



**Beyond the Headlines
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***Foreign Policy and National Security Challenges
for the Second Obama Administration***

Patricia Ellis: So good evening everyone and welcome. Thank you all so much for joining us for our first event of 2013: our Beyond the Headlines event with Karen DeYoung, the senior national security correspondent and associate editor for *The Washington Post*, and David Sanger, author of the best-selling *Confront and Conceal*, and the chief Washington correspondent from *The New York Times*, both of whom have had impressive careers as journalists, authors, and of course, real experts on current pressing foreign policy issues and national security issues of the day. This event has become a real tradition, and it could not be more timely following President Obama's second inauguration, and also the fact that there will be a transition in the leader of the foreign policy and national security team. I'm Patricia Ellis. I'm president of the Women's Foreign Policy Group. We promote women's leadership and women's voices on pressing international issues of the day. So on behalf of my board members who are here today—Diana Negrofonte, Theresa Loar, and Donna Constantinople—we just want to welcome everyone and we're so pleased you could be here. I also want to extend a warm welcome to our partners from NYU Washington, DC. First to Ron Abramson, an NYU trustee, Alicia Hurley, director of the Bratimus Center, and Michael Ulrich, director of the NYU Washington, DC and his team. We really appreciate your warm hospitality and partnership and for allowing us to be in this beautiful new space. This is our second time here and we look forward to many more collaborations because it's just wonderful to be here. The large turnout is a real tribute to our speakers, and we're especially pleased that so many diplomats could join us tonight because we work so closely with the diplomatic community as part of our Embassy Series, our Celebration of Women Diplomats. And I would just like all the diplomats to raise their hands and get a feel for how many of you are here. Thank you so much. And we have two of the women ambassadors right in front here.

So this year we are celebrating our 18th anniversary—hard to believe—and we're planning many exciting upcoming events. Our next event will be with an Afghan woman leader, a member of parliament, then we have an Author Series on Saudi Arabia, International Women's Day luncheon, and of course, our annual Mentoring Fairs, both in DC and in New York, where we sit and council the next generation. So please make sure to pick up all these invites on the way out.

It now gives me great pleasure to welcome back Karen and David. And if you want to learn more details about their careers, we have their bios in our program book, in the interest of time. They've divvied up the world, per usual, to give you as many updates as possible. So Karen will begin with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, and Mali—just a few interesting areas of the world. And then David will talk about China, North Korea, and Iran—where a few things are going on. After they speak, we'll go to the Q&A, and then at the end of the event, David will sign copies of his recent book, *Confront and Conceal*, which is available upstairs. So please join me in welcoming Karen DeYoung and David Sanger. And we'll begin with Karen [*Applause.*]

Karen DeYoung: Thank you, Pat. I'm always happy to be here. Pat is a very persuasive inviter, but having been here at the launch of the Women's Foreign Policy Group, I'm very happy to accept any

invitation and very grateful, so thank you. I'm just going to talk very briefly about some of the immediate problems, the ones you read about in the newspaper every day, or at least until we lose attention and move on to something else, which you can see we've done very rapidly over the past several weeks. I actually wrote something about Syria today, which was the first time in many, many weeks—after spending fulltime working on Syria for a long time—and discovered, to my surprise, that it hasn't gone away, that it's still a huge problem. Many of you probably watched President Obama and Secretary Clinton last night on television. There's been a lot of attention focused on their relationship with each other, and the question of whether they've managed to paper over the mutual distain they both exhibited during the 2008 campaign or whether they really are the kind of best buds as they seemed to present themselves last night. In addition to looking at the really interesting part, which was how they related to each other, I thought there were actually some really interesting foreign policy clues in there that showed that they really do think alike to a great extent—whether that's where they started out or ended up after four years, I don't know. Clinton talked about listening to speeches by President Eisenhower and she said, "You've got to be careful"—this is channeling President Eisenhower—"You have to be thoughtful. You can't rush in, especially now, where it's more complex then it's been in decades. We're on the side of freedom. We're on the side of the aspirations of all people to have a better life, but it's not always easy to perceive exactly what must be done in order to get to that outcome." And then Obama chimed in, "You know, there are transitions and transformations taking place all around the world. We are not going to be able to control every aspect of every transition and transformation. Sometimes we are going to go sideways. Sometimes, you know, there will be unintended consequences. And our job is to, number one look after America's security and national interest, and number two find out where these opportunities—where our intervention, our engagement—can really make a difference and to be opportunistic about that. I think that both of them displayed the kind of caution that the administration has shown on pretty much every issue through the president's first four years and it's likely to characterize the challenges he meets over the next four. We have new members of the national security team, who I think have been chosen because they're likely to see things the same way or at least not put up too much of an argument.

Some of the most immediate problems are going to last throughout the second term, and I think you'll see the same kind of reluctance to be what I would call an expeditionary superpower. That doesn't mean doing nothing, but it does mean having a preference for being relatively slow and systematic in response, however frustrating that may be for others. I don't think you can underestimate the influence that the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq and its aftermath, and the extended deployments to Afghanistan have had on administration thinking. In Afghanistan, Obama was persuaded against arguments by some members of his team to send surge forces for an expanded counterinsurgency mission. While I don't think I would go so far as to say that they regret every aspect of that decision, I do believe that they are now convinced that major ground deployments in faraway lands for dubious goals was not the way to go. The goal now in Afghanistan, which I think is clear to most of us, is to leave as quickly and as cleanly as possible, ideally with a small force of counterterrorism specialists left behind to strike US-specific targets in Afghanistan and Pakistan and support indigenous forces. But I think they would settle just for the former goal rather than the latter, if it came down to that. And that's also the same template that's been developed for US involvement in Yemen. We've been writing in *The Post* about the playbook that the administration has developed as a sort of guide to these kinds of counterterrorism challenges. In Yemen, a relatively small special operations force is working with Yemeni counterterrorism troops that we've trained, while drones from nearby bases strike targets determined to be planning strikes against US targets. This is being done under a somewhat convoluted legal framework that we can talk about a little bit later, if you'd like. A similar program in Somalia is being operated along with the US-backed African military force. And the idea is that these strategies will prevent the kind of major deployments that seemed to be necessary in Afghanistan. But the problems that we're seeing now in Libya and in Mali are the leading edge of what are likely to be severe challenges over the next several years in North Africa and the Sahara. Al-Qaeda and its affiliates are kind of like a balloon without much air in it—if you squeeze it in one place, it will expand somewhere else. These are vast, largely ungoverned spaces with histories of corruption and injustice, and colonial borders that engender dispute and insurgency, potential spreads across Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Algeria,

