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POLICY FORUM

AFTER AFGHANISTAN

THE FUTURE OF INTERVENTION

AND NATION BUILDING

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Moderator:

Gary Dempsey, Cato Institute

Featuring:

Alan Tonelson, Senior Analyst,

U.S. Business & Industry Council;

Gareth Evans, President, International Crisis Group;

and Ted Galen Carpenter,

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. DEMPSEY: Good morning, and welcome to the Cato Institute. My name is Gary Dempsey, and I'm a Foreign Policy Analyst here at the Institute.

Today we are very fortunate to have with us three experts to discuss the future of intervention and nation building in the wake of the events in Afghanistan. Everybody has probably noticed that, with the rapid collapse of the Taliban regime, American policymakers and commentators have been vigorously debating what a post-Taliban Afghanistan should look like. Some observers are suggesting that the previous administration's emphasis on nation building has been vindicated, and that absent a comprehensive plan to rebuild Afghanistan, the Bush administration may find that, despite its victory on the ground, it is unable to adequately achieve its long-term counterterrorism objectives.

Critics, however, warn that nation building in Afghanistan would repeat the fiascos of Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans, and that U.S. national security does not require the existence of a centralized, multi-ethnic, democratic government in Kabul. It requires only that whatever government controls any portion of Afghanistan it not harbor or assist terrorists in the way that the Taliban did.

Now, the Bush administration has been sending mixed messages with respect to these issues. On the one hand, it tried to slow the advances of the Northern Alliance last month to buy more time to shape a post-Taliban government. And it has hinted that it will link reconstruction aid to the composition of its central government in Kabul. "The international community must be prepared to sustain reconstruction programs that will take many years," recently stated Secretary of State Colin Powell.

On the other hand, some administration officials have been emphasizing entirely different themes. According to Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, for example, a stable Afghanistan "is not going to be achieved by the American military, and it's not even going to be achieved primarily by outsiders. If you're a foreigner, try not to go in. And if you go in, don't stay long."

Today we have three distinguished speakers to help us think through these issues not only as they apply to the immediate post-Taliban situation in Afghanistan but as they apply to what national security strategy the United States should pursue in the coming years.

Our first speaker this morning is Ted Galen Carpenter. Ted Galen Carpenter is Vice President for Defense and Foreign Policy Studies here at the Institute. He is the author or editor of 13 books, including "NATO Enters the 21st Century," published

earlier this year, and "NATO's Empty Victory: A Post Mortem on the Balkan War," which was published last year.

Carpenter's articles on international affairs have appeared in such journals as Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs, and Mediterranean Quarterly. And he has written more than 200 articles on international affairs that have appeared in newspapers, such as the New York Times, Washington Post, L.A. Times, and the Wall Street Journal. Dr. Carpenter is a frequent guest on television and radio programs in North America, East Asia and Europe. He has appeared on news shows on ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, CNN, and the list goes on.

Dr. Carpenter received his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Wisconsin, and he holds a doctorate in diplomatic history from the University of Texas.

Ted.

TED GALEN CARPENTER,  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY STUDIES  
CATO INSTITUTE

DR. CARPENTER: Thank you very much, Gary.

It is clear that the policy debate concerning Afghanistan is switching from the issues of military options to the nature of U.S. policy in a post-Taliban Afghanistan. It is

already becoming apparent, including the quote from Paul Wolfowitz that Gary cited, that the U.S. inclination is to adopt a relatively low profile in a post-Taliban Afghanistan. And we are already seeing tangible signs of that preference.

I don't think it was coincidental that the talks to form an interim government were held in Bonn and that the Europeans played the lead role in trying to orchestrate a settlement among the various contending groups that were opposed to the Taliban. The U.S. has also made it clear that it does not intend to put American troops on the ground as peacekeepers in Afghanistan; that instead we prefer to let Britain, Turkey and other countries provide the personnel and also the leadership role for a peacekeeping mission.

I think that is a very wise move for a variety of reasons, including the fact that a prominent U.S. role in Afghanistan would, quite literally, be a lightning rod. Fears of U.S. imperialism are endemic throughout the Islamic world and in many other portions of the world, and we don't need to give those fears any degree of substance. An American leadership role in Afghanistan would, I think, reignite that paranoia about American imperialist ambitions in that part of the world, and that would truly be counterproductive.

If we decide, though, to decline a leadership role in peacekeeping or nation building in Afghanistan, we have the

difficulty of overcoming the myth that it was U.S. abandonment of Afghanistan in the early 1990's that led to the current tragedy. In reality, the situation is a lot more complex than that. And in fact I would argue, and did argue at the time, that it was the way U.S. aid was channeled to the Afghan mujahedin, the anti-Soviet resistance, in the 1980's that became the root of Afghanistan's post-war problems.

The United States, largely because of pressure from Pakistan, channeled the overwhelming majority of its financial aid and military hardware to the most radical Islamic elements in the Afghan resistance. That in turn strengthened what had been marginal political forces in Afghanistan and moved the more moderate majority elements in Afghanistan's political culture to the sidelines. It would be very much as if an external power poured in money and other support and elevated someone like Al Sharpton to prominence in the United States.

When the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, therefore, the radical Islamic factions were in a much stronger position than they had been when the Soviet occupation began. And that would have very dramatic implications.

Power struggles and civil strife broke out among the rival radical factions during the early- and mid-1990's, and that in turn led to the eventual emergence of the Taliban and its Arab allies as the dominant political force in the country. And

again, the United States really had very little to do with this. The chief external culprits in this process were Pakistan and Saudi Arabia:

Pakistan in terms of providing a great deal of support to the Taliban, feeling that the Taliban would provide a friendly government on that border and that radical elements in Pakistan would therefore have less incentive to support internal revolution; they would be supporting a radical regime next door. The Saudis, by 1995-1996, had become the chief financial supporters of the Taliban movement, and eventually the Taliban government.

We have to keep this in mind when we talk about the international coalition against terrorism. To be blunt about it, some members of that coalition, at least in the past, have been part of the terrorism problem, not part of its solution.

So I think the charge that the United States, because of neglect, is responsible for the current tragedy in Afghanistan is a bogus charge. Other people were responsible for that tragedy, the Afghan political factions themselves of course, and Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

But what about today? That is a sad, terrible history for the country, but do we have the prospects of a viable nation-building mission that will lead to happier results in the future?

Well, perhaps. But I would argue that there are reasons for pessimism about nation building in Afghanistan under anyone's auspices, not just American auspices. First of all, we have the reality on the ground and the history of the country, the intense ethnic rivalries involving the major ethnic blocs, the Pashtuns, the Tajiks, the Uzbeks, and the Hazara, who have barely tolerated each other under the best of times. And that in turn points to a root problem in Afghanistan that any would-be nation builder is going to have to face. And that is there is a very weak sense of nationhood, a very weak sense of identification with a nation-state.

In Afghanistan, the primary allegiances are subnational -- to clan, to tribe, and to ethnic group. And this is often a difficult phenomenon for Westerners to understand. Throughout our modern history at least, loyalty in the West has been primarily to the nation. And in recent decades we have seen a new layer put on that, namely, loyalty to supranational entities. We see this, I think, most evidently in Europe, where you find many people in European countries now identifying themselves primarily as Europeans, not necessarily as Italians or French or Dutch or so on. That national loyalty is there, but there is a new layer now on top of it.

But it is not that way in Afghanistan, except of course for the very amorphous loyalty to the Muslim religion. But that

generally doesn't dictate political behavior. And it is also true in many other areas of the non-Western world -- the primary allegiances are subnational, not national or supranational. Indeed, I would say it is uncertain whether Afghanistan will even hold together as a country. I think the jury is very much out on that. And I would offer an even more provocative observation -- that maybe it shouldn't.

We might have greater long-term stability if Afghanistan divided itself into some of these subnational entities. Again, that runs against the grain of Western thinking. But we ought to at least consider that as a possible outcome, and that it might not be the greatest tragedy in the world.

Again, Afghanistan is not entirely unique in that respect. One can make the same statement with regard to Somalia, where we have seen, again, a "country" where the primary allegiances seem to be to subnational entities. And the West has tried a major nation-building venture there, in the early 1990's, and, in contrast to the initial humanitarian mission, it failed rather spectacularly.

