

**U.S. STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN: ACHIEVING
PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE GRAVEYARD OF
EMPIRES**

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BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA
OF THE
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U.S. STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN: ACHIEVING PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE GRAVEYARD OF EMPIRES

THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2009

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST
AND SOUTH ASIA,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, the Honorable Gary L. Ackerman (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. ACKERMAN. The subcommittee will come to order.

Last week, President Obama announced his new strategy for fighting extremists in Afghanistan and Pakistan. I wholeheartedly support the President's new approach. The previous administration—by its own admission—never recognized that the true central front in the struggle to secure our nation was Afghanistan, where the 9/11 attacks were orchestrated, not Iraq. It has been clear for years that the last administration took its eye off the ball and allowed al-Qaeda and the Taliban to regroup and rearm in Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan. For years, the fight against extremists has been under-manned, under-funded and lacked a coherent strategy. President Obama's new strategy recognizes those facts and moves aggressively to address them. I am gratified that it contained many elements that I and others in Congress have been urging for several years.

First, the President laid out a clear objective which is, "to dispute, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent the return to either country in the future." I know that there has been concern expressed that focusing our attention on al-Qaeda—the reason United States forces are in Afghanistan in the first place—somehow means that we are abandoning our efforts to establish functioning democratic government in that country.

I think a close examination of the strategy reveals that the President intends to both stabilize the security situation in Afghanistan and continue our work to improve governance there. Successfully focusing on al-Qaeda will give us and our allies the "exit strategy" the Presidents wants in order to reduce our military footprint there and to sustain allied involvement. But that does not mean that work on Afghanistan's democratic institution will not continue.

No discussion of an exit from Afghanistan can even be contemplated until the security situation is stable and al-Qaeda and

the Taliban can no longer use Afghanistan as a base for terrorist operations. In the near term that means more troops. I have been calling for additional United States forces for Afghanistan since 2002, so the President's announcement of 17,000 additional combat troops and 4,000 additional trainers is a welcome development. It is clear that neither we nor the Afghans have sufficient forces to take and hold territory once it has been cleared of extremists. More U.S. forces will allow us to do that. In the long term, more and better trained Afghan forces will be able to do it for themselves, allowing U.S. and other NATO forces to recede into the background and ultimately withdraw.

While we are on the subject of NATO, I know that the President will use the summit tomorrow to remind our allies that Afghanistan is their fight too. While some NATO allies may not be willing to provide more combat soldiers, there are other capabilities that they could provide—such as strategic airlift and military trainers and mentors—that would support the overall security mission there. There are also civilian aspects of reconstruction and capacity-building at both the national and local government levels with which our allies could assist.

But more resources from more countries also has to mean more and better coordination by us. A signature result of the Bush administration strategy of subcontracting Afghanistan to our allies is that there has been little central coordination of either the political or military effort, and many nations sent forces with vastly different rules of engagement.

Each nation charged with security for a portion of the country, or rebuilding some devastated Afghan institution went off in their own direction, with their own objectives, and reported to their own national capital. It should surprise no one that as a result, little was accomplished. Afghanistan is a case study of what happens when the United States abandons its leadership role in an international security crisis. What is most remarkable is that it has not turned out even worse.

More resources also means more money, from us and the international community. But as the President's plan makes clear, more of the money needs to reach the Afghan people and much, much less of it should be spent inside the beltway on consultants or on overhead. Our assistance should be used to purchase goods and services from Afghan providers and to put Afghans to work.

We cannot talk about strategy in Afghanistan without talking about narcotics and the corrosive effect drug trafficking has on security and governance. Afghanistan is the source of 93 percent of the world's opium and, even though the most recent report by the U.N. Office on Crime and Drugs show an increase in the number of poppy-free provinces and an overall decrease in the amount of opium produced, there is still far too much drug money sloshing around in Afghanistan tempting everyone from local policemen to provincial governors. Afghans will never believe they have a real alternative to the Taliban as long as they see local and even national officers on the take.

Opium eradication, crop substitution, effective transportation for those crops and improved local security all have to be combined in order to make legal crops safe and profitable for Afghan farmers.

In a nation where 70 percent of the population lives in the countryside, safe and profitable alternatives to poppy production are not optional.

The President's strategy recognizes the need for an effective counternarcotics strategy by combining the elements I have just described with new authorities for the United States and NATO forces to directly support Afghan counternarcotics units during the interdiction of narcotics traffickers.

There is one more element necessary for a successful strategy and that is a coherent regional approach. In particular, one that deals effectively with Iran and Pakistan. As usual, Iran has tried to have it both ways in Afghanistan. On the one hand they have legitimate concerns regarding the impact of narcotics trafficking and the attendant instability that results, yet there is also significant evidence that Iran has shipped weapons to the Taliban in an effort to gain leverage over us.