Libya, and beyond. So far, the administration has had to deal with it in the same way—by putting in place a structure of special operations forces, training weak governments and militaries, and putting in place a strong human and technical intelligence network. They want to have a plan. They don't want to shoot from the hip, as President Obama said during the CBS interview last night. The problem is that a lot of the insurgents didn't get the memo—that this plan was still in the planning and early implementation stages—and they jumped the gun. Certainly in Mali and in Libya, they know the territory and the weaknesses much better than we do and they're ready to move when they see opportunities—as we saw in Benghazi. With weapons from Libya and a government in disarray, they also saw their chance in Mali, and they're likely to see it in many more places over the years. The question now, in addition to whether the program will ultimately work, is whether we can get it in place quickly enough for it to have the best chance. You saw today reports that new surveillance drone bases are being contemplated in Niger and in Burkina Faso. An even bigger question, over the long-term, is if this kind of containment, training, and targeted killing will work. What the administration sees as careful planning, others have charged is a lack of nerve and lack of leadership.

I wanted to talk just a little bit about Syria, which poses a somewhat different kind of problem, but where the administration's response has also been characterized by caution. Again, I think we have to keep both Iraq and Afghanistan in mind when we think of Syria. The administration is extremely wary of the possibility of getting stuck in quicksand in yet another Mideast war, supplying arms that are ultimately turned against us, and they're also extremely conscious of their own interpretation of international law. Again, they've been accused of being too slow and too cautious, but these are real dilemmas that have not only national security, but domestic political consequences. The American public has made very clear that they do not want to be involved in another ground war, especially against a shadowy enemy that many people in this country don't understand and, in some cases, don't even see as an enemy we should concern ourselves with. People are not interested in nation building; they're not interested in spending more money and having troops die in countries that they can't find on a map. I think for clues how the administration will handle these challenges, I'll refer again to the president's own words in another interview that he had with the new republic that was published today. "What I have to constantly wrestle with," he said, "is where and when the United States can intervene or act in ways that advance our national interest, advance our security, and speak to our highest ideals and sense of common humanity. As I wrestle with those decisions, I'm more mindful, probably than most, of not only our incredible strength and capabilities, but also our limitations. In a situation like Syria, I have to ask, can we make a difference in that situation? Would a military intervention have an impact? How would it affect our ability to support our troops that are still in Afghanistan? What would the aftermath be in our involvement on the ground? Could it trigger even worse violence, or the use of chemical weapons? What offers the best prospect of a stable post-Assad regime? And how do I weigh tens-of-thousands who've been killed in Syria versus the tens-of-thousands who are currently being killed in Congo?" The question I think we need to ask is whether we are, in fact, weighing Syria against Congo because, in fact, we're not intervening in either place. And whether there is a part of the world, among the many that are likely to explode in the next several years, where it will, in fact, seem worth intervening. Thank you. [Applause.]

David Sanger: We thank you very much for coming, and thank you, Patricia, for having us here to this beautiful new facility, it's really great—great to be here with all of you and great to be with Karen. You know, if you're a reporter in this town you realized that there's a handful of people who you really worry about at night—and I'm not just talking about worrying about their health—I'm talking about what you're going to read them writing the next morning. [Laughter.] Karen is at the top of that list.

I think that Karen has given you a really good sense of the innate caution of this administration. You've seen it in the way they've handled Libya, you've seen it now in their reluctance to go into Syria, you've seen it in the few weeks delay that they had before they told France this weekend that they would send refueling capability to help them with that and a process that took a bit longer than I think many people had expected that it might. I think the question that arises from this as we look ahead at some of the big challenges of this coming year—including Iran, North Korea, the rise of China, and so forth—is what

was the approach and the doctrine that the administration came to in the first term and what are the chances that that will survive in the second term, because the one thing that we know about two-term presidents is that the second term rarely looks very much like the first term. George W. Bush spent his first term doing what he did during the first term; he spent the second term digging out from underneath it. Clinton had been marked by the Rwanda experience in his first term and tried to compensate for that with the decision to go into Bosnia, of course, in his second term. So there are lessons learned out here, and I think that two things to ask about for President Obama as we think forward to these next four years is, first, can his doctrine survive? And second, can his approach, which I write in *Confront and Conceal* is basically a light footprint approach, can that survive the test that Karen laid out and a few more that I'll discuss.

Let's start with what the doctrine was. It may be an overstatement to say that there is an Obama Doctrine—I'm not sure it's quite up to the level of, say, the Monroe Doctrine or even the Truman Doctrine yet. But if there was sort of a guiding principle that comes out of the issues that you've just heard about, I think it was this: the president determined that, when there was an overwhelming threat to the United States, he was perfectly willing to use unilateral action—as willing as President Bush was. Think the bin Laden raid, think Olympic Games, which I'll come back to—which was, of course, the cyber program against Iran—think about those moments when he has been willing to step in with vastly increased use of drones. We forget, but there were maybe 48-49 drone strikes in Pakistan during the entire Bush administration. It was somewhat constrained by an absence of drones being available. By the time President Obama was re-inaugurated last week, he had come up close to 300 in his time. In fact, in Pakistan alone—that's without getting into Yemen and so forth. So the doctrine was if there's a direct threat, they would act unilaterally. If there is an indirect threat—there's just sort of a general good out there to be done—then he's separated from his predecessor and said, "No we are not going to be the policemen of the world. In fact, we're not even necessarily going to take the lead in these. Here, the countries that have the greatest interest, have to put the most skin in the game—sorry to use that, but it is Super Bowl Sunday coming up. And you saw that in Libya where he agreed to use unique American assets—drones, intelligence issues, satellite Intel that they sent, and in some cases some strike forces, but no one on the ground. You've seen it again in the Mali example where I think the president was perfectly happy to see the French take the lead in an area that has historically been much more their territory. And in Syria, you've seen what's happened when no one was willing to go in and take that lead—NATO wasn't willing to do it, the Arab League wasn't willing to do it—and it didn't get done.