We see a similar, although not identical, situation in Bosnia, where we have, again, a "country" that is no closer to being a viable national entity now than it was five years ago -- six years ago now -- when the Dayton Accords were signed. What

we have in Bosnia is basically a soft partition that the West is unwilling to recognize officially, a Potemkin country run by an army of increasingly autocratic international bureaucrats. But what we don't have there, and have no prospect of seeing emerge, is a truly viable nation-state.

When we talk about nation building in Afghanistan, I think it is important to understand America's real interest in that country. Our security does not require a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, much less a democratic Afghanistan. Now, I would be very happy if such a country emerged. I think that would be wonderful for the Afghan people. But it is not likely to happen. And from the standpoint of our interests, it does not really need to happen.

All America needs for its own security interests is that Afghanistan not become a haven for terrorists the way it did under the Taliban. And given what we have done to the Taliban for that offense, I think any successor regime in Afghanistan would be foolish indeed to venture down that same path.

Our policy should be fairly direct. We give an option to a successor government or, if the country divides, to successor governments. And that is, as long as such a government does not harbor or aid terrorists in any way, the United States will not interfere in Afghanistan's internal political affairs. But should any regime go down the same path as the Taliban, we

will be back militarily and we will mete out the same treatment. I think any rational government would accept that option quite readily.

Finally, I would add that a little American humility is needed. The United States cannot bring peace and prosperity to Afghanistan. The Afghan people will have to do that for themselves. And they have some hard decisions to make. The reality is that a majority of the nearly 190 countries in the international system are woefully misgoverned. And that is tragic for the people involved; I would be the first to concede that. But the overwhelming majority of those cases will not adversely affect the security and well-being of America.

We have enough problems of our own seeking out and destroying the terrorists who committed the atrocities of September 11th, we should not become distracted by trying to engage in a futile nation-building mission in Afghanistan or, for that matter, anywhere else.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. DEMPSEY: Thank you, Ted.

Our next speaker this morning is Mr. Gareth Evans. He is the President and Chief Executive of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group. He was one of Australia's longest-serving Foreign Ministers, and is best known

internationally for his roles in developing the U.N. peace plan for Cambodia, helping to bring to a conclusion the International Chemical Weapons Convention, and founding the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum.

Mr. Evans has written or edited eight books, most recently "Australia's Foreign Relations," and "Cooperating for Peace: The Global Agenda for the 1990's," and has published over 70 journal articles and chapters on foreign relations, human rights and legal reform, and Democratic Socialist political philosophy. In September 2000, he was appointed by the Canadian Government to co-chair the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.

He holds first-class honors degrees, in law, from Melbourne University, and in politics, philosophy and economics, from Oxford University.

Mr. Evans.

GARETH EVANS, PRESIDENT,  
INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Chairman and ladies and gentlemen.

When I received the invitation to speak at this forum, my friends in Washington who know about these things told me that

liberal internationalist whimps are what Ted Galen Carpenter eats for breakfast, and that beating up on them is the Cato Institute's favorite spectator sport. If I wanted to avoid being dragged out of the coliseum feet first, I had better abandon any sympathy for basic human decency as a motivator for international action and get down, dirty, cynical, and realist.

Well, although he was a little bit more of a pussycat than I really expected, in what I heard this morning, I don't think that advice was entirely misconceived.

Let me say at the outset that, as someone who was in politics for 21 years -- and this is no less true of Democratic Socialists or Labor Party politics than the Tory variety -- cynicism and realism are not entirely unknown phenomena to me. One of my most famous predecessors in Australian politics, a 1930's character called Jack Lang, whose brand of populism would have made even Huey Long blush, once gave the following immortal advice, which has been handed down to fledgling politicians in my country ever since: Always back the horse called self-interest, son. It will be the only one trying.

Well, the case for America and Americans being willing to engage in nation building and, on occasion, full-scale intervention, is not one that needs to be made on any other basis than national self-interest. And I am happy to spell out why. Of course, it is a case that is much reinforced if you can bring

some basic human decency back into the equation as well. And I don't in fact think, when I look at the Cato Institute Web site, that this Institute is entirely immune to some of those sentiments.

"Our greatest challenge today," I read, "is to extend the promise of political freedom and economic opportunity to those who are still denied it in our own country and around the world." Well, that is an admirable sentiment, And I don't think the authors of it were concerned only about the opportunity to stuff Big Macs down the throat of the last remaining Congolese villager or Pashtun tribesman.

Well, what then is the national self-interest case for getting involved in nation building and, on occasion, full-scale intervention? For a start, what do we mean by this term "nation building" in particular?

Nation building is a term that, of course, has been much used and abused since it first came into vogue in the early days, I think, of the Clinton administration, although the concept has certainly been around much longer in international discourse, more often called peace-building than nation building. It has become so useful now as a sort of kind of straw man, as I see it, in domestic politics here that if it didn't exist, I suspect someone here at the Cato Institute would feel they had to invent it.

Variously, it tends to mean all engagement with nations that lack nuclear weapons, strategic geography, or NATO membership, or it means all elements of U.S. foreign policy apart from warfighting, or sometimes even all parts of U.S. foreign policy that the speaker doesn't like. But I think we need to move a little bit beyond that and acknowledge that perhaps if the Clinton administration had been a little more disciplined and a little less wooly-headed in using the term -- a consummation devoutly to be wished, I might say, in respect to the number of other aspects of the Clinton administration's foreign policy -- we might not be having today's debate.

Because, really, the essence of the idea of nation building is pretty straightforward. It is a set of international support strategies taking place either before conflict, in order to prevent it, or after conflict, to stop that conflict recurring; strategies designed to build stable and workable governing institutions, able to deliver three basic things -- internal safety and security, respect for the rule of law, and economic opportunity; and strategies which in turn involve, variously, financial support, technical support, like the training and policy planning advice, engineering consultancy and so on, and sometimes peacekeeping, at least for long enough to stabilize the internal security situation and to enable police, gendarme or military services or forces to take their place.

Call it reconstruction, call it draining the swamp if you like, or call it, as President Bush did a couple of months ago, the stabilization of a future government. That captures the idea very well. And it is exactly what we ought to be now doing, and America ought to be contributing to, in the context of post-conflict Afghanistan.

There is more to the U.S. interest in Afghanistan than simply ensuring that the place doesn't once again become a haven for terrorists. If you are going to ensure that, you have got to go down the path, not just of careering in with another military intervention the next time the failed state fails again and becomes such a haven, but you have to be prepared to address the security problem, to address the basic governance problem, to address the problem of providing economic opportunity, and to address the problem of providing something in the nature of a viable system, with the rule of law.

Of course, it is going to be difficult in this failed-state environment, where there is so little of an overt sense of national identity, as has been said, where the primary loyalties are to subnational institutions and entities, but it is doable. And I think the kind of skepticism we heard this morning is a little less well placed, after the events of the last week or two, than it might have been expressed three, four or five weeks ago. The truth of the matter is that gigantic strides have

been made in forming the rudiments of a viable, ongoing political administration.

There is a huge amount more to be done, in thinking through conceptually how you build constitutional and governance arrangements that are going to work for the country, a huge amount more thinking and effort to be done in terms of doing all the other elements in the equation. But the task, I genuinely believe, and all the people I talk to in this administration genuinely believe, is in fact doable. And the only debate that seems to be going on in Washington at the moment is not about the desirability of someone doing it; it is just the question to which American resources, or further American resources, as distinct from those of the Europeans and others, ought to be going into the task.

Well, let's move just beyond Afghanistan and focus on the issue a little bit more broadly, because I think the self-interest case for nation building comes down to these four or five basic points. And I will make them very quickly.

The first one is a general one. Whether we like to believe it or not, dirty little wars in faraway places, collapsed states in faraway places, do have the potential to impact upon us in the West, and here in the U.S., far more directly and immediately than anyone used to think possible. Until recently, this argument was, certainly in this country, more theoretical

than real for most people, cocooned here as you are by two oceans and with an added confidence about American economic and military prowess.

But now, of course, things have changed. 9/11 did make the point far more graphically and horribly than any previous argument could about the potential for terrorism being bred, being organized, and being protected in states like Afghanistan, and others in that region, in the Middle East, in parts of Africa, and, indeed, in Latin America as well. And it is not only terrorism that can bite us on the tail. It is refugee flows. It is drug production and narcotics trafficking. It is other international crime. It is health pandemics, like AIDS. And sometimes, although I acknowledge this is less likely to affect a continentally secure country like the United States, there is the prospect in many of these situations of cross-border environmental disasters as well.

