

World Focus – September 3, 2017

Matthew Hoh

I'm privileged to have Matthew Hoh as a guest. He's a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy, a former director of the Afghan Study Group. Matthew is also a former Marine Corps officer who took part in the Iraq war. In 2009, he resigned his state department position in Afghanistan in opposition to the escalation of the Afghan war. He's now a member of Veterans for Peace. Welcome Matthew Hoh.

Matthew: Hi Blase, thank you for having me on.

Blase: How did you decide to become a Marine?

Matthew: Actually...you know, it kinda gets to a bigger story that people listening will identify with. When you're younger and maybe afraid to follow what you know is true, perhaps getting lost along the way...when I was in grade school I wanted to go to West Point or Annapolis. I wanted to be in the military. But then I was a senior in a high school when the Gulf War happened, when Saddam Hussein and Iraq invaded Kuwait, and the US put all those troops in Saudi Arabia and had this moral crisis with it. I decided that I couldn't square the killing that occurred there with who I was. And so I went to college and didn't accept an ROTC scholarship, didn't follow up on the opportunities to go to West Point. I didn't think much more about it until many years later, after college, I was working in Boston for a publishing company doing finance, a good job but I was bored. So yes, thoughts about the military came back, and I think I had just lost that moral center and got caught up in wanting to do something in my life and "being part of history", being afraid that I was going to miss out on life experiences and never be a part of something...yes...so I want to do serious work, to do something that had life or death meaning to it. Where the consequences were very real. I actually investigated becoming a fire fighter back in the '90s but it was very difficult to become a fire fighter. It was easier to become a marine commander, so I ended up in the marines.

Blase: I think that many did the same thing with the very best of intentions, and so many have come home so sick because of the trauma they've been through. I hope that Lockheed and the other war corporations understand what they're doing by their lobbying for endless war. They have damaged so

many of our fine young people to say nothing of the slaughters overseas. Today we see an article by Eric Prince of Blackwater in the New York Times. Do you have any comments on this amazing individual?

Matthew: Where do you start? First of all, Blase, you or I would have to buy the New York Times in order to have the opportunity to get an editorial in the New York Times. When is the last time the New York Times published an op-ed from the point of view of the need for reconciliation and cease fires are the primary solution in Afghanistan? I've been doing this for nine years, watching Afghanistan for longer than that, and I'm not sure that the New York Times has *ever* published an editorial advocating for reconciliation with cease fires as the first step in that process. I don't think they have. Here's a person who is obviously putting an advertisement in the NYT for his own business proposal. First off he writes, in the first paragraph or two about the American volunteer group in China, things that are factually inaccurate. They were actually in the Chinese military; they were not part of a private company. So he wasn't even fact-checked on things, which really bothers me because every time I write an op-ed for someone I get fact-checked on my name.

Blase: Well, these papers are very much in the military industrial mode.

Matthew: Exactly.

Blase: If they did what you said, they would tell us that North Korea would like to end the ceasefire and have a peace treaty ending the war; secondly, they would be happy to negotiate for the future - Korea has the same culture, the same language, the same people – they want to reunify. We went through this before with Germany. It was a different situation, but at the time there were those who said we can't reunite Germany. Well, what happened? It did reunite and became the strongest economy in Europe. We have this problem, and it's war journalism, there is such a thing as peace journalism which doesn't declare every member of every country we disagree with as madmen, and which is not afraid to say: Here is what they are saying. They lost about a third of their population in the Korean war. The press always talks about the other side. We get one side. And I think you can help us get the other side. Right?

Matthew: Absolutely. But it was shocking. The Eric Prince op-ed is shocking. He has been making the rounds. He's been on CNN and FOX and MSNBC. He had a similar op-ed in the Wall Street Journal, making the same pitch: that we should turn over the Afghan war to his company - a company that

committed atrocities in Iraq. But the whole war has been an atrocity. Whether or not it's soldiers or contractors, the end result is atrocity. That's what war generates. You cannot have a war without killing and atrocities. So you're just getting into semantics at that point. But the fact that these media organizations, as you said, continue to allow them to promote themselves shows how interconnected the entire complex is - how connected the money of the defense industry, the media and the government really are, how it's in all their best interests for these wars to continue.

