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Evaluation Code | E-11

Index | I-52.A

Location | Zoom

Title | Interview of Earl Anthony Wayne

Purpose | To identify long-term factors undermining the Afghan government's authority and legitimacy, as well as successes and failures in U.S.

Informant name | Earl Anthony Wayne

Informant title | Deputy Ambassador to Afghanistan

Title status  Current

Former

Phone Number

Email address

Informant has expressed fear of retaliation, reprisal, or embarrassment

Yes

No

Informant has requested confidentiality and interviewer agreed

Yes

No

Informant is a foreign national

Yes

No

Copy sent to Investigations Directorate

Yes

No

Interview date | 12/21/21

SIGAR Attendees

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Date prepared | 5/20/22

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Date reviewed | 5/25/22



INTERVIEW OF  
EARL ANTHONY WAYNE  
BY  
DANIEL WEGGELAND

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DECEMBER 21, 2021

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This transcript was produced from  
audio provided by the Office of the Special  
Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 MR. WEGGELAND: This morning we are  
3 interviewing Ambassador Anthony Wayne. The rules  
4 for today's interview include the following,  
5 Ambassador Wayne has agreed that we can attribute  
6 his comments, essentially up to his name, in the  
7 public report, and we will also be recording  
8 today's interview. Of course, if at point he  
9 wishes us to pause, we will pause and not record  
10 those comments. Ambassador Wayne, does that work  
11 for you?

12 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: That works me.  
13 Thank you.

14 MR. WEGGELAND: Excellent. Thank you  
15 very much for joining us this morning. We have  
16 this set, currently, for an hour, but if you're  
17 willing to go longer, we have also time, as well.  
18 I'll let you know when we're getting close to the  
19 hour, and then check in with you and see how you  
20 want to proceed.

21 Before we kick off, looking at your  
22 background it seems that the best time period

1 that you can comment as an observer, direct  
2 observer on Afghanistan affairs would be from the  
3 time you were made the Coordinating Director for  
4 Development and Economic Affairs at the Embassy,  
5 which would've been June 2009, through your tour  
6 as Deputy Ambassador under Ambassador Eikenberry,  
7 which started in May 2010, and I assume that  
8 ended May-ish, June-ish of 2011, is that?

9 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: June of 2011.

10 MR. WEGGELAND: June of 2011. Okay.

11 Would that be fair to say that is the time period  
12 that you had the most focus and direct  
13 observation on Afghanistan, or are there  
14 subsequent experiences you'd like us also to be  
15 aware of?

16 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: I'll mention a  
17 couple other things. So, there, sort of, have  
18 been three periods of time where I paid attention  
19 to Afghanistan. The most intense, certainly, was  
20 2009 through 2011 because I was there, and my  
21 wife went with me, and she worked at the Embassy  
22 while we were there. From September 2011 through

1 the beginning of 2003 I also was the lead  
2 coordinator for the State Department on  
3 reconstruction efforts, international  
4 reconstruction efforts on Afghanistan.

5 So, I was the Assistant Secretary for  
6 Economic and Business Affairs, and at that time  
7 the State Department really didn't have a bureau  
8 that focused on crisis response and rebuilding  
9 and things like that. So, we took the lead to  
10 organize international donors including starting  
11 while fighting was still going on in Afghanistan  
12 because we realized that there was going to have  
13 to be a rebuilding effort afterwards, a new  
14 government, helping to recreate the economy and  
15 make the economy better going forward. So, we  
16 started working with the World Bank and the UNDP  
17 and some key donors, particularly the Japanese,  
18 volunteered to be our partners in convening the  
19 first donor conference to get the outlines of  
20 what was going to be needed, where people should  
21 invest, asking people to make pledges. So, we  
22 had a whole series of meetings leading up, and

1 some big donor meetings but led up to a very  
2 large donor meeting in Tokyo in January of 2002.  
3 Through the next year we worked to keep donors  
4 coordinated and to try to support from capitals  
5 the work that was going on on the ground to get  
6 the economy going again to provide for the needs  
7 of Afghan people.

8 So, this was a period where, I think  
9 it's fair to say, few people really knew what  
10 they were doing well, and there was, I mean, One  
11 Afghanistan was a real disaster, much worse than  
12 when I went back again, or when I went there in  
13 2009. Donors were trying to figure out how to  
14 support Afghanistan, and they did a number of  
15 things that weren't too smart as they were going  
16 forward, including giving lead responsibility to  
17 different donors for different sectors, which  
18 really didn't work very well because people  
19 didn't coordinate during that period of time. Of  
20 course, in peril of this was the political  
21 process of getting the Loya Jirga to convene in  
22 Germany and trying to get a political structure

1 up and running, which they did. Eventually, I  
2 handed this responsibility off to my colleagues  
3 in the South Central Asia bureau once they were  
4 staffed up to keep working on this, which was  
5 really the end of 2002, beginning of 2003,  
6 because I got to focus on Iraq **\*\*(20:51:54)\*\***.

7           So, then I went off and really didn't  
8 work on Afghanistan, per say, until spring of  
9 2009. Dick Holbrooke had been named the special  
10 representative. He was looking to assemble a  
11 team of senior specialists to go out to  
12 Afghanistan to beef up, his idea was we should  
13 beef up our presence there and our efforts there  
14 on the civilian side as well as the military  
15 side. I was recruited to do that from where I  
16 was serving as Ambassador to Argentina, and I  
17 think in part because of my earlier experience on  
18 Afghan reconstruction and that I had been the  
19 Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business  
20 Affairs, so I had also worked on Iraq and other  
21 rebuilding efforts for the economies.

22           So, I then left Argentina, has a brief



1 period, very brief time in Washington, and then  
2 headed out to Kabul in June of 2009 in a newly  
3 created job which was called the Coordinator for  
4 --

5 MR. WEGGELAND: Development and  
6 Economic Affairs?

7 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: CDDEA, Coordinating  
8 Director --

9 MR. WEGGELAND: Coordinator Director  
10 for Development and Economic Affairs.

11 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Economic Affairs.  
12 That was it. Right. Long title.

13 MR. WEGGELAND: Right.

14 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: So, the idea was  
15 that we would have four ambassador ranked people  
16 at the Embassy, and part of the reason for that  
17 was there were so many senior military officers  
18 there, three and four stars, that you had to have  
19 people that were of similar rank for them to  
20 seriously engage them. This was the theory.

21 MR. WEGGELAND: Sufficient wasta?

22 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Exactly. Part of

1 that was fueled by Karl Eikenberry who had been a  
2 three star general there and now was ambassador,  
3 and so he knew, sort of, how generals thought.  
4 So, he thought this was key and we would pair up  
5 with the other generals and commanders and work  
6 in different areas.

7 So, my area of responsibility for the  
8 first year was to try to bring much more  
9 coordination to the civilian assistance effort  
10 and then try to coordinate with DoD, which was  
11 doing a lot of assistance, a lot of what would  
12 normally be civilian assistance as part of their  
13 military activities. For understandable reasons,  
14 they were trying to win hearts and minds locally.  
15 But we had a number of different civilian  
16 agencies with about four billion dollars worth of  
17 programs underway at that period of time. I  
18 think it was fair to say they were not well  
19 coordinated, and I think it's fair to say that  
20 like much else in Afghanistan, you were  
21 innovating as you went forward, as SIGAR has  
22 detailed in many of its reports. So, people made

1 mistakes, and they were doing that. They were  
2 often working at the very extreme of their  
3 ability, their capacity to act because there was  
4 so much going on and so much happening. We were  
5 trying to deploy civilians out to the various  
6 military installations around the country at the  
7 same time we were trying to bring in better  
8 coordination, first among ourselves then with the  
9 U.S. forces and the NATO forces and with other  
10 donors and with the Afghans all at the same time.

