



Pakistan, Then and Now (4/18/18)

00:00:24 Noah Rauch: Good evening, and welcome. My name is Noah Rauch, I am the senior vice president for education and public programs here at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum. It's my pleasure to welcome all of you to tonight's program. As always, I'd like to extend a special thank you and welcome to our museum members and those tuning in to our live web broadcast at 911memorial.org/live.

00:00:47 Tonight, we are joined by C. Christine Fair for a conversation examining the tenuous and fraught relationship between the United States and Pakistan. Christine is a Provost's Distinguished Associate Professor in the Peace and Securities Program in Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service.

She was previously a senior political scientist with the RAND corporation, a political officer with the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, a senior researcher at the United States Institute of Peace Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention, as well as a senior fellow at West Point's Combating Terrorism Center. Christine's research focuses on political and military affairs in South Asia.

00:01:26 She has authored, co-authored, and co-edited several books, and is an active contributing writer for "The Atlantic," "Foreign Policy," and "Foreign Affairs." Christine's extensive knowledge of Pakistan and the larger region makes her a sought-after voice on this topic, and we are especially fortunate to have her with us here tonight.

We'd like to thank Christine for sharing her time and insights with us. We are also deeply grateful to the David Berg Foundation for their support of the museum's 2017-2018 public programs season. Please join me in welcoming C. Christine Fair in conversation with executive vice president and deputy director of museum programs Clifford Chanin.

(applause)

00:02:07 Clifford Chanin: Thank you, Noah, and welcome, everybody. It's nice to see you this evening. Thank you so much, Professor Fair, for coming here.

C. Christine Fair: Thank you for having me.

Clifford Chanin: Good.

C. Christine Fair: Let's be very clear. To talk about Pakistan in this building, it's a... It's... I hate to overuse that word "surreal," but it really is.

00:02:26 Clifford Chanin: Well, let's, you know... We have, as a country, been at war for many years. We were, uh, we were and have been at war in Afghanistan, and in Iraq, other places, as well. But Pakistan has not specifically been a field of combat, but it looms over so much of what has happened in these recent years.

00:02:46 And, of course, going back before 9/11, there is a very long history of intense involvement, and then complete estrangement, and then back, after 9/11, and so describe, if you can, the contours of this relationship between the United States and Pakistan, going back to-- and you have to go back a ways, I realize, so I'll ask you to not make it, you know, the lecture that you could otherwise give-- but, you know, what's that, what are the ups and downs of this... have they been, and where are we now?

00:03:19 C. Christine Fair: So let me say that perhaps one of the best books on this is written by Ambassador Husain Haqqani, called "Magnificent Delusions," and I think the title pretty much summarizes it. For a briefer version, I recommend a book called "Riding the Roller Coaster," written by Teresita and her husband, who's now deceased, Howard Schaffer. That's a hundred-page version of the same story, versus a 700-page.

00:03:44 But in some ways, our relationship bilaterally begins in the late '50s. Pakistan had been soliciting U.S. support, literally, from the time it became independent in 1947. Part of the reason is, when the British left the subcontinent and divided up the subcontinent into India and Pakistan, Pakistan was really the loser of partition. And again, I could elaborate upon this for hours, but Pakistan's entire governance apparatus was shambolic. And while the army had no complete units, it was the least shambolic of the others.

00:04:23 And the first thing that Pakistan did was, it went to war with India, and it's a fairly brazen move, right? Because even after partition, India still was militarily much more, at least conventionally, superior to Pakistan. So Pakistan began saying things that we would really kind of laugh at if you were to see it in, you know, in text, but they would say things like, you know, "Our army could be yours if you just give us the money."

00:04:49 And they were asking for extraordinary sums of money. And you have to remember, at this time, the United States was very much involved in the reconstruction of Europe, but they were asking for a sum of money in excess, for example, of what we were paying out in the Marshall Plan. I mean, the distance between where we were as a country and where Pakistan wanted us to be could not have been further.

And what changed this was actually the Korean War, when we realized that we have to have our own Asia policy, that it was no longer adequate to just outsource our policy to the British. So we began a series of alignments with the Baghdad treaty. And then when Baghdad threw out--uh, withdrew, it changed names, and then we also had SEATO, which was the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.

00:05:36 But the Pakistanis wanted to be a member of these treaty organizations because they really wanted money and military assistance to rebuild their military. And we really wanted them to be a part of a coalition against communism. And in some sense, this is where our relationship goes wrong, but very few people appreciate that.

00:05:58 We were engaging and arming them and training them so they could become counterinsurgents with us, but when you read Pakistan's military journals at the time, they were actually learning from us how to be insurgents. So this relationship went under false pretenses until the 1965 war, we cut...

Clifford Chanin: Pakistan and India...

00:06:21 C. Christine Fair: The 1965 war between Pakistan and India-- we cut both countries off, it affected Pakistan more because it was more dependent upon our systems. And Pakistan remained cut off. Another fabulous book is called "The Blood Telegram" by Gary Bass, and he tells the story of how Nixon illegally armed Pakistan in that 1971 war which freed Bangladesh. But apart from those illegal efforts in the Nixon administration, we didn't have a relationship with Pakistan really until after the Soviet Union invaded.

00:06:53 And in fact, we had sanctioned Pakistan in April of 1979 because of advances in its nuclear program. And what was happening in the late '70s, Pakistan, on its own time and its own dime, began a jihad policy in Afghanistan, and, you know, the United States, after the Soviets invaded, we had to figure out how to undo those sanctions, and it was very difficult to do. So we don't get the sanctions undone until Reagan is in office, and Congress relieves those sanctions in 1982.

00:07:26 And this relationship continues until it doesn't anymore, and we reinvoke sanctions that had been previously suspended. And that happens in 1990. And then we are estranged again, until 9/11 happens. In fact, not only are

we estranged, we are heavily sanctioning Pakistan. And so, what happens after 9/11 is that, I think, the Bush administration suffered from the fact that after the Cold War had ended, we got rid of all of our South Asia analysts, and people just didn't understand this country anymore. All that expertise was repurposed.

Clifford Chanin: In the government, you mean.

C. Christine Fair: In the government.

Clifford Chanin: In the intelligence community, the State Department, so on.

C. Christine Fair: Repurposed.

00:08:07

C. Christine Fair: And I think they misunderstood what was so important to Pakistan. And some of the very early assurances that Musharraf sought, like, "Do not let the Northern Alliance take Kabul," we failed to understand-- "we" being the government-- and that really sowed the seeds for Pakistan to very aggressively begin undermining us. And so, I think it's... I think Carlotta Gall's book "The Wrong Enemy" summarizes the situation perfectly well: We've been fighting a war in Afghanistan, but it's really Pakistan that's been killing us.

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Clifford Chanin: So you say Pakistan has been undermining us, and I'm assuming you're thinking of the more recent times, and the campaign in Afghanistan. Let me ask you to be more specific about what you mean by Pakistan undermining the U.S. effort in Afghanistan.

C. Christine Fair: So, to put a very fine point on it, from 2004, if not earlier, Pakistan began actively resupporting the Taliban. So, for many people who are not South Asianists and weren't following the ins and

outs of this conflict, by 2004, we thought we had won Afghanistan. We thought we had defeated the Taliban. But all we really did was rout them.

00:09:23

And so, we came in through the north with the Northern Alliance, and we pushed them south, and they went into Pakistan, where they, along with al-Qaeda, took sanctuary, as is well known, right?

