

Center for Strategic and International Studies

The Inaugural Arnaud de Borchgrave Transnational Threats Dialogue

**Opening Remarks:
Dr. John J. Hamre,
President and CEO,
Center for Strategic and International Studies**

**Dialogue:
HRH Prince Turki Al Faisal,
Former Director of Intelligence, Ambassador to the United States,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

**General James L. Jones, USMC (Ret.),
Former National Security Adviser, NATO Supreme Allied Commander,
Commandant, USMC**

**Moderator:
Thomas M. Sanderson,
Director and Senior Fellow, Transnational Threats Project,
Center for Strategic and International Studies**

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JOHN J. HAMRE: My name's John Hamre. I'm the president here at CSIS.

Before we begin, every kind of public event that we do we start with a little safety announcement, and I'm your responsible safety officer. I'm in charge of your well-being tonight. So if we have anything that happens, I'd ask you to follow my directions. We're going to go out – we have an exit out to the street right on this level. And if there's a problem out in front we're going to go to the back, and if there's a problem in the back we're going to go to the front. And so I don't know what we're going to – (inaudible) – and I know we won't have a problem, but I'd ask you just please to follow me if we have to do something.

It's a – it's a real privilege to have all of you here tonight, and you're all here because we share together, you know, a link from someone who is with us tonight, but just not physically with us, and that's Arnaud. You know, you feel his spirit coursing around the room. That's what we all share with this remarkable man.

And I remember when we had the memorial service. You know, you don't – if you just try to carve someone's name in a piece of granite and put it away in some green space, people forget. So instead we wanted to have something that kept this remarkable man's memory alive among us. And we thought the best way to do that would be to have an annual lecture program that embodies, you know, what Arnaud really committed his own life to, and that was trying to find solutions to very tough problems.

Arnaud created something here called the Transnational Threat Program, and it was Arnaud that had that insight. I still remember when he came to talk to me about it, where – you know, he said that criminal networks create the logistics backbone for terrorists. I'd never thought of that before, but he was right. And he said, we need to look at this as a whole. You know, this is usually a divide that's separated intelligence and national security on one side and police on the other side, and he said, you can't deal with this problem when you have that kind of a divide. So he was a pioneer to think about this. And so it's in that spirit that we want to kind of commemorate that insight.

Fortunately, one of Arnaud's greatest accomplishments was to mentor Tom Sanderson. And Tom has all of Arnaud's, you know, unending energy, vital energy, and a little bit of Arnaud's recklessness, you know. (Laughter.) You know, I could remember – (inaudible) – I can remember –

Alexandra, I'm sorry I didn't wait for you. My God, how embarrassed am I? I'm glad you're here.

I remember several times when Arnaud said I'm – you know, I'm going to leave tomorrow. I'm going to meet Mullah Omar. I'm going to go to the Bekaa Valley, and then they're going to drive me four hours. I said, Arnaud, for Christ's sakes, don't, you know? I mean, he's just right on the edge of recklessness. Well, Tom inherited that, OK? (Laughter.) And Tom is on the edge of recklessness all the time. But it is keeping that spirit alive, and we're so very, very grateful for that.

The purpose of this was to bring, you know, notable intellectuals together who would share with us their insights about this world, and I'm so grateful to have Jim Jones and Prince Turki with us tonight. I could spend a long time going through their resumes, but that would be a waste of my time and your time because we want to hear them.

Obviously you know that Jim Jones was commandant of the Marine Corps, became supreme allied commander, national security adviser to President Obama, the top – the highest positions possible. And something that only a few military officers have ever done, to make that transition and see in your life from being a military leader and also being a civilian leader. So it's remarkable, Jim, and thank you for being with us tonight.

Prince Turki is legendary in so many ways. I have to tell you one story, just one brief story. This was back about 10, 12 years ago. We were going to hold a very high-level conference in England at Leeds Castle. I'd recommend you go if you haven't. And this had people like Ehud Barak and Primakov and very high-level people, and Prince Turki was instrumental in helping us line this up. We all get out to Leeds Castle, lovely chauffeured cars and all that, and we're waiting around, and all of a sudden there's this helicopter – whoo, whoo, whoo, whoo, whoo – coming in. And stepping off the helicopter was this man in a beautiful white silk suit, a gorgeous deep pink rose shirt, a white tie, a white fedora and sunglasses. It was a James Bond moment. (Laughter.) And that was – and that was Prince Turki, OK? (Laughter.) At the time he was the ambassador from Saudi Arabia to the Court of St. James, and of course he was the ambassador here in Washington and did just remarkable service throughout his career. He knows Washington so well, having been a student here.

But I'd say that Prince Turki is a friend in the deepest sense. You know, a friend is not somebody who tells you what you want to hear. A friend is somebody who tells you something you need to hear, and that has always been Prince Turki. And he's always given us the depth of his own personal wisdom and judgment to help us, even though there were times when it was hard to hear it. And I want to say thank you to – for you, Prince Turki, for that.

HRH PRINCE TURKI AL FAISAL: Thank you. Thank you.

MR. HAMRE: Tom, let me turn it to you. Let's get this thing going for real.

THOMAS M. SANDERSON: Great. Wonderful. Thank you, Dr. Hamre. (Applause.)

It's great to see everyone out there. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Dr. Hamre, for your superb remarks and for your outstanding leadership here at CSIS. We all thank you and love what you've done for the organization, and also more broadly for your leadership across the U.S. national security community.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and thank you so much for joining us for the inaugural Arnaud de Borchgrave Dialogue. My name is Tom Sanderson. I serve as the director of transnational threats here at CSIS.

I'd like to extend my own warm welcome to His Royal Highness Prince Turki Al Faisal – thank you so much –

PRINCE TURKI: Thank you.

MR. SANDERSON: – and to General James L. Jones. Thank you very much. When we sat down, Alexandra and I and Harlan Ullman and others, over the summer to plan this event, took us no time at all to think about who it is we wanted to kick off such an event. And of course, we went right to these two gentlemen, and we're very, very happy that they could join us and lend us their expertise this evening.