11 So, we used to joke with each other  
12 that it was like flying a combat mission on a big  
13 plane while you were rebuilding the plane at the  
14 same time and getting conflicting instructions  
15 about what you should be doing and you were  
16 getting new members dropping into your crew on a  
17 regular basis, because, as you remember, at that  
18 period of time, everybody served one year and  
19 that was it. So, you had this massive knowledge  
20 and brain drain on a regular basis. It was  
21 really dysfunctional, but you tried to do the  
22 best you can. There was a lot of political

1 pressure to produce results back from Washington.

2 So, a lot of regular, once a week deputies and  
3 principles readings and once a month, for a  
4 while, meeting with the President on video with  
5 everybody on.

6 So, a lot of attention to what was  
7 happening there, and we were trying to staff at a  
8 time when it was really hard to get enough  
9 civilians, knowledgeable civilians, experienced  
10 civilians to come out. So, as you remember, they  
11 were trying this method of, oh, I've forgotten  
12 it, something 10. A procedure by which you were  
13 hiring --

14 MR. WEGGELAND: Right, 3161 is the  
15 hiring authority for a State Department.

16 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Yes, 3161, that's  
17 it. So, you were getting a mixed bag. You got  
18 some really outstanding people and some people  
19 who were just there for money and some people who  
20 weren't up to living in a war time situation.  
21 So, you had to manage, you were trying to manage  
22 people, manage a process, manage the substance,

1 deal with all these other people, and it did make  
2 it a really complex situation.

3 So, anyway, in that first year, in  
4 became clear to me and to my colleagues, pretty  
5 clearly, that the political modernization of  
6 structures in Afghanistan had not yet taken  
7 place. This was still a patron-client  
8 relationship based on tribes and family ties and  
9 other things superimposed in this structure that  
10 we were trying to support of a more modern  
11 government.

12 So, you had a lot of what we would  
13 call corruption, but for Afghans it was just  
14 taking care of your family and building networks  
15 that could support you because that's the way it  
16 had been done for generations and generations  
17 given the weakness of the government structures  
18 there. You had a thin layer of technocrats, some  
19 of whom were very good but a number of whom,  
20 under their veneer of having a western education,  
21 were still Afghans who grew up in Afghanistan and  
22 felt all those other pressures from their

1 families and others to help out, and their clans  
2 and their tribes.

3           And we were all learning this because,  
4 you know, I'd never served in Afghanistan, I came  
5 in from Argentina, which had it's own problems  
6 but a different kind of problems, and a lot of my  
7 colleagues the same way. So, we were trying to  
8 learn all of this, be culturally sensitive,  
9 figure out what's the best way to deal in this  
10 culture and get good results as we were  
11 discovering what was going on. By the time I had  
12 been there, by the fall, I had concluded that  
13 once we somehow got a better hand on managing  
14 corruption, not eliminating it, the government we  
15 were working with would not be seen as legitimate  
16 over the longer period of time, and I think that  
17 remained a problem throughout our whole stay  
18 there, as I saw when I came back to this later  
19 on.

20           MR. WEGGELAND: On that point, very  
21 briefly, would it be fair to say, from your  
22 perspective, that, at least at that time, which I

1 guess would be the fall of 2009, is that right?

2 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Right.

3 MR. WEGGELAND: The assessment, at  
4 least that you had, was that corruption could not  
5 be or had not been mitigated despite all the  
6 accountability, oversight, et cetera, et cetera,  
7 efforts that the international community  
8 collectively, or individually in the case of the  
9 U.S. Government or the implementing agencies, had  
10 imposed.

11 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: That's correct.

12 MR. WEGGELAND: Obviously, your  
13 arrival is the start of your time line to observe  
14 things, but it's not the start of the U.S.  
15 intervention. So, all the donor conferences up  
16 to that point saying things like corruption is  
17 bad and needs to be dealt with, all the efforts  
18 to try to whittle away at this big problem, that  
19 at least after you got a chance to get your feet  
20 under you and have a look at it as much as one  
21 could, this giant monster in the fall of 2009,  
22 that the assessment is essentially whatever we've

1       been doing up to now is insufficient to deal with  
2       this corruption challenge and that that challenge  
3       is a threat to the legitimacy and/or authority of  
4       the Afghan state.

5                    AMBASSADOR WAYNE:   Right.  And part of  
6       the challenge was that a number of people that  
7       the U.S. Government and NATO were relying on to  
8       fight the Taliban effectively were corrupt and  
9       killed people, sort of, unnecessarily, I mean,  
10      depended on the individual and where you were and  
11      things.  But it was like, and this isn't true of  
12      everybody, there were a number of people with  
13      whom, whether or not they were corrupt, if they  
14      were you couldn't see it, who knows.  And we  
15      never saw that Karzai himself was personally  
16      corrupt, but he had a lot of people in his  
17      network that were, that were key in his patron-  
18      client network.  And a lot of people that the  
19      military worked with who were effective generals  
20      had a lot of big flaws including corruption.  And  
21      a lot of the governors around the country and  
22      political leaders had a big chunk of corruption.



1 They ran their states okay in some cases and less  
2 well in others, or their provinces, but there was  
3 a lot of corruption going on. So, you weren't  
4 modeling. And there weren't really modern  
5 political parties that existed within these  
6 **\*\*\*(21:02:32)\*\*\*** sort of to counter this as we  
7 got forward. Thinking back to my old political  
8 science training decades before, we learned how  
9 modern political parties evolved, and that helped  
10 eliminate the corruption in the old royal systems  
11 in Europe and elsewhere and in the United States,  
12 but that wasn't really happening for a lot of  
13 reasons.

14 MR. WEGGELAND: Just so I'm clear,  
15 because corruption is a term that can mean a lot  
16 of things to different people, and I just want to  
17 make sure I'm understanding how you're using it.  
18 So, the general definition of corruption is  
19 abusing public office for private gain, but I  
20 assume that if one is effectively governing a  
21 province that it might not be personal gain it  
22 might be trying to solidify a coalition or to

1 redirect it towards a different, so it would  
2 potentially be fraud if one says, yes, I use this  
3 money for this purpose but actually used it for  
4 another, that would be fraud, but I guess this is  
5 a more general, the impression I get is the more  
6 general sense of corruption being used in  
7 Afghanistan as redirecting resources towards  
8 other ends and not exclusively personal benefit  
9 like I am enriching myself. I just wanted to  
10 clarify that.

11           AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Exactly. It really  
12 was both kinds because a lot of it was diverting  
13 funds that came through assistance or went to the  
14 government and then came down there to build  
15 coalitions to sustain things, even if it wasn't  
16 done efficiently **\*\*\* (21:04:09) \*\*\*** payoffs in  
17 order to keep people so wealthy. But there was  
18 other that was personal enrichment, and we found  
19 both of them. Then, that dividing line, what I  
20 discovered was that the dividing line between  
21 what is morally okay and what is morally not okay  
22 in that society was just very different because

1 there was a lot of pressure on people to protect  
2 their, take care of their families. And that's  
3 not quite the same thing that we feel in western,  
4 I mean, of course we love our families, but we're  
5 not going to divert money to do that. But for  
6 Afghans, it was okay to give job opportunities  
7 and contracts and other things to family members  
8 even if they weren't the best to receive that  
9 because that was part of your responsibility.