Clifford Chanin: Let me just interrupt you and ask, if we can bring up the map of the region.

C. Christine Fair: Oh, yeah.

Clifford Chanin: The political map of the region.

C. Christine Fair: I think it...

Clifford Chanin: They'll get it-- there you go. So, as we're talking about this, you can see Afghanistan there at the top center. Driving them south into Pakistan is what the result of the U.S. invasion was.

C. Christine Fair: So, I think perhaps a better map will be slide number six.

Clifford Chanin: Okay.

C. Christine Fair: Because this actually... So, do you see that color in pink that looks like a schmear of salmon lox?

(laughter)

00:10:07 Clifford Chanin: You know, I'm sure they use that reference all the time in Pakistan, as well.

C. Christine Fair: That's true, that wasn't a very halal reference.

Clifford Chanin: Yeah.

C. Christine Fair: But so, that is called the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. And we came down through the north of Afghanistan-- so Afghanistan, you see that little thumb here-- we came through the north with the Northern Alliance, and we pushed the Taliban and their al-Qaeda associates south. And they went to that area first, which is this pink area, the tribal areas.

00:10:39 And this is an area where Pakistan law doesn't hold. But the most important guys didn't stay there. And I'm sorry, women, al-Qaeda is a sexist organization. There are no senior female members in their leadership. And so the senior leadership didn't stay there. It's really hard to run a global terror organization from this backwater tribal area.

00:11:04 So most of the al-Qaeda leadership that were caught-- with Pakistan's help, by the way, and that's an interesting question-- are in Pakistan's major cities. But we thought that we'd defeated the Taliban, and that we have wrapped up end of major military operations, but many of the things that we did really disconcerted President Musharraf, and we can talk about whether Musharraf would have undone the assistance had these things not happened or not.

00:11:32 So, for example, the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal was something that really infuriated Musharraf. But we know by 2004, the Pakistanis are completely involved in rearming, training. The Taliban launch themselves as an insurgency in 2005. And just like what we saw with the Iraq War, the U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan were very slow to pick up that they were actually confronting an insurgency.

00:12:00 By 2007, they're still debating this. By 2008, it's really clear what's going on, but the problem that we have-- and no matter what President Trump, the, you know, the Twitter- troll-in-chief, says-- he confronts the exact same problem that Presidents Obama and Bush faced. And this is summarized in a map, um... I think the best map is-- if we go to slide four.

00:12:31 The basic problem is logistics. And I don't know if any of you in here have a military logistics background. Military logistics will trump strategy anytime. And if you look at Afghanistan, it's a landlocked country. We have to have what's called G-LOCs-- ground lines of communication-- to stay engaged in Afghanistan. And if you look at this map, and look at the middle map, you see Afghanistan's the darker green, Pakistan's the lighter green. What we have largely been doing-- and to the left, you'll see the ground lines of movement that we have been traditionally using.

00:13:07 So, how do you put pressure on the country that's literally taking our money with one hand and giving it to the Taliban with the other? And let's be really clear: our people were not being killed by al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. They were largely being killed by the Taliban, which is Pakistan's proxy, and their allied fighters. So, I was an opponent of the surge, not because I am, you know, a tree-hugging, you know, peacenik, but rather because we were losing because of Pakistan, and the surge made us more dependent upon Pakistan. Now, you say...

00:13:41 Clifford Chanin: So let me, let me just... The-- so, the flow of supplies to our troops in Afghanistan, as things are now, runs through Pakistan, and they have, at times, threatened to-- and even slowed down—that pipeline.

C. Christine Fair: So the current situation is that... So in 2011, after a series of events, including Mr. bin Laden's demise, the Pakistanis close down these what's called G-LOCs, and so we begin resupplying our presence largely through Pakistani airspace. They're called the ALOCs, the air lines of communication. We still use Pakistani ground routes to resupply the Afghans. Now, if you look at this map-- and this is why I

provide this chaos on the right-- this was called the Northern Distribution route. This was supposed to be our alternative to Pakistan.

00:14:35 And if you actually go and you were to look at this, at this map, you'll see how absolutely preposterous this is. The Northern Distribution route was never workable. It still is not workable. So this means that we are fighting a war in Afghanistan, we're being undermined by Pakistan, and yet, if the Pakistanis close down access to their airspace or their ground space, we would not be able to either sustain our presence or sustain our commitment to the Afghans.

00:15:04 Clifford Chanin: Let me ask this. What is the rationale for the Pakistanis to, aside... I understand the financial incentive to maintain relationships with the United States-- but what is their incentive for rebuilding the Taliban, as you describe, and maintaining that as a viable organization that is more than viable, is actually gaining strength?

00:15:26 C. Christine Fair: Yeah. So... to understand that, you have to look at that second map. So, there is another route into Afghanistan, and that's Iran, right? And, in fact, the Indians have been building a port. And you see that little dotted line that goes from India to Iran, that's the port in Chabahar. And so you see there's this very nice alternative ground route that the Indians and the Iranians have built. Obama, with the JCPOA, created an opportunity...

Clifford Chanin: The Iranian—the nuclear deal.

00:15:56 C. Christine Fair: The Iran nuclear deal. Created an opportunity, that we could've outsourced some of this logistics to the Indians-- say to the Indians' private sector contractors, just as we do Pakistani private sector contractors, "Get this stuff into Afghanistan," 'cause that's what we do with Pakistan. It's not government suppliers. These are private sector contractors. And, um, obviously, the Trump administration doesn't understand that you-- if you're gonna stay in this country, in Afghanistan, and you want to win, you have to decide which one of these two countries is less evil.

00:16:29 From Pakistan-- and by the way, I will say very clearly it's Pakistan. Pakistan is a global menace. Iran on the best day aspires to be a nuclear-proliferating state sponsor of terror that Pakistan is. I mean, Iran is, like, in the junior leagues compared to Pakistan, right? But to go to your question, it's not just about India, but a lot of it does derive from India. They are afraid of Indian encirclement, and the fact is, India...

Clifford Chanin: The Pakistanis are.

00:16:58 C. Christine Fair: The Pakistanis are-- so, if you look at that map, the Indians are much closer to the Iranians than they are Pakistan. The Iranians-- the Afghans and the Indians are very close to the Indians. In fact, the Afghans can't stand the Pakistanis because of the destruction that they, on their own, have commenced in that country since 1974. And the Central Asian countries are closer to India. So, Pakistan's worst fears are that a government that's stable...

Clifford Chanin: In Afghanistan.

00:17:30 C. Christine Fair: In Afghanistan, that Pakistan has no control over, will simply hand over their space to the Indians to support that western border with Afghanistan, which, historically, the Afghans have not made their own lives remotely easier by rejecting that border, at different points in time supporting the different insurgencies in Pakistan along that border.

00:17:55 And then there's also evidence, at different points in time, of the Indians, working through the Afghans, supporting those insurgencies. So this is really about Pakistan feeling surrounded and feeling that the only thing they can count on are these Islamists who will be beholden to Pakistan. Now, this hasn't worked out, right? Because some of the Taliban hate the Pakistanis as much as us. But that's, in, in a complicated geographical way, why Pakistan is so committed to making Afghanistan a client.