So those are the two elements. The light footprint strategy was a strategy of avoiding the kind of huge attritional wars that the president inherited. So if you asked him what his biggest accomplishment was in the first term, I think he would probably say—I think he did say, in the interview—getting us out of Iraq and being on a pathway out of Afghanistan. As Karen suggested, the way out of Afghanistan was not simply pulling the troops out, but first defining down what we were trying to accomplish, and then getting the troops out. And I write in *Confront and Conceal* about the creation of a secret committee inside the White House that was called the Afghan Good Enough committee. [*Laughter.*] And its mission was pretty clear from its title, and they would meet on Saturdays when no one would notice them in the situation room and basically take that set of issues that the president had defined we wanted to accomplish in Afghanistan over the first term—building up justice systems, helping eradicate the drug trade, building up schools, making sure more girls were going to school, so forth and so on—and he basically defined those down, down, down, until they hit to the point where the only real goal was keeping Kabul from falling to the Taliban again, under which point you can then justify pulling out the troops.

But the light footprint strategy also applied as he was dealing with places like Iran, to a lesser degree North Korea, where the concept was go in with a unique American asset—whether its drones, cyber, special forces—do what you need to do and get out. So the nation building part of it is gone and the rewiring of societies is gone. The diagnosis that the Obama administration brought to the table, whether it's right or wrong, was that we get in trouble when we go in to rewire societies—that we simply can't manage to go do that. And so if you look at how he's defined his goals, he's defined it to avoid just that.

Defeat al-Qaeda. Stop the Iranian nuclear program. Keep North Korea from threatening its neighbors. What you don't hear is, create a democracy in Iran or promote regime change in North Korea so that the gulags get emptied out. You hear very narrow goals, and sometimes they can't even accomplish those.

The most interesting example, to my mind, of light footprint—drones are the most obvious. Drones are the least-covert covert program in America. Every time there's an attack, you read about it in long-word journal, short-word journal, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*—they're all out there. Olympic Games was probably the most covert covert program that the US had running and that was the cyber warfare program that began at the end of the Bush administration to try to develop the first computer worm that the United States could deploy against another country that was designed to attack infrastructure. This isn't like the normal kind of cyber attack, where you go after Karen's email to figure out what she's writing tomorrow, and Patricia's bank account to empty it out. This was instead to send a computer worm in, in an effort to destroy the centrifuges that were spinning away—something that we could previously do only by bombing it from the air or sending in saboteurs on the ground to go blow it up. It was a fascinating effort. When President Bush was first presented with the possibility, he had significant doubts that it would even work. They set up, basically, a test bed made to replicate Iranian enrichment centers in the US national laboratories, sent the worm into these computer controllers that run these centrifuges, got them to speed up or slow down the centrifuges in a way that operators wouldn't notice. And of course, when that happens, these machines that run at supersonic speeds get destabilized—you don't want to be standing next to one when it blows up. And if that happens in a centrifuge hall, it takes out many, many of these centrifuges at one time. Once they had the rubble from this test, they flew it here to Washington, brought it into the White House, and dumped the rubble out on the conference room in the situation room—right out on the table. And that's what persuaded President Bush to allow them to go ahead with it. President Bush handed this off to President Obama the week before President Obama took office, and President Obama expanded the program quite dramatically. And it ran beautifully for about two years as the Iranians tried to figure out why their centrifuges were breaking down, why they were blowing up, and rapidly came to the conclusion that they must've been making their own mistakes—fired a bunch of their engineers. [Laughter.] And it wasn't until a mistake was made in the summer of 2010 when the worm itself, which had been ratcheted up by the Israelis and the Americans, got a little bit too frisky and leapt aboard the laptop computer of an Iranian engineer and he walked out the door and went home and connected up to the internet. And the next thing you know this secret worm that the United States and Israel had spent hundreds of millions of dollars developing was being replicated all across the World Wide Web. Led to an interesting moment in the situation room when Leon Panetta and some of his aides had to go downstairs and explain to the president quite how this had happened. They decided to let the program go forward. And, in fact, it was in the next hit—because they had assumed the Iranians wouldn't understand what was going on quite yet—that they destroyed just shy of 1,000 of the centrifuges out of the 5,000 that were spinning at that time.

I take you into this detail because it takes you to the question of where we are now with North Korea—I'm sorry with Iran—and, to some degree, with North Korea as well. In the Iranian case, the Iranians now see the cyber stuff coming and the big question is whether or not the US, through similar activities, can delay the day that the Iranians would have enough medium-enriched uranium to build a weapon on fairly quick notice. So when you saw President Netanyahu show up at the United Nations last year, with that sort of Wile Coyote chart that he held up showing an image of a bomb with the big fuse coming out of the thing and the level of which it could be fueled, he was basically making the point that, if the Iranians went beyond a certain red line that he had drawn on this thing, that Israel would have to act. The thing to know about these red lines is they've kept moving. The Israelis have retired six or seven already that the Iranians have blown past. In this case, there's an effort to try to get the Iranians to slow down enough—either because of the politics of it, the sabotage of it, or the economic sanctions around this—so the US and Israel and the Europeans would have some more time to come to a negotiated answer. And they may get that time this year. Even today we heard rumors, which nobody seems to be able to confirm, of some kind of explosion at another one of their enrichment plants. Now, I'm not sure if

this actually ever happened, but the very fact that people are so attuned to it tells you that there are big targets out there, and the Iranians know that they are a big target.