10 So, there are all these different  
11 things going on simultaneously and we in the west  
12 had tried to fix some of it, all the western  
13 donors and everybody, and I could see where there  
14 were improvements in accountability, and while I  
15 was there I could see the Finance Ministry  
16 improving its accountability, but it was way  
17 short of making substantial gains. Some of that  
18 corruption in a war situation it's going to  
19 happen, and it's okay. The problem is, as I came  
20 to see it, if it undermines legitimacy of the  
21 government that you're trying to work with,  
22 that's not good, and if it undermines, thus, our

1 goals, U.S. goals there and our own view of  
2 legitimacy because we're seen as facilitating a  
3 corrupt, ineffective government. If it were a  
4 somewhat corrupt but effective government, that's  
5 a different situation, you have to make those  
6 judgments around the world, and we do that all  
7 the time. This was just a really, really  
8 difficult situation. So, at some point over  
9 those months it became clear that the cost of  
10 really calling out some of the senior level  
11 diversion of funds for non-official ends and not  
12 producing good results at a high level wasn't  
13 going to be called to account because at the top  
14 levels of the U.S. Government it would create too  
15 much disruption to the war effort. So, they  
16 said, let's keep working. It was basically, you  
17 guys keep working on it as best you can going  
18 forward.

19 MR. WEGGELAND: Would it be fair to  
20 say that trying to, I guess this is a two part  
21 question. So, the first one is, would it be fair  
22 to say that the surveillance, whether active or

1 passive, the surveillance capabilities necessary  
2 to get a good sense of is this individual acting  
3 corruptly, that that's a significant investment  
4 of time and energy on the part of the U.S.  
5 Government to get to a specific did this  
6 individual commit a corrupt act?

7 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: We did not have the  
8 capacity to do that in most cases.

9 MR. WEGGELAND: And then in those  
10 cases where we did that that --

11 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: The most effective  
12 way of doing this was when we used technical  
13 means to uncover either money transfers or  
14 conversations.

15 MR. WEGGELAND: So --

16 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Then we didn't  
17 really have the people to go out and investigate  
18 that stuff because you have to get into that  
19 society, so you have to have Afghan partners to  
20 do that. What happened was, in part, in a couple  
21 areas, anti-drug area because they develop, as  
22 they do around the world, DEA had a special

1 investigation unit, these people are all vetted,  
2 they actually started finding stuff. Then, when  
3 the treasury people came out from OPEC and  
4 started tracking money they started finding  
5 stuff.

6 But that didn't take you all the way  
7 because it just showed you that there's this  
8 channel and there's money flowing through it, too  
9 much money, but you really couldn't go  
10 investigate a lot of it because the justice  
11 system was **\*\*(21:08:31)\*\*** a couple of areas.  
12 Plus, you were busy doing all this other stuff.  
13 It was really complex. When Petraeus came out,  
14 for example, he hired McMaster to come and try to  
15 set some examples of finding corrupt people and  
16 going after them, and they had a really hard time  
17 of doing that. I think that was a right effort  
18 to do, but it was very hard to do.

19 As I say, some of the people that we  
20 identified as we believed were among the most  
21 diverting of money for their own ends were also  
22 very effective, either militarily or in running a

1 province. So, what did you do? How could you do  
2 that? It kept coming up to a number of really  
3 difficult and hard choices.

4 MR. WEGGELAND: Right. So, after the very  
5 labor intensive effort to first identify do we  
6 have sufficient evidence then that queues up the  
7 second challenge, what does one do with it. I  
8 guess it often -- correct me if I'm wrong, it  
9 sounds as if it appeared that there were often  
10 forks in the road where it was a choice of, do we  
11 take the cost of picking a fight on this issue,  
12 or in doing so does that undermine the  
13 effectiveness of our counterpart and that this  
14 made it a very difficult choice over and over  
15 again, is that a fair way of summarizing it?

16 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: That's a good way  
17 to look at it. And a lot of times we didn't have  
18 sufficient evidence. As you said earlier, we  
19 didn't have the ability to investigate the  
20 evidence that we had to take it further just  
21 because of the limits of what we could do. Then  
22 we came to these various forks in the road, and

1 it was very hard.

2           There were certain instances like the  
3 Kabul bank crisis where eventually we had to keep  
4 pushing because so much money was involved, even  
5 though they were really top well connected in the  
6 economy and the society and to Karzai people who  
7 were involved in this corrupt act of diverting  
8 money away, bank fraud and doing other things.  
9 And with a lot of pressure they got some  
10 punishment but they didn't, as you know, they got  
11 off fairly lightly after a couple years of  
12 scrutiny. That was a very big case.

13           And this was happening at all sorts of  
14 different levels, a lot of which we didn't know  
15 about because you'd have to, you'd pick up little  
16 things about this road construction where we're  
17 spending all this money, some of it's going to  
18 the Taliban, some of it's going to the local  
19 people who let you go through, is that really  
20 corruption, some of it's who's getting the truck  
21 contract to bring all the asphalt in, et cetera.  
22 You just couldn't do that around the country.



1           MR. WEGGELAND:  So, it sounds almost  
2           as if, at a certain point, the conclusion is  
3           basically any intervention, any development or  
4           development like effort will involve bad things,  
5           corruption, pay off to the Taliban, et cetera.  
6           So, it almost sounds as if the question then  
7           becomes, do you do anything or do nothing, I  
8           mean, in its most extreme --

9           AMBASSADOR WAYNE:  I think for us the  
10          question came, when it was a big enough thing,  
11          can we get this practice changed?  So, we would  
12          have targeted interventions to deal with specific  
13          cases that came up.  But we didn't think we were  
14          going to change the system to prevent things like  
15          this from happening.  It's like the customs  
16          houses.  Through a lot pressure from us and other  
17          donors we got them to increase the collection at  
18          customs houses, but I don't think we ever  
19          eliminated the corruption and the skimming that  
20          was taking place, and it was just go up and down  
21          depending on how much pressure there was from  
22          Kabul to Washington.  As we heard in the last

1 couple year it just started skyrocketing again.  
2 Part of the interesting thing is, at those  
3 moments when it looked like there might be a  
4 reduction in U.S. support and other things, the  
5 temptation to be corrupt just went way up because  
6 people were tempted, I better get what I can now  
7 because it's not going to last. Anyway, gigantic  
8 problem, really hard to figure out.

9 I eventually, I faced this in  
10 different ways when I went to Mexico. My  
11 conclusion was we didn't have a good set of anti-  
12 corruption policies as a U.S. Government, in  
13 general, so not just in Afghanistan. We had some  
14 tools that sort of worked and donors, some tools  
15 that worked, but they're far from perfect and  
16 especially at a place where you're so deeply  
17 involved it's really hard.