- 00:18:31 Clifford Chanin: You know, in a strange way, the situation you're describing puts the U.S. war in Afghanistan as almost a secondary consideration for all the other actors. That is to say, we want what we want, but that doesn't seem to rise to the top of the list for any of the other countries that you've mentioned here.
- C. Christine Fair: So, yes and no. I mean, I think our allies-- so, it's been a long war, right? So, I mean, at this point, the war can have a driver's license. Pretty soon, it'll be old enough to vote. So, at different points in time, the neighbors wanted different things.
- 00:19:06 So, initially Iran was very supportive, right, because... In fact, they were also supportive of the invasion of Iraq, because they hated the Taliban, they hated Saddam Hussein. We did Iran an enormously large service. And, actually, Iran was very supportive of the Afghan effort. They were very helpful to the Americans at Bonn, and they got rewarded for this cooperation by being branded part of the Axis of Evil.
- 00:19:35 So, over time, Iran has at time facilitated al-Qaeda movements, particularly where you see Iran sharing a border with Afghanistan. They provided, I.E.Ds., you know, improvised explosive device apparatus, so tactical support to the Taliban, even though strategically, they're not interested in them. India has benefited from our military presence because under our security umbrella, it's been able to re-establish its traditional presence in consulates and embassies.
- 00:20:05 The Chinese have really benefited. You know, as a colleague of mine used to say, "We're gonna fight to the last Marine to make Afghanistan safe for Chinese exploitation." But the security situation in Afghanistan is so dire that even the Chinese don't want to exploit it. So, at different points in time, these different neighbors have wanted different things.
- 00:20:25 And I think, right now, their biggest concern, and the biggest question mark, is really, "What is President Trump going to do?" And this conflict

that part of our government has with... with China and Russia, really complicates the hedging strategy that all of these countries around Afghanistan are, are undertaking.

Clifford Chanin: Now, at the beginning of this year, the president announced suspension of aid to Pakistan. Now, as you've written in a number of places, there's all kinds of aid coming from all kinds of different American programs. Some of it is economic support, some of it is military support, some of it is state building support, essentially.

00:21:06 And that the threat to cut off aid, or in fact the actual cutting-off of aid, is not the recourse uniquely of the Trump administration-- it has happened in the past. The Obama administration, the Bush administration. You mentioned earlier the various embargos and boycotts by the U.S. government of Pakistan. Yet, one, we don't seem actually to stop the flow of aid, and two, it doesn't—whatever we do cut doesn't seem to stop anything from happening the way we don't want it to happen.

00:21:38 C. Christine Fair: So, that's really true, um... So, the other thing you have to look at is, what was the purpose of those sanctions. So, when we impose sanctions on the Pakistanis in 1979, within a matter of a few years, by 1982, those sanctions are lifted because we need to figure out a way of moving money through Pakistan because of the, the Soviet invasion.

00:22:00 But what people don't appreciate is that Pakistan actually had developed a nuclear weapon, we know from Pakistani sources, as early as 1984. So we impose nuclear-related sanctions in 1990-- a little bit like, you know, using birth control after you're pregnant. And so, we have a... So, there was this attribution error, right? We'll say, "Well, sanctions didn't work."

00:22:23 Well, of course sanctions couldn't work in 1990, because they were not terror-related. They were nuclear-proliferation related, and they had already proliferated. But your-- the general question is, once you understand that this is one of Pakistan's most significant national security

interests, we have an asymmetry of interest. Pakistan wants to do this more than we have tools to punish it. It's a really simple...

Clifford Chanin: This being nuclear development?

00:22:57 C. Christine Fair: Well, that, for sure. The nuclear development, by the way, is what enables Pakistan to continue using terrorists in Afghanistan and India, right? Because the Americans are afraid of walking away and taking our checkbook, because we are coerced by this, this idea that if somehow we're not there writing checks, Pakistan's gonna fall, and then the terrorists get the nuclear weapons.

00:23:17 Clifford Chanin: So, let me, let me come to this piece you wrote for "Foreign Policy." I'm gonna read you a quote from it and get you to elaborate further. "Why is it that the United States continues to make huge payouts to Pakistan, even though it's widely recognized that the country continues to fund the very organizations that are killing U.S. troops and allies in Afghanistan? First, Pakistan has the fastest-growing nuclear program in the world."

00:23:41 You actually refer to battlefield-- that's small size and perhaps looser kinds of weapons. "America and its allies are rightly concerned that any instability in Pakistan may result in terrorists getting their hands on Pakistan's nuclear technology, fissile material, or a nuclear device. Second, related to the first, the United States worries about Pakistan's solvency. Pakistan has essentially developed its bargaining power by threatening its own demise. With any economic collapse of Pakistan, Washington again fears that the specter of a nuclear-armed terrorist group rising up from Pakistan will materialize." Now, this is not a fanciful scenario, even in a relatively stable Pakistan.

00:24:25 C. Christine Fair: So, I actually think this... Pakistan is more stable than people think. I call it a stable instability. So this idea that Pakistan is gonna crumble, its bargaining power of "Stop me before I shoot myself." I usually say, "Pull the trigger, 'cause you're not gonna do it." They are much more stable than people appreciate. And, and this is actually the

beauty of Pakistan. I often am accused of being anti-Pakistan. I'm actually anti-terrorism and anti-I.S.I., which is the intelligence agency that orchestrates it. But if you actually spend time in Pakistan during a crisis, you see something totally profound.

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So, I was there during the 2010 flood, when about a third to a fifth, depending on how you classify the population, was affected. These floods were biblical in scale, and it was...

Clifford Chanin: These are tens of millions of people you're talking about.

C. Christine Fair: The tragedy that beset Pakistan in those floods made Haiti look like a cakewalk. And Pakistan got a fraction of the funds that Haiti got. Haiti today is still debilitated by, by its earthquake. You see no signs of this in Pakistan. And to see this up close is to actually see what makes Pakistanis so extraordinary. They're some of the most resilient people you'll ever meet.

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So, what immediately happened at the village and sub-village level, people just began gathering resources. People began rescuing people. Folks began donating whatever they could. And this is not very well documented, because people are not interested in the times when Pakistan does something extraordinary. But I kind of think of these local activities as the triage that happens on a battlefield.

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You know, we now have that stuff that you sprinkle in your wound or you stick a tampon in your wound. And that stabilizes you until, until you get to a medical facility. And that local aid that happened immediately is what kept that country going until the big aid started. And so, there are so many things that Pakistan has experienced like this.

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Losing half of its population in 1971, and with a few years, it's still able to challenge India, right? So, there is a resilience to Pakistan that's really quite-- there's no other word for it--it's, it's moving. And it's not

something that we tend to see on CNN. And so, what I think will happen if we actually do what we need to do-- which is really to cut them off-- when we cut them off, I also think that Pakistan will undertake reforms.

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So, this aid is killing Pakistan. We are actually undermining our own interests, and we're undermining Pakistani democracy by this aid. And we're doing this in two ways-- and Americans don't like to appreciate this-- but the fundament of democracy is taxes. We pay our taxes, and the scoundrels have to be accountable, or we vote the scoundrels out. Pakistan is a rentier state, in much the same way that Saudi Arabia is, right? People don't pay taxes, right? They get money from the outside. And therefore, there's no accountability.

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And we have essentially been putting lubricant into a system that would ordinarily demand change, right? Ordinarily, people would be furious that an army that has never won a war-- and it's never won a war, except its own democracy, and has started every single one of them-- also is projected as the savior of the country and gets to eat whatever piece of the pie it wants, leaving the rest of the country to beg to the international community. In no place would be, this be sustainable, if it weren't for this infusion of outside funds, at the I.M.F. and elsewhere.