I think that the bigger question this raises though is, has this light footprint strategy reached the end of the road after four years of the Obama administration trying it out? There are some reasons to think it may have. In Pakistan, the tolerance for drone strikes has been pretty thin for a long time. But now, even within the US military, you hear many people asking the question of whether this weapon, while very good in every tactical situation, is something you want to keep using on a repeat basis because it so angers the local population. On the cyber end, well you can do that for a while and you can probably fool a few more countries—as far as we know, the North Koreans haven't been hit by a cyber weapon yet, but it may yet happen given the fact that their nuclear program needs to be run by computers as well. But, to some degree, once countries know that this is happening, they become harder and harder to conduct these attacks. And similarly for special forces, it requires a violation of a country's sovereignty to send those special forces in. You saw the reaction to the bin Laden raid—probably the most justifiable, single invasion of a country's sovereignty, and yet it took a year and a half to try to calm down the Pakistanis from that moment.

So I think the big question that I'm looking for in the second term is, has President Obama come to the conclusion that these tools that he glommed onto in the first term—because they were a great alternative to sending in a 100,000 troops and spending half a trillion dollars for a war for which Americans no longer have patience—whether or not this set of new tools is running out of gas, or whether he can develop new ones along the way that will serve the same purpose. We don't know the answer to that. Karen quoted what the president said to both the new republic and in the interview on CBS. And I think the way the world will read those is that, in this second term, this is a president who is perfectly comfortable not being able to control every set of incidence. That is fine with a lot of Americans. It upsets a lot of others who believe that somehow the United States needs to be omnipotent, needs to be able to run all of this. It's particularly interesting to the Chinese. When you think about the past four years with China, year one of the Obama administration was spent trying to treat China as a close working partner—not an ally—but you will remember those first meetings that took place between President Obama and Hu Jintao, were meetings about how to handle the global financial crisis.

The US theory of the case was that, if you treated China as a close partner, it would step up to the plate and would recognize we're not trying to contain them. The Chinese read it differently. The Chinese read it as, the Americans know they're a declining power, they need our help, they can't run the world without us, maybe we should challenge them a little bit earlier than we had in mind. I'm not saying that everybody in China had this view, and in fact I don't even believe Hu Jintao did. But certainly many in the military did, some in the financial sphere did. And when you go to China, you'd hear this all the time. So year two and three were all about the Chinese making claims in the South China Sea—that map you've seen with the seven dashes shows the area they consider to be their own—the disputes over the Senkaku Islands, the kind of troubles they've had with both Japan and the Philippines. And each of these have been an element of the Chinese, in my view, trying to make clear that they were going to develop a sphere of influence, one in which they hope the United States could be pushed back—at least to the second island chain in the Pacific. So I think one of the most interesting strategies that the president has brought about has been what some call the pivot, others call the rebalancing—the effort to show China and the rest of Asia that the US is, over the long term, trying to disengage some from the Middle East, reengage in Asia in a much deeper way, move more of our forces there, move more of our diplomatic attention there. Our trade, of course, is already there. And the big question is, is this sustainable? Because every time the president tries it, something else seems to blow up, either in the Middle East, in North Africa, some urgent moment to take on al-Qaeda. We've got a limited number of carrier groups, you've got a limited amount of political bandwidth here in the United States for dealing with these things. The Chinese are betting that there is more talk to the rebalancing than there is action. And they also make the case that this is just containment by another name—it's in their interest to make that case. But I think that will be the very big challenge there.

I just conclude with this thought. The first half of what I described to you was basically how you deal with weak and collapsing states. Whether it was dealing with Mali, or dealing with North Korea, or so forth. That's one set of skills—we're getting slightly better at it after a decade of this work. The second question is how do you deal with a rising power? And that's something we've never been very good at and frankly, the British weren't very good at it when we were the rising power. It's a much more difficult, much more subtle problem to handle. And my guess is, when we look back at the Obama administration for however important the counterterrorism issues will be, the future of al-Qaeda will be, the question of how we'll handle the Arab uprisings will be, the question of whether or not the president got China right will probably be what he gets remembered for in the foreign policy sphere. So I'll leave it at that, thank you. *[Applause.]*

Ellis: So we are going to open it up to questions, and I'm just going to lead off with a couple. The first question I'd like the two of you to address is what kind of changes should we be anticipating—in terms of priorities, approaches, leadership style—with the new secretaries of state and defense? They both were Vietnam veterans, they have had their own different experiences, and I'm just wondering what kind of changes, because they also will have budgetary constraints. That's the first one. Then, to Karen, if you could, or if both of you could address how involved the US is prepared to get in Mali. And David, if you could talk a little bit about Egypt—I mean there's now a state of emergency, people are getting killed every day—how can the US respond and what is this signal to us about in terms of how we will be dealing with other situations throughout the Middle East.

Sanger: Well I'll start on the cabinet, and I'll be interested to hear what Karen has to say on this. I think the dynamic of this cabinet is going to be very different than the dynamic that we saw four years ago. Just think what it was like four years ago: you had a secretary of defense, Bob Gates, and a secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, who were significantly more interventionist by, I think, nature and had more confidence in what you could get done with the American military than the president himself, who, at the time, was pretty inexperienced in these issues, and certainly more inclined in that direction than many other members of the national security cabinet. And so in the Afghan-Pakistan debate of 2009, it was Gates and Clinton together who were arguing for 30,000-40,000 troops—it was actually Secretary Clinton who wanted the slightly higher number to protect the civilians she helped to send in in the civilian search.