18 Now, let me just step back a minute.  
19 The other thing that, the big difference that  
20 came out in the summer of that first year that I  
21 was there was when we were debating the surge,  
22 and you know that there were a set of cables then

1 embassy sent in to Washington \*\*\*(21:14:13)\*\*  
2 channel that were then leaked by people who  
3 either didn't agree with McChrystal's strategy or  
4 wanted to undermine Eikenberry for arguing  
5 against McChrystal's strategy. So, just  
6 philosophically we had a very intense review, and  
7 we pretty quickly came to the conclusion that if  
8 we're going to change this place we really needed  
9 to plan for at least 10 years of intense  
10 development assistance, institution building  
11 programs and keep working on it repeatedly and  
12 repeatedly and repeatedly to try and change  
13 people, and bring newly educated people who had  
14 gone through the high school and university  
15 systems there into active government with a hope  
16 that a number of them would have a different set  
17 of approaches to how you run governments. Not  
18 that they'd be perfect but that they would know  
19 there's a value to having transparency and less  
20 corruption and more accountability to doing  
21 things.

22 And that was just so when it became

1 clear that the surge was going to have a date  
2 certain.

3 MR. WEGGELAND: As in an end or a  
4 beginning date?

5 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: As an end date,  
6 that we were really disappointed because we'd  
7 already concluded that's not going to work.  
8 Plus, we didn't think it would work on the  
9 Taliban side. We kept thinking, unless you can  
10 get to the Taliban and Pakistan they're just  
11 going to wait us out. And, as you know, we never  
12 got to the Taliban and Pakistan.

13 So, I mean, we were good soldiers if  
14 we were diplomats or not, we worked really hard,  
15 and our aid team worked really hard to try and  
16 get these programs out there even though they  
17 were managing more programs than they could  
18 effectively manage as you guys and the aid  
19 inspector general and the state found when they  
20 looked at INL and others, that was happening.  
21 But we tried very hard, and we tried to work with  
22 others to be both careful and get stuff done.

1 But wars don't get, it's hard to win wars and  
2 transform societies in a two year period or three  
3 year period or four year period. It doesn't  
4 work.

5 So, once you've made a decision to go  
6 in to a place as massively as this decision was  
7 made, they're going to be a certain number of  
8 time tables that you need to show progress. That  
9 was a big source of tension during that period of  
10 time between us and the military. The military,  
11 we're told, you've got this really short time  
12 frame and we've got to change everything. Our  
13 aid and other people just kept saying privately,  
14 no way you're going to change society this  
15 quickly. And that led to a lot of tension and  
16 yelling and things back and forth. Eventually we  
17 got beyond that and people understood that they  
18 were under pressure to deliver but they should  
19 listen to this expertise of people who had worked  
20 on development around the world, and they did  
21 eventually. We got a modus vivendi and worked  
22 forward. The tension of the time line was always

1 there throughout the whole two years that I was  
2 in Kabul.

3 MR. WEGGELAND: So, would it be fair  
4 to say, and I don't know if this is just a  
5 military versus civilian perspective or if it's,  
6 principally military actors tended to articulate  
7 one way and principally civilian senior leaders  
8 articulate another, but it sounds as if there is  
9 almost a philosophical debate between how much we  
10 can, through our efforts, shape the environment  
11 versus how much we can respond and maybe, if the  
12 conditions are favorable we can take it to the  
13 next level, but if they're not, we can't, through  
14 our efforts alone, create that change. Maybe the  
15 military senior officials were more sensitive to,  
16 there's a limited time therefore we have to  
17 transform it through our energies. Again, not  
18 saying this is in all cases, but senior civilian  
19 officials who are saying if the conditions are  
20 not right, no matter what you do, you can't force  
21 society to change on your time line. Would that  
22 be a fair description of the underlying debate

1 that happened to be viewed as a bureaucratic  
2 fight?

3           AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Yes. And both  
4 sides, what we came to understand, military is  
5 perfectly legitimate to have a tactical need to  
6 get the support of the local people. So, you  
7 want to give them things, that's support. I  
8 understand that. But that's not going to change  
9 that local society, or change their view of  
10 governance, or change their practices over the  
11 long run. You need to get that tactical  
12 advantage and then you have to have enough space  
13 where there's a legitimate government and  
14 services and other things operating that people's  
15 loyalty will start going toward, in this case,  
16 the Afghan government as a service provider, as a  
17 legitimate force and as something that you are  
18 willing to work for, as distinguished from  
19 tolerate, and appreciate the school, but if it  
20 came to that or your family, your tribe, or other  
21 things, no, you would change. And that's why, in  
22 so many ways, what I came to conclude was our

1 most effective programs, in general, over the  
2 long run, were education and health because  
3 people valued being alive, and when they got  
4 educated they started seeing things differently,  
5 especially as they go through elementary and  
6 secondary school.

7 MR. WEGGELAND: And on that point, one  
8 of the documents that I suppose was issued during  
9 your tenure, I don't know if you were still the  
10 coordinating director or if you had transitioned  
11 to deputy ambassador, was the October 2010 post  
12 performance management plan, which, from my  
13 reading of the various documents to come out of  
14 the conflict, is perhaps the most nested. It  
15 says the President's West Point speech, the  
16 regional stabilization strategy, and then the  
17 integrated civ-mil campaign plan, and then you  
18 have this document the post performance  
19 management plan. One thing that I remember  
20 stands out to me to this day is under the  
21 strategic coherence discussion for health, why  
22 does the U.S. Government investment help, is this



1 line that it is the best way to build active  
2 support for the government. Which is,  
3 presumably, a behavioral change. And I don't  
4 know if you're familiar with that document or  
5 this line of thinking but you mentioning health  
6 and education, I guess one of the things I would  
7 ask is, when we make this assertion that  
8 healthcare leads to active support, did you have  
9 a strong sense at the time that that was based  
10 off the experience in Afghanistan or is this  
11 more, well, if anything is going to work  
12 hopefully it's something that directly benefits  
13 people.

14           AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Well, I think aid  
15 believed that from all their experience. But the  
16 example that really brought it home to me was  
17 midwives, our training for midwives, and the  
18 Afghan people started calling them angels, and  
19 that was their term for them because they would  
20 go into these little villages with nobody there  
21 and they would save mothers and children just by  
22 knowing how to deliver a baby and what to do in a

1 emergencies. I went to a number of the  
2 graduation ceremonies around the country, at  
3 least two of them, I can't remember, and I saw  
4 there was a real affection towards these young  
5 women who were doing it. They were so proud. To  
6 me that just drove home, these guys are right.  
7 This was an example, people really appreciate it,  
8 and people will remember that while they might  
9 forget other things. Now, it doesn't mean, I  
10 supported training for farmers, how to grow stuff  
11 better and all that stuff, I mean, you've got to  
12 do that too, but these were two really important  
13 things. And then the other thing, I just kept  
14 meeting young Afghans who both were graduating  
15 from high school and graduating from university.  
16 It was so different. They were optimistic, they  
17 viewed the world differently, they understood  
18 there's a world out there, they'd clearly read a  
19 lot about that outside world and what was going  
20 on, and they were so different than the older  
21 generations. You could just see in talking with  
22 them and all the different opportunities they had

1 that this is the future that we want here.

2 But what's that mean? That means that  
3 you've got to be there for 15 years running these  
4 programs, at least, to have a couple of cohorts.  
5 And then they've have to get rid of all those  
6 nasty old war lords and corrupt people above  
7 them, and that never happened in our time there.  
8 So, if you've going to really go into a country  
9 and invest like we did, you just have to think  
10 about a 20 year time frame, I now conclude  
11 thinking about it.

