

November 2017



## **Ambassador Dan Feldman**

### **Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan**

**Ambassador Dan Feldman** was once the highest-ranking official at the State Department responsible for relations with those two countries. He actively shaped the Obama Administration's policies for the region, including on political transition, economic growth initiatives, regional integration efforts, international engagement with key partners, strategic communications and congressional outreach.

At the State Department, Ambassador Feldman served as a principal advisor to Secretaries of State John Kerry and Hillary Rodham Clinton regarding Afghanistan, Pakistan and broader South, Central, and East Asian issues.

He is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations and has appeared frequently in the media, on outlets including BBC, NPR, CNN, and FOX News Channel, discussing national security issues.

### **Subject Area/Topic: US Policy Towards Afghanistan and Pakistan**

**Highlights:** After 16 years, the American public seems willing to tolerate our continued presence in Afghanistan. There have been achievements. In 1961, there were about a million boys in school. Now there are 8.7 million students and 40% are girls. In addition, the status of women and girls has improved, life expectancy has gone from 45 in 2000 to 61, and there is a functioning independent media, improved infrastructure and GDP growth.

But, there have been immense costs to the U.S., our allies, and most of all to the Afghans. About 2,200 Americans have been killed and the financial cost has been nearly \$1 trillion.

While he believes that President Trump was right in sending several thousand more military advisors to Afghanistan, Ambassador Feldman stated, "...All agree that there is no military solution to Afghanistan."

He stressed the way Ambassador Holbrooke and General David Petraeus worked together to ensure that our military and diplomatic initiatives were coordinated. He contrasted this close coordination with what he sees as the current Administrations "...solely military effort." In his view, our diplomatic approach to Afghanistan has been "...adrift for the last year."

There was an extended Q & A session. His response to a question about our rejection of the Trans-Pacific Partnership was that "...By abdicating, the Administration has made China great again."