I'd also like to offer a grateful thanks to all those who've supported our TNT project over the years and for your support of the new dialogue we're launching tonight. We simply could not have done it without you. Some of you have also asked me how you can support the endowment fund for this, and we will reach out to you afterwards.

For 13 years I worked side-by-side with Arnaud. That experience has had a profound impact on me personally and professionally. It has made me a little bit reckless, as John pointed out, but I think I'm better for it, and I am extremely thankful for that.

Over those 13 years, I also became very close friends with Alexandra de Borchgrave. Many of you in this audience know Alexandra, but for those of you who do not, Alexandra's a highly accomplished photojournalist and author, and is one of the most wonderful persons you could ever hope to know. Alexandra's now a member of our Transnational Threats Project Senior Steering Committee, which is chaired by Judge William Webster. Thank you, Bill, for joining us tonight for this discussion. And thank you, Alexandra, for everything that you've done for us. It's been wonderful. (Applause.)

When introducing Arnaud to visitors at the office, I would encourage Arnaud to talk about his illustrious career and background, from D-Day in 1944 to his careers at Newsweek, Washington Times, UPI, and then finally at CSIS. I have here one of his older passports, and let me tell you it is unbelievable – (laughter) – when you look through this: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Somalia, United Arab Republic, the Khmer Rouge Republic. I mean, unbelievable when you think about where Arnaud's been. I think you could wallpaper an entire room with what we have in there. So I'd always ask him to look at that, and he would always talk about that. And I would ask him, please tell us about that history. But he would always say to his guests, I'm much more interested in the future than in the past. And in March of this year, we hosted a heartfelt memorial for Arnaud that looked back on his amazing life.

But as we meet this evening, the world is experiencing tremendous instability and uncertainty, and the future is indeed our greatest concern. The challenges underway and those over the horizon are simply the most complex we've ever faced. They range from economic weakness, resource depletion and climate change, pandemics, demographic pressures, cyber problems, geopolitical friction, upheaval across the Middle East and North Africa, poor

governance, and transnational threats to include terrorism and organized crime. Tonight's discussion will focus primarily on transnational threats and geopolitical competition.

With that, let us turn to these two fine minds on these subjects and begin our dialogue. Let me begin right away with ISIS. The group has many strengths: established territory, reliable funding, effective media, skilled fighters, Sunni marginalization. What actions, military and nonmilitary – if any – can make a difference at this point?

GENERAL JAMES L. JONES: I have to defer to His Highness. (Laughter.)

PRINCE TURKI: (Laughs.) Well, first of all, let me thank you all for being here and for CSIS. And Sandra, thank you for inviting me to attend this wonderful occasion. It's rather daunting for me because there are so many luminaries here. I hope that I can live up to what you're expecting from me after that big sendoff that John Hamre gave me. I thought he wasn't going to tell tales, but apparently I misjudged him. (Laughter, laughs.)

One thing about Arnaud, I must say, is that a frequent sentence he used when we were together was: What are we going to do about that? And he was that kind of person. He wanted to do things. And whatever the situation was, he felt that he could be either helpful or contributive in one way or another. And Arnaud, I'm going to miss you. I know these people are going to miss you, too.

ISIS – I call them, if you don't mind, Fahsh. And in Arabic – it rhymes with Daesh, which is the Arabic name for ISIS. In Arabic, Fahsh means "obscene," because I don't think that they deserve to be either called a state or Islamic. And I think that's one of the things that we must keep in mind in looking at how Fahsh is projecting itself to the rest of the world, and counter that projection with rejection. They shouldn't be allowed to assume whatever position they aspire to show themselves to assume.

And there are several ways that we can counter them. Of course, ideologically. I'm not one of those who thinks that they are an ideological threat to Islam or to Muslims or to the world, because the way that they conduct themselves is so abhorrent to the rest of humanity that no one in their right mind would accept their philosophy as being either acceptable or in any way agreeable to proselytize for or to propagandize for. They do that for themselves, the proselytizing and the propagandizing. But throughout the Muslim world I notice, from the Atlantic all the way to the Pacific, the vast majority of the people in those lands, whether Sunni or Shia, whether Alawite or other subdivisions or Islam, reject the philosophy and the way that Fahsh is trying to show itself as being the true original message of God to the Prophet Muhammad. And that, I think, is something that we must also keep in mind.

However, they do attract young people of all ages. There are some people who are above 40 years old who have joined Fahsh, and they do that for one of the things that John Hamre referred to, which is the criminal aspects of Fahsh and because they have a criminal network. They deal in drugs. They deal in stolen goods, particularly archeological artifacts. They are thugs. They kidnap people for ransom. So all the practices that you can think of of a criminal mind is very much in the makeup of Fahsh and how it operates in the areas that it controls. And

the only way I can think we can – we can – we can meet that criminal activity is through a forceful and very direct military intervention that has to subdue this cancer that is eating at people’s hearts and people’s minds, particularly in the areas where they have control.

Unfortunately, the world community is not of that view. They think that – perhaps justifiably, but I’m not one who accepts that argument – that airpower is enough to subdue Fahsh. It’s not. You have to root them out from their places of occupation by boots on the ground.

But we don’t need American boots on the ground to do that, and that’s the thing I think that many in this country – perhaps even in the leadership in this country – have expressed opposition to, and maybe rightly so after the experiences that America has had in Iraq and Afghanistan. But within the Arab and Muslim community in the world there are countries that are willing to work in a – in a – in a setup of a combination of capabilities, with support from the world community, to root out this cancer.

We hear President Putin saying that he is there in Syria now in order to fight Fahsh. The American coalition, in which Saudi Arabia participates, has equally expressed its efforts to fight Fahsh. But none of these various groupings have committed the necessary means to do that. That is my view.

And our late foreign minister – my late brother, Saud – a year and a half ago, before he resigned his post as foreign minister, in an interview he said that if it needed to Saudi Arabia would be willing to put boots on the ground. And I think if you look around the area there, as we’ve seen now in the conflict in Yemen, the commitment to meet the challenge of groups like Fahsh is there, and it only needs the right leadership to put together the right formula for that – for that engagement. I don’t think there is any other way that we can stamp out this devilish cabal that portrays itself in the most altruistic and the most high-sounding phrases.