12 Now, it might not be wise to make that  
13 choice to go in and stay that long, but it's  
14 unwise to make the choice to go in and try and do  
15 it in a couple years, especially with a country  
16 in the state of development of Afghanistan.  
17 Different thing for Germany after World War II,  
18 you know, Japan, relatively educated, developed  
19 institutions, things like that. I mean, look at  
20 Korea. Look how long it took in Korea for them  
21 to get beyond the military dictatorship and then  
22 a corrupt democratic system and all that stuff.

1 It takes a long time to do these kind of things.

2 So, anyway, yes, there was a  
3 difference of perspective between the military  
4 and the civilians. We eventually, we did work  
5 that through, we talked it through, we understood  
6 each other, we understood what the needs were.  
7 But there was a big difference of perspective  
8 after I'd been out there and the perspective from  
9 Washington about time lines and what was needed  
10 to really make a difference if you want to do  
11 that.

12 Yes, that civ-mil plan. So, we  
13 started doing the first civ-mil plan while I was  
14 still the coordinating director.

15 MR. WEGGELAND: Right. I think that  
16 was 2009, the first one I'm seeing.

17 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: That's right. And  
18 then we did one in 2010, which was a lot better.  
19 We brought the Afghans in to that one, and we had  
20 a real process where civilians and military  
21 debated back and forth to come up with these  
22 common plans, and it was really healthy to do,

1 and then we involved the Afghans in debating part  
2 of this too. That was very healthy. It was a  
3 big step forward. I don't know what happened  
4 after I left. But it was what you needed to  
5 build consensus. We looked at all sorts of  
6 different sectors and did that, and that helped  
7 us get much better aligned going forward.

8 Then, as I understand, of course, once  
9 the decision was made to draw down and the draw  
10 down took place, even when I was there, we wrote  
11 this in cables and stuff, we said, if we draw  
12 down this economy is going to go into recession  
13 unless you somehow change this economy by that  
14 time. Because right now they just have so much  
15 of their activity, the employment is tied to the  
16 ISAF and U.S. presence. Of course, that's what  
17 happened, as you --

18 MR. WEGGELAND: It sounds almost like  
19 a catch 22 that the dependency is the creation of  
20 our intervention, but if we withdraw the  
21 intervention past a certain unknown minimal  
22 threshold that everything will collapse.

1                   AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Yes.

2                   MR. WEGGELAND: So, it sounds like  
3 your tenure featured a number of very wicked  
4 trade offs that were, at least the arguments  
5 between members of the family could be mitigated,  
6 or at least the way we expressed ourselves to  
7 each other, but the underlying issue, perhaps,  
8 persisted.

9                   AMBASSADOR WAYNE:. Yes. The  
10 contradictions built into the intervention were  
11 always there. Then when I came back from Mexico  
12 at the end of 2015 I started an informal group on  
13 Afghanistan with an Afghan-American, and we  
14 hosted lunches every six weeks or so among people  
15 who had served in Afghanistan before, some of  
16 whom were still working on it at the World Bank  
17 and the IMF and things. So, we kept that going  
18 and it still goes now. So, then we watched this  
19 whole process. This is part of what led to a  
20 number of joint op-eds that I've done with others  
21 over these last five years sort of tracking this  
22 process. But you could see these same tensions

1 were working out until they really just fueled  
2 the collapse with the Trump Administration policy  
3 and then finally the Biden Administration  
4 decision at the end. And you could see it  
5 coming, and we wrote regular op-eds saying this  
6 is what you need to do to keep things going  
7 warning of bad things that were going to happen,  
8 and bad things happened.

9 So, it is, from your perspective  
10 writing the story of this whole thing, I think  
11 these contradictions were there all the way  
12 through, and we managed them better or worse  
13 during this whole period of time, but they were  
14 always there, and they were always threatening  
15 the operation.

16 MR. WEGGELAND: Right. I imagine that  
17 you're in a unique position having seen it from  
18 the beginning and then seeing it at the height,  
19 or at least the lead up to the height, right?

20 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Right.

21 MR. WEGGELAND: Because 2009, 2010,  
22 2011, that's where the groundwork was laid for

1 the high point in, say, 2012. I suppose one of  
2 these tensions that presumably you would've seen,  
3 I mean, I haven't gone through declassified  
4 internal memorandum from the late 2000 era, early  
5 2002, is this, what I get the impression of, very  
6 clear directive, we don't want to own the  
7 problem. We don't want a nation build. The  
8 President when he was a candidate said, no nation  
9 building. We don't want to own it despite  
10 recognizing that there's all types of problems in  
11 this country that is Afghanistan. And from Dov  
12 Zakheim's book I get the impression it was trying  
13 to convince other allies to pony up so that we  
14 wouldn't own it, get the UN to take it, get the  
15 Europeans or someone to handle it. I guess by  
16 the time you come back, 2009, 2010, we clearly  
17 own it. We being the U.S. Whether it's owning  
18 in the sense of the military or owning in the  
19 sense of the civilian effort and now trying to  
20 make sense of, so, if we own so much how can we  
21 disengage if the President's direct is to do so.  
22 Is that a fair --



1                   AMBASSADOR WAYNE: I think that's  
2 right. I think at the very beginning we wanted  
3 to share responsibility with a lot of people.  
4 That didn't work. Then I think they made that  
5 flawed decision also to not accept the Taliban  
6 overtures early on.

7                   MR. WEGGELAND: It's what  
8 \*\*\* (21:30:56) \*\*\* refers to as the original sin.  
9 Even though I've heard him use that phrase in  
10 other conflicts too, it seems to be his favorite  
11 phrase.

12                   AMBASSADOR WAYNE: I do think it was  
13 a big mistake. It wasn't the only mistake. It  
14 was a big mistake.

15                   Then, if we had remained, I might be  
16 wrong, but I have a sense if might have stayed  
17 focused on Afghanistan maybe we could have been  
18 smarter in those years, but we didn't. We did  
19 this extremely questionable and strategically  
20 flawed decision to go into Iraq. And that meant  
21 people weren't paying attention to Afghanistan.  
22 So, sort of by default is became ours. The

1 Taliban regained enough strength to start being  
2 more active. And then we had a decision to make,  
3 are we going to respond to the Taliban's  
4 increased strength there. And Obama made the  
5 decision, yes, let's get out of Iraq and we'll  
6 stay and try and win Afghanistan.

7 Again, I would've rather like to see  
8 a longer term commitment to stay, but at a much  
9 lower level of military presence and not having  
10 us so much taking the lead in doing fighting and  
11 having more of an effort on trying to set up a  
12 longer term reconciliation policy. Which is,  
13 when I got back from Mexico, is what I started  
14 looking at and with others seeing, is there a way  
15 we can actually get people talking to each other  
16 and build trust over a five year period of time.  
17 Have international forces help provide a space  
18 for people to work together in a coalition  
19 government, that whole kind of thing, which  
20 wouldn't be easy, but we're seeing the  
21 alternative right now, which isn't a very nice  
22 alternative either.

1                   MR. WEGGELAND: Right. Once sense I  
2 get from speaking with, particularly senior level  
3 and former senior officials, is almost this  
4 confusion/frustration around the fact that there  
5 were objective improvements in, say, the  
6 socioeconomic sector, more girls going to school,  
7 more kids going to school, more access to  
8 healthcare. And yet, the Taliban violence  
9 patterns continue to trend up in the way that we  
10 did not want. I guess as you reflect on the type  
11 of scrutiny, the time lines, or questions that  
12 you received with these regular meetings with the  
13 White House, did you get the sense that that was  
14 a shared question and maybe people were trying to  
15 figure out, okay, so what do we need to do to  
16 reverse this? There seemed to be agreement  
17 things are objectively better, but in the  
18 political security realm they're not, they're  
19 getting worse.