I have to say that I have always thought that the argument about a butterfly fluttering in the Congo causing a cyclone in Florida was a little overdrawn. And I was a bit surprised to see Kofi Annan running it again in Oslo this week. But, nonetheless, the connection between failed states, unresolved grievances, and American national interests are now too obvious, I believe, for anyone to ignore.

The second point I want to make is that there are plenty of cases where America has engaged in nation building where it has worked, and where the outcome has been manifestly to America's advantage. Post-war Germany and Japan are the cases that everyone cites, and for the excellent reason that they make the case so well.

Some opponents also like to note that the Marshall Plan cost more than \$80 billion, in current-day dollars, to implement. And obviously no one is talking about that kind of money in an Afghani or any other context today, although the resources needed will be significant. And certainly nobody is asking the U.S. to take on that kind of burden alone once again. The proportion back in the late forties of GDP of the United States, around 70 percent of global GDP, is, despite all the American dominance, economically much reduced -- around 22 percent, as I understand it, these days -- and that carries its own logic. But, nonetheless, the story is there, and it is one in all our minds, and it is still real and relevant.

El Salvador is another classic example of some nation building that actually worked. It was a war-riven, dysfunctional society, as we can remember, with massive human rights violations on all sides. There has been less recognition than that of the subsequent progress that has been made in that country, with very substantial assistance from the U.N. and from the international

community. Not only did the U.N., with U.S. support, broker the end to civil war, with a formula that specified the shape of the government, from elections through to judiciary, through to the composition of the police force -- all the kinds of things we are talking about -- but that worked. And a decade later, GDP has tripled, and immigration to the United States, if you want the direct interest connection, is down by 50 percent.

Mozambique is another faraway place, but it is a spectacular example of successful nation building after civil war. It was run largely by the U.N., but with relatively small but highly visible U.S. involvement. Of 1.7 million refugees, three-quarters of them have returned home within two years. The electoral democratic environment is extraordinarily encouraging, producing a government that, far from perfect, has been stable -- a remarkable achievement after 16 years of civil war. What was one of the world's poorest countries has now become one of Africa's fastest growing. And it is not now on anyone's list of places likely to harbor bin Laden.

And you can multiply those examples.

The third and major point I want to make is that there are cases where America has not engaged in nation building and where that non-engagement has been manifestly to this country's disadvantage. Now, I know there was an attempt to downplay this in what Mr. Carpenter said a moment ago, but you have to refer to

the situation in Afghanistan after the Russians were driven out as a classic example of policy failure in this respect.

It is perfectly true, what has just been said, that such U.S. support as was given during that period, in the run-up to getting the Russians out, was fairly fundamentally misconceived in terms of the kind of people who were built up to exercise the kind of power and authority they should never have been given that responsibility to do. But I cannot believe that had the United States put the kind of post-conflict effort then that is now going into the construction of a viable political authority, the construction of viable security arrangements, and the mobilization of not only short-term humanitarian but longer-term reconstruction and development support, I can't believe that if that had happened in the early nineties, with the kind of resources that are being now talked about -- maybe \$10 billion over a five-year period -- I can't believe that anything like what happened through the nineties, with horrible effects that we are all now aware of, would have in fact occurred.

The fourth point I want to make is that some of the cases where nation building has allegedly failed have not really been nation building cases at all. And I think Somalia, which had another mention this morning from Mr. Carpenter, clearly falls very much in that category. The international intervention in Somalia not only the initial humanitarian one but the more

complex efforts made a little bit later to try and stabilize the political situation, that intervention went off the rails in every direction it is possible to mention -- a misreading of the situation on the ground, misconceived mandates, misapplied mandates, culminating, of course, in the disastrous military exercise to snatch Aideed from his urban warren in Mogadishu -- may be a sobering foretaste of what some of the fighting might be like in Baghdad if countries were tempted down that path in the future. But that's another story.

But whatever the U.S. Marines and others were doing in Somalia, I don't think you can even begin to make the argument that that was nation building in any meaningful sense of the term, and certainly in the way I have sought to describe it, and which is the usage in most current and widespread acceptance around the place.

The final point I want to make is that, in some of the cases where nation building clearly has not yet worked, it is a product of the task being incomplete rather than the task being a misconceived one. Maybe Haiti is in that category. I would certainly put Bosnia and I would certainly put Kosovo in that particular category. And my organization has done a huge amount of work over the last five or six years on both Bosnia and, more recently, Kosovo, and I think we got a lot of experience and a

lot of writing we can bring to bear to this, which I can only summarize in a moment now.

Basically, what we say about Bosnia is this: that yes, although it has some of the characteristics that have been described this morning -- I think "Potemkin country" maybe is putting it a little bit harshly -- although it has some of the characteristics of a not yet integrated state, with clearly an unsustainable, if you want to build a state there, division between the two entities, the Serb in the north and the notionally united Croatian and Bosniac one in the south and west, although that is manifestly not yet producing anything like a sustainable state that could handle the withdrawal of international support and the withdrawal of international troops, nonetheless, significant progress is being made.

We have seen in the last year the emergence of a far more moderate set of political forces, not in Republic of Srpska, that's for sure, not among the Serb side, but certainly the alliance is building support and has given us some credible basis for thinking there is a way forward in the future. I think there is a lot to be said about how this could be handled, and maybe there will be an opportunity for more discussion on this later on.

Partly it is a matter of using the processes that are already underway with the Constitutional Court and forcing some

further institutional change as a result of the requirements of that Court decision. But, ultimately, it may well mean a far more robust exercise of the powers of imposition by the international community and some rewriting of the Dayton Constitutional Accords, simply to strip away that two-entity structure and, in effect, force the embrace of a system built around strong central institutions and devolved authority at essentially the municipality level.

I think that is workable. The dynamic that is now operating in Belgrade is such as to make it a lot more achievable, and obviously it was the case before, although there is still internal tensions in Belgrade that make the situation very difficult. It is an incomplete task, but to abandon it at this stage would be grossly irresponsible on the part of the international community and, I think, the United States in particular.

Similarly, for Kosovo, that is a job manifestly extremely incomplete at the moment. There is a lot that has to be done to build viable institutional structures that are capable of forming the foundation for a substantial longer-term political settlement. And I don't think you can say anything more than that is a job very half-finished at the moment.

Let me conclude by saying this. I have been around long enough in government, and I have been an observer of

governments and intergovernmental organizations for long enough, not to be naive about their shortcomings when it comes to this kind of stuff. I don't think I am naive or ill-informed about the inability, for the most part, for governments and intergovernmental organizations to think much longer term than about three months. That is long term in people's thinking. I mean, three weeks is medium term and three days is short term. That is the real world we live in.

I don't think I am naive about the inability to think through and clearly define goals and objectives in these processes. I don't think I am naive or ill-informed about the miscalculations that so often occur as to what is necessary operationally and the resources that are needed to meet particular objectives and, similarly, about the failure so often to adapt to new circumstances, to deliver the necessary resources even when they have been committed. And, generally speaking, I don't think I am naive about the gap that so often exists between aspiration and achievement.

But I have also been around long enough to know that the aspiration here is deeply worthwhile and that it is our responsibility in the policy community not to pour scorn on the aspiration but, rather, to make sure that the gap between aspiration and achievement is closed to the extent that it possibly can be. It is not only in the interests of young Afghan

kids or, for that matter, Pakistani kids, to have a decent, non-madrassa education and the kind of government that can provide it; it is in our interest, in the West's interests, in the United States' interests. We can afford to do it, and we can't afford not to do it.

It is absolutely in our interests to do everything we humanly can to ensure that failed-state disasters like Afghanistan don't happen again. So I am not asking Americans to support this kind of nation building because you are full of the milk of human kindness and can't wait to do the decent thing, although I am sure that that is true, even if in some cases the instinct is a little deep down inside. What I am asking you to do is do all these things because you are smart.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. DEMPSEY: Our final speaker this morning is Alan Tonelson. He is a Research Fellow at the U.S. Business and Industry Council, a Washington research organization dedicated to studying U.S. economic, technology and national security policy. He is also a Research Associate at George Washington University's Center for International Science and Technology Policy.