The United States has talked to Iran before in the context of Afghanistan and it is a positive sign that Iran attended the international meeting on Afghanistan earlier this week. But while we seek their cooperation in Afghanistan, we should also insist that they stop arms shipments to the Taliban in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1390.

The question of Pakistan's role is even more complex and frankly merits its own separate hearing. Suffice to say that the entire endeavor in Afghanistan is unlikely to succeed if terrorist safe havens in Pakistan are not eliminated. The Government of Pakistan, and more importantly, the people of Pakistan must come to realize that the terrorists they have nurtured for decades have now turned on them as this week's attack in Lahore clearly demonstrates. The fight against extremists is not solely an American fight, nor is it solely an Afghan fight. The fight belongs to Pakistan too. It is a fight for their very existence as a nation and they ignore the problem at their own peril. I cannot say it more clearly: There is a real and present danger to Pakistan's survival, but it comes from inside, not outside the country.

President Obama's strategy for Afghanistan is a welcome, indeed, desperately needed change from 8 years of reliance on ad hoc, under-funded, under-manned, uncoordinated, and faith-based strategies. It is finally time to devote our attention, our energy and resources to defeating the terrorists who attacked us on 9/11. My strong view is that the President has given us a realistic strategy to accomplish that goal.

And now I would like to turn to our good friend, acting in place of the ranking member, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and appreciate you calling this hearing, and I appreciate the many years that we have spent discussing this issue as things got better and got worse, and got better and got worse over the years.

I certainly support the President's new focus on Afghanistan. I am not sure if it is a policy. I have been listening very closely as people have been talking, and I will listen very closely today, to see if it is a strategy. It does not seem to be that way to me, Mr. Chairman. It seems to be statements, and seems to be concepts that are being thrown out. I would hope that this, number one, is not just

for PR, and that instead what we have got from the administration is a policy in the making. Perhaps what the President is doing and perhaps what we have seen and how we have been briefed for the last month is an example of the administration reaching out and trying to find new idea and trying to come up with a strategy. So far all I have heard are slogans that most of which I hate to say will not work.

When we look back on Afghanistan, a lot of people blame Ronald Reagan for involving us there with supporting the Mujahideen against the Soviet army. I do not believe that was a mistake. I think that support helped end the Cold War. I think the bravery and courage of the Afghan people, coupled with President Reagan's willingness to help them, brought an end to the Cold War. The Afghans played a significant part and thus we owe them a great debt.

However, when President Bush, the first President Bush was in power after the Russians were forced out, we walked away. So if we have to find where the chain of responsibility is, I do not put it on people who would say that helping the Mujahideen and ending the Cold War was where this started. That was successful. What was not successful was after President Reagan left, the senior President Bush cut a deal with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and walked away, and left the future of Afghanistan, these brave people who fought and died in alliance with us, let them just sleep in the rubble.

Furthermore, when President Clinton became President, in order to stabilize the situation a further deal was made for the United States to covertly support the Taliban. Yes, that is right. The United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan created the Taliban and during the Clinton administration they dutifully supported the Taliban against the forces within Afghanistan that did not want that type of radical Islamic government. So many examples of that that it was mindboggling at the time.

But let me note even here we have had witnesses that on the record have contradicted the State Department when Ben Gilman sat in this seat, along with me and requested all of the documents from the State Department in our dealing with Afghan policy, the State Department did not—not only did not comply, but arrogantly cut us off the chairman of this committee from information, and just a few weeks ago when former Secretary of State—Assistant Secretary of State Inderfurth was here, there was testimony indicating that a memo had been sent with very important information, which is exactly what we were requesting that was withheld from us by the State Department.

This is a democratic society. We cannot put up with that, Mr. Chairman. We need to have an honest discussion of issues between the Executive and Legislative Branch. This not closed government making decisions, and we elected officials being told about it.

So now we have President Obama. During the Bush years, of course, we paid for what happened with our support of the Taliban, and by first President Bush's walking away, we paid for it in 9/11, and I would note I will submit for the record places where about ten times I suggested that, and you were present during my warnings that if we did not change our policy in Afghanistan it would come back and hurt us in a big way.

So President Bush after 9/11 was forced to deal with that, President George W. Bush. Unfortunately, he walked away as well. We walked away, and we walked away and turned the corner and went over to Iraq. Instead of keeping our promises to the Afghan people who drove out the Taliban, the people who had committed the crime against us, we walked away and spent our money in another endeavor in Iraq. We walked away again. We did not keep our promise again, and all of this talk about how we defeated the Taliban after 9/11 is just nonsense. It was the Afghan people and it was the remnants of the Mujahideen. It was the Northern Alliance that drove the Taliban out of Afghanistan, again with our help, based on a promise that we would now stick with them, and we did not.