20                   AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Right. Well,  
21 during my time actually in Kabul the main  
22 explanation was that Taliban had this sanctuary

1 in Pakistan and they could just retreat there and  
2 recover, heal their wounds, and then come back in  
3 and recruit more people, both from Afghans but  
4 from Pakistanis also who were in that border  
5 region and stuff and come back in. I thought  
6 that explained part of it. The other part was  
7 that the government in Kabul never really was  
8 able to develop strong enough service provision  
9 at local levels, and there were a lot of reasons.  
10 I mean, we could debate about this. A lot of  
11 people thought they should've been more  
12 decentralized government control. So, you had  
13 governors that weren't just dependent on Kabul  
14 but they had to build a local following. That,  
15 of course, has a trade off with corruption and  
16 other stuff, but there wasn't a formula that  
17 really established that legitimacy in the eyes of  
18 Afghans. So, there's a difference, I think,  
19 between, I don't ever think the Taliban was  
20 popular across the country. I always think it's  
21 20 percent or less.

22 But that doesn't mean the government

1 was popular. There's a difference there. The  
2 government was tolerated because they did some  
3 good things, they did some bad things, and I  
4 think that was the problem. There wasn't a way,  
5 and then the further we got into this, the more  
6 we became the foreigner. I mean, we stood out  
7 more as the foreigner. So, that, if you think  
8 about it, you think of the Chinese Communists  
9 against the Japanese and the Vietnamese against  
10 the Americans and all this stuff. At some point  
11 if you become the bigger target because you're  
12 the one who's different, then you've given the  
13 power to the other person.

14 So, sometime between when I left in  
15 2011 and when I came back and looked at it again  
16 in, let's say, especially 2018, 19, 20, we had  
17 become the enemy. And I think that was part of  
18 the side effect of the intensified bombing  
19 campaigns, probably, in 17, 18, 19, because we  
20 were hitting a lot of people that we didn't mean  
21 to hit, or that weren't meant to be hit, let's  
22 put it that way. And I think that helped shift

1 this to be increasingly, let's get rid of the  
2 Americans, we're tired of war, we don't need this  
3 going on, especially in rural areas. Not in  
4 urban areas but in rural areas.

5 So, there is, again, I think that  
6 Pakistan contributed a lot to this by providing  
7 that sanctuary to the Taliban during the years  
8 that I was there. That was certainly my view of  
9 it. But the government also contributed by not  
10 having the formula that could create their own  
11 legitimacy so that they could really, we wouldn't  
12 have to be so out front, that we could be more  
13 out of sight. But the combination of sanctuary  
14 and our big presence and their illegitimacy just  
15 wasn't a formula for success.

16 MR. WEGGELAND: I guess if a major  
17 talking point of your opponent is that their  
18 opponent is a puppet, being so clearly on the  
19 stage reinforces that line of argument. Not  
20 saying it's the right answer.

21 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: No, not saying it's  
22 true, but over time, and then especially if

1 you're getting nightly bombings. It's  
2 interesting because, to his credit, Karzai was  
3 saying this, especially in 2011 when I was there.  
4 And I just thought he was under too much pressure  
5 doing this stuff. But I think he sensed, he  
6 didn't have the answer, but he sensed that he was  
7 getting, his credibility was being undermined by  
8 the fact that local Afghans were being killed by  
9 the United States.

10 MR. WEGGELAND: I guess it was his  
11 line of argument that the war should not be  
12 fought in the villages, I believe that's how he  
13 framed it.

14 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Right. Now, he  
15 needed to have a strategy, which he did not have,  
16 really, for building the legitimacy of his own  
17 government. But his point, I think his feeling  
18 that he was being undermined and we were being  
19 undermined was probably correct.

20 MR. WEGGELAND: So, we're at the hour,  
21 and I want to be respectful of your time. Do you  
22 have time for one or two followup questions?

1                   AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Sure, we can go a  
2 little bit longer. Yes.

3                   MR. WEGGELAND: Okay. Great. I just  
4 wanted to ask, on the point that you raised about  
5 the Taliban not having, perhaps, not more than 20  
6 percent support. I assume that's derived from  
7 things like The Asia Foundation, annual surveys,  
8 and things like that.

9                   AMBASSADOR WAYNE: And other surveys  
10 that were being done at that time. Right.

11                  MR. WEGGELAND: Right. So, I guess  
12 the question I would have is, if we presented as  
13 basically a binary between the Afghan, the  
14 Islamic Republic and the Taliban, that's kind of  
15 how we think about it. Saying one has a  
16 preference for the other is not the same,  
17 presumably, as one taking steps to ensure one  
18 side wins over the other, right? The level of  
19 dedication can be very different, and  
20 indifference could be as deadly to the Afghan  
21 state as reported support for the Taliban. I  
22 guess if it's presented as either or, do you



1 prefer this one or that one, you're understanding  
2 was about an 80/20 split, but when it comes down  
3 to who's going to stand up and fight for it,  
4 either now or in the final reckoning, that maybe  
5 preference was insufficient.

6           AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Yes. No, that's  
7 what I was trying to get at in saying that that  
8 didn't make the Afghan government legitimate. If  
9 you had a legitimate government that people felt  
10 these guys care about me, I'm willing to work  
11 with them and fight with them, that's different  
12 than saying, I really don't want the Taliban  
13 here. I think that's what, I mean, very early on  
14 I got the sense that that's what really needed to  
15 be addressed. There needed to be more things  
16 that had people have a preference, an active  
17 preference. I mean, I think if people had to  
18 choose they would choose the government but would  
19 they fight for the government? That's really the  
20 thing. And I don't think they got to the point.

21           MR. WEGGELAND: It sounds as if we  
22 need to unpack the concept. When we say

1 legitimacy it's often operationalized in a survey  
2 response of preferences, but the idea of  
3 legitimacy is much more than that. It's not  
4 just, well, if given the choice I'd choose A over  
5 B, but I'm also not going to do anything about  
6 it. I'm not going to put my neck out to support  
7 A over B. I guess the difference conceptually is  
8 an important one in retrospect.

9           AMBASSADOR WAYNE: It is. So, what  
10 you need is an extra couple of questions to get  
11 at that. You prefer the government but would you  
12 work with the government? Would you fight for  
13 the government? That's what you're getting at.

14           MR. WEGGELAND: I remember a comment  
15 that Antonio Guistozzi, the scholar on  
16 Afghanistan made, this was maybe 2015, and I need  
17 to speak with him and run this down, but it was  
18 some type of report launch, I think was an ARU  
19 report launch or something, but he made this  
20 offhanded comment of the middle class are not  
21 joining the Afghan national security and defense  
22 forces in combat roles. I mean, they seem to be

1 willing to join the ministries and direct it, but  
2 they don't seem to be showing a lot of skin in  
3 the game. He took that as a concerning point.  
4 They have the most to lose if this falls apart,  
5 but we're not seeing families taking decisions or  
6 individuals taking decisions to really put  
7 themselves in the most overt way to protect the  
8 Islamic republic. I didn't know if reflecting on  
9 your time if you had a sense that that was true  
10 or not or if it was just not something that was  
11 thought about. What choices people make now as  
12 indicative of not just preference but actually  
13 this active support issue.