Now fast forward to today. I have a hard time imagining that Secretary Kerry, from when he gets confirmed, and Secretary Hagel same thing, would take as strong an interventionist position as Clinton and Gates did. Now, that wasn't a unified position. While Clinton and Gates were together on Afghanistan, they were separated on the question of Libya. Secretary Clinton wanted to have a much more robust US role, Secretary Gates said there are no vital national interests here, we should stay out. That was interesting that the president sided with Secretary Clinton, but in a very limited way. I don't see in this administration that you're going to have the kind of rip-roaring debate that you had in year one or year two.

DeYoung: I thought it was so interesting to watch John Kerry during his confirmation hearing—I don't know how many of you saw it. But he clearly hadn't learned yet to say the every 30 seconds, "as the president has said" and "as the administration believes" and it was really sort of a John Kerry presentation, and it got more so as the hours went on, where he was very much into what he thought. I'm not sure he's quite that non-interventionist. I mean, it was Kerry who also—long before the administration decided it wanted to go into Libya—Kerry was there with John McCain saying we need to move here. So I'm not quite sure what his position is going to be on that. I think that he has a very healthy regard for his own abilities as a negotiator. He has taken on some of these missions for the administration in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, and in Syria obviously, in Egypt, where he's gone several times and met with Morsi, even before he was president. And there's some people in the administration who feel like he went beyond his brief and was acting more as a senior senator than as an emissary for the administration. I think that he will want to do more of that. I think that he will want to be directly

involved in negotiations with Iran if it ever gets to that. He feels that he has a history in Pakistan, he's very well thought of there. He also brings—on Pakistan, which we haven't talked about very much—he is one of the authors of the major aid program there, and feels very strongly that the administration has not really paid much attention to Pakistan while giving lip service to the idea that Pakistan really is much more important in the long term than is Afghanistan to US interests. So I think he'll want to be a major player—I mean he'll want to be personally involved—in a lot of these things. Hagel, I don't know that well. I think that if we look at what he said, he kind of says things that you know Obama would like to say if he could say things like that—he's said things about Israel, he's said things about intervention, been very much more outspoken. So I think that he is of one mind with what the president has articulated in terms of what he wants to do. Do you want me to go on and talk about Mali?

Ellis: Before you do, I forgot to throw in—and I think everyone would like your assessment of what Hillary Clinton's legacy will be, now that she is leaving, if you have any thoughts on that.

DeYoung: You know, going back to what David said about no more nation-building, no more building the kinds of things that she was so identified with—women's rights, education, health care—I think that's her legacy, but I don't think it's a legacy that will last very long. I think that the administration is in a position now, vis-a-vis Afghanistan for example, where the question of women's rights has gone down and down and down on the list, and as they get more eager to get out and as the actual mechanics of getting out come into play, I think it will be more and more difficult for them to follow up on that. You know, I would disagree just a little bit with David in terms of how much the administration is still interested in democracy building in other countries. I mean, I think they do think that ultimately that is the way out of a place like Yemen, for example. They see it in Somalia, where they were pleased to welcome the president of Somalia here a couple of weeks ago and feel a real sense of accomplishment that they managed to stay with it to get what appears to be a kind of turn over there. That actually kind of leads me into Mali, where I think that they have no intention of being involved on the ground. I think that it would be unlikely at this point for them, even though they are going to start flying surveillance drones over Mali. I don't think they're interested in doing targeted attacks. They are very uncertain of who is who in Mali. Again, I talked before about this sort of legal framework that they've set up. They don't think that they can justify it at this point in Mali until they have a better idea of who's doing what on the ground, which they are very far from having at the time. But what they really want to do is to copy what happened in Somalia and get an African force up to speed there. I don't think they've dismissed the idea of having a true UN force there, and they would really like to work through surrogates and not have any involvement on the ground there. So I think that that's pretty unlikely.

Sanger: I would agree on Mali. I think that Mali is a classic example—even more so than Libya was—of where the US wants to show that they can send in some unique capability, whether that's intel or the refueling and so forth, but they draw the line at the actual combat. And I think partly that's because the president doesn't want to get us involved and sucked into these, but partly because I think he's trying to reset the international mindset that it's not necessarily—it's not an on-off switch that the US is either going to do this or not. That people have to begin to think what their own plans are and to go do them. Now in France's case for Mali, some of what you would hear at the White House, not necessarily the Pentagon, was that the French bit off more than they could chew, that they came in and did this too quickly. The French response to this is, well, we were asked by the government of Mali and didn't have very much time to respond because they were going to lose major cities fairly quickly, and sometimes you just have to act fast. But there is a sort of slow and steady to the Obama administration approach that I think is probably going to shape on countries that believe that they need faster action.

Ellis: Do you want to say anything about Egypt?

Sanger: I was in Egypt exactly a year ago this week, and I'm just astounded how much this has changed. A year ago, nobody was talking about Morsi at all. A year ago, you would go into the Muslim Brotherhood party's headquarters and they would tell you that they had no particular interest in having the presidency. And here we are a year later and they're fighting people on the streets over a state of

emergency, over broader powers for Morsi. And I think that that's the biggest problem that the Muslim Brotherhood is going to run into, which is that the Egyptian people themselves have a difficult time trusting what they're hearing from the Muslim Brotherhood leadership, and they're never quite sure what the real agenda is, and I think you've now seen that in the degree of violence that's taken place now in four or five different cities.

Ellis: Just lastly—and get your questions ready because we will go to them immediately—is there anything that's not on the radar screen that we're not thinking about or talking about that you think we should be focusing on?

Sanger: Well, I mentioned cyber in the Iran context, but I think cyber is going to be a big issue and a defensive issue as well because President Obama's biggest concern about the attacks on Iran was that it would legitimize the use of cyber against the United States, of course we're the most vulnerable nation on earth. It seems that he was right. It wasn't a great secret that the US was using this as an offensive weapon, and now you've begun to see from the Iranians, China, from Russia—much of this pre-dated Olympic Games, of course—escalating attacks but not just now attacks of the usual kind, but infrastructure attacks aimed at us.