MR. SANDERSON: Thank you, Prince Turki.

General Jones, you’re a military man but you also served at the White House as the national security adviser. Do we have a strategy? If we do, do we have the right things? What’s missing in this effort?

GEN. JONES: Well, I – first of all, thank you, Alexandra, for inviting me to this wonderful occasion. And I’m one who has been deeply affected by and influenced by my friendship with Arnaud and Alexandra both. My most memorable time with Arnaud was at the 60th anniversary of D-Day, Normandy. I was serving as the allied commander – I don’t like to use the word “supreme,” I’m sorry, but – and I flew down from Brussels, and Arnaud and I spent the day together listening to speeches and walking through the cemetery, and then having a wonderful dinner together in Paris. And looking – listening to him and watching him, particularly on that occasion, was a very moving experience.

My family moved to France in 1946, when I was two-and-a-half years old, and I grew up looking at the United States from the European side of things. And so I, as a young child, was

deeply affected by the postwar era in Europe. And Arnaud's path and mine coincided rather late in life, but it was one of the – one of the nicest things that ever happened to me. And I'm honored to be here on the first panel celebrating his life and the contribution that he's made to the world that we have. And he's helped us understand that world.

So we miss him, we love him, and hopefully – we know he's here in spirit.

I think the American word for Daesh is “monsters,” so I'm going to call them monsters tonight. You know, for me the issue of the existence of this group and what it does and how it does it goes back to – maybe a little bit longer than what I'm going to say, but it goes back to our collective failure to act when Assad used chemical and biological weapons on his – on his own people. I think that there was a missed opportunity.

I participated in Operation Provide Comfort in 1991, which – as a colonel in northern Iraq. And we partitioned Iraq into a northern sector and a southern sector – in which we had no-fly zones – and a middle sector where Saddam could play around but there wasn't anywhere for him to go. And I thought at the time that a proper response would have been to do the same thing in Syria, which is to say to take a chunk of that country with an international force and just declare it a no-go, no-fly zone, but also importantly a refugee zone. And I think that, had we done that, that the refugee problem that other countries are now facing – particularly in Europe, but also Jordan and other countries in the region – might have been attenuated. But I think there should have been a price to pay for that – for that action on the part of Assad.

And now it's more difficult. And it's more difficult because of the Russian presence, although I'm happy to see that they've reached some accommodation between – on the – on the flying challenges.

And as far as a strategy is concerned, I deeply believe that this century presents itself in radically different ways than the 20th century. In the 20th century, most solutions involved massive use of militaries – big armies, big navies, big air forces, big marines. But in this century, that's not enough. If you don't have a combination of a capability of bringing about security, and with that economic development and governance and rule of law relatively simultaneously, you're probably not going to be successful. And I think the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan speak eloquently to that.

The other thing that you need is, obviously, a good partner. And in Iraq, Prime Minister Maliki proved himself not to be a good partner. And unfortunately in Afghanistan, although it started out OK, President Karzai proved himself to be an unreliable partner as well.

So that – those elements of the – of a kind of a three-legged stool – and I'm speaking not as an American here; I'm speaking about a global problem. I don't see these monstrous acts and this existence of this group as necessarily a regional problem. And organizations that were created in the 20th century like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization can't simply be passive and reactive until it's too late to do anything about them. And so I think I also agree with His Highness that victory through airpower on this fight is not going to be enough. If anything, it's going to prolong it.

And because this problem is not only regional – it will metastasize and spread – and has already spread to the African continent and other places – it has to be taken care of. It is not something that you can wish away. You can't talk it away. You have to take it on. And I think the global community has to take it on. So whatever our national strategy is is almost irrelevant if the United States is going to do it alone, and I don't think that's right and I don't think it's fair. But I do think that there are organizations, there are coalitions that can be brought together to develop the strategy that will, first of all, take care of the security problem, and then we can turn our attention collectively – Arabs, Europeans, Americans, and anyone else who wants to join – to very quickly show the people of the region, who reject this ideology and what's happening, that there is an economic plan, there is something that's going to come that gives them hope that their future is going to be better and that their children's future is going to be better. So they're going to be secure. They're going to have some sort of economic vision. And the governance and rule of law question is going to be resolved so that they're governed in a way that is, you know, appropriate to the norms of the 21st century that we expect in terms of human rights and other things.

So it's complex. It is not impossible. But the longer we wait to apply decisive action comprehensively, the more difficult it's going to be.

PRINCE TURKI: Can I add one –

GEN. JONES: Please. Please do.

PRINCE TURKI: Because it's important to say this. Fahsh is a virus, a virus that attacks the body. And when the body grows weak, it simply grows in that body. And in order to treat the virus, you have to strengthen the main body. And if you look at where Fahsh is doing most of its activity, it's in these states that have grown weak: Iraq, Syria, Libya, some other African places, et cetera. So to fix the symptom, which is the virus, you have to fix the heart of the disease. You have to fix Damascus. You have to fix Baghdad. You have to fix Tripoli, et cetera, et cetera.

And when the refugee problem was mentioned – by you, I think, originally – that Europe is facing today, a friend of mine has a wonderful saying. He says, if Europe will accept one refugee, this problem can be solved more quickly than otherwise. And that one refugee is Bashar al-Assad. (Laughter.) It makes us laugh, but I think there is – there is wisdom there, and there is recognition of a reality that because of this one man and what he stands for all these millions of people, internally and who have gone to Jordan and Turkey and Saudi Arabia and other places in the world, are fleeing – fleeing their homes, fleeing their livelihoods, and living in camps that are desperate and in bad condition.

MR. SANDERSON: Indeed. My colleagues Zack Fellman and Dr. Jon Alterman and I have been to those camps, and it is really stunning.

General, you started to touch on a question I have here now, and it involves what we've seen in our field work over the last few weeks in Mali, Tunisia, on the Syrian border in Turkey.