Mr. Tonelson's latest book, "The Race to the Bottom," was published by Westview Press in November of last year and will be released in paperback next fall. He is also the Co-Editor of

"Powernomics: Economics and Strategy After the Cold War," which was published in 1991. Mr. Tonelson's articles on American foreign policy, globalization, and technology policy have appeared in numerous journals, including Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, and National Interest, and in newspapers such as the New York Times, Washington Post and Wall Street Journal.

In addition, Tonelson has appeared often on television and radio networks, including the Jim Lehrer News Hour, PBS's Nightly News, and CNN. Mr. Tonelson received his B.A. in history, with highest honors, from Princeton University.

Alan.

ALAN TONELSON, SENIOR ANALYST,  
U.S. BUSINESS & INDUSTRY COUNCIL

MR. TONELSON: Thank you very much, Gary. And it is a real privilege to be part of such a distinguished panel, and I would like to thank the Cato Institute for putting it on and helping to focus the public spotlight on these very important issues.

Adjectives are one of my least favorite forms of words. I really don't like adjectives. I like verbs; I don't like adjectives. So I am not going to stand here and insist that the picture of nation building that we just heard from Minister Evans

was naive. I am not going to call it ill-informed. But I think I will try to make the case that if you look at concepts like nation building and failed states, if you look at them closely, they are not serious concepts. They do not hold up to any intellectual scrutiny whatever.

Nation building, first of all, is an inherently difficult subject to talk about for a reason that should caution us strongly about its very viability. And I am sure we will get into more of this in the question, answer and exchange part of our program. But as I see it, in the real world, as opposed to the world of op ed articles and the world of foundation proposals, it has never happened before. And I will just use the one example of Marshall Plan aid that Minister Evans brought up.

Obviously the world has seen hugely successful exercises in the economic, physical and even political "rebuilding" of states destroyed by war and/or their own dictatorships, but these states were already cohesive and successful -- economically anyway -- before the cataclysm struck. There was a state there underneath the rubble, there was a society there underneath the rubble, that could be rebuilt. Building a nation from scratch, where none has existed before, that is what we are talking about now.

And I would submit -- and, again, I am sure we will talk about all of this in much greater detail -- what Minister

Evans has been talking about are some very limited examples in some very small countries of where the international community has taken a region, with no coherent society whatever, and turned it into an international welfare case, and kept it on international life support of various kinds. If you want to call that a success, that is, I suppose, anyone's privilege. It is an adjective that I would strongly dispute.

And as I have just implied, I think, the term "failed states" is a highly misleading, non-serious term also, again, implying that real statehood and viability had existed in some previous era. But the regions on everyone's failed states list were never states at all. Most, at various times, have had the superficial trappings of statehood. They have had flags. They have had national airlines. They have had postage stamps -- often, very nice ones. They have had U.N. missions. They have even had what looked like militaries.

And the frustrating thing, again, for a serious thinker, is that when you look at a failed state on a map, it looks exactly like a real state. I mean, just think of the map of France and the map of Afghanistan. They look very much alike. They are different shapes, but they are areas that are bounded by solid lines. They have little dots inside them that signify cities. They have, usually, a starred dot inside them that

signifies the capital city. But images like this are utterly misleading.

The reason is that these regions -- I don't even want to fall into the intellectually lazy habit of calling them "states" or "failed states" -- these regions lack the defining qualities of nation-states. And these defining qualities have absolutely nothing to do with physical assets like hard currency reserves or arsenals or even government office buildings. These defining qualities are intangible.

First, as we have heard from Ted Carpenter, you need a sense of national cohesion stronger than various subnational loyalties. And second, and what we haven't spoken about, is you need a notion of government that is something more than unrestrained repression, exploitation and outright theft. And I would submit, Afghanistan, again, anything but a failed state. Haiti, anything but a failed state. Somalia, anything but a failed state. Yugoslavia, anything but a failed state, even though it was awarded the Winter Olympics. That doesn't make you a successful state, believe it or not.

Now, there is no question that these essential qualities of nationhood, these intangible qualities, can develop and evolve over time. If they couldn't, we would not have states at all. But there is no evidence whatever that these qualities can be transplanted by an outside power. As historians describe

it, the qualities of nationhood, these essential intangible qualities, can only emerge gradually, organically, in the uncounted individual and group transactions and relationships and instances of learning that take place every day in the private, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of life.

They aren't produced by government fiat. They aren't produced by the good works of even the most effective NGO's. And the reasons for this, in turn, are pretty simple, and are in fact almost identical to the reasons that world government schemes and even strong international regimes never emerge. There is a reason for this: Life, and especially politics, in failed states are almost identical -- and it's no coincidence -- almost identical to life and politics in the international arena. There is no meaningful consensus on legitimate authority. There is no meaningful consensus on appropriate behavior.

Therefore, groups that have cohered within these regions -- again, I am not going to call them failed states, because they are not -- in these regions, the groups that have cohered have placed an entirely understandable and, I would submit, inevitable, premium on what might be called monopolizing the guns. And monopolizing the guns is extremely important, because you have to assume, if you value your life or your family's life, that any gun you don't have is possessed by

someone else, and it can and will be used against you. That is an essential characteristic of a failed state.

In other words, politics in these failed states -- and how I hate using this term, but I guess I get intellectually lazy myself -- politics is not about human improvement or any public purposes as genuine states understand these goals, however imperfectly genuine states pursue these goals. It is about gaining and wielding power for self-defense and aggrandizement.

The good news is that nation building is irrelevant to fighting terrorism, or global terrorism, and strengthening U.S. national security in any significant or cost-effective way. And even in wartime, economics matters. First, the closer you examine the supposed link between failed states and global terrorism, the weaker this link looks. Most failed states have not generated global terrorism or even hosted global terrorists. And today, how many failed states could such terrorists really hide in, much less operate from, beyond the reach of the U.S. military?

Nor does there seem to be much of a link between global poverty and global terrorism. That is an argument you frequently hear -- "drain the swamp" -- that's what that refers to.

The terrorists we know about -- and we have no reason to think that they're not typical of the kinds of global terrorists we face -- first of all, they don't come from

low-income families, by and large. They are not Afghan herdsmen. They are not Pakistani school kids. A few Pakistani kids apparently went over to join the Taliban and/or al Qaeda forces in the early phase of the Afghan conflict, when I guess it looked pretty promising from their side. I have a feeling their recruitment lines now are not stretching around the block. I have that feeling. It is not a good career move to join al Qaeda anymore.

So, by and large, the terrorists that we are worried about are not coming from low-income families. I would argue they are the sons, largely, of elites that have unfortunately lost out in the endlessly violent struggles of Arab politics. And there are in fact few signs that global terrorists like this have made major inroads among the Arab world's poor. The Arab street seems rather quiet. That is what a smashing military victory will do. That is why victory is good and you should seek it when you need to. U.S. embassies are not in flames, from Jakarta to Morocco. And, again, I would imagine that al Qaeda recruitment is down.

All of which leads to the conclusion that the best and most cost-effective ways of preventing and combating global terrorism involve combining military strength, which is the best form of preventive diplomacy ever invented -- make no mistake about this -- with sensible homeland security measures. As in so

many realms of life, the key to American success in the anti-terror campaign will be keeping it simple, at least conceptually.

(Applause.)

MR. DEMPSEY: Thank you, Alan.

I am going to now allow the panelists to respond to any of the remarks that were made by the panelists that preceded them or followed them. I will start with you, Ted.

DR. CARPENTER: I will try to be brief, because I want to leave the maximum amount of time for Q&A from the audience.

Let me just say that I think the drive for nation-building missions is in many ways the newest face of an old phenomenon. And that is, Western imperialism. This may be a more benign face, but it is still reflecting the same kinds of motives. And in this case, I think maybe we ought to talk about Democratic Socialist imperialism, because it seems the most popular on that side of the political spectrum. The belief that if you have talented people, a really comprehensive plan and enough money, you can mold, you can remake entire societies, I am very skeptical about that. I think that societies tend to be impervious to that kind of outside pressure, with the exceptional cases and for the exceptional reasons that Alan Tonelson cited, with the post-World War II experiences with Japan and Germany.

