir dispute. So, I think there are enough signals to move on, but there are also enough practical problems.

The question is: Is there enough creative ideas to push this at this moment? Where you have a new handle on Pakistan, you can in some senses take care of India's interests, and everybody can work together to make it [a different place]. All I'm saying is that there is an opportunity. Because I think transformation is possible, but as to whether it is achievable depends on what all the details are.

**Audience Question:** Two questions: To get back to your question of how do you clean the environment from terrorism. How do you think that the tactics right now will serve the long-term goals? The second question is very small, is the current backlash comparable to a puritanical backlash, a backlash against oppression by Islamic states? Is there a need for the United States to create a policy for the eventual transformation of such states to avoid the backlash?

**Michael Krepon:** I'm going to intervene, because I see there are many people that have questions, and ask that subsequent questions and answers be kept as short as possible.

**Commodore Bhaskar:** A very brief response. I think that this is one of the most complex and important issues, that the contradictions, as far as some parts of the Islamic world are concerned, and this is part of the ferment as to what you are seeing as far as the animation of the level of debate about these countries, about the mismatch between regimes, and what they stand for, and the actual dissemination to the people and how they relate to it. I just wanted to say is that for me, the reason for looking at this is Kashmir. I have always tried to say that at the heart of all the other territoriality and nationalism issues, is perhaps also the theological dimension that Sufi Islam, as it is practiced in the Valley, is perhaps one of the most moderate, variations within the subcontinent, and as you know we have many forms. I don't want to get into South India and the Islam of South India, but this is an important issue, and it has to be addressed. For the United States has identified public diplomacy as one of the fallouts of Sept. 11.

**Dr. Mohan:** The conflict between the short-term and the long-term is natural in any sort of complex struggle. But I think at this stage, you can only go by what the Americans are saying publicly, that no country can have a veto on the final formation and structure in Afghanistan, that

is what Mr. Powell said at his press conference in Islamabad. He also said that if there are moderate Taliban he would try to incorporate them into the new regime. So, I agree with you that none of this is finalized, there is no finality to how all of this is going to unfold. I think the US also understands that you cannot bring back the same group of people who facilitated this.

**Audience Question:** You said that Osama bin Laden had stated that the world is divided between believers and non-believers. And in that context, let me just frame my question in terms that there was an elected Parliament in Algiers, Algeria, which contained 300 PhDs, which I imagine would qualify it as modern. And that parliament was suspended and the army took over, and enlighten me if India condemned that and asked for sanctions against Algiers. And then we have Turkey, and Turkey is very modern, and just because a women covers her head alarms are going off. All of this happened before Afghanistan, before Mullah Omar, before anything, so doesn't that support the premise that the world is divided between believers and non-believers? Even if the believers are pretty modern and educated they will not be allowed to take power.

**Dr. Mohan:** I think you have an important point: States are not paid to be consistent to take one particular position. That's more public posturing. I think the more important point is that the Islamic world is going through a profound journey. You have in Algeria a backlash against the secular, Francophone-you can't get more European than the Algerian elite-there was a backlash against them. In Iran, twenty years after the revolution, there is a backlash against the mullahs. You have the young people for three elections in a row vote with their feet for change. Those who rule in the name of God, as well as those who rule in the name of modernity, both have failed. That is the important point, that across the board, regimes have failed people and that there is a problem of how do you come to terms with the world, and what are the options you have, and how do you go forward. I think there is a problem, that the Americans understand much better than everybody else, because their fingers are deep in the Islamic world, their interests are far higher, and compared to Europe, the Americans have engaged with the Islamic world in a much more deeper sense, because they have strong interests at stake. So, what is needed today, I think, is exactly that, that you need to work in the communities to promote more secular regime, that are a little more representative, a little more responsive to the needs of the people, but it is not going to happen overnight, its going to be country by country, state by state. So, that is precisely why I think we have a stake as much as the US, that Pakistan moves in a direction that is moderate, modernizing, [and] whether it is army or otherwise is a second issue I think. Are you willing to take the society forward? I think that is the question, there is not a single formula, it has to be case by case.

**Audience Comment:** Both speakers correctly put the issue as one about modernity, in one way or the other. And when you think about modernity, you think about how long the struggle is. What I think this adds up to is that it is a false dichotomy to talk about short-term positions and strategic ones. In other words, you are going to have fight a raging bull, and deal with the modernity issues, at the same time, over and over again, for a long period of time. So, what does that mean for US relations with the region. It means that there are going to be certain tactical decisions, in terms of US relationships with Pakistan, that will give the Indian government [discomfort].

[Tape ends. Approximately the last five minutes of the meeting where not recorded.]

[Edited by Chris Gagné and Chris Clary.]

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