Blase: Well, the code of military justice says that a commander cannot give the order to assassinate non-combatants. Those who obey such an order would be breaking the law. The code of military justice understands disobedience. Now we have a president who is talking about not just firing on non-combatants, but about eliminating tens of millions in a holocaust. How can anyone possibly believe that that was a legal order?

Matthew: Yes, absolutely. We've already seen the escalation of air strikes under Trump. That's not to say that the wars under Bush and Obama were not vicious. A million Iraqis died as a result of our invasion and occupation of Iraq. A number of Afghans who have died because of our presence there is unknown - the estimates are 150,000 - 200,000, but even that might be low. We do know that the Afghans have the second largest refugee population in the world. And there are millions who are homeless within Afghanistan, and that will just continue. We have seen too what will occur with the evolution of American military strategy in the Middle East as it is now unfolding. Basically you're just turning the Middle East into a free fire zone, and you're seeing this with the way the Saudis are conducting their operations in Yemen. You're seeing it with the way the Somalis and Americans are conducting operations in Somalia. You saw it in the way the Iraqis conducted their operations with the Americans in Fallujah and more recently Mosul. The same in Syria. We're bombing parts of Syria right now with hardly any restraint. We are bombing any and all buildings that we can bomb. And that's how we're conducting our air strikes in Afghanistan now.

Blase: We saw the beginning in 1990 and 91. We had a peace delegation to Baghdad and met with Yasser Arafat. Everybody there was saying it is entirely unnecessary, illegal and immoral - well that's 1990 - 91. Over New Years. Later that January the bombs were falling on Baghdad. And they really haven't stopped. The disaster went on through the Clinton Administration by way of so-called sanctions, which starved out the Iraqis and massacred Iraqi children. And it goes on - and even people like our

beloved Vice President Cheney said that this is going to go on forever. I guess that's what's in his mind, and the minds of people who are addicted to war. They can't get off it. It's their only source of income, apparently. And that is the really heartbreaking part of it - that so much money is being made on the death of innocent people. It is an illegal situation. I think our major problem is a failure to obey existing international law. And this could lead us to fail to stop the nuclear arms race as well - 122 countries have just signed on to making nuclear weapons illegal. That's a great statement. Now we want them to ratify that and make it clear that this must be kept and never broken - that is our hope.

You mention here in your interview on Real News that it's a falsehood, it's based on lies, more of the same that we've heard time and again. We're seeing an increase in the number of troops in Afghanistan. My God, all we are to the Afghans is another group of warlords, the most powerful group of warlords. Is it anything beyond that?

Matthew: That's probably the best way to put it. We are the strongest warlords there. We're the top level war lords. The amount of money we have makes us the primary war lords. And we have the war planes. So we're kind of like these war lords from the sky, and they don't really see us because our troops are now kept for the most part on the bases. However many troops they're going to send, and they keep saying four thousand more, they won't be exposed to combat so much. They will, just like our troops in Syria and Iraq and Yemen and Libya - they don't get exposed to combat very much. Sometimes they do, but not very often. And that's why over the last several years you've seen very small numbers of Americans being killed in these wars. That's why for the most part the American public is pretty okay with these wars. They're not making a fuss about it. And one of the things I've been looking for the last weeks since Trump made his last speech about Afghanistan is I'm looking to see has Gallup or Pew or CNN or Merrimack or any of these organizations that do polling, have they done polling on the war. Have they done polling on Afghanistan or the wars in general. They haven't. I believe it's because they feel that there's no need to because there hasn't been a change because it's accepted, and this goes because we haven't been losing our own soldiers over there. The Afghans are losing about thirty-one soldiers a day in combat, 1500 a month plus about 300-400 civilians at least being killed in Afghanistan due to combat. The numbers of civilians are going to drastically climb because we've begun dropping many more bombs and sending more airplanes to Afghanistan for the Afghans to use themselves, along with more artillery pieces. We're going to train more Afghans to be commandos. The way the Afghans will now handle the Taliban will be through mass amounts of firepower.

Blase: This is called "Vietnamization."

Matthew: Yes, exactly.

Blase: We've been here before, we've seen this before. We've seen the elections before. You comment on the elections in Afghanistan saying that we've had three successive elections there and they've been incredibly fraudulent according to outside observers.