And in all of our discussions there are many, many factors that people point to, but the two that come back all the time that underpin the conditions and factors leading to the threats, the environment, the problems we're talking about are jobs and bad governance. How do we get around these two issues? It just seems that there are hurdles that are too high to leap, and we hear it everywhere we go from every level of society: no jobs, bad governance.

GEN. JONES: Well, I think – I mean, I didn't anticipate your question, but I think I inadvertently answered it in part. The jobs – the jobs piece is part of the three-legged stool that I just described. If you're going to create economic conditions that are more favorable, the odds are that you have to have a secure environment to do that. So that is job one.

The mistake we made in Iraq in 2003 was that the only ambition we had was to see Saddam's statue fall, and after that there was no – there was nothing. There was no long-term plan, and we all know the rest of that story. So, for me, that was a lesson relearned while I was sitting in Europe, writing the plan that got NATO into Afghanistan in 2004.

But that it's – you know, it's measurably more difficult if you have bad governance. And how you – how you solve that is difficult, but it's not impossible. In looking forward and not looking back, on the continent of Africa, for example, there will be 16 national elections this coming year – 16 out of 54 countries if I have my numbers right. It is time for the global community of developed nations, if you will, or nations that have, you know, good governance and rule of law, to put pressure on those leaders who are tyrants and who brutalize their people and who are corrupt. And it has to be done in a way that is very public because the publics – the people of – that are being oppressed now have something that they didn't have before: they have the social media. And they know what they don't have. They know what they're missing. And we're seeing signs in the developing countries that they're increasingly rejecting that, the idea that a leader can just rewrite the constitution so he can stay in power and continue to govern.

And so I think there's a lot that we can do to ensure that the desires of the people not only to get good governance, but also for developed countries, wealthy countries to not only engage with them politically, but also economically. The United States and Saudi Arabia and other countries are blessed with an abundance of energy. Most countries in the world don't have enough energy to cope. There are a lot of ways in which we can – which we can change the lives of those people for the better and who them that by staying where they are they will have a better future.

I believe that this refugee problem in Europe is really the first wave of something that could be more cataclysmic in the future, particularly from the African continent, if we don't do something about this. It's absolutely essential. It is a – it is a critical requirement. And the longer we delay in applying a winning formula that combines not only the private sector – or, the public sector, but also the private sector. And one of the big – one of the big mistakes I think we make in our country here, and I'm seeing encouraging signs of change, is that the public and the private sector, almost since the Marshall Plan, have kind of gone their separate ways.

We need to bring that back together. The one sector of the American society that is universally admired and recognized and wanted is the private sector of the United States, is the

American private sector. We create jobs. We know how to do that. We create wealth. We know how to do that. But it's got to be applied more holistically, more cohesively with our foreign policy. And I think that the American private sector is probably as important an instrument in our foreign policy as is our military capability for the future.

PRINCE TURKI: I agree fully with what the general said. I can't speak for other countries, of course, but I can say that as far as Saudi Arabia is concerned the issue of improving the conduct of government is an issue that is alive every day of the week in the kingdom, within government and outside government. If you look at the press in Saudi Arabia, very lively discussions about the conduct of bureaucracies and the failures of bureaucracies. And that public exchange of views and comments impresses and ends up at the king's desk. And there are means whereby the grievances and the complaints of the population rise within the society, within government and outside government.

Although our parliament, we call it Consultative Assembly, so we don't have parliamentary elections, but we'll get there one day. It is a Consultative Assembly, but it does consult. And it is being consulted. And all of the regulations within the kingdom since the functions of this assembly have been established have been modified and some improvement has occurred over the bureaucratic conduct of government, through the Consultative Assembly.

In the – within the Consultative Assembly for the last couple of years or so, an important addition and transformation, and I would say a needed addition and transformation, has taken place. And that is the addition of 30 ladies to the numbers of the Consultative Assembly, who have brought not only the ladies' view of the world, but a more dynamic and a more exacting discipline that far outshines their fellow members of the Consultative Assembly. And they're already getting things passed in this assembly that were thought impossible to achieve in the kingdom before.

One other thing that has taken place in the kingdom, in the effort to get the issues of governance and participatory engagement in the population and government going, is the coming elections in December of municipal councils, where for the first time in the kingdom, again, women will be able to vote and will be able to present themselves to be elected by the voters. And I think, if my memory serves me right, the latest number of women candidates in these municipal elections I think has gone above 1,000 in the kingdom. So you can imagine what impact that is going to have on the whole of society and so on.

And no government acts without committing mistakes and committing errors. But if there are means of rectifying these mistakes, and improving on the – on the errors that occur, that's where the test is, I think, for a successful governing system, and a system that does not believe that it has reached the end of its – of its course in proving itself, but rather that it is always in the beginning, that it needs to take more steps to go forward and to meet the needs and the requirements of the population. And I think this is what is needed in all countries, whether the developed countries or the so-called developing countries.

MR. SANDERSON: Thank you, Prince Turki.

General Jones, several years ago I was at a talk with you, it may have been a dinner at home with Arnaud and Alexandra, but you were talking about your role as allied commander at NATO. And you said that you hoped when you went there and as you left you were not there to turn out the lights on NATO. And this week, you said that we're facing the premier challenge of our time, and that in fact NATO may be going away as a result of this – or weakened irreparably as a result of it. Can you tell us what you were talking about, the nature of that threat, and what do we do? And is NATO the right tool?

GEN. JONES: Well, it may not be – it's certainly not the only tool, but it may be the right tool. When Secretary Rumsfeld asked me if I would stay on active duty to go to NATO, I was floored. I never expected that. I asked him for 24 hours to discuss it with my wife. And for me, it was probably the only job that I would have stayed on active duty for. Having been commandant of the Marine Corps, that's – that was pretty – you know. (Laughter.)

Everything else was – but this one was really captivating for me because of my European background, because my father worked for an international harvester company in Europe from 1946 to 1963 in France, and '63 to '73 in Brussels. And as it happened, I finished my military career in December of 2006, 20 miles from where my father retired in Brussels. So for me, it was a very emotional thing and it was certainly something that I was very happy and honored to do. And I'm very grateful to Secretary Rumsfeld for giving me that opportunity.