14           AMBASSADOR WAYNE: I think they would  
15 say we're actively supporting the government by  
16 being in government ministries and doing the kind  
17 of functions that other Afghans can't do because  
18 we have the education to do it.

19           MR. WEGGELAND: Right.

20           AMBASSADOR WAYNE: So, I think the, I  
21 do think in all societies you're going to find  
22 the middle class will drive **\*\*(21:43:31)\*\***

1 government, right.

2 MR. WEGGELAND: Or civil society or  
3 contractors.

4 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: They'll do other  
5 things and be out on the front lines. But I do  
6 think it comes back to are you willing to take an  
7 active role in supporting this regime and this  
8 government in doing that. I don't really think  
9 it has to do with, am I going to go out there and  
10 fight in Zabul province. Hell, no, I'm never  
11 going to go to Zabul province if I can help it is  
12 what most people from Kabul would say, at any  
13 level.

14 Clearly, even up to the very end,  
15 there were many Afghan National Security Force  
16 forces who were fighting pretty vigorously and  
17 dying in large numbers. So, it wasn't that they  
18 weren't willing to die, it was that there was a  
19 big chunk of the population that wasn't willing  
20 to join actively in that effort.

21 MR. WEGGELAND: I mean, the rapid  
22 collapse of the cities, again, this is where

1 you'd have the greatest concentration of people  
2 with the most to lose if the republic falls.

3 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Exactly.

4 MR. WEGGELAND: And yet, it seemed as  
5 if virtually no resistance outside of the initial  
6 attempt in Herat.

7 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Well, there's a lot  
8 that needs to be unpacked there. Of course, I  
9 wasn't there, and you can do this, but I think  
10 over the last two years it was a systematic  
11 tearing down of the moral and legitimacy of the  
12 government in Kabul. Some of it by their own  
13 infighting from the election results forward, a  
14 lot of it by that. A lot of it by the United  
15 States moves of legitimizing the Taliban and of  
16 delegitimizing the government like making them  
17 release those 5,000 prisoners which included all  
18 sorts of people that everybody knew were  
19 terrorists and murderers, including the Afghan  
20 citizens of the Islamic Republic. They knew  
21 that.

22 So, I think that moral of non-Taliban

1 Afghans was just severely undermined over the  
2 last two years and people felt isolated and alone  
3 and that there's no way they could hold out. The  
4 Taliban were good fighters, no question about  
5 that. They're well organized. They could act  
6 effectively in a military or a terrorist or an  
7 insurrectionist role, whatever you want to call  
8 them. They were good at that. It happened  
9 gradually. And, as I said, we became more widely  
10 viewed as the outside problem.

11 MR. WEGGELAND: So, my final question  
12 is just to followup on a comment you made where  
13 you said, where the perception increased That the  
14 United States would reduce its investments or its  
15 presence that corruption increased. I think you  
16 were talking about customs collection as one  
17 example of this. Could you give a sense of, I  
18 mean, rhetorically the international community  
19 kept signaling, and I suppose your tenure would  
20 have been maybe one of the first big signals that  
21 the investment and the intervention was not going  
22 to last forever. And I suppose also signaling to

1 the Afghan government, you need to increase  
2 revenues because it will be necessary for  
3 continued survival. Whether we call this a  
4 sustainability issue or whatnot. But did you  
5 ever get the sense during your tenure that the  
6 Afghan government senior officials truly  
7 appreciated that if they did not generate revenue  
8 on their own that they could not persist? Or did  
9 you get the sense that it was almost like calling  
10 a bluff of, yes, you say you're going to go, but  
11 I don't really believe you. Or you say you're  
12 going to reduce but it's not going to hurt me  
13 enough to change my behavior. Because you  
14 would've been there during one of the first big  
15 phases of, hey, we're going to leave, seriously,  
16 you all start doing something different, please.  
17 And what you observed, at least in That comment,  
18 was what they changed was corruption short-term,  
19 let me rent seek in the immediate term because I  
20 don't think this is going to last. I was just  
21 wondering if you could share a bit on that.

22 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: I think that there

1 are a couple things going on. During this period  
2 of time people at the top levels of the finance  
3 ministry and other places understood they needed  
4 to increase their leverage. And a lot of them  
5 were committed to reducing corruption, and so  
6 they did increase. There were a number of years  
7 where you can see the percent of GDP coming in,  
8 actually it went up. I think the highest it got  
9 was 13 percent of their income or something like  
10 that of the budget they cover.

11 So, there were improvements made  
12 during this period. Part of the challenge is it  
13 was hard to sustain. You have a lot of rent  
14 seekers who were out there. What you needed is a  
15 regular process for purifying the rent seekers  
16 and the ones taking money off the process. That  
17 was hard to do.

18 And then as you had a more rapid  
19 turnover of finance ministers and deputy finance  
20 ministers and others over the last decade, that  
21 made it doubly hard to do. And, of course, the  
22 finance ministry is not the whole government.



1 So, you had a whole other part to the government  
2 who weren't even performing as well as they were  
3 performing. So, there was always this temptation  
4 at various levels to do this.

5 I know there was one study that went  
6 on in the last several years pointing out that  
7 congress, the parliament in Afghanistan, was  
8 always demanding rent, special things for their  
9 district, for their families, for people they  
10 knew That would come into the government in the  
11 finance ministry on a regular basis. So, it was  
12 very much ingrained in the system, and it was  
13 hard even if you made some progress, it was hard  
14 to sustain that progress if you couldn't  
15 institutionalize these practices. Now, that's  
16 what the donors were trying to do in the period  
17 of time that I was There. I think they made some  
18 progress by consistent interaction, but it was  
19 not sustained progress, it would go up and down.  
20 Then when you started having more political  
21 infighting among the Afghans themselves it just  
22 fueled more of this, I better get what I can now

1 because look how divided we are, this is all  
2 going to fall apart.

3 MR. WEGGELAND: Right. And the sense  
4 I got was when international donor pressure to  
5 increase revenues was articulated that the Afghan  
6 Ministry of Finance would go to the easiest  
7 sources of revenue, so indirect, like customs is  
8 something that is more observable if it transits  
9 through a customs port. You don't have to go out  
10 and tax every individual.

11 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Yes, I agree.

12 MR. WEGGELAND: I guess one point of  
13 tension was that another source, and easier  
14 source of revenue to access was taxation on the  
15 beneficiaries of the intervention, the  
16 implementing partners, the local NGOs.

17 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: That was a regular  
18 pressure. And other governments do this also.  
19 They often will tax international companies  
20 because international companies have a set of  
21 standards they have to maintain to keep  
22 functioning internationally. So, in the

1 Afghanistan case that was the aid providers and  
2 the contractors, and they were right there, and  
3 they were easier to follow because they do have a  
4 set of books even if some of them are doctored  
5 here and there, but in general they try to look  
6 like they're being legitimate and doing stuff, so  
7 that's easier for you to tax. The other thing is  
8 the bigger companies.

9 MR. WEGGELAND: Like Roshan the  
10 telecomms, for example?

11 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Yes, exactly. If  
12 it's a bigger company it's easier to tax them.  
13 When you don't have the infrastructure to tax  
14 SMEs or common people, you find indirect ways to  
15 put taxes on it. And that's true for developing  
16 countries all around the world.