DeYoung: And I think trade—I think the administration would like to focus a lot more on trade. Trade with the EU, trade with Latin America, perhaps a hemisphere trade agreement, but I think they see that sort of big vision idea for policy for the next four years.

Ellis: Great, okay, so we are going to take questions. If you could raise your hand and we're going to take three questions together, if that's okay with you, so we can get to everyone. Claudia, over here, and Rebecca. Okay, wait for the mic please.

Question: Thank you both very much. Claudia Fritsche, Embassy of Liechtenstein. I was wondering if any of you would care to say a few things about Pakistan. It is a crucial country in the region where the US has considerable interests. It is a volatile situation, very difficult. [*Inaudible.*] Thank you.

Question: Hi. Chris Parks, TCI. Great presentation, thank you. I guess, Mr. Sanger, this is a question for you principally. How would you describe the change in leadership, or is there a change in China, from Hu Jintao to Xi Jinping, the new man. And then the second part of that is, is North Korea's sort of existence, as it is now, really depending upon the Chinese support?

Question: Arnaud Guillois from the French Embassy. We've heard a lot about containment and crisis management, but is there some space for a positive agenda for foreign policy in the next administration? I'm thinking about the Middle East peace process and other areas. Thank you.

DeYoung: Yes, obviously the US has interests there. What you see is that a lot of people are just so tired of Pakistan, and they feel like they can't deal with it and they wish it would go away. They don't often look at it from Pakistan's point of view, which I think Pakistan has some fairly legitimate reasons for being irate with the United States and distrustful of the United States. I think that you saw a whole series of events from the Ray Davis incident to the bin Laden raid to the shooting deaths of the 24 Pakistani soldiers up on the border where the American reaction—all you had to look at was the last of those and how long it took, despite Hillary Clinton saying, look just apologize, just say sorry we killed your guys. And they just would not do it because they think that Pakistan—they're as suspicious of Pakistan as Pakistan is of the United States. And again, they give lip service to saying Pakistan is much more important over the long term than Afghanistan is to our interests. And if we don't take Pakistan's concerns into account in figuring out what we're doing in Afghanistan, and what we're doing in India, then we are going to run into trouble in the long term. I think it's just like nails on the chalkboard to them. They have a very hard time dealing with Pakistan, I believe. And I think that that's a problem. I don't really know what's going to happen with the SRAP [Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan] office. Kerry said he was going to keep it open, but we don't know who's going to head it or

what's going to happen with assistance to Pakistan—where we've promised a great deal—but people in Congress are not at all interested in giving money to Pakistan and want to impose conditions on it. I think we don't know what's going to happen with the Pakistani government, although I think it's kind of encouraging that the recent of many cyclical ups and downs in Pakistan's political life seems to have subsided for the moment and they actually seem to be heading toward the first handover from one civilian power to another that they've ever had. There are many people in the State Department who would like very much to pay more attention to Pakistan, but there are not many people in the White House who would like to pay more attention to Pakistan. And I think that the military, which at one point under Admiral Mullen felt like they developed a kind of relationship—even Admiral Mullen kind of bailed out of it after a while. And so there's not a good relationship. Strangely enough, I think the relationship with the CIA is actually not too bad at the moment and, again, that's one that's had its ups and downs. So I don't know if that answers your question.

Ellis: Karen, aren't there a lot of tensions with India now on the border? You know, this is going on, off, and on for years.

DeYoung: Well, you know the Pakistanis have always wanted the Americans to intervene and use their influence with India to become involved. The Indians have just said, absolutely not, never, this is not your business, stay out of it. And, again, I think as far as the White House is concerned, it's one of those things they wish would just go away. And so every time it flares up, people kind of bite their nails because you are dealing with two nuclear powers who have increasing arsenals, particularly on the Pakistani side. So we just would like it to calm down. And as long as we feel like the nuclear weapons are secure in Pakistan, which I think we do for the moment, we'd like them to just resolve these problems by themselves.

Sanger: Before I get to the China question, let me just add one thought on Pakistan. The biggest insight, I think, that the administration had in 2009 during the Afghanistan-Pakistan review was that Pakistan was deeply linked to our strategic interests, and Afghanistan wasn't. And I think that helps explain why the president, as soon as he came to the conclusions that the surge was not likely to be wildly successful, pulled the plug on it. But it also explains why it is that they want to keep a force in Afghanistan. Some of this is about Afghanistan; a lot of it is about keeping an eye on 100, getting to 200 nuclear weapons in Pakistan, and an unstable government and the concern of nuclear material going loose. There's a very short chapter at the beginning of *Confront and Conceal* called "Bomb Scare" that is about a fear that ran through the White House the first few months that they were in office in 2009 that the Taliban had gotten a hold of some nuclear material or a weapon itself. It turned out, fortunately, to be a false alarm. But it made them confront the question of what the world would look like one morning if there was a loose weapon. It completely changed the way they think about the country.

To the very good question on China, we don't know very much about Xi Jinping so far. We know that Hu Jintao was considered to be a fairly weak leader—that there was a fairly big split between the military and the civilian leadership. That partly explained what happened over the last couple years where the military stepped out more on its own. But we don't know if Xi Jinping has consolidated enough power that he's going to be able to reassert control over them. The military did many things over the past ten years that they never would have done when Mao was around because you would've heard a few rapid gun shots in the back of the Forbidden City and that would be about the end of it. And it's now not clear, the degree to which Xi Jinping actually can or wants to take that set of reigns. We have a lot to learn about him.

On your North Korea question, how much are they reliant on Chinese support—pretty reliant, particularly on the energy side. There was one moment about five or seven years ago, and I can't remember what precipitated event there was around it, in which the Chinese just turned off the oil for about a week or two because they said they were having a pipeline issue and they needed to go do some maintenance—it was a politically very well-timed pipeline issue. And boy did the North Koreans come around very quickly. The problem is the Chinese fear something more than a nuclear North

Korea. They fear a collapsing North Korea that brings the US and South Korea right up to their border. And so they would rather live with the status quo than risk the collapse.