However, the question that you just quoted – I asked the secretary at that time, I said, I would gladly accept this job, but I want to know from you that I'm not going to Brussels to turn the lights out on NATO. And he said – he reassured me that that wasn't the case, although as you recall during 2003 he was anxious for Europeans to do a little bit more than what he thought they should be doing, and he expressed that in no uncertain terms. And that certainly was a challenge for me when I got there in 2003. (Laughter.) But we worked through that.

I was fortunate to be able to stay there for four years, and went through a lot of great experiences, not the least of which was working on the NATO response force, and also composing the plan that got NATO involved in Afghanistan. And at the same time – and I was encouraged by that, because for the first time in NATO's history, we were truly talking about out of area operations, I mean, and great distances. Their response force was a very good concept. It was agreed upon by the 19 countries at the Warsaw summit in 2002.

And in 2003, when I got to NATO, at my first ambassadorial lunch, the British ambassador – and I studied everything about NATO, because I was ready for the ambassadors to ask me questions to see what I knew about NATO. And the British ambassador stood up and said: Well, general – he said – as the host of this lunch, I get to ask the first question. And I said, what is that question? And he said, how are you going to get us to Afghanistan? (Laughter.) And the last thing in the world I thought about was whether NATO was going to go to Afghanistan. And a year later, we were doing it. And that was a very heady moment. I mean, it really showed me that NATO – the 19 countries which became 26 in 2004 and then now 28 were really thinking about the future and the global – the global role that NATO could play.

What worries me about NATO now is that the experiment with the NATO response force, most member countries didn't want to pay for. The alliance was beset by what we call national caveats, which means to say I'm going to give you my forces, but this is what we're not going to do. If you ask us to it, we're not going to do this. We had no intelligence architecture in NATO. There was – if you go to Kosovo, for example, there are nine different national intelligence networks, none of whom shared information. And this was a systemic problem that we worked on, and we actually made some progress on.

The reason I said what I said at the hearing in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee last week – or, the week before, was because I don't perceive that NATO, as a voice, or that the membership of NATO is thinking about a more – a more global – a more global capability. When you have 28 sovereign countries that are allies and where they – as a condition of the alliance they say an attack against one is an attack against all, how can you – how can you sit back and watch what's going on and not ask to be part of the problem, in a political way, and also in a – in a military way? And that's my problem with NATO.

Now, in the case of Vladimir Putin and his expansion into the Crimea and his mischief in the Ukraine, the military portion of NATO, I think, did everything that they possibly could do, but the leading countries of NATO have not used that organization to have the dialogue that, in my view, should be elevated. When you get 28 countries that kind of fundamentally agree on things, that's pretty impressive.

And so I think that if NATO drifts back a little bit and becomes a reactive alliance, like it was designed to be in the Cold War, and rejects the idea of being proactive to help developing countries, for example, develop their own security capabilities and the like – and I don't mean by invasion; I mean by being friends and allies – then I think that NATO is losing its airspeed and altitude, as Chuck Wald like to say in the Air Force. And that will – that will cause perhaps not the end of NATO, but certainly a diminution in the potential effectiveness that it could otherwise have.

And you know, I recall in 1991 in northern Iraq, we had a 25,000-man international force that went into northern Iraq to – on a humanitarian mission – but to aid the Kurds to come back out of Turkey and into their homes. That kind of engagement, I think, is well-within the capabilities of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. And in cooperation with our friends in the Arab world, we should be able to do – we should be able to do more than I think we're doing.

Now, one more point. There's a – it exists within NATO a group called the Mediterranean Dialogue. And it's composed of I think seven countries ranging from West Africa all the way to and including Israel. It is a – it is a group of countries, mostly from North Africa, but including Jordan and also Israel. And it seems to me that that's another group that could be revitalized, both militarily and diplomatically to discuss the issues of our times. But there's – it's just not out there. And I think that's a mistake.

MR. SANDERSON: Thank you.

PRINCE TURKI: I would say that the Arab world needs its own NATO. And we've seen day-to-day, presently, the need for something like that. Syria aside, you have the issues of Yemen. You have the issues of piracy in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. You have the issue of protecting the thoroughfares and the waters – Bab al-Mandab, Hormuz Strait, Suez Canal, et cetera. And in the past, you know, the Arab League for all of the people who have criticized it, since its inception it probably brought the most brilliant ideas in the world into paper – never in action, unfortunately.

And one of those was a joint defense agreement of all the Arab states, signed too with a command structure and all sorts of wonderful diagrams and charts and so on. But none of it came through because of the political differences within the Arab world. But as we're seeing in Syria, for example, the Arab countries with the United States and with other countries, and a coalition that is bombing Fahsh, there is the capability to coordination. Maybe Libya is not a good example, but at the time that it was taking place, it was definitely a very effective means to protect the Libyan people from someone who wanted to take revenge on them for standing up to him and saying: You're not our leader anymore.

There was no follow-through in Libya, unfortunately, to justify the sacrifice that took place before that. But in Yemen, we're seeing a coalition of Arab states that is doing a job that is necessary. And if it wasn't there, things would be a in much tougher situation than they are now. And with the experience of NATO, of course, as an example, something in the Arab world can be set up to operate – in full cooperation with NATO and with other organizations, perhaps with United Nations mandates. But there is a necessity for a grouping of nations in the Middle East, to come together to meet the very difficult situations that we have.

And it's not just Fahsh. Fahsh, if it's not treated the way, as I suggested, by fixing Damascus and Baghdad and Tripoli and the other cases, it's going to spawn even more vicious forms of itself in the future. And so you need to have a means to counter that, and working with NATO, of course, would be one of the means of doing that.

MR. SANDERSON: Thank you, gentlemen. Many more questions, but I'm mindful of the time and want to open it up to the audience. Please raise your hand and make sure you identify yourself and your organization. I'll start with Dr. Anthony Cordesman.

Q: I would like, I guess, to ask you both to address the problem of scale.