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Then there is this China thing, and Pakistanis love to dangle, "Well, we're just gonna go to China." And I say, "You know what? You do that." Because the Chinese aren't gonna be as forgiving as we have been. The Chinese are engaging in a very extensive loan program to Pakistan, and like Chinese adventures elsewhere, there's no opacity. The Chinese basically set the price, the Pakistanis get the bill. They bring their own employees in, they'll bring their own resources in, and then Pakistan gets the variable-quality infrastructure at a price it cannot service.

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So this is an interesting moral hazard problem. If we don't cut Pakistan off at the I.M.F., the American taxpayer is going to be subsidizing Pakistan's loan-servicing to the Chinese, right? I mean, this is really perverse. And then, this-- the Americans, unfortunately, we don't have a national security elite right now that thinks about national security.

00:29:03 But what we see happening in Sri Lanka, where the Chinese also did this, in this useless port at Hambantota, the loan servicing is more than the, than the port can ever generate a profit. What the Chinese basically said was, "Fine, give us the port." (laughs) So the Chinese essentially have a sovereign port in Sri Lanka. And they're doing this in Burma. They're doing this in Bangladesh, although the Bangladeshis are, are a little bit more wary of them, and so then we have...

00:29:31 So, with respect to, uh, this port that the Chinese are building in Pakistan, the Americans are really again at the horns of another dilemma. Do we basically keep the Pakistanis from defaulting and having to give the Chinese access to this port, a la Hambantota, or do we encourage Pakistan to engage in fiscal irresponsibility by continuing to support them at the I.M.F., which will ultimately mean that we're gonna be funding their payouts to the Chinese?

00:29:51 There are no good options for Pakistan and, and the United States. There just aren't any. And Trump can tweet all he wants, he's... (laughs): I assure you, his national security team is no better than previous national security teams. So it's, it's, uh, it's really hard to be optimistic, either for Pakistanis or for us.

Clifford Chanin: Let me ask, then...

C. Christine Fair: Or for Afghans, actually. The worst victims.

00:30:23 Clifford Chanin: You know, you, you talk about this nuclear risk, and it, it is real. And you talk about some of the loose handling of the, of these weapons. I mean, let's hear a little bit about that, so that... Does the risk of unwanted proliferation-- unwanted even by the Pakistanis-- does that exist even in spite of the controls the Pakistanis claim over their own nuclear weapons?

- 00:30:50 C. Christine Fair: So, I... I kind of call the BS flag on this, for a couple of reasons. What enables Pakistan to be a rogue state with impunity and to continue getting our money, is its nuclear assets, all right? So Pakistan has a very high incentive to keep control of these weapons, right? So, at a structural point of view, if there wasn't what we would call reliable command and control, the utility of this weapon, from a Pakistani point of view, diminishes.
- 00:31:30 However, from a rent-seeking point of view, they themselves are the ones that encourage people to be afraid, right? So amongst Pakistanis, the utility that it, that it reassures them that they can do what they do with impunity is this belief that they have solid command and control. They exploit us and our fears by encouraging doubts about their command and control.
- 00:31:56 So what are the real issues? And, um... When they are in the barracks, in their peacetime position, I'm not terribly concerned about them. I don't lose sleep over that. I'm concerned about a couple of situations. One: when a conflict begins, they move these weapons out of their peacetime location for potential use, 'cause, after all, Pakistan has a first-use strategy. This, when they're out of their barracks, they're more vulnerable to, um, theft.
- 00:32:30 The other thing that they do, they're constantly moving these weapons around as a part of their deniability strategy, and if we believe the news reports-- and I'm 50/50 on believing these news reports-- they move them in thin-skin, normal vehicles, like ambulances. Now, the argument would go that these are not suspected of carrying nuclear materials, and therefore they're at a less risk to being attacked. But if they were attacked, there's very little that could be done to protect those assets.
- 00:33:06 So I, I put a big question mark around the reliability of that reportage, but what we do know is they move them around. We also know that the Pakistan army has been infiltrated. We know this 'cause we've seen these high-level attacks that have had insider information.

Clifford Chanin: Attacks... by Pakistani military ostensibly on Pakistani military bases?

C. Christine Fair: Well, attacks by terrorists on Pakistani bases...

Clifford Chanin: With the help of insiders... Insiders of the military, yeah.

00:33:33 C. Christine Fair: Of insiders, yeah. Very, very precise information about where certain units were, um... So we know that there's insider problems. The other thing with these tactical nuclear weapons is that this is... The Pakistanis are basically taking our doctrine from the 1950s, right? From Cold War Europe. The problem is, we don't know about the two-man rule, we don't know command and control, once these things are deployed. And that is, that is an issue of concern.

00:34:03 And now, the reason why I publicly-- and this, I know, is public-- I, in my writings, I try to not be hysterical about this because they exploit that hysteria, financially. And I'm of the belief that if we turn this around, and we say to them, "We're kind of tired of being blackmailed by you. You say you're a responsible nuclear weapon state. If you're-- and we know what your signature looks like..."

00:34:27 The nuclear signature, because of, um, the investigations in Iraq, the Libyans, 'cause the Pakistanis were the ones giving this nuclear technology, and also because of the investigations of the Iranians, we have an idea of what their signature looks like. And I'm of the belief that we should simply say to them, "You are responsible for your materials." And if it gets into the hands, um, of non-state actors, or if you use nuclear weapons in a first use against India, we are gonna respond to you appropriately per our doctrine.

00:34:59 In, in other words, instead of us trying to manage question marks about their command and control, we simply make the costs of their screwing up inordinately high. And that's, that's an approach that unfortunately,

you'll find very few takers in Washington because policymakers are risk-averse.

Clifford Chanin: Mm-hmm.

00:35:21 C. Christine Fair: Right? They'd rather see Pakistan—the example I give, although youngsters don't know these things ever existed, is the parking meter. Remember in the old days, we'd put a quarter in, and maybe we're supposed to get 15, but we actually got, like, five, 'cause the thing was broken, 'cause, like, these things are a scam anyway. But to a policy maker, they would rather work with Pakistan as a broken meter.

00:35:42 We put-- we're buying 15, but maybe, maybe we're getting three, but we're getting three consistently. If we do something extraordinarily different, we might get negative-15, right? This is the sort of risk-averseness of policy makers, right? And look at our policy makers, for crying out loud. I mean, they do, like, arm workouts, but they don't do spine workouts.

00:36:01 So if we think that they're gonna be serious and provocative on, on Pakistan when they can't be serious or provocative on anything else, I, I'm not holding my breath. But that's, that's the complexity of it.

Clifford Chanin: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

C. Christine Fair: We're basically holding ourselves hostage to Pakistan's tantrums.

Clifford Chanin: So let me shift a little bit, because, um, you write, as well, in terms of the development of some of these different jihadist groups that Pakistan supports, but the spread of this, and we go back to the political map, I want to just show everybody Bangladesh, which is now a country where some of these issues have occurred.