Matthew: Oh yes.

Blase: What came out of Afghanistan was a massive mutiny that I've been hearing about while teaching over the past three or four decades - a mutiny there, a mutiny in Iraq, I hear about a mutiny in Afghanistan. Have you seen this phenomenon?

Matthew: What do you mean by mutiny?

Blase: People refusing to fight, people attacking us, attacking US forces...

Matthew: Oh yes. That has happened in Afghanistan. Not in Iraq, but in Afghanistan, that happened quite a lot and still happens quite a bit. The Taliban will place people into the army that are sympathetic to the Taliban. So it may be planned. But there are also instances where the Afghan who does that attack has just had enough, he's seen too much of the effrontery, of the abuse and corruption, and he has had enough. And he attacks the Americans because of what he's seen. Other times there have been issues of cultural ignorance that have caused these problems. The Afghans are the most gracious people you'll ever meet in your life. These are people who have had war pushed on them for almost four decades. I was born in 1973, Blase. That was the year the king was overthrown. The chaos and war in Afghanistan has been imposed upon the country during my entire lifetime. Chaos or bloody war. And they are the most gracious people. When you come into their houses, they will give you everything they have. But they are a proud people, so there's been some cultural issues where insults have gotten to the point of violence. And you've seen that as well. So you've had that occur. A friend of mine was killed, a man named J.D. Loftis, who was one of the few American military officers who ever learned Pashtun. He and I were together in Afghanistan in 1979. He was a wonderful man. A father of two children. Very

smart man, and a very kind man. The Afghan people that he met and came into contact with loved him because he was a good man. This was a person - someone who joined the military for the best of intentions, and got used for this corrupt money-making machine that benefits the American empire. This was somebody who had believed all the lies. He joined the military because he believed what was being done was right. He was in Afghanistan, he learned Pashtun, but he was shot in the head in one of these attacks by a Taliban insider. Now his children are growing up without him, and the thoughts that I have had about this, Blase, about JD being killed like this - and so many others like him - is what a waste! Men and women like him, what they could have done for our country here, living here, what they could have done for other people - all they could have done, what a waste, and the way he died, and that is the ultimate sadness and tragedy of it all. All of it. This phrase, what a waste, goes all the way back to a book by EB Sledge, who was a marine infantryman during the second world war, and he fought in two campaigns in the Pacific. And that was his phrase. What a waste.

Blase: Almost anywhere we go without weapons, we are well-received by people. I can remember being in Babylon, New Year's 1991, just before the bombs started falling. The people were asking us to join them in dancing and singing and food there in this amazing rebuilt city. It's probably in shambles now. When will they ever learn, as the song goes? You arrive at someone's home, kick down their doors, terrorize their family, take away their young. What in the world do you expect them to do but form something like ISIS? It's a direct response.

Matthew: That's exactly right. The majority of the people who have been fighting us for a decade and a half over there have been fighting because we are occupying them and terrorizing them. This was a lot of what we saw in Iraq, very clearly with the Sunni insurgency there. It's very clear what the grievances were. And then it was the same in Afghanistan. It's been very clear. That's the reason for my resignation in 2009. We refused to speak to the insurgency. We only wanted to escalate the war for a number of reasons. The White House wanted a political victory for the president, because they wanted President Obama to win the war. The generals and Bob Gates wanted a victory for the US military because they want to put Iraq behind them. And of course, because of the money that was going to be made. We were spending 120 billion a year on the Afghan war. It gives you an idea of the money. If Donald Trump - if they send 4,000 more troops to Afghanistan, that's going to be 14 billion dollars more for the war. The amount of money here is just amazing, astounding. We can't comprehend how much money is involved here.

Blase: It seems to me that if we're going to end this system, it would help if all military production was non-profit, federal production. That would take the wind out of Lockheed, Raytheon and the lobbyists; they would no longer be able to make money off the blood of our young people and innocents abroad. Do you think that might help?