MR. SANDERSON: Hold on, Tony, we're going to do a microphone so the folks online can hear it.

Q: Sorry.

MR. SANDERSON: Thank you.

Q: (Comes on mic.) I wonder if I could ask both of you to address the problem of scale that we now face. (Background noise.)

PRINCE TURKI: You're radioactive, Tony. (Laughter.)

(Off-side conversation.)

Q: Jim, you mentioned the (classic ?) development. This is Arabia, where the population is about six times what it was in 1915. In 2011, before any of this started, the unemployment for young men in the age of 20s was something like 30 percent or more, direct and indirect. You talked about refugees, but the number of people displaced without a home or job in Syria is more than twice the number of refugees – in fact, it's more than half the population. We don't know how bad it is in Libya. In Iraq, the figures are about 30 percent, and you have a steadily declining real per capita income for the average person in a state where the economy, which basically – (inaudible) – won't create any jobs. You look at Yemen and it's 80 percent of the population which is now at risk in terms of food supply. When we look at our experience in Afghanistan and the World Bank says essentially that poverty has been increasing since 2008, and that now seems to track with Afghan figures. Assuming we could defeat the Taliban and Daesh, how do you really address something on that scale? Because having a traditional development model really hasn't worked much of anywhere since World War II.

GEN. JONES: I mean, I certainly agree that it's a huge problem. But one of the – I think one of our failures in Afghanistan was despite lofty ambitions with five lead nations to tackle the five main pillars of Afghan reconstruction, we only did one. And we only did one, and that was the security umbrella. And one – doing one of those things is simply not enough. So I – you know, I think – while President Karzai, to me, was a disappointment, I think President Ghani really has the right idea and is worthy of our collective support – not just the U.S., but the international community.

And if you – and you've talked to him many times, as have I. And he will always revert to the fact, yes, that security is important, but without an economic plan that shows the people of my country that there is a better way ahead, we're not going to make it. And that's what we don't do well, anymore. That's what we, the international community, don't do well. And that's why I believe that a greater unity between the public and the private sector, to encourage companies to invest and to – and to help in the reconstruction of these countries and the development of these countries is absolutely essential.

The penalty for not doing that is going to be even more mass immigration and migration. And so, yes. Is it hard? Yes. But a lot of the countries that you just mentioned have natural wealth and sovereign wealth that, properly developed and properly governed, would provide jobs. But until we figure out a way to collectively do that and to influence the governance of those countries, we are going to be losing – we're going to be losing ground.

PRINCE TURKI: I don't think anybody knows our part of the world better than Tony Cordesman. And I know that his question is coming from that knowledge of the area. The Arabian Peninsula, and I can speak only from that aspect and then tie it in with others, has been in a drought for 10,000 years, basically, since the last Ice Age. If you can imagine what that means. There are no rivers in the Arabian Peninsula. There are wadis, riverbeds that dried up

long ago, that every once in a while when there are rains there's flash floods and so on. But there is no sustainable means of providing sustenance to a growing population in the peninsula.

And throughout those 10,000 years that it existed in this drought, whenever the population grew in the peninsula, they always migrated to the river valleys around there – the Euphrates Valley, the Indus Valley, the Nile Valley, perhaps up to the Turkish areas and Anatolia. And for the first time in that 10,000-year history – it was only from 1950, I would suppose, that migration from the peninsula outside has been reversed.

So you have people coming into the peninsula, which doesn't have the natural resources to sustain more than a specific number of people per square kilometer in the peninsula. And it's a big challenge because, along with these people who are coming into the peninsula because of the oil wealth and the project development in these areas, you have a growing population because people are settling. They are being treated health-wise. They have education. They don't need to go to Egypt or to Iraq or to Syria or to India or to Iran to find livelihood.

And the only way that you can meet this challenge is to have a collective and coordinating grouping of countries and complement resources with each other. And I'm thinking of a – of a grouping that might – initially it will have to be the Arabian Peninsula because Yemen is a country without any resources, not just water resources but also their oil is running out. So they're really running out of any means of sustaining themselves. And I think the GCC will have to become the ACC, which is the “Arabian Cooperation Council” rather than the Gulf Cooperation Council alone.

And Yemen has to be brought into the collective organization of the GCC, and investments in Yemen by the GCC countries hopefully will not only meet the needs of the population in Yemen but also allow for the GCC itself to benefit from what Yemen can offer in terms of human resources, but also this huge coastline from Aden all the way to Salalah, basically in Oman, which can then be developed into an industrial hub, if you like, for trade between the Far East and the Africa and the rest of the world.

That's one way of meeting the immediate challenge of the Arabian Peninsula, but the other areas around us are also in need. Egypt's population is, what, going to be 100 million, I think, in the next five years, and the Nile is not going to sustain them for very long. They will need to have a similar arrangement with their neighbors.

I think the Sudan and Libya would be natural and complementary areas for coming together with Egypt with their resources. Sudan has the Blue Nile and the White Nile and vast lands for agriculture. Libya has a lot of oil resources. They can complement each other if only there were stability, as you mentioned, General. You need stability in order to consider these options that are available to all – to all of us in the area.

And then you have another grouping that might come together. Those of you who are old enough like me to remember the Fertile Crescent Proposal, this was a proposal coming out of British and some European thinkers in the '40s and '50s where you have Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Palestinian, and now Israel, of course, and perhaps Turkey joining in some kind of cooperative

and joint organization. So there are ideas that can be explored and that can be pursued by the people to meet the challenge that Tony Cordesman referred to, not just population growth but lack of resources.

But we need to have the stability, and you can't have stability with Fahsh running around doing its utmost to upset everybody and without any world leadership basically to meet these challenges because you need someone to look up to who can bring us together. The Marshall Plan was brought together because the United States decided that it was in the United States' interest to be so generous with the European countries after the Second World War. There is no one playing that role today in our part of the world. So we are left to our own resources, and in many cases those resources are lacking, whether human or economic.

MR. SANDERSON: Thank you. Perhaps in some concluding comments by both of the gentlemen you can address that issue of U.S. leadership, and are we past the point where we can play that role again?