Nobody answered Arnaud's question, about whether or not there's a positive agenda.

DeYoung: I would say—they would say—that climate change and environmental issues are part of the positive agenda. They would say nonproliferation is part of the positive agenda. They would certainly give lip service to boosting the status of women. I think they would say that spreading American values at the same time you allow countries to make their own mistakes, going back to this sort of light footprint thing. They would see that as a net positive of American influence in the world.

Sanger: And rebuilding the American economy as sort of an engine for it.

Ellis: Okay, yes. Diana, here, and Rebecca.

Question: Diana Negroponete, Brookings Institution. I want to bring you both back nearer to home—Keystone pipeline. The Canadians have waited. The Canadians have made their own plans for a pipeline to the Pacific. The new secretary of state, who must decide. What do you think he will decide?

Question: Hi, my name is Rebecca. I'm from the Women's Foreign Policy Group. My question is regarding Islamist parties in the Middle East. You see on the one hand more radical groups, which aren't recognized internationally, while on the other hand groups like the Muslim Brotherhood are being recognized internationally. However, there are a growing number of Islamist parties that fall someplace in the middle of that spectrum. Do you think that the United States, during Obama's second term, will focus on developing relationships with any of those groups that don't fall to those extremes or do you think it'll take sort of a back seat to some other pressing issues?

Question: Yes, Randi Levinas with the US-Russia Business Council. The topic of Russia has really only been mentioned maybe once in connection with cyber-security. But I'm interested in knowing your views on how you see the administration's approach with Russia going forward in the second term. Whereas publically there's always a great concentration on human rights issues, I think somewhat publically, but sometimes more privately, there's a lot of discussion on the cooperation between the two countries on the route to Afghanistan, on Iran itself, and in other areas, certainly in cooperation on antiterrorism. Thank you.

Sanger: I'll start on Keystone. If I had to bet, and I wouldn't bet very much on it, I think it's going to go through. Once you saw the governor of Nebraska flip the other day about this new route, I think it's going to be hard for the White House to step in and take a position that's stronger than the one of the governor of Nebraska, which of course was the place where there were some of the most critical questions on sensitive lands. And I think having made their point by forcing the company to go do the reroute and say, you know, the environmental concerns have to come first, and try to move the meter there, I think they'll probably go ahead. I could well turn out to be wrong.

DeYoung: This is something that I think the administration would sort of pride itself on, even as it hopes to do better. You look at the statements that they've made. I think they have tried, without saying it, to say, look, Islam as a political movement—we're cool with that, we don't mind. And we recognize that, even if there are religion-based parties in other parts of the world—and here, to some extent—that we're happy to live with that. We're only interested in groups that turn toward terrorism. But it's hard for them to figure out who's who. You see the Muslim Brotherhood, which is a very different thing in different countries. You see what's happening in Jordan, you see what's happening in Syria. I think that they would like very much to have a really sophisticated ability to distinguish among groups. And they're trying to do that in Mali, where you have groups that are secular fighting with the insurgents there. You have Islamist groups that are not al-Qaeda related and you have Islamic groups that are al-Qaeda related. I think they are trying to have a more sophisticated understanding in the belief that, in a

case like Mali, that not every Islamist party is interested in attacking the United States, for example. And so they are trying to—and this is one of the reasons why they have been hesitant to become involved with the French. They feel that some of these groups can be brought over in a way that's not threatening to the United States, and that it's just not very sophisticated to not understand more of what goes on in these societies. And that's what they're trying to do in Syria too, I think.

Sanger: On your Russia question, I find it notable that Obama and Putin barely know each other—I mean, just because Obama has spent much more time with Medvedev during that time, there's not been a great rush to get the two of them together since you don't hear of many conversations they have on the phone. But Iran and Syria are the two places where I think they have the possibility of beginning to build some relationship. You saw the Russians move on Iran somewhat in the past four years—not delivering the S300s, which was the big anti-aircraft, going very slow on the development of the Buchi reactor. And now on Syria, you're beginning to hear the Russians make the case that, you know, maybe Assad isn't the god-given leader of the country. And that changes the conversation a lot. So I think you may begin to see Obama try to go out and do that. If you ask people in the White House, what's the biggest single failure of your foreign policy in the first term? They'll tell you it was the Arab-Israeli peace process. And you say, what was your second biggest failure? They would say, buying that big reset button at Staples. [*Laughter.*] And I think they're going to try to find a much more subtle way to go do that.

DeYoung: I would just add to that, I think I disagree a little bit on Syria. If you look at what the Russians said today, it's basically what they've been saying for some time now. We never said that Assad had to stay; we just said it had to be a decision of the Syrian people. They kind of repeated that today. And I think there is a real—within the upper echelons of the administration on foreign policy—there is a real mistrust of Putin. I think they just don't like Putin. They believe that, if you take Syria as an example, that Putin is using that as a way to basically keep the United States from almost being involved and having a solution in Syria. I think that they feel that—David's right, what he said about Iran—and I think that is a shared threat, and there is a sense that the Russians have been pretty cooperative. They've been pretty cooperative in Afghanistan. But I think that what underlies it all is a conclusion that I think will last throughout the Obama second term—that Putin is somebody who's not to be trusted and they need to be very, very careful how they deal with him.

Ellis: There's time for a few more questions. Donna, Sylvia, and Joanne.

Question: Hi, Donna Constantinople. I wanted to go back to a follow up on Pat's question about Hillary's legacy issue. I'd be interested to hear what you thought the motivation for the White House initiating this 60 Minutes interview and do you think it's possible that Hillary Clinton feels vulnerable about her legacy. I think David, your colleague David Brooks, wrote a piece, and maybe I saw something else that well—you know, she's traveled a lot. What is the real legacy for Hillary Clinton? And then to have this interview surface—I'd just love to hear about the spin on it.