17 MR. WEGGELAND: And I guess in this  
18 particular case, if the donor imperative is to  
19 increase sustainability but the easiest way to  
20 raise revenue is to tax the unsustainable, the  
21 detris of the unsustainable intervention, i.e.  
22 the construction companies doing work for the

1 intervention, the NGOs receiving maybe a second  
2 third, fourth tier the programming money. That  
3 doesn't actually resolve in any substantive way  
4 the sustainability challenge.

5 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: No. Especially  
6 when they decide to leave. When there's no more  
7 military construction you can't tax those  
8 companies and those companies employ less people  
9 and are generating less wealth.

10 MR. WEGGELAND: I guess on this  
11 particular point, did you get the sense that  
12 donors were parsing out or were they looking at  
13 overall revenue principally regardless of source,  
14 or was it, certain types of revenue mobilization  
15 like direct taxation is much better from a  
16 sustainability standpoint. Was it just, okay,  
17 they hit X percent of GDP, that's good.

18 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Yes.

19 MR. WEGGELAND: So, more the former  
20 than the latter.

21 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Most donors  
22 couldn't get into a more detailed level of

1 analysis, to be very honest. I mean, it was hard  
2 for us, and we had, by far, the largest set of  
3 people working on development issues and finance  
4 issues of anybody. So, you had a lot of other  
5 donors that just didn't have that. They were  
6 lying on the road bank, you know, we're fine.  
7 The IMF who weren't there for much of the period.  
8 They didn't really get down to that level of  
9 analysis, because I remember sitting around a  
10 bunch of those different donor meetings during  
11 that period of time. There were not that many  
12 people who got below the macro figures.

13 MR. WEGGELAND: This sounds very  
14 similar to the issue around legitimacy versus  
15 preference. The measurement, who do you prefer,  
16 is then interpreted to mean, well, you're only 20  
17 percent legitimate versus the Islamic Republic  
18 being 80. I guess a similar issue with this. If  
19 we think of taxation as, perhaps, a core element  
20 of the social contract, which is reciprocal  
21 between citizens and state, then an increase in  
22 revenue overall is, more legitimacy/a better

1 social contract. But if, in the case of  
2 Afghanistan, the economy is so skewed the revenue  
3 collections have focused on a chimera of a GDP  
4 then is it really reflective of the concepts that  
5 we hope it represents, the way we measure it.

6 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Well, I think what  
7 people were looking at, is there any way we can  
8 make this economy more sustainable. Remember,  
9 it's an economy that is largely subsistence,  
10 farming, so much poverty. I mean, even in the  
11 best of times, 50 percent poverty. So, there's  
12 not a lot of sources of income. We kept, I  
13 remember my colleagues working in the economic  
14 section and in AID looking for industries that  
15 they could make profitable. After I left they  
16 started flying stuff out, as you remember,  
17 agricultural products to the gulf and other  
18 places and India and places in this search for  
19 anything that you could do. Of course,  
20 Afghanistan has the curse of being next to  
21 Pakistan that won't let goods go through, and  
22 they couldn't trade with India. India would've

1 had a big trade with Afghanistan if there  
2 could've been a free flow of goods through  
3 Pakistan, but they wouldn't do That because  
4 they're rivals, Pakistan and India. So, there  
5 were all sorts of limits on where Afghanistan was  
6 and then what was possible economically. It was  
7 like, bang, bang, bang, one blow after another on  
8 the economic side.

9 MR. WEGGELAND: I guess basically the  
10 state Afghanistan could afford in no way would  
11 match what we though was minimally necessary to  
12 prevail in this conflict with the Taliban. Is  
13 that a --

14 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Yes. For sure. I  
15 think that is right. Especially when you had a  
16 neighbor next door that was quite willing to see  
17 the Taliban as a lever for pursuing their own  
18 geostrategic interests. It was a terribly,  
19 terribly complex situation.

20 MR. WEGGELAND: Ambassador Wayne,  
21 you've been so generous with your time. Is there  
22 anything else you want to say to us before,

1                   AMBASSADOR WAYNE: I'm going to look  
2 forward to seeing after you've talked to  
3 everybody what you come up with. I will be very  
4 interested to see. It's an important story to  
5 tell, and there are so many lessons that we  
6 should be able to draw from it, at least to help  
7 inform us as we go forward. I guess I would say,  
8 the one thing I haven't said that is sort of  
9 evident, is That we really have to be modest and  
10 humble when we get into situations like this. We  
11 don't know how to handle these situations. We  
12 can learn from previous experiences, but they're  
13 way more complex than we think we understand.  
14 Especially if people get in there for one year  
15 and they're supposed to apply all these lessons  
16 in a very different society and a different  
17 situation, it's like we're just weighing  
18 ourselves down with unneeded weights and thinking  
19 we understand what we're doing, when in reality  
20 we need to be really humble about what we're  
21 trying to do.

22                   MR. WEGGELAND: Hopefully the result



1 will meet your minimum threshold of satisfaction.  
2 I don't know if we're going to aspire to saying,  
3 this is what one should do, but I think if we can  
4 better inform one's imagination of what actually  
5 happened, I would count that, personally, as a  
6 success, then maybe that could help encourage a  
7 greater humility if one has a greater  
8 appreciation of what it was we knew or didn't  
9 know or thought we knew and wasn't actually true  
10 or just accepting the breadth of the various  
11 attempts That were made. It's one of these  
12 things where any time someone says, well, if only  
13 we did X. It's like, well, did you think we  
14 didn't.

15 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Exactly.

16 MR. WEGGELAND: When you have so many  
17 interventions and so much money the imagination  
18 is empowered to do whatever you can come up with.

19 AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Right. It's more  
20 like, if only we did A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I,  
21 J, K, all at once and did them well.

22 MR. WEGGELAND: Right.

1                   AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Great. Very nice  
2 to talk with both of you.

3                   MR. WEGGELAND: Thank you very much.  
4 Obviously, if there's anyone else you would  
5 suggest we speak with to help inform our work,  
6 please let us know, happy to followup and engage  
7 with anyone you suggest.  \*\*\*(21:59:27)\*\* the  
8 fire hose but also try and make sure we get the  
9 right mix of perspectives to inform this work.

10                  AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Right. Well, so,  
11 I mean, I think all the people who were in  
12 ambassador or deputy ambassador roles throughout  
13 the whole period of time would be interesting to  
14 talk to. Some of the aid directors we still  
15 remain engaged in the issues also. I don't know  
16 who you have on your list to,

17                  MR. WEGGELAND: I think we're going to  
18 send out through the American Foreign Service  
19 Association a blast email asking for folks,  
20 particular ambassador or deputy ambassador,

21                  AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Do it through the  
22 AAD also, the American Academy of Diplomacy.

1                   MR. WEGGELAND: I think that's how we  
2 got connected, I believe.

3                   AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Anyway, there are  
4 a number of people around who still pay attention  
5 and think about this. So, I'm sure they'd be  
6 willing to cooperate and collaborate with you.

7                   MR. WEGGELAND: Great. If you can put  
8 in a good word if anyone asks.

9                   AMBASSADOR WAYNE: I'll be happy to.

10                  MR. WEGGELAND: Thank you, very much.

11                  AMBASSADOR WAYNE: Take good care.

12                  (End of recording.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Interview of Earl Anthony Wayne

DATE: 12-21-21

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of pages 1 to 75 inclusive are to the best of my belief and ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording.

*Neal R Gross*

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**NEAL R. GROSS**

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