Matthew: Oh, it absolutely would help. The recklessness and short-sightedness is just astounding. It doesn't just put BMWs in people's driveways and buy people's second homes in the United States. It also allows a certain - and not everybody is in it in for the money, like your amazing work you've done that's helped so many people was done out of something else - but there are also people who have these ideas, romantic visions of war and grand theories about it, whether they are academics or theorists or just talking heads, they need to be supported, and that's where a lot of this money goes to. Let me give you an example. When I left the state department in 2009 and spoke out publicly against the war, the last three months of 2009 when President Obama was debating whether to send an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan, the top ten defense companies spent 30 million dollars lobbying congress. Some went to their own lobbyists, so people from Northrup and Raytheon and Boeing who would go into congress and say escalation was the right thing to do, a lot of that money also goes to the think tanks. Okay? There are theorists who aren't necessarily interested in getting rich but are interested in having their views of the world endorsed, and they're interested in being in sync with the decision makers who go in front of the people who control power and have them execute their plans. These people are very dangerous. They are funded by the defense industry. They then go back into congress and say, this is what we should do in Afghanistan, in Iraq, etc, and this is what makes sense in the whole Middle East. That is how the system works. The house just voted for 700 billion dollars for the defense budget, which is 50 or 60 billion dollars *more* than Donald Trump asked for. And that included more than 60 percent of democrats voting *in favor*. That 700 billion will go to the defense industry, which will pour multiple millions more into these think tanks who will then send experts back to the congress as well as to speak to the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, CNN, or whoever, but also to congress to say "this is what's best for America in our expert opinion. This is what we should do in the Middle East, and then congress, based upon that expert opinion and testimony, will say this is what's best to keep our country safe. And next year it will be 720 billion dollars. And so it goes on and on, and the wheel keeps spinning.

Blase: These are the kinds of things - this is the way it works in Washington DC. This is how we can get to this point, eight years or nine years after President Obama put a hundred thousand troops into Afghanistan. Trump can think it's a good idea to continue to put more troops into Afghanistan, because the cycle - the circular flow of money to the Pentagon, to the defense contractors, to the think tanks, back to congress - this is really amazing. It happens and the people in Afghanistan die. And the empire continues. So this is where we are.

I have some comments here made by a journalist you may know, Anan Gopal. He's speaking about the Taliban insurgency today, including a small ISIS presence in Afghanistan. Together they're really the most powerful force in the country. Then you have the Afghan government, which is really just a rump state with a network of strongmen or warlords, hundreds upon hundreds of militias, and the Afghan army and police, all of which are being paid for by the United States and its allies and have been since 2001. What do you think of Anan Gopal?

Matthew: I would urge anyone interested in Afghanistan to read him. He has been reporting from Iraq and Syria the last couple of years as well. Anan wrote a book that came out a couple of years ago called *No Good Men Among the Living*. It won a number of awards. It is an excellent book describing what has occurred in Afghanistan since the United States invaded in 2001. It is a heartbreaking book. It is shattering. But it also illuminates many of the lies that have sustained America's war in Afghanistan. I think incredibly highly of Anan. And his description in the book of the layout in Afghanistan is absolutely correct.

Blase: Why doesn't the New York Times quote him here? When the United States invaded, the Taliban surrendered because they were thoroughly defeated. This is not surprising. It happens often in conflicts everywhere. After the Taliban were defeated, they went back to their homes and effectively ceased to exist as an organization. Al Qaeda, meanwhile, had fled the country. So there were thousands of US troops on the ground to fight a war on terror, but there was no enemy to fight. To justify their presence, and to lay the groundwork for future invasions of Iraq, it was hoped, and Iran, they inadvertently created enemies where there were none. They did this by giving huge amounts of money to warlords to catch terrorists. These strongmen simply turned over their enemies and rivals, who were almost always innocent. What a statement.

Matthew: Yes. I remember in 2009 a couple of Afghans I was working with were bickering about something and they saw me approach. And one of them said to me, "This guy is Al Qaeda. Give me money." You know, the knowledge of what had occurred there. We know this. The first 700 people we took from Afghanistan we did not capture ourselves. They were handed over to us. We paid bounties. The absurdity of all this goes even further. The Taliban rose to power because of the banditry and lawlessness after the warlords took control of the population and abused the population, raping people whenever they wanted to, I mean the tales are awful. And the Taliban came to power around 1994 because of it, and has a lot of popular support, especially in southern Afghanistan, because of how awful the situation was because of the warlords. And who is the warlord they took out of power in Kandahar? The same warlord that the US put back in power after the invasion. I mean, it is just remarkable what occurred there. It is just - if you wrote a novel about this, the publisher would say this is too absurd, too outlandish, too over the top.