Outside of that, most of the nation-building efforts have been, at best, partial successes, and, at worse, outright failures. And I don't really accept the explanation of, in cases like Bosnia, just give us more time and it will work eventually. It has been six years. Bosnia is no closer to being a viable country today than it was when the Dayton Accords were signed. That is the reality.

Why? Because a substantial portion of the population, perhaps even a majority of the population, does not want to be in this so-called country. Their identification lies elsewhere. And in their frustration, the international officials have become ever-more arbitrary and autocratic. Removing candidates from the ballot, padding registration rosters for elections, dismissing elected officials from office because they are deemed insufficiently cooperative, and banning them from running for elections in the future -- this is a very curious democracy that the West is bringing to Bosnia. Press censorship, another, is something less than a prime Western value.

And what have we seen after six years? Politically, still a sense of division in the country. Economically, the Wall Street Journal and the Heritage Foundation issued its Annual Report on Economic Freedom in the World, and out of 150-some countries studied, Bosnia ranked 141st. I believe it tied with Burkina-Faso and Yemen in terms of economic freedom. That is

after six years of a comprehensive international effort, with aid being poured in and literally an army of international officials to administer it.

That to me is a textbook study that good intentions are not enough, and that policies have to be judged by their results, not their intentions. In the case of Bosnia, in the case of other nation-building ventures, the results have been, to put it charitably, quite disappointing.

MR. DEMPSEY: Gary?

MR. EVANS: The trouble with Mr. Tonelson's view of the world is that there is no real argument that you could ever make that would ever possibly persuade him. The truth of the matter is that, all around the world, as I think he acknowledged, the state after state after state that contains groups of people who ideally, if asked and if they had an absolutely free hand in the matter, would prefer not to live with the other national entity or group in that particular state, but, nonetheless, do so, because the balance of advantage for continuing to live with the existing arrangements, rather than trying to create some new arrangement, has either been recently or long ago established.

I live in one such country. I live in Belgium. And the French and the Dutch speakers basically hated each other's guts and continue to do so. But they have developed a viable, extraordinarily complex, clumsy set of constitutional

arrangements that enable them to live together. And people have long ago made the judgment that it is better to go on rolling with this.

And similarly in Switzerland and similarly in Canada even, as between the French and the English speakers. But Germany, given as an example of a country that was able to be a subject of a nation rebuilding exercise or a state-rebuilding exercise, after the war because it was so well-established as a state, that was simply the phenomenon that wasn't the case less than a century earlier. It was made a state, I guess, by Bismarck and by other German nationalists, working to create a state entity out of a whole bunch of separately divided entities. And that story repeats itself over and over again throughout Europe.

But you can't argue any of these cases, because the missing ingredient for a viable state is, according to Mr. Tonelson, the notion of national cohesion. Okay, but national cohesion is the ingredient which explains why some states do work as states, notwithstanding multiple internal divisions, and other states don't, because there is national cohesion. But national cohesion does not descend, as he himself would acknowledge, by divine manner. It is something that has to either evolve over time or be brought about as a balance of someone creating circumstances, be it a national leader or an outside intervener,

that establishes a new set of balances of advantages and disadvantages that make people prepared to live with them.

And the truth of the matter is that all the time we are engaged in enterprises to try and hold together states which are perhaps not inherently all that enthusiastic about hanging together, but which it is important for them to do so. To just give you one example, Burundi. At any give time over the last four or five years, Burundi could have exploded in massive genocidal violence between Hutu and Tutsis of the kind that occurred in Rwanda in 1994. The dynamics are slightly different in terms of the political environment, but the degree of feeling as between the two sides of that ethnic divide within that country is just as strong. But, nonetheless, that state is hanging together.

And I'll tell you why it is hanging together -- because of a massive, sustained commitment of resources by the international community to ensure that that is the case. The Mandela peace process, all those who have been involved in it, including some of these whimpy NGO's like my own, that has been intimately involved in crafting one strategy after another to develop viable institutional arrangements.

And okay, there is still a long way to go to make sure that it is viable and sustained over time. But is anyone prepared to stand up here and say that it would have been better

to just let all that go to hell in a hand basket and that violence to explode and there to have been another genocide just because you might not be immediately able to see a direct nexus, a direct connection, between an American national interest, narrowly defined, and without worrying about any of the other things that I talked about before -- refugee flows, health pandemics, and all the rest of the things that can indirectly burden you over time?

These things are worth doing and they can be done. The important thing is to hang in there and try and do it, and to do it better than, by and large, it has been done in the past. I guess that is the basic message that I would insist upon.

The notion, finally, in the context of terrorism, that all you need to do is to have the military sanction ready to zap anybody who gets out of line, and then spend all the rest of your resources engaged in building homeland defense frankly seems to me to be, with due respect, I think misconceived. What you have to do to deal with the terrorist problem, and the recurrence potentially of the further appearance of it around the place, is not only to be willing to do the punitive retaliatory stuff in exactly the way that has been very successfully done in recent weeks -- sure, you've got to do that -- but what you have to do is to build the capacity and the will of those states where terrorism has been bred and is going to continue to be bred as a

result of all sorts of internal phenomena and external grievance, you have to build the capacity and the will in those states to do the job internally themselves and to cooperate with the West, with the United States, in the kind of intelligence sharing and money trail chasing, and all the rest, that is part of the business of effective homeland security. That just can't be done unilaterally; it has to be done in cooperation.

How do you build that capacity and will? Well, by being supportive, and not just by standing around and being prepared to zap everybody if they get out of line. A much more constructive approach is necessary than that, a much more sophisticated, subtle, multi-tiered policy strategy, involving some elements of what can only be called, sensibly, nation building, nation reconstruction or reconsolidation. It also means being prepared to address some of the underlying things like unresolved political grievances, unresolved or badly resolved conflicts, underlying economic, social and cultural grievances that are part of the picture.

I don't want to make any, again, naive or simplistic judgments about what motivates individual terrorists. There are all sorts of motivations. What people say is not always what seriously motivates them. Palestine was a recent invention for bin Laden. We know all that stuff. But what we sure as hell know is that if you want the cooperation of these states where

terrorism breeds, from which it comes, and from which it is going to go on coming in the future, you sure as hell have to do something which gives them some confidence that they can be cooperative with the international community, with the West, without coming under huge, relentless pressure from inside.

You have to be seen to be addressing some of those issues which move the street and which do generate grievance. And that is why a complex strategy addressing all these issues is a critical part of the anti-terrorist repertoire. It is not an argument we are going to be able to take much further, I think, because it is an unwinnable argument. If you do have a cohesive state, it is because there is an ingredient there called national cohesion. But I would argue that national cohesion is not a matter of chance, is not a matter of ancient history; it is something that you can actively contribute to creating right here and now, and it is overwhelmingly in our interest in case after case after case around the world to try and do just that.

MR. DEMPSEY: Alan?

MR. TONELSON: I always sense that when a 12-minute talk provokes an 11-and-a-half-minute reaction, I must have done something right.

(Laughter.)

MR. TONELSON: Let me just take a few points very quickly, because I know we would like to hear from all of you as well.

It is very convenient when your interlocutor makes your case for you. My case was not that nations never emerge. I explicitly said of course nations emerge all the time. The question is: How and why do they emerge? What does history teach us?

And certainly I omitted military conquest or diplomatic brilliance, acquisitive diplomatic brilliance ala Bismarck. Now, I am not sure, though, that that is the formula that Minister Evans would want us to reproduce today, unless he would like us to go around actually conquering failed states or encourage certain factions within failed states to militarily conquer the folks that they don't like. I don't think that is the road we want to go down at all.

What I did say was that it cannot be transplanted from the outside. Now, as I also said, if you want to turn countries into permanent wards of the international community, permanent welfare states, subsidized by Western and/or U.S. taxpayers, I suppose that is a reasonable goal. Or, I should say, that is a defensible goal to stand for. It is not something that I happen to agree with. I don't suppose many American taxpayers would agree with that either. And we are a country of enormous

goodwill, as we showed by being the biggest donor of food, by far, to Taliban-era Afghanistan. So I really would rather not hear anything about how deeply submerged the goodwill and cooperative impulses of the American people are.

But when you keep in mind that the Defense Department estimates that there are al Qaeda cells operating in 68 countries around the world, the notion that we are going to nation-build 68 times and do it successfully in time to prevent or preempt major terrorist strikes, again, to me it is not a serious concept. And it is not that I am setting the bar too high; I'm setting a reasonable bar, as I see it.