I'd like to turn to Harlan Ullman. He is UPI's Arnaud de Borchgrave Distinguished Columnist.

Q: Tom, thank you. One of the topics that Arnaud was fascinated with, as you know, was the Soviet Union and Russia, and he was very interested in Vladimir Putin. I wondered, Prince Turki, General Jones, if you could share with us your views of what you think Putin's strategy is not only in Ukraine but Syria and more broadly, because when you take a look at the things that he's doing with trying to expand the anti-Islamic State, Daesh, coalition using the Shanghai Cooperative Organization, launching missiles 900 miles from the Caspian it's really quite interesting.

So I wondered if you could share with us what you think Putin's strategy is. Is it just tactical, long term? What does he want for outcomes? And how do we deal with him?

MR. SANDERSON: Fantastic.

PRINCE TURKI: Turnabout fair play. General? (Laughter.)

MR. SANDERSON: We want to hear from both of you, for sure. General?

GEN. JONES: Well, first of all, I think we have to – we have to talk a little bit about the personality of the man. I mean, this is a case – His Highness mentioned that one man can make a difference, like Assad. In this case, Vladimir Putin is one man who can make a difference.

And having been in the White House for two years under his predecessor, I can tell you that most of us were seduced by the idea that Russia really, in 2009 and 2010, leading up to the START Treaty, was really – had really turned the corner and decided it really wanted to be in the Euro-Atlantic arc after all. And we were celebrating that, and the friendships that I formed on a personal level with my Russian counterparts were, I thought, quite real. The only cloud on the horizon in 2009 was the prime minister.

And I recall a breakfast meeting in Moscow with our president and the prime minister. It was supposed to be a one-hour meeting. There were five of us at the table – five Russians, five Americans. And we sat down at the breakfast table and our president said something about – just to get the conversation going – Russian-American relations. The prime minister responded for an hour-and-a-half – (laughter) – taking us all the way back to 1945 and going all the way up to the – to the present day.

And essentially he made three or four main points. One is that the dissolution of the Soviet empire was the worst thing that happened on the face of the globe. And by the way, he meant this. This is not – this is not fabrication. Two is NATO is the greatest evil. Three is that the United States – America in particular kicked Russia in its hour of need after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and that the — NATO, the family of nations, violated what he called – and I quote – “a gentlemen’s agreement” that NATO would not expand into the Warsaw Pact countries.

He believes that. It was the most bizarre recitation of history that I have – I have ever heard, and it lasted for an hour-and-a-half with no notes and no interruptions. So we stayed another hour so our president could say something in return. (Laughter.) So understanding the man and how he thinks is important because one leader can make a difference, and he’s making a difference. I believe that he believes what — exactly what he said. And I believe that he thinks his destiny and his job – job one is to recreate a Russia that is a global – a superpower, a global power.

And how he does that is going to be limited somewhat by the fact that, unfortunately, in this case, oil is not \$100 a barrel now. Think of what he’d be doing if it were. They are facing a huge recession. So there’s some limits to what I think he can do. In the case of Crimea and Ukraine, I think he’s basically done what he wants to do. And it’s a little bit off the front pages. I’m not sure of that but it – he’s now turned his attention to Syria.

I actually believe that, in his willingness to meet with President Obama, that he actually thought that he could create a deal. And the deal would have been that, in return for Assad staying in power, that Russia would help us with the fight against ISIS. And when that deal was rejected then all bets were off. And we’ll have to see what happens, because this is a developing story as it happens. But I do think that Vladimir Putin is a kind of leader that needs an enemy to make himself look good, and we serve that purpose admirably in terms of his popular support, although that’s hard to measure because he now controls the media and, you know, polls are not exactly reliable.

But, Harlan, I think it’s a mixture of kind of the personal nature of the leader and the opportunities that he sees and he will go for. But I think there – in the main, I think they’re quite limited because of the state of the economy.

MR. SANDERSON: It would be interesting to know what that plan was for ISIS, given what took place in the Caucasus under the Russians.

Prince Turki?

PRINCE TURKI: Please don't give us credit for bringing down the price of oil. It's oil market issues, all unintentional.

I'll never forgive Putin for what he's doing in Syria. He's been sustaining al-Assad the last four or five years and he continues to sustain Assad. He sees him yesterday in Moscow and assured him of Russia's support.

So just from that aspect alone, to me Putin is a man who has done so much harm to innocent people throughout the area in Syria and all the refugees now that are around the world and so on. But I must also consider that he is the head of a state and that state is a big state, and he feels that that big state should have a share of decision making in the world, that perhaps in the past 20 years or so it had lost as a result of the breakdown of the Soviet Union. And hence he's telling us all that: I am here. If you want anything done, you have to come to me. And without that, nothing will go the way that you wish it to go.

That's one aspect. The other aspect, of course, I think he does feel an inferiority complex about the United States. You see that in his – in his physical posture and his body language and the way that he speaks. I don't know if you watched him speak. I don't understand Russian but I made a point once of listening to him speak just to see how he expresses himself. He is pugnacious and someone who takes a pugilistic stance in order to prove himself to whoever he's talking to. And even when he's smiling he looks angry. I don't know how he can accomplish that – (laughter) – but it is something that – something worth watching.

And we have to deal with him. It's not that you can ignore him or simply cast him off as someone who is a megalomaniac, or however you want to describe him. No, he has a vision of the world and he's there to put that vision in place. And if something comes out of the Syrian situation where – I heard on the news that after he met with Assad he picked up the phone and called King Salman of Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah of Jordan, President Sisi of Egypt and President Erdogan of Turkey. I don't know what he told them but it indicated to me that he was delivering a message to them not from Assad but from himself that: I had Assad here and you have to come to me to get what you want from Assad.

If there was something else, we will see. As the general said, I mean, the coming days will tell us what to expect and where to go with Putin. I think he was very clever to reach out to China because that, of course, is something that has allayed some of his fears of China, the other super-giant that is champing at the bit also in terms of world position.

MR. SANDERSON: Thank you, Prince Turki.