- 00:36:40 So you see on the map, you see where Pakistan is, and all the way on the other side of India, in yellow, you see Bangladesh, which used to be Eastern Pakistan. And the war that you described was the separation of those two elements of Pakistan, and when you speak to Pakistanis, this is considered an ongoing national tragedy. This was a terrible loss in their history and so on.
- 00:37:03 So it certainly conditioned them, given India's role in supporting Bangladesh and so on, to have suspicions of the Indians, and Bangladesh, in its own development, decided on a very different path, at least ostensibly so. So pick up the story for us of a state that, in the early 1970s, emerges from this war, declared itself a secular state, and more inclined to identify along ethnic rather than religious lines, as Pakistan has.
- 00:37:31 And yet the transformation in that country is feeding on many of the same currents that have created this radicalism in Pakistan, in Afghanistan, and so on and so forth, raising the possibilities of new threats that are not, at this point, really being recognized.
- 00:37:50 C. Christine Fair: So that's a really... Boy, that's, there's a lot in that question because, A, very few people know about Bangladesh. The Pakistanis, as you noted, this is, this is something that they continue to lugubriously repine. But what the Pakistanis do not themselves acknowledge publicly is that they lost East Pakistan not because the Indians intervened. They actually lost East Pakistan beginning in the '50s because they treated the ethnic Bengalis in East Pakistan execrably.
- 00:38:25 I could-- I, you know, I... At Georgetown, I do a whole hour lecture about the things that Pakistan did from '47 to 1954 alone, right? So the Pakistanis like to focus upon the Indian intervention, but they take no responsibility to the racism, the religious exclusive-- the religious exclusion policies that Pakistan adopted. Remember-- or if you didn't remember, now you'll know-- that when Pakistan became independent,

about 25% of its population were not Muslim. Most of them were Hindus, and most of that non-Muslim population lived in Bangladesh.

00:39:07 So Pakistan, early on, adopted what's called the Objectives Resolution that says there's gonna be no law that's repugnant to Allah. Well, that's a terrible law if you're not a Muslim, right? I mean, it, it's fairly... Who would want to live in a situation like this? And then, um, the Bangladeshis... The Bangladeshi Muslim was frequently characterized in racial epithet terms. They weren't considered to be real Muslims because of their close proximity to Hindu Bengalis.

00:39:39 Their language wasn't recognized as a national language, so they were deprived access to government employment. And because they weren't considered a "martial race" by the British, nor were they in the military, and so when Pakistan had its first coup by Ayub Khan in the late '50s, Bangladeshis were literally excluded from all access to power. They were politically excluded, they weren't in the military, they couldn't work in the bureaucracy. And so this had-- this was a long march.

00:40:10 And what the Pakistanis did in 1970 was, after the party that represented the Bengalis in the east, the Awami League, won an outright majority, the western Pakistani elites didn't want to seat that government because they didn't want to be ruled by, quote, "Racial epithet, racial epithet." So, this is... And then that's really what made the independence irrevocable, because the Awami League figured out playing by the rules doesn't work.

00:40:48 You know, "We won fair and square. We won probably the cleanest election in Pakistan's history." And they refused to seat the government. And then, as refugees began pouring into India, we know that, initially, India was very hesitant to intervene because some of those folks were leftists. At this time, India was experiencing its own Marxist insurgency. India was very hesitant about this, and they also didn't want the precedent, because India also had insurgencies, right?

00:41:15 They didn't want the precedent of an outside actor liberating a disgruntled group within their country. But eventually, we know what

they did. Throughout the summer, they began training the rebels, the Indian army began moving assets from the west to the east, they began putting air assets into place. And technically speaking, the war began in, uh... The, the war began when Pakistan struck air assets, Indian air assets.

00:41:42 So technically, Pakistan did begin the war, and the end was as we know it. But many of the instruments of the Pakistani state used to oppress East Pakistanis were Islamists. So Jamaat-e-Islami had a couple of militias that did very brutal things, and they were collaborators in the war crimes that the Pakistan army committed. And because of the Islamism that the Pakistani state was using to suppress ethnic tendencies, the state became independent as an ethnic state, really averse to Islamism.

00:42:16 But what happened almost immediately, because Pakistan and Bangladesh shared this shared history of coup-making, the very first military coup, which happened very quickly, because the first leader of Bangladesh was himself very corrupt and authoritarian and really not a good dude, the first coup happened, and this begins the process of relegitimizing Islamists, and so Bangladesh moves from being adamantly opposed to Islamists to, now that they are a Bengali majority state, they're reconsidering the place of Islam in their society.

00:42:52 And also there were Bengalis, Bangladeshis that went to the original Afghan war. So this is an incredibly complex story from the south. In the '80s, there were also Rohingyas. By the way, the Rohingya crisis is not new. It's been ongoing ever since Myanmar became independent in 1948. So, the... many Bangladeshi Muslims found themselves caught up in these global jihad concepts.

00:43:19 And now, you know, we have ISIS in Bangladesh. And these are not poor terrorists. These are some of... Some of Bangladesh's most well-educated, urbane youth. One of the fellows that went to fight in Syria and was featured in "Dabiq" magazine... What was it? One of the Holey, the Holey Bakery attackers-- I forget which one, I apologize-- was actually a finalist in the Bangladeshi version of "Who's Got Talent?", right? So these are not poor urchins from madrassas.

00:43:49 Bangladesh has a problem, and this current government isn't helping. That's another long discussion. As this government tries to consolidate her authoritarian rule, she's constricting space for legitimate Islamist actors to participate-- that's never a good recipe. Take a look at Turkey, for example.

Clifford Chanin: Let me ask, though, you... You talk about the appeal of both al-Qaeda and Islamic State in Bangladesh, and you distinguish between the kinds of people who are recruited for each of them. Can you... Who's drawn to al-Qaeda, who's drawn to ISIS, and what's the difference there?

00:44:25 C. Christine Fair: So, there is a... There's a big ideological difference. So, in South Asia-- and I can't speak to other parts of the world, 'cause I only study South Asia-- al-Qaeda is very closely associated with the Taliban, and a particular interpretive tradition called Deobandism. So the Afghan Taliban, most of the militant groups in Pakistan, they're Deobandi.

00:44:47 Interestingly enough and ironically, Deoband is actually originating in India. But these guys bear no resemblance to their Indian Deobandi co-religionists. So there has been this long-standing reliance of Deobandi militants upon madrassas. And so the al-Qaeda-Taliban folks, you'll see many more people coming from madrassas that are less well-educated. ISIS, in contrast, is... One of my Bangladeshi colleagues, named Ali Riaz-- who you should really have, he's really superb on this stuff-- he described, it's, like, why would you... Why would you have, like, an old Nokia phone when you can get the newest iPhone?

00:45:32 And that's the comparison between al-Qaeda and ISIS. Al-Qaeda is your father's terrorist group, right? ISIS is the new, fresh terrorist group. And, and they're seen to have a very different set of goals. And so they're, they're very different in terms of the kinds of attacks that they do, in terms of the kind of young men that they attract.

Clifford Chanin: What are the different goals that are attributed to each of them?

00:45:58 C. Christine Fair: So, al-Qaeda is no longer seen as this global terrorist organization, right? This idea of a global caliphate, or I guess Americans say "kay-li-fate"... And in fact, you know, bin Laden never really spoke that way, either. Bin Laden had very specific goals, and we know he had a huge falling out, right, with Zarqawi, and that's why Iraq went in this sectarian way.

00:46:26 And this is... Al-Qaeda Central, or al-Qaeda Indian Subcontinent, is not sectarian. They're not into deciding who is the right Muslim. They're, they don't support the killing of Shia, they don't support the killing of Sufis. ISIS is a very sectarian organization. And they are... they practice takfir, which is the idea that someone can declare you to be a kafir, a non-believer, and that they can kill you.