The final point that I will make is that Minister Evans did mention the responsibility of policy analysts. And I think that is a very important point to bring up. As I see it, the responsibility of those of us who analyze public policy for a living is to essentially call a spade a spade. In public life, in politics, there are often only terrible choices. There is often no good option whatever. And sometimes doing nothing makes a lot more sense than deceiving yourself into thinking that you can do something.

In fact, just one final point here. I was struck by the formulation that I kept hearing over and over again in Minister Evans' response, which was that we need to do all that we can. To meet that is a morally slippery concept. It suggests

that doing all that you can and satisfying your own conscience is the main purpose of the kinds of nation building or humanitarian -- even self-interested humanitarian -- activities that we just heard about. Because "all you can" suggests that the option of failure is real -- I would say the option of failure is all too real -- and that this is not an exercise in therapy; this is an exercise in policymaking.

And I am not worried about being constructive. I am not worried about being respected. I am not worried about being sophisticated. I am not worried about being subtle. I am worried about being effective. And we owe nothing less to the American people.

MR. DEMPSEY: I'm going to open it up to questions and answers in a second, but just some ground rules. When the microphone comes around to you, please give your name and affiliation, if you have one.

Actually, I am going to take my prerogative as the moderator and ask the first question. The model of Switzerland was brought up as an example of success of a nation-state. I am wondering if federalization is the answer, and why it is not being proposed in Bosnia, where it is being proposed that it be centralized, and the same is being advocated for Afghanistan. Is federalism, is decentralism, part of the solution or part of the problem?

MR. EVANS: There has been a kind of quasi-federalism as part of the scene in Bosnia at the moment. It is not complete because of the merging of the Croatian and the Bosniac components of the one-half of the country at the moment. Normally, it is a quite effective potential solution for reconciling these competing objectives of a strong center and a devolved sense of identity with some lesser administrative unit. And the kind of model that I would have in mind, my organization would have in mind, for Bosnia is one that combines the strong center with, nonetheless, a strong sense of ethnic identity, if you like, at a level of governance which would still be very meaningful in terms of repertoire of powers available to it. But it wouldn't be a formal federation; it would be a kind of municipal level of administration. Another variation of this is the cantonal model, which is the equivalent in many ways to Switzerland.

I think the problem with the existing federal model is that it has become too entrenched in its form, the institutions are too strong and are working against the possibility of creating a new center, and basically they have just got to be broken down. But in the Afghanistan context, the "f" word is the one that ought to be on people's minds at the moment, in terms of trying to create a viable new national entity. You have to recognize the reality of those regional differences; they are very strong. The question in issue is whether the impulse to

create a genuinely viable state is going to be strong enough over time to sustain such a state or whether the impulse to disaggregate will prove, over time, to be in the way that Mr. Carpenter wants to accede to right now.

I think there are grounds for encouragement in what has been happening over the last two or three weeks. We cannot be totally optimistic for the future, but there is enough in Afghanistan's past to suggest that if the place is well governed at the center and it pays sufficient attention to the necessity for a significant degree of regional devolution, then the country can in fact hang together. And it is very much in people's interests, because of the destabilization that is inevitably to occur if you start breaking the place up into completely different state entities.

To separate out the Pashtuns, for example, which many people regard as an attractive option for Afghanistan, immediately raises the question about the implications of that for the Pashtuns in Pakistan. It would be tremendously destabilizing there, and therein lies a problem. Similarly, in Iraq, if you break the country up and divide the north into a separate Kurdish entity, the Turks are very, very anxious indeed about the implications, destabilizing as they would be for them internally.

So there are often constraints which make it very much in the international interests, as well as quite apart from the interests of the local players, to try and hold to particular outcomes. But what you are trying to do always is simply to improve the odds of success by international intervention. And to say that we should do all that we can in constructing these kinds of models and in seeking to encourage people to embrace them, I don't see as being morally slippery; I just see it as doing everything you can to improve the odds of success.

MR. DEMPSEY: Ted?

DR. CARPENTER: Federalism is a very attractive model, but I would argue that if the lack of national identity is present, federalism is likely to be a halfway house to secession or to warlordism far more often than it is to a stable national political system. And let's remember, even in cases where there is a strong national identity, federal systems are sometimes not all that stable.

The United States came within an eyelash of having its federal system fail in the 1860's. And I think, in an atmosphere like Afghanistan, I would not be optimistic about the long-term viability of a federal system.

MR. DEMPSEY: I'll open it up to questions.

MR. BUTT: My name is Kami Butt, and I am from Pakistan. And I think that introduction is enough.

I was just wondering, is this fair to blame Saudi Arabia and Pakistan for the mess that has mostly happened because of American negligence? Had America paid proper attention after the Soviets left, this would not have happened. That is number one.

I know, being from Pakistan, I was there in those days when Pakistan was fighting the Soviet Union. And I was kind of a kid. I was never afraid of the Soviet Union or socialists because I knew they are faithless people, but I was always afraid of the Islamic sect fundamentalists who abused Islam. And that can be anywhere in the world. It is not just Muslims. They can be Christians and they can be Jews. But who are the people who capitalized or materialized on that hatred? I concede that President Reagan is an American hero, but it was that very American President who capitalized on that hatred among Muslim against communism and won over communism.

Now, I feel kind of upset because this is very WASPy, to use these brown people and throw them out like a dirty condom after we use them. If we are not going to pay attention, if we are going to leave Afghanistan, I can assure you that these things will happen again. I kind of threw my point out to you all.

Now, what will happen? Most probably America will kind of bribe General Musharraf. And I like General Musharraf. If he

prolongs his regime for a long time, people will be oppressed again, and who will pay the price -- naive Americans or people like myself?

The other day I was driving around Capitol Hill with three or four friends, and all of them were white. And the police were looking at me. They have reason to look at me. You can call it profiling. It has turned against Arabic and against Asians like me. And I really feel like it is people like you who mislead Americans just by giving little statements on the TV. I feel your debate is so harmful. I think people are human beings. They should be treated with respect.

MR. DEMPSEY: There are several questions that are in there, so I will just let the panel respond to them.

DR. CARPENTER: The first question was, is it fair to blame Pakistan and Saudi Arabia for the mess in Afghanistan? Yes, it is. Pakistan, for its own political reasons, in the 1980's, pushed the United States to channel the bulk of the aid to the Islamic radical factions. Pakistan, for its own political reasons, in the mid-1990's, backed the Taliban. Saudi Arabia has become the chief financial backer, the banker, of the Taliban. They deserve a tremendous amount of blame for it.

I did not exempt U.S. policy. I said that the U.S. helped create a problem during the 1980's, and I would reiterate

that. But one cannot exempt Pakistan and Saudi Arabia from the blame by any means.

MR. TONELSON: I just want to make one comment here. The Afghans did not help the United States to expel the Soviet Union from their -- again, I don't want to call it a country, because I don't think it is -- from where they live as a favor to the United States. They didn't do this because they like the United States. They didn't do this because they think well of American consumer society or anything else that we stand for. They did it because they wanted the Soviets out. We wanted the Soviets out too. We helped each other.

This happens all the time in history. States help each other. Alliances or quasi-alliances or informal alliances form. The task is achieved. The alliance breaks apart. There was no actual or implied obligation for the United States to do anything for Afghanistan. And to think that, again, we were helped as a favor to us, I think so misreads the situation that it is very difficult to even grasp.

MR. DEMPSEY: Next question, over here.

MR. MORGAN: My name is Larry Morgan. I am with Chemonics International. Thanks to Cato for an excellent forum.

I don't take offense from any of the speakers. I think they are well-founded in what they say. But the purpose of this forum is to talk about what about Afghanistan in the future and

nation building. I would like for Minister Evans to go back one decade ago, to talk about, if the United States did renege on its commitment, what should the United States have done in Afghanistan? I think that might address this gentleman's concern and what the other two speakers have said also.

MR. EVANS: In a nutshell, to try to do what it is now trying to do, not only unilaterally but with the support of others in the international community. And that would be, first of all, to try and use the muscle and the influence which the United States unquestionably possessed with a number of the key players, including guys like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who I have to say, I know I've negotiated with the Khmer Rouge in my time, he remains the creepiest single individual I have ever come across in my entire public life, but he was made by the United States and was perfectly capable of being influenced by them.