I think, due to time, what I'd like to do is turn to each of you to make some concluding comments. And then we have a very special gift presentation by Alexandra de Borchgrave. And then I'll make final comments. So, General Jones, please. Your Highness.

PRINCE TURKI: Again. (Laughter.) Fine.

One thing we haven't talked about, I think, is Iran. And, you know, there is much speculation in this country as to where Saudi Arabia stands on issues like the nuclear deal with Iran and the Iranian influence in the area, et cetera, et cetera. When King Salman was here, we met with President Obama. They issued a joint statement. And for those of you who are interested in where Saudi Arabia stands on issues with Iran, I think you should look at that statement.

First, the king accepted the president's assurances that the nuclear deal is going to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons for the time of the deal, the agreement, 10-15 years. Second, both leaders agreed that they will challenge Iran's nefarious activities in the area. They didn't specify which area, but obviously it's the Middle East. And thirdly, that both countries will continue to exchange information and intelligence on matters of security, including terrorism, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. The other aspects, of course, of the – of the statement was a closer cooperation on trade and economic affairs and student exchange, et cetera, et cetera. So that's one aspect of it.

The other aspect, of course, is what comes after 15 years? And my personal view – and I've been very vocal in saying this – is that this deal is an incentive for nuclear proliferation. It's not a deal that stops nuclear proliferation. It's a matter of 10, 15 years. And as I mentioned before, you have a 10,000 year history since the last age – the last ice age. So 10, 15 years is nothing, especially for a country like Saudi Arabia that is right across the Gulf from Iran. And the Kingdom, with its partners in the area, hopefully with the world community, will pursue the post-deal activities that will assure us what happens after 15 years in nuclear development in Iran.

My personal favorite solution for that is to build on this nuclear deal that the P-5 plus one had with Iran, into going into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. You've all heard about that. The last two nonproliferation treaty review conferences – in New York in 2010 and again this year also in New York, I think, at the United Nations, or Geneva; I don't remember where – reaffirmed the need for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

And I think that is the only way that we can have a proliferation-free zone in the area. There are conditions. There are discussions, negotiations that have to be undertaken by all the parties concerned, but other than this formula I don't see any other way that you can prevent countries – and not just in the Middle East but throughout the world – from seeking to have what Iran has gotten from this deal.

MR. SANDERSON: Thank you. General Jones, please.

GEN. JONES: Well, thank you. I think this is a very important time for our country, not only because of the internal challenges that we face but also I think this is a defining moment with regard to how the United States is going to be in terms of its position in the world for the next 20 or 30 years.

As I mentioned earlier, I'm a child of the – brought up during the Cold War overseas, and when I was old enough to understand things I kept hearing about every 10 years about an

American decline. I heard it when Sputnik went up. I heard it when communism took over in the Soviet Union. I heard it when the Japanese economic miracle was buying up Hawaii and did all these wonderful things. And they'd say: Well, this is an economic decline. Now you're going to be replaced.

And it just seems like every decade there's somebody who's predicting the inevitability of American decline. And one of the reasons that it's never happened, in my view, is that, because of our moral leadership, of our willingness to do the right thing for people who are less fortunate than we were – whether it's the reconstruction of Europe, whether it's at every turn where we won a military victory we helped that country back on its feet, with a few exceptions.

I really believe that His Highness touched on it when he used the word “leadership.” There is a perception, whether it's valid or not, but the perception – perception is reality on this playing field – that the U.S., particularly in the Middle East, has withdrawn, or is withdrawing. Some people say it's because we now have our own energy security, and the oil-for-energy deal that existed for the last 40 years is not as important.

Whatever the reason is, that perception has to be – has to be – has to be turned on its head. If the United States wants to be a – wants to be anywhere near the position of greatness that we were from 1945 to the year 2000, then we need to do – we need to – in my view, we need to understand that military power alone is not going to do that. It's going to be a combination of cohesive engagement; all of society, all of government focused; clear, unambiguous desire to reassert our commitment to our friends and to our allies and to lead, to His Highness' point, and to provide the leadership that is required to achieve that.

It doesn't mean we have to do it alone, but it does mean that the United States has to lead. And it has to lead in organizations like NATO. It has to lead in organizations – at least be a co-leader with – a co-partner with the European Union, with the Arab League and other international organizations to include the United Nations. But I think – I think that we need to reassert who we are and what we stand for going forward, and the moral – the moral quotient of that philosophy I think is fundamentally important to who we are, how we're perceived and what we do. And I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

MR. SANDERSON: Great. (Applause.) Thank you.

GEN. JONES: Thank you.

PRINCE TURKI: Thank you.

MR. SANDERSON: If you could please remain seated, I'd like to ask Alexandra de Borchgrave to please come up and present to – special gifts for our guests.

ALEXANDRA DE BORCHGRAVE: The first one is –

MR. SANDERSON: And they'll be up on the screen here for all to see.

PRINCE TURKI: Oh, my goodness. That's wonderful.

MS. DE BORCHGRAVE: And this is the first Telex that Arnaud sent you for a secret meeting that they were –

MR. SANDERSON: The Telex that Arnaud sent to Prince Turki for a secret meeting here. That's the first one. (Applause.)

PRINCE TURKI: Thank you very much. (Applause.) Thank you. Thank you very much.

MS. DE BORCHGRAVE: This is to –

GEN. JONES: Thank you. Thank you.

MS. DE BORCHGRAVE: – Jim with the Marines in Vietnam, Battle for Hill 400. (Applause.)

GEN. JONES: Thank you very much. (Applause.) Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. This is very special.

MS. DE BORCHGRAVE: Great job.

MR. SANDERSON: Thank you. Wonderful. Thank you, Alexandra. That was fantastic.

Prince Turki and General Jones, thank you so much for kicking off the new Arnaud de Borchgrave Transnational Threats Dialogue. We hope that everyone in the crowd enjoyed this. We intend to have this as an annual event. We hope it will expand the public debate on transnational threats as well as larger geopolitical issues. I think we hit both of those today. And I hope to see you at future events. Thank you very much for coming. (Applause.)

(END)