Question: My name is Silvia Kofler. I'm from the European Union office here. And I have one question about the fact that you have mentioned so many international problems here. We saw the president at his inaugural address—he really didn't focus on international issues. Do you think he will do this now at the State of the Union address? And if not, do you think we could still assume that he's more focused on domestic issues than international issues in general? And, if I may, a second question—you mentioned the Middle East. Do you think he's going to make any advance or try again to find peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis?

Question: Thank you. Joanne Young. About the time your book came out, there were a lot of concerns about national security leaks with respect to the virus, the drones, deployment, I think another version of an underwear bomb that might have evaded security. That kind of, you know, went below the surface and there were a lot of concerns at the time that, without a special prosecutor, there'd never be a chance to really understand who in the situation room might have had access to that information—

might have let it go. I wonder if you could comment on the extent to which you think the American people are ever going to get some answers on those national security leaks.

Question: I'm Carol James. Christine Lagarde has mentioned the evolution of several reserve currencies for the world, when currently we have really the US dollar. Do you have any comment about currency evaluation and other currency related issues as we look to the future, and particularly in respect to the evolution of international trade?

DeYoung: Hillary. I don't know the motivation for that. I mean, you're right that the White House initiated it. I don't know if Obama wanted to bask in Hillary's glow, or Hillary wanted to bask in his glow—I don't know. I don't know what the motivation was. You know, in terms of her feeling vulnerable and what's her legacy. I think her legacy is that people really like her—people overseas really like her, people here really like her. And after many years in which whichever American was coming to visit was not a very well-liked person, I think that she—even when policies were disliked—she earned an enormous amount of respect and I think that will stand her well, and it stands the country well.

Sanger: I would agree with that and I would say that, if she runs four years from now, people will have pretty much forgotten the details of where she was on Afghanistan or the Libya invasion and all that. But they do have this overwhelming, sort of warm glow about her, which is not the feeling many people had about her at the end of her last campaign. So now, health care is behind her now. She seems to have a degree of international experience that no other democrat, except Joe Biden, could claim. She's got incredible fundraising capability, and I think I saw an approval rating that was up in the 60s or something—67 or something. President Obama has never had a number that began with a six, I don't think. Maybe he did right after the bin Laden event, but that would've been fairly brief. International issues in the State of the Union, I don't think you're going to hear a whole lot of them.

DeYoung: I think it's going to be very much like the inaugural speech where you've got kind of three paragraphs stuck in there that talk about our values and protecting national security and saying good things about the troops, and that'll be it. I think it'll be almost completely about domestic affairs.

Sanger: I agree. I think it will be—I think you will not hear a lot of foreign policy. On the national security leaks, I keep reading—I just picked up my *Sunday Washington Post*, and on my way to trying to find Karen's stories, I found reading the paper, telling me yesterday that there are new investigations on what you'll read in this book, or heightened investigations. I think that we forget, sometimes, in the political atmosphere of campaigns that merge up with leak investigations. My experience as a reporter doing this is that, whenever you hear a simple explanation about where a leak came from, it's almost always wrong. And I can't speak to the other leak investigations that they have underway. I can tell you—and I have said before publically that the work on Olympic Games and the Iran project took 18 months—that there was an extremely big leak here and I described it to you before. It was the accident that let the virus out and accidents do happen. Sometimes in intelligence operations, as they happen in everything else we do in life. And that opened up the code for everybody in the world to go see, including the Iranians. So it wasn't exactly news to the Iranians that they were under attack once they had that code by the fall of 2010. And they said themselves who they thought had done it, and it wasn't the Swiss. [*Laughter.*] So then you've got to go back and ask the question, what was the public interest, if any, in revealing that the United States is conducting offensive cyber operations—perfectly legitimate question. The answer to that is that, as I said before, there's no country more vulnerable than the US. We have a government that's talked about cyber defense endlessly, without talking about the fact that we also do cyber offense. And because they haven't discussed publically cyber offense, they have not discussed publically what the rules are under which we use cyber weapons. When would you use an offensive cyber weapon and when wouldn't you? Can you have that debate about a classified program? You bet. Everything about nuclear weapons is classified—how you build them, where we store them, how many of them we have, so forth and so on. And yet for 20 years between Hiroshima and the Cuban missile crisis, we managed to have a very vivid national debate about when we would use nuclear weapons, and that included a couple of crazy generals stepping out saying, let's drop one on

the Chinese during the Korean War. An Air Force general who was advising President Kennedy—you hear this on the Kennedy tapes—the Missile Crisis was a superb moment to end it all for the Soviet Union, and so forth. It took us a while to come to some conclusion about when we would, or more importantly, when we would not use these weapons. Everything about drones is classified. But we've had a very vivid debate for ten years—thank goodness—about whether or not we want to go use this weapon, and it's begun to have some effect in the public discussion. And we need to have that about cyber. It's just we need to have it over a much more telescoped period because we don't have a whole lot of time, given the degree to which we're being hit by cyber weapons, and the degree to which many in the United States wants to go use cyber weapons. So when something like this is written, it's not that we're walking into it unthinking, it's not that we're revealing it because it's a cool story—though it is a pretty interesting story. There's a public interest usually at work, and that doesn't get much discussion when people work themselves into a discussion of leaks.

DeYoung: I would just add to that, as David said, just in terms of reporting. You know, the search for the person who said this or the source of this document, I think that most reporting that we've been involved in doesn't really work that way. Nobody's putting something under your door, saying, here, surprise. With someone like David who's worked on this subject for many, many years, who knows lots of people in lots of countries who deal with this issue, I think that you're building a picture of something based on your own information. And it's the same with drones, that again, by definition, everything about it is secret. The administration has tried to put out versions of things that will boost their case without revealing any information and then they're kind of stuck because, in fact, information comes out anyway. And then they're forced to better define why they're doing something and what they're doing, and I think that we can only all benefit from that.

Ellis: Well we've come to the end of an absolutely fantastic program—you see why we keep inviting you two back again. Thank you all for coming and for your great questions. [*Applause.*]