Blase: These people will be remembered. Anan Gopal will be remembered. In fact, he said the majority of Afghans sent to Guantanamo were never members of the Taliban. In fact, some were *enemies* of the Taliban. This is a journalist, ladies and gentlemen. This is not someone speaking falsehoods.

Matthew: Yes, and we know this from department of defense records when the documents were unsealed. We've released almost everyone from Guantanamo because we couldn't bring any charges against them. They were not members of the Taliban. They were simply caught up in the wrong place at the wrong time, completely innocent people who were victimized by the United States. I want to go back to a point he makes about the Taliban trying to surrender. They tried to surrender a couple of times, and the mainstream press really betrayed their responsibility to report this. If you go through the English language Pakistani press, the Iranian press, the greater Middle Eastern or South Asian press, you will see overtures in the press from the Taliban to the United States - and they basically said we're looking to talk, to negotiate. We're not going to surrender, but we're looking to talk. If you look at Mullah Omar's statements for Eid, he would have language there where he'd say we're open to negotiations. They have a Facebook page, and on that page they talked about their willingness to have negotiations. They said, if you want to fight, we're willing to fight, but we're also willing to talk. And the United States continually and to this day has this lie about the Taliban never wanting to talk, never being willing to talk. And that completely comes undone in the sense that this past September when, in all places, the New York Times ran a story, and I think only because the Norwegians were involved, but for

three years the Norwegians were meeting with the Taliban and actually met with Mullah Omar personally to discuss a peace deal in Afghanistan. And that fell apart because of the Americans. And that's the same story I heard a couple of years later in Libya, where the Norwegians were dealing with various factions and trying to broker a peace settlement, but Americans and other partners scuttled that peace deal and began bombing within a week or two later. This is the constant over and over again - we have not wanted peace, we have only wanted war and only wanted "victory," and we lie about it.

Blase: We're the ones who won't talk. This was true in Vietnam as well. We said the Vietnamese won't talk. Totally false. Anybody who went over there could talk. Tom Hayden went over there. So many people. They were talking to them all the time, yet officials said "they won't talk."

Now here we have a situation - again according to Gopal, who states "The Afghan state, such as it is, relies on foreign aid for its existence. That aid will only come if there is a war, which means there is every incentive to keep producing enemies and to keep fighting. More generally, the result is one of the most spectacular failures in the US foreign policy history. The US designed the Afghan state to meet its perceived national security interests, not the interests of the Afghan people, while the state survives on foreign aid. It collects almost no direct taxes, and provides almost no social services. Large parts of the Afghan state security forces are privatized in the form of militias that effectively operate as private security companies under US intervention. Afghanistan is in fact one of the world's most fully neoliberal states."

Matthew: Yes, and that's exactly the same thing we did in Iraq. Unlike Afghanistan, Iraq still has somewhat of an industrial base and somewhat of a functioning economy to a degree relative to Afghanistan. But we immediately closed down any state run systems that many people received their work from. Many sources of food production and other production came out of the state system and state owned companies. These were anathema to the Americans who came over and occupied Iraq. This neoliberal ideology had to be put in place - imposed by force of arms - and the same thing occurred in Afghanistan. I remember working at the state department in 2005 and I was on the Iraq desk but hearing from the Afghan desk that Hamid Karzai was very upset with the Americans. Khalizad, who came from the University of Chicago and was very neoconservative in his foreign policy and neoliberal in his economics. Karzai was very upset with the American ambassador at that time because of the large number of American contractors who were in Kabul trying to engineer, just as you describe. He didn't

like the contractors because they were making all this money doing - what, exactly? Just making money for themselves and not helping the Afghan people. But he was also angry because of what was being designed. He could see exactly what was being designed, a system that was built as a test case for these neoliberal ideologues. Done to prove a theory that this grand theory of neoliberalism is going to stand up in the Hindu Kush. That it's going to work. Anan's description is dead on accurate. And you're right, there is no other industry in Afghanistan. Nothing has been built. Nothing has been sustained. The only thing that has had any success there is the opium trade.