I would have exercised that authority to try and get these guys together, to try and find the king to play a symbolic role, to do all the sort of things you can do through a combination of sticks and carrots. The carrot, in particular, being the willingness to put some significant financial resources into the country to create economic opportunity for the people and to create the possibility of it being a more stable island in the region, to address the question of the drug trade and production through a strategy that would be genuinely helpful in

that respect and which we have got to face up to now. Talking about the external implications of what is going on inside the country, if this issue is not addressed, the first thing that these tribesmen are going to do in various parts of the country is be planting their poppy crops tomorrow. And, come next spring, we have a whacking-great international problem all over again, and in particular a problem in the wider region -- ask the Iranians about that -- quite apart from a lot of others. So it's a matter of addressing those issues.

It is a painfully difficult process to use authority and to use incentives and to use pressure to do these nation-building tasks. But the way I put it is the only way I can repeat it now. To do the best we possibly could have with the motivation of creating viable governing institutions, a viable security environment, a viable justice system, and a viable set of economic opportunities for people in that country across the spectrum. And I think if a serious effort had been made to do that, we wouldn't have seen anything like the situation that evolved over the last decade.

DR. CARPENTER: I think we are going to get a field test of the nation-building strategy. We will see, a few years from now, whether the current strategy works in Afghanistan. If it doesn't, then I think the inescapable conclusion is that it

probably would not have worked a decade earlier with a more concerted U.S. effort.

Mr. Evans also raises the bar considerably. I guess now, not only do we have to engage in a comprehensive nation-building effort, but we have to win the war on drugs in Afghanistan, something that we have tried globally for better than three decades without any discernible success. I think if he piles that on top of a basic nation-building mission, we have almost no prospect of success.

MR. DEMPSEY: Yes?

MR. KHAN: My name is Masood Khan. I am from the Embassy of Pakistan.

Mr. Carpenter has made a very pointed reference to Pakistan. Of course, retrospectively, we can rewrite history, but in the mid-eighties, it was not under the pressure of the Government of Pakistan that the United States agreed to send in militants, or extremists, inside Afghanistan. The United States and Pakistani agencies, and in fact all the agencies of the West, had developed this consensus that Islamic radicals, or Islamic extremists, should be sent into Afghanistan, because they were the ones who were ready to fight, not the moderates, who decided to migrate and now are part of the Afghan diaspora.

I would say that in hindsight, of course you can say that it was only Saudi Arabia or Pakistan to blame, but I can

tell you that we were partners, the United States and Pakistan and all other Islamic countries, were partners until 1989. And then the United States decided to walk away. And they were never a part of the political process that followed, the political process that never succeeded. There was the Jalalabad Accord and the Peshawar Accord, and there were many attempts made to catalyze cohesion amongst Afghan factions, but they never succeeded.

I do agree with Mr. Gareth Evans that cohesion is not divine, that it has to be willed and designed by human beings. And yes, if the United States was there in the 1990's, things would have been different. You wouldn't have a haven of terrorists in Afghanistan. And you can call it whatever you like. You can call it nation building. You can give it another name if you don't like that. But involvement of the United Nations and the United States and the major actors is always helpful, and I think that this has been demonstrated in Bonn that this has been helpful.

And in the future, if the international community continues to remain involved, that will be good for Afghanistan, good for the region, and good for the preservation of the self-interest of the United States.

Thank you.

DR. CARPENTER: Again, I don't want to take up much more time. I would simply say that the U.S. and Pakistan deserve joint blame for what happened in the 1980's. Pakistan, in 1995 forward, however, I think has a lot to answer for in its support of the Taliban. And that was not a U.S. policy.

MR. TONELSON: I think it is very important to understand also that in the world of real geopolitics, which, for better or worse, the United States Government thought it was engaged in, in the late 1970's and throughout the 1980's, we had to work with factions and groups that clearly we would have rather not have worked with. One reason is that all around Afghanistan are failed states. So it is not as if we had a lot of really great choices. We did the best that we could with the material that we had available.

We did not have a successful state in Pakistan that we could work with, full of nice, wholesome people who could help us. That option did not exist. It is not a successful country. In fact, I would even argue -- and again, I don't want to make this personal, but to underscore just how misleading our American image is of so many developing countries are -- there are so many aspects of Pakistan that are not real. It has been a kleptocracy for decades. It has been a military dictatorship for decades. It happens to have nuclear weapons, so we have to take it

seriously, unfortunately. But that is about it. So, again, we don't have much to work with in that region.

We have to make imperfect bargains with some terrible people. And of course, it has fallout, but we felt, again, rightly or wrongly, the rationale was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was unacceptable, and it was a top U.S. national security priority to reverse it.

We might not have made the best possible policy. We might not have paid sufficient attention to whatever blowback consequences you can list. But when you are faced with emergency situations like that, sometimes you cannot think very far ahead. You simply cannot afford it. The world does not let you, tragically.

MR. DEMPSEY: Daniel?

MR. SERWER: Daniel Serwer, from the U.S. Institute of Peace. I direct the Balkans Program there.

It seems to me that Mr. Carpenter has asked the wrong question about Bosnia. It is not whether there is a state or not that looks like other states. The question is whether the United States is better off today than it might have been otherwise and whether the cost is worth what we got for it. And it does seem to me, without wanting to drag out the argument, that on many scenarios much worse than the current one from the American perspective and that would have cost a great deal more, including

the scenario that actually drove policy at the time, which was the creation of an Islamic republic in Bosnia that would have been a platform for Iran in Europe and that would have required a kind of American military intervention, according to your model, that I submit would have cost much more than what it actually did.

I would note two things about Afghanistan that seem to me important. Tribal or ethnic or language affiliations may be primary, but there is a secondary identification as Afghans. And it seems to me that that is extraordinarily important.

Secondly, the neighbors of Afghanistan, with the possible exception of Pakistan, have shown remarkably little interest in Afghanistan generally, and really no interest in dismantling it. Had those conditions prevailed in Bosnia, there would never have been a war and it would have been quite easy to build a state.

DR. CARPENTER: Let me just respond that there are things that might have been worse in Bosnia, and there are also things that probably would have been better, including the decision at Dayton, instead of adopting a soft partition to adopt a real partition, and stop pretending that Bosnia is a real country. An enlarged Serbia, an enlarged Croatia, and yes, a smaller, overwhelmingly Muslim Bosnian state, I think, very

likely, over the longer haul, is going to be a more stable option.

We have attempted to maintain a wholly artificial entity. I think Alan Tonelson is absolutely right -- this is going to be an international military welfare case for decades, indefinitely, because there is no point that this is likely to become a viable country.

As far as the interests of Afghanistan's neighbors, I tend to be agnostic about that. If they want to do something in Afghanistan, fine. If they want to coordinate a multinational effort to try to engage in nation-building, so be it. I just don't want to see the United States in there as an active participant, much less the lead country.

MR. EVANS: I think that the force of Dan Serwer's point about a Muslim entity in Bosnia has been under appreciated in what Mr. Carpenter just reminded us. And I wish I had remembered to make the point myself, because I think it is a powerful one.

Just remember this -- in 1993, 3,000 mujahedin, with Iranian arms and Arab funding, did arrive in Bosnia to take up arms on behalf of the Muslim community when the West at that stage would not. Instead of allowing them to play that particular role and then to create the environment, in a post-Dayton situation when the West finally did get involved,

where you would have sort of a rump Muslim statelet in which these guys would have had phenomenally strong influence, we hung in hard to create a multiethnic environment, as difficult as it is going to be to sustain that, for the larger interest of not only the country itself but the wider international community. It is a very formidable argument and it is one that you just have to take into account, these counterfactuals, when you are addressing these so-called failures or incomplete successes in nation-building.

MR. TONELSON: I just want to make the point that we have seen quite vividly in the last three months that when the United States faces a genuine national security threat, as opposed to a threat concocted, again, in think tanks and on op ed pages and by armchair analysts of all kinds, when we face a genuine threat we get our act together and we are really good at what we do. We don't screw up.

MR. EVANS: Up to the event, yes, that's right. You're very successful after the event.

MR. TONELSON: That's right, we are.