00:46:57 So doctrinally, these two organizations are very different. And so, al-Qaeda will talk about wanting Bangladesh to be an Islamic state. ISIS will talk about wanting Bangladesh to be part of a global caliphate.

Clifford Chanin: And... that latter aspiration, you say, is more appealing to a better-educated, higher-quality...

C. Christine Fair: Yes.

Clifford Chanin: I mean, what is that connection?

00:47:25 C. Christine Fair: So, I mean, it's a puzzlement, because we also see this in Pakistan. I do a lot of survey work, and then actually, I'm analyzing data as we speak, data in Bangladesh about people who support different kinds of groups and why. But in Pakistan, the data are really clear, that the people that are most supportive of the nastiest of terrorist groups,

they are Pakistan's cosmopolitan elites. They are more likely to be educated, they're more likely to not be wealthy. And in fact, the people that dislike them the most are in fact the urban poor.

00:48:01 And the reason is, these terrorist groups, they don't attack randomly within cities. They don't attack wealthy neighborhoods, right? They attack the poorest of neighborhoods. They attack Sufi shrines, where poor people live. And so the negative externalities of that terrorism is borne differentially by the urban poor.

00:48:22 Now, Bangladesh is just a lot more complicated. So, in the survey data that I'm analyzing, that we just collected a year ago, about one in three Bangladeshis who have heard of the three terrorist groups that we ask about support the goals of these groups. A much smaller number-- one to three percent-- support the means. Uh, and so... But when you think of a country of... roughly with 160 million Muslims and a large number of non-Muslims, that small number is actually a very large number, right?

Clifford Chanin: It's a small percentage, but a large number of people.

00:49:07 C. Christine Fair: Yeah, it's a small percentage, but a large number of people. And terrorism is really a small-numbers game, right? You don't need to have... In fact, terrorism, we don't think about it as a, as a hirer of labor, right? But terrorism as a profession is actually demand-constrained. So as long as they have more people that want to be a terrorist than they actually have the ability to absorb, they can turn people away, right?

00:49:32 Which is one of the reasons why, if we look at the 9/11 attackers... In general, if we look at attributes-- and I have a database of Pakistani terrorists-- in general, they're better educated than... than the communities from which they draw. And I think part of that is because it's... we...

Clifford Chanin: The groups can be more selective.

00:50:01

C. Christine Fair: They can be... they're hirers of labor. I mean, even McDonald's, you know, doesn't take, like, the worst candidate to be a burger steamer, right?

Clifford Chanin: Um, you know...

C. Christine Fair: They used to flip... When I was in school, we actually flipped the burgers. Now they just steam 'em.

Clifford Chanin: I didn't know that.

C. Christine Fair: Really? I...

Clifford Chanin: You know, this is... You're coming from all directions here, I have to say.

C. Christine Fair: I do a lot of road trips. And my dogs love McDonald's cheeseburgers, they love 'em.

Clifford Chanin: Yeah, I'm not gonna... I'm not gonna go anywhere near this.

(laughter)

Clifford Chanin: You know, I'm just... We'll take some questions from the audience in a minute, but, you know, I'm so interested in the track. I mean, you've worked in government, you've worked in policy...

C. Christine Fair: I never worked in government.

00:50:35 Clifford Chanin: Well, the U.S. Interpeace, but, I mean, um... But you've been in the field with different government or quasi-government agencies. You've done analysis work for think tanks. You're in the academy, no doubt in various places, and you've been in many of the places we're looking at on the map, repeatedly. I mean, you're crossing paths with people who are doing all kinds of work for the government.

00:50:56 And I'm curious as to how you see the development of those kinds of relationships and information flows. I mean, certainly-- I'm not now necessarily talking about a policy level, but in the years since 9/11, the government, and the supporting community of analysts and think tanks and so on, has really built up this enormous knowledge base in fields that were essentially ignored before 9/11.

And I'm wondering how you see the development of that infrastructure and how that does or doesn't connect with decisions that are made at a policy level.

C. Christine Fair: So, that is such a profoundly important question. But let me say this. So, I'm here by accident—I was...

Clifford Chanin: No, we invited you.

00:51:46 C. Christine Fair: Well, no, no-- yes, yes. But this wasn't the career I wanted. This was not the career I wanted. I actually wanted to be, um... My PhD is in South Asian languages and civilizations. I wanted to be a professor of Punjabi literature. I wrote my dissertation on Punjabi literature. But like many women, um... I was just sexually harassed out of my PhD program, and it's just because I am very cussed that I finished. I finished it remotely working at RAND.

- 00:52:14 My... One of the most prestigious professors-- and I will say his name because I'm fearless-- Dipesh Chakrabarty, you know who you are and you know what you said-- he asked me, um, as I'm handing in my final paper in my first year of graduate school, "Are you looking for sexual pleasure?" The University of Chicago—we would recognize this as, and I've been very-- I've written about this, I've talked...
- 00:52:35 This is... there's just no reveal. This guy, he's a serial predator. And Chicago, um, when I... And I filed a complaint immediately after this went down, and I was told that, um, in fact he had violated nothing, that faculty were allowed to proposition students, and had he not asked me, how would he know if I wanted to have intercourse with him? How could he possibly know? And that, moreover, I would have to tell him that that was not desired if I wanted to ensure that he would not do it again. It was just extraordinary.
- 00:53:09 And obviously, you know, I... I had to literally ambush him at the International House to tell him that this was not wanted, and you can imagine what that relationship was like. It was just unbearable to be at the University of Chicago, so, um, and I did not have parents, and I was afraid of being unemployed in a... Like, who isn't afraid of being unemployed? So I did an M.A. in public policy while I was doing my PhD, and I went to the RAND Corporation, where I was working when 9/11 happened.
- 00:53:42 And, um... You know, this is... Women in this business-- little did I know that I left one field because of sexual harassment to go to another field which is even worse. You know, it's, like... So now I tell my female students, gender discrimination, it's like gravity, you know? It is what you make of it. You can either Rollerblade on gravity or you can fall down and, you know, smash your head. It's not gonna go away.
- 00:54:11 I see the young women that are in my classroom, they're dealing with the same stuff that I went through. MeToo is, is a very limited phenomenon, but in the academy, the academy is a place that protects predators, full stop. So, gentlemen, if you want to be a sexual harasser with job security, get yourself tenure-- I'm telling you straight-up.

(laughter)

00:54:35

C. Christine Fair: And, totally. And also, women, if you want to be a predator, get tenure, because women harass men at the University of Chicago, too. It's horrible. When She-zilla crawls out of Lake Michigan, I hope she stomps over to Hyde Park and just takes that place out.

(laughter)

C. Christine Fair: Because it's still the same way. And so to go to your question...

Clifford Chanin: Thank you.

00:54:56

C. Christine Fair: So... how does...

(laughter)

C. Christine Fair: No, but, but... But this is real-- I mean, this is how I ended up here. This wasn't the life I wanted-- I really... Do you think I want to go to a place like Afghanistan, where my friends were murdered? I mean, where I'm attacked in my hotel room?

00:55:09

This, this is, like, the reality of this kind of job. And so, it's very bittersweet for me, because I wanted to be a professor of Punjabi literature and not a professor of terrorism. But I'm at the RAND Corporation, which was, you know, just... I just followed, like, Brownian motion.