Blase: We're running out of time, Matthew. Do you have any final thoughts about how we can get out of another mess? Since WWII we've been engaged in one conflict after another. Is there any way to put an end to it?

Matthew: Well, Veterans for Peace believes that wars abroad are tied to our warfare at home, and that we cannot have peace at home until we have peace abroad. President Eisenhower spoke about this in his farewell address, and President Kennedy saw this before he was killed. President Lyndon Johnson resigned because the Vietnam War made it impossible for him to carry through his domestic plans and priorities. Martin Luther King spoke about this, and this is where we get our guidance, from Dr. King. Poverty, militarism and racism are all intertwined. So we will always have these wars abroad and wars at home until we break down both of them. The United States is the world's largest arms dealer; we export more weapons than any other country; we also own 350 million guns in this country. We've killed more than a million human beings in the past 15 years. We have more prisoners than any country in the world. Those things are all tied together. The congress will gladly vote for 700 billion dollars for weapons and air craft carriers and jet planes. But who in congress is talking about universal healthcare for our people? About taking care of future generations? This is the challenge: establishing peace and justice at home will require ending the war system.

Blase: Thank you being with us today on World Focus, Matthew Hoh.

Friends, you've heard of the presence of white supremacists, the KKK, Nazi groups in Southern California? Well, we have them here. And we experienced it first hand in Santa Monica. A wonderfully integrated group called the Committee for Racial Justice met in Virginia Park on Sunday, August 6th, to discuss the racial divides that are escalating locally and across the country. Theresa and I were there

together with many other civic-minded people, many of whom have been meeting regularly. We were greeted by a mob clearly provoking violence with their foul and insulting rants. There was more. The attackers were pushing in the doors of our meeting room violently. Many raced to the doors to keep them out. Yes, the Santa Monica police were present. Maybe they would have done something if someone were injured or killed. But this matter is not a first amendment matter. It's time for us to catch on and not allow that ruse to be used. The first amendment does not permit violence. In fact, the first amendment forbids dangerous and inflammatory speech, including shouting fire in a crowded theater. It does not protect any right to make direct threats. A threat is a crime, and in Santa Monica, many crimes were committed that evening through direct threats.

Friends, we're not playing parlor games to decide what to do. "You take the side of violence and I'll take the side of non-violence and we'll have a lovely parlor game." The answer to racist violence is not anti-racist violence or pacifism, and the idea that those are the only two choices is ridiculous. What does non-violence stand for? Take the six principles of non-violence, the fundamental tenets of Dr. King's philosophy.

1. PRINCIPLE ONE: Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.

It is active nonviolent resistance to evil.

It is aggressive spiritually, mentally and emotionally.

2. PRINCIPLE TWO: Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding.

The end result of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation.

The purpose of nonviolence is the creation of the Beloved Community.

3. PRINCIPLE THREE: Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice not people.

Nonviolence recognizes that evildoers are also victims and are not evil people.

The nonviolent resister seeks to defeat evil not people.

4. PRINCIPLE FOUR: Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform.

Nonviolence accepts suffering without retaliation.

Unearned suffering is redemptive and has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities.

5. PRINCIPLE FIVE: Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate.

Nonviolence resists violence of the spirit as well as the body.

Nonviolent love is spontaneous, unmotivated, unselfish and creative.

6. PRINCIPLE SIX: Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice.

The nonviolent resister has deep faith that justice will eventually win.

Nonviolence believes that God is a God of justice.

So friends, we have seen many self-defense groups come up over the years. Many of them with very good intentions. And they're coming up under different names, Antifa or whatever the case may be. But in each and every case in my very long experience, in very short order a large percentage of these groups are filled by agents of the government. The dear woman who lost her husband, a black panther, at UCLA campus where I used to teach, in commenting on this situation said: "My God, I think that about one third of the members of our party were agents." And this will happen, and it will lead to what the Nazis and the KKK are trying to achieve. And what are they trying to achieve? They're trying to achieve violence. They want to see some violence so they can blame everything on the side of the "other." This is one of their main goals. So think about it, and realize that we have a history and we should look at this history. It has been highly involved with agents of all kinds, and the opposition, the Nazis, the KKK, the white supremacists, really want to see violence coming from what is called "the side of non-violence."

Thank you for being with us today on World Focus.

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