And when we face, again, one of these concocted, half-baked, well, this particular scenario might spin out and Slovenia is this dagger pointed at the heart of I don't know what -- lower Slobovia -- when we don't believe it ourselves, we don't act effectively and we screw up massively, and it is

because it is not important to us. And for 10 years, the U.S. Government, under Democrats and Republicans alike, have acted as if nothing in the Balkans is of any real importance to the United States.

I think we have wasted a tremendous amount of time and resources there. But because it wasn't important, the failure, thank God, has not been fatal to us. So, again, I think it is just stretching it beyond permissible bounds of the English language to call this a national security -- even -- problem for us. It was a humanitarian challenge. We flunked.

MR. DEMPSEY: We only have time for a few more questions.

MR. ISENBERG: David Isenberg, Adjunct Scholar, Cato Institute.

Keeping in mind the admonishment to keep the discussion centered on Afghanistan and remembering the admonishment to one of the panelists to operate in the real world, I would like to proffer the following thought about a solution for Afghanistan. It seems to me the problem with the discussion thus far is that the premise behind nation building, whether you believe in it or not, is that it is a job for states. And I am wondering, is there any reason we cannot see the restoration of Afghanistan as a functioning society, if not a state, where we don't have to worry about it being a hotbed of people planning attacks against

us in the future -- which is, after all, the main thrust of our concern here -- be done by the devices of the private sector?

My role model for this is looking at what happened in Somalia after the U.S. and other forces withdrew. Everybody forgot about it and the Somalians slowly restored a functioning society. It may not be a state currently, but people are being fed. It is not a hotbed of activism, at least notwithstanding the current interest in it as an al Qaeda cell location. But the point is that private sector groups went in, provided telecommunications services, provided functioning transportation, providing functioning financial services. And even before the bombs started dropping in Afghanistan, you had a whole panoply of NGO's doing that sort of stuff, taking care of internally displaced refugees and clearing out landmines, which was done almost entirely by private groups, not by states.

Is there any reason why that can't be a route to a solution in Afghanistan as opposed to having states operate it?

DR. CARPENTER: I guess one of the virtues of private sector options is that people assume their own level of risk, they aim at particular rewards, and, if they calculate incorrectly, they are the ones who pay the price. So I think there is much to be said for that particular option.

And you are absolutely right -- one of the untold stories of the aftermath of the multilateral intervention in

Somalia is that you did have private initiatives in that country that, over the longer term, have proven to be more successful. Whether that would happen in Afghanistan, I don't know. I think that is something that really has to be judged on a case-by-case basis. And given Afghanistan's history, I am not sure if most private sector individuals would want to venture there, but they may. And if they do, more power to them.

MR. EVANS: I think that is a bit of a triumph of optimism over experience to think that the private sector, in any significant way, is going to want to go into Afghanistan and make major investments in infrastructure, road building, mine clearing, energy supply, and all the rest of the things. You are going to see a revival, as we are seeing already in the streets of Kabul, of small-scale entrepreneurial activity, import/export, and all the rest of it -- exactly what is going on in a very significant scale in Kosovo, but because of the uncertainty about that country's future, you are not getting major investment into Kosovo. And you sure as hell are not going to get it into Afghanistan.

It is very difficult to see, on any assumption about risk and return, what could be the motivation for major capital investment coming from the private sector in Afghanistan. And unless you do that, unless you get the whole economy viable, quite apart from the problems about it going back to drug

production and trading and so on, which is going to need public sector intervention -- if you leave that to the private sector, you know exactly what the outcome is going to be -- quite apart from all of that, you are just not going to be able to develop any kind of a resource base for the country to generate an income flow which will enable the reconstruction of the education system and all those other kinds of public goods, the money for which has got to come from somewhere.

Now, a viable, thriving private sector-driven state entity can, over time, generate those income flows necessary to do it. But you're whistling "Dixie" if you think that's going to happen in Afghanistan in the indefinitely foreseeable future. It is public sector, international aid support, intervention, or nothing, I'm afraid.

MR. DEMPSEY: I'll take one more question.

MR. MCCUTCHEON: Rob McCutcheon, from the Cato Institute.

My question is also directed at Minister Evans. I appreciate your attempt to justify nation building using a realist paradigm and a very broad definition of self-interest. Using that same definition, I am curious about, in your opinion, when would it not be in the interest of the United States to engage in nation building?

MR. EVANS: The world as it is today has demonstrated that risks to United States' national interests can come from the most unlikely sorts of places, and maybe they are not going to be big and immediate interests in terms of narcotics or international crime or refugee flows or health pandemics or that stuff, but sure as hell you have to worry about the terrorist haven syndrome. So, frankly, almost anywhere in the world is a potential target for appropriate concern given what we now know about the way the world is capable of working.

Now, that does not necessarily follow, as was put rhetorically before, that that means 68 countries now have to be propped up with all the resources the United States can muster in order to make them viable because they are impossibly unviable at the moment. Although I do have to say that if the United States spent a halfway generous proportion of its national income on ODA instead of the around about .1 percent at the moment, which is only half the international average of .2, which in turn is only a third of the international target of .7, if the U.S. were prepared to be generous to that extent, you could make a hell of a lot of difference, in particular, in delivering support to an innumerable number of countries around the place through institutions like the World Bank and UNDP and so on. So there is scope for doing things even without becoming directly involved.

But, obviously, it is a burdensharing kind of an exercise. It is not only the U.S. that ought to have the responsibility for doing the best it can, because a lot of other countries share similar interest -- in particular, the E.U. -- and ought to be prepared to work with them. But it is a matter of being prepared to acknowledge the reality if you are serious about dealing with a terrorist phenomenon. A haven for terrorism is a real problem out there and it needs to be addressed by real solutions, not just pulling the old blanket over your head and hoping it will go away and being prepared to bring in the B-52's if and when some horror subsequently occurs. That way, to me, just doesn't seem to be a very constructive approach to what is a very real problem.

MR. TONELSON: I am so glad that that question was asked, because the problem with the nation-building strategy is that it is an open-ended strategy. And an open-ended strategy is not a strategy. It is a spasm of expenditure and effort. Because if you really do take Minister Evan's logic seriously -- maybe he doesn't really, but if you do -- then you do have to see about the 68 countries.

In fact, you can't stop there, because other countries might become failed. You might add to that list. How can you take the chance that the swamp won't spread across national lines? How can you take this chance? It's one world. We're an

integrated world. We face global threats. You can't take these chances. You can't put bounds on this. It seems that you would justify any expenditure of money, any assumption of risk.

A final point. Even the World Bank now acknowledges, through a report written by one of its Chief Economists, William Easterly, foreign aid don't work. ODA don't work. We could triple ODA and it doesn't work, because most of the recipients are not states. The agendas of their leaderships, again, to monopolize the guns, to get the money for themselves, to protect their own fortresses and regimes, are totally at odds with the agendas of the aid givers. There is a complete disconnect. So, please, no more about foreign aid. There is 50 years of experience, please.

MR. EVANS: Just one comment on that. I happen to have read that book, and that is not what Easterly says. Easterly says, if you are going to use aid, direct it properly and make sure you create incentives. You create incentives for the donors. You create incentives for the recipients. And you create incentives for individuals. Don't distort what is a very serious debate and a very intelligent contribution to it.

MR. TONELSON: Isn't it incredible that that insight took 50 years to come up with?

DR. CARPENTER: To answer the real question, the record of foreign aid over the past half-century is crystal clear. Even

a lot of the foreign aid officials will concede the point that aid, by and large, has not worked. It has not transformed societies in a desirable direction. It has not led to self-sustainable economic development. The typical copout, though, is, well, we need to do it differently. But that is just that, it is a copout. The record over the course of a half a century is crystal clear. And simply pouring more money, from the United States or anywhere else, into that failed strategy is not going to make it work.

The more fundamental point that Mr. Evans made, and I think Alan Tonelson responded very well to, is if you follow his logic, the United States cannot be safe unless it seeks to remake the entire planet and stabilize the entire planet. That is a task far beyond the capability of even a superpower. This would be a foreign policy that should appeal only to masochists.

MR. DEMPSEY: On that note, I would like to thank our panelists.

(Applause.)

MR. DEMPSEY: And I would invite everybody upstairs for our buffet lunch.

(Whereupon, the Cato Institute Policy Forum concluded.)