- 00:55:25 And then 9/11 happens, and then, oddly enough, my entire life changes, and, um, in a way that I could never have planned it. I could not have planned it. So I think... What I've seen is that, from the academy side-- and Georgetown's very different-- I think... most of... I would not be hireable-- in fact, if you go and see what other people at other universities say about me, they think I'm a baby-killing warmonger, right?
- 00:55:54 So, in general, academia is very hostile to this stuff. In general, government is hostile to this kind of stuff, because they view us as being unsympathetic to what they're trying to do. So there's a very small number of academics who move... Basically, we're, we're loathed, optimally, in both sides. But, for example, certain government agencies wanted to hire me immediately after 9/11, because of my language skills, and, um, I'm not clearable by the C.I.A., because I had, um... intimate relations with non-Americans, particularly, you know, gentlemen that weren't white. The sexism of that hiring process, again, it's still in place.
- 00:56:38 So the people that they want-- and we've been investing in linguists, we've got various programs, like the Critical Language Fellowship Program-- inevitably, when you go and spend time in a country, you develop friendships with those people, and it makes you unclearable, right? So what will happen at the C.I.A., inevitably-- and I've seen these people come and go-- we get these kids with clean passports, clean relationships, right?
- 00:57:06 Nothing, nothing funky, no one... "Was that a turban? Does he wear it, what is he, a Sikh, or because he's a Moslem?" All right? No complicated questions. "Oh, you dated this guy named Bob-- okay, great, perfect. Is Bob from Kansas, too?" Right? So, actually, from my point of view, I see a tremendous dysfunctionality, right?
- 00:57:25 So let's take the Pakistan embassy, for example. No one wants to go serve there, because it's not a prestigious post, it's not a family post. And so we need our A-team, and we're getting our D-team. So... it's... It is definitely glass half-full, glass half-empty, but my argument would be, "Well, if it's a glass half-full of cow piss, it's still cow piss."

00:57:48 Do you really want to drink that? Probably not. So I don't think that that interface is as good as you might think it is. I think, like, the program I'm in at Georgetown, we're kind of an exception-- I've got Bruce Hoffman, I've got Dan Byman, Victor Cha. Because Georgetown is so close to DC, we are an aberration. But your regular academic wouldn't even want to work for the government. Because academia, especially coming out of the, the Vietnam War...

Clifford Chanin: Right.

00:58:20 C. Christine Fair: ...this general hostility. The Human Terrain team project is a really good example of a great idea that was absolutely sabotaged by academics. The idea of the Human Terrain team was that we were gonna have anthropologists who speak these languages, who are comfortable hanging out. But the American Anthropological Association basically said, "Anyone who does this, we're gonna blackball you."

00:58:42 And I thought this was the most outrageous thing, because all of us benefit from U.S. government funds. They, they pay for our language skills. They subsidize our libraries. And my view was if you, if you're gonna blackball someone who wants to work for the government, then you should give back every single government cent you got. Right? You can't have it both ways, right?

00:59:00 "We didn't invest in you because we wanted you to resurrect, you know, 15th-century Buddhist poetry that was inscribed on a piece of rock that's managed to survive weather, right? That's not why we did this." So, I, I sort of... I'm at this intersection where I'm equally curmudgeonly of both academics, as well as government, because it's... We have so many resources, but these resources are structurally unable to communicate with each other because of confirmation bias and other forms of bias.

00:59:38 Clifford Chanin: Let's see if we have a question or two.

(laughter)

Clifford Chanin: And you can ask about confirmation bias if you're so inclined or...

(laughs)

C. Christine Fair: Thank you.

Clifford Chanin: There we go—thank you. This gentleman here—please wait for a mic. We'll be right with you.

00:59:54

Audience Member: Hi, there-- thanks for that. That was really informative. I just have to share an anecdote with you. I'm from Pakistan.

(Fair speaks foreign language)

Audience Member: Karachi.

C. Christine Fair: Oh, Karachi.

(both speaking foreign language)

(laughter)

Audience Member: Soon after 9/11, a colleague of mine decided to join the C.I.A., because he thought this was his calling. He's going to serve his country. A few months later, a gentleman from the C.I.A. came to my

office, asked my boss, like, "You know, we are doing some Q&A, backgrounds check." My boss sends this guy to me and he asks me all these questions about my colleague. Background question, "Does he do drugs, alcohol?" And I'm waiting, is he gonna ask me that I'm from Pakistan?

(Fair laughs)

Audience Member: Is he? Is he? He never asked anything about me. I was so disappointed.

(laughter)

>> C. Christine Fair: Yeah, okay, that's... By the way, he hits upon a really interesting subject, right? Who does these background investigations?

Audience Member: Right.

01:00:57

C. Christine Fair: A bunch-- no offense to those, if you're in the room, who do it-- a bunch of retired goobers who are... I can't even imagine that they're entrusted doing these background investigations. 'Cause I'm a professor. I, you know, my students are... A lot of them now work in government, so I can't tell you how many of them have called me up, and the... oh, oh, oh, my goodness. So, the South Asians-- you'll get a kick out of this. So, because I... There was a time when I did Beltway bandit contracting, and so you have to have a clearance.

01:01:30

And so after Edward Snowden, like, "We're gonna clean up our act. We're gonna get serious and we're gonna find the problem people." So, my brother-in-law is a Punjabi from the U.K. And he has a funny name even though he's British. They said, "Well, you have to fill out this special form for your brother-in-law." (laughs): They actually asked him, what is his tribe. I wrote, "Manchester United."

(laughter)

01:01:54 C. Christine Fair: Just like... (stammers) How preposterous is this? I, I... So I was, like, "Well, we're gonna have more Snowdens, if this is stepping up your game." But no, this process, the, the people... It is like putting a pederast in charge of the playground. We are having some of the most incompetent people do the most important job. It is amazing to me.

01:02:18 I'm so glad you raised that, because I can't tell you, you know, how many times I've had to... I've been interviewed for my students, and I'm, like, "I can't believe you just asked me that question." It's just absurd. But that's how, this is how, that's how it rolls. Um, that's how it is.

Clifford Chanin: Let's go in the back there. Please. (laughs softly)

Audience Member: Hi, so, you raise so many interesting, uh, um, visuals.

(laughter)

01:02:52 Audience Member: One in particular really stands out, though, when you were talking about the nuclear weapons in Pakistan. When you said that they, they could move them, you know, they move them to a wartime position, they move them, like, in an ambulance or a truck, when we see footage of North Korea and the nuclear weapons, they're showing these massive weapons with missile launchers and, you know, I personally have never seen a nuke, but my guess is that a nuke would be pretty huge and it just can't... It's not something you could throw over, over the border, right?

01:03:21 My guess is you need some type of launching equipment. So, how do they... How is that... You know, because that seems pretty frightening when you say that, that they could just move a nuke in a truck and worry

about the nuke being kidnapped, you know. It's not like we're watching "24" or some television show. So, can you explain that a little bit?

01:03:38 C. Christine Fair: Okay, so... There is a debate in the scholarly literature. So, there's essentially three processes that happen. So, the first is that the cores, the nuclear cores, are mated with the warheads, right? Then the warheads are mated with a delivery device. Then the delivery device is deployed, right? So, if you, if you looked at our doctrine, our missiles are always good to go, right? A little bit like, you know, Hefner back in the day. He's always good to go.

(laughter)

01:04:16 C. Christine Fair: So, in those silos, it... Because it was part of our doctrine, right? If we saw, if we picked up intelligence that the Soviets were going to, were, were going to nuke us, we weren't gonna wait to see if that thing landed with a thud or not. So, our doctrine was, always keep them good to go. So, in 2007, you may recall that we lost some nukes. We had some nuclear warheads that were just flying around on a B-52.

01:04:40 So, we have what's called a nuclear triad, right? So, we've got nuclear weapons that are in the possession of all of the services. Pakistan does not yet have a triad. India is working on a triad. So, what does this, what does this mean? Predominantly, the Pakistan army has command and control over, over these assets. And so the reason why they can move things around in a van is that they're not moving the mated... They're not moving the mated warhead with the delivery vehicle.

01:05:16 So, Pakistan has a couple of delivery options. One, they're called TELs: they're... trailer- erector-launched missiles. And that's what, when we see these military parades-- which apparently we're gonna have, too, I'm looking forward to it.

(laughter)

C. Christine Fair: I want to see some Minutemen, you know, going down Pennsylvania Avenue. So, those, those are called TELs, and you'll see the missiles put on. They loved showing these things at parades. I mean, France apparently does this, too. But Pakistan can also drop ordnance from nuclear-capable aircraft like F-16s. So, that's the long and short of it. They're probably moving around the warheads. I think my girlfriend, Farah Jan, is she here? You know this stuff.

01:06:01

Clifford Chanin: In the back.

C. Christine Fair: Harass her, she knows this better than I do.

Clifford Chanin: No, no—no harassment. We're not...

C. Christine Fair (laughs): No. I mean, I mean in a good way, 'cause she's smart as a tack and she knows this stuff.

Farah Jan: You've explained it well.

C. Christine Fair: Oh...

(Chanin laughs)

Clifford Chanin: I'm, I... you know, I don't know what to do. Um...

(laughter)

Clifford Chanin: Let's take one on this side, please. Hang on, just wait for the mic, please.

01:06:23 Audience Member: Hi, thank you. I've been really entertained by your, um, sparkle. I don't know how else to say it.

(laughter)

Audience Member: This is really the best panel discussion I have been to in years. I appreciate you so much—I have a question. You said all kinds of interesting things. You mentioned that the military, the Pentagon was confused to label what was happening in Afghanistan an insurgency until late 2008-2009.

01:06:47 But didn't George W. Bush sign an edict in 2002 saying the military wasn't in charge in Afghanistan, that it was the C.I.A. that was in charge in Afghanistan? So, if that's true-- I'm not saying it's true, but I think I read it somewhere-- when did the C.I.A. cease to be in charge in Afghanistan and the military take over, and did that coincide with this realization all of a sudden that we were fighting an insurgency?

01:07:16 C. Christine Fair: You... See, this is the magical question. Did you read Carlotta Gall's book?

Audience Member: I didn't, but I know her.

C. Christine Fair: Okay, I love Carlotta Gall-- love her. Okay, so, this is the magical question. We actually were fighting two wars in Afghanistan. One was a counterterrorism war that was being fought by largely C.I.A. and special operators. These are the guys that go out, slit... They do stuff that you don't want to do, um, you don't want to see done. And that, that was, um, a very specific mission. Operation, um, Enduring Freedom was their mission.

01:07:50 Then there was a second mission, which was NATO-led, right? Which was, at the time, called ISAF, the International... Now, now I'm forgetting what ISAF stands for.

Clifford Chanin: Security Assistance Force.

C. Christine Fair: Yes, exactly. Menopause brain-- don't go through it. So, you had these two very different functions. And, so, what ISAF was doing, ISAF was assisting Afghanistan, as the name suggests, and they were training ANSF, the Afghan National Security Forces, whereas the counterterrorism folks were specifically focusing upon al-Qaeda. So, this is why the United States for so long misunderstood the Pakistani game.

01:08:34 If you were C.I.A., you loved Pakistan-- now they don't, by the way, that's changed-- because whenever there was some, you know, yakety-yak going to Pakistan, there'd be some al-Qaeda number three, you know, pull... "Oh, we just caught al-Qaeda number three." By the way, that had to be, like, the worst job description ever. Because of, you know, "al-Qaeda number three." Because, like, they were constantly being nabbed, and the Pakistanis were turning them over.

01:08:59 So, if you were C.I.A., what you saw from the Pakistanis was cooperation on al-Qaeda. Because remember, in this period, we thought we had defeated the Taliban. It wasn't an issue for us. But what was happening on the military side is that increasingly, we began to see stuff like, "Oh, what is this? The Taliban, they're fighting differently."

01:09:24 And by the way, we weren't just seeing the Taliban. If you, if you talk to... If you know anyone that served in Afghanistan, they'll tell you, in some cases, Pakistani military, the Special Services Group, were fighting with the Taliban. I want you to let that sink in. We have given \$34 billion and counting to Pakistan, and they are sending the Special Services Group embedded with the Taliban, who are killing us.

01:09:50 And I guarantee you this: anyone who served in Afghanistan, they will tell you this. And as a sister of soldiers, nothing makes me more angry than that. This is outrageous. But we missed this because of this inter-agency focus. So, over time, D.o.D. and our NATO, ISAF partners are seeing the Taliban emerge, but the C.I.A.'s not looking at this. So you don't really begin... The C.I.A. doesn't really start focusing on the Taliban problem well into the Obama administration.

01:10:27 And part of that issue is, the Bush administration really trusted Musharraf. I mean, just, they... Bush loved Musharraf. In fact, the Pakistanis used to call the two men Busharraf. And the Pakistanis had a right to be angry, because here we are saying we support democracy, and yet here we are supporting this man who's undermining democracy. And he's also undermining our, undermining our interests.

01:10:53 Ambassador Crocker, an honorable man otherwise, is applauding Musharraf as a contributor to Pakistan's democracy while he's actually sending his goons to beat up actual activists for democracy, right? So, this inter-agency story that you so presciently identified is actually part of this problem.

And the G.A.O., the Government Accounting Office-- not an office that you think of as a hero in national security, but they were-- they said to the Bush administration, "Y'all have not done any assessment of this war, like, ever, in the eight to, seven years you've been in business." So, in the summer of '08, the Bush administration began doing assessments and assessments and assessments.

01:11:38 And then Obama the candidate hired Bruce Riedel to do an assessment of the assessments. So, the... I'm not making this up. It's actually true—assessment of the assessments. And so that's why Obama came in absolutely loathing Pakistan. Obama didn't need to be taught that Pakistan was taking our money and killing our troops; he knew it.

01:12:00

But, going back to this map issue, what can you actually do? And then Obama finds himself pressured by McChrystal for the surge. I mean, I know for a fact the Obama administration was not interested in the surge. I had dinner with the vice president where he was supporting this idea of counterterrorism-plus.

But the military... And this is where Obama is to be faulted. He did not lead the military. The military led him. And by the time we had invested in the surge, it really became impossible to unscrew this. I mean, our military mission in Afghanistan was and remains a football bat. And... But that's, that's part of it, is that... So thank you for... That's just an incredibly prescient question, thank you.

01:12:42

Clifford Chanin: Well, this has really been extraordinary. I mean, we've ranged from... I mean, the complexities of this are head-spinning.

C. Christine Fair: It's really... Yeah, it is.

Clifford Chanin: And, you know, and McDonald's technique for cooking burgers, so...

(laughter)

Clifford Chanin: I don't know that we've done it all tonight, but we've done an awful lot, and I'd really... I'd really like you to join me in thanking Professor Christine Fair.

C. Christine Fair: Thank, thank you-- thank you.

(applause)