So now we have President Obama, and I hear what is being said but I hate to suggest that, as I say, I do not see the policy. I am hoping this is a policy in the making. If it is, let us have a discussion about it today. But from what I have heard, what I have heard, the ideas being presented will not work, and the situation will not get better.

Mr. Chairman, the structure that I have been told I have been told about, the structure that I have seen in "classified briefings," the structure that we are supporting is a non-democratic structure for Afghanistan. Let me repeat that. We keep hearing about democracy and how important it is, freedom, there is a non—what we have been presented by the administration is a plan that will not permit democracy at the local level. I would challenge the administration, I would challenge anyone who cares about the Afghan people or wants to finally find a solution to understand that Afghanistan has never been ruled from the center, and we should admit that, we should embrace it, and we should make sure that people all the way down to the village have a right to elect their local officials. Our plan is based on provincial governors being appointed. District people being appointed all the way down to the bottom, and let me suggest that that is exactly the wrong approach. We have not included the local militias.

Again, we talk about building the Afghan army and cutting deals with other governments, with the leaders of other governments. That will not work.

Mr. Chairman, and again your thoughts on the drug war were, I think, on target, but yet what I have heard is a down playing of our commitment for drug eradication in Afghanistan.

So I think that this is vitally important for us to discuss these issues. There are serious questions for those of us who are supporting an effort that will succeed in Afghanistan, but what we have now is a plan, from what I can see is a non-plan that will not work, so let us discuss it, let us work with the administration, try to come up with something that will work so that we do not walk away again with a tragedy in the making in Afghanistan.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Carnahan.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief because I want to hear from our witnesses. I am glad to see President Obama and his renewed emphasis on the region that launched the 9/11 attacks on our country, but we cannot have a United States

strategy on Afghanistan unless we have a United States strategy on Afghan poppy and how to deal with that. As the chairman said in his remarks, over 90 percent of the world's poppy. We have to look at broader, smarter strategies in terms of alternative crops, genetically-altered crops, legal markets in terms of use by pharmaceutical companies. These cash crops fuel extremists and terrorist activity. It lines the pockets of corrupt officials and skews government reforms. Drug routes make their way through Europe and also to the United States, and even to my home city of St. Louis. So this has to be fundamental in our U.S. strategy, and I look forward to hearing about that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. The ranking member, Mr. Burton.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sorry I was a little late. There is a heck of a traffic jam out there on the road. I sat there for over an hour which might be of interest to everybody.

Mr. ACKERMAN. A break for us.

Mr. BURTON. I am anxious to hear from the witnesses today. The one thing that I recall about Vietnam was that the enemy had the ability to go into sanctuaries across borders, and as a result, in Cambodia and Laos, which were supposedly prohibited from being attacked, led to one of the big problems that we faced in that conflict.

We now have a similar situation with Pakistan. The Taliban and their contemporaries seem to go back and forth across that border with some ease, and I do admire the administration for going after them with drones and air-to-surface missiles that knock out some of their leaders. But I would just like to know today how far we are willing to go.

Pakistan was very instrumental in us winning the war, helping them win the war, the Afghanistan tribal leaders win the war against the Russians, and it was a conduit for us getting some military equipment in there that shot down Russian helicopters. I think Dana knows about that because you were over there. But I would like to know how far the cooperation with the Pakistanis is going to go, what kind of problems they are going to face with the people inside their country that are upset about the United States hitting targets in Pakistan, and whether or not we are willing to go all-out to eliminate those sanctuaries so that the Taliban cannot run back and forth across that border with impunity. I think that is one of the key elements.

I believe our troops in every single battle, whether it has been a fight, have done very, very well. They won. But the problem is if we cannot pursue them back across that border and knock them out in their areas of sanctuary, I think we are going to have a long and drawn out problem. So I would like to have some answers about that from our witnesses, and I really appreciate you being here today.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Klein.

Mr. KLEIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the witnesses coming to talk to us today about the important strategies to move forward on Afghanistan.

I had a chance to travel with the chairman and others, Democrats and Republicans, to Afghanistan a couple of months ago, and

to see firsthand some of the things on the ground, met with some of the military leaders, and some of the civilian leaders, met with some of our folks to get some ideas on the PRTs, the teams that are doing the reconstruction.

I also had a chance recently to meet in Washington with Minister Zia to talk about the National Solidarity Program, and I think that what I heard in the laying out of the policy from the administration, which I appreciate the fact that it is being thought through from top to bottom with excellent advice from our military leaders, with excellent advice from our non-military people who understand what it is going to take to get the Afghan people to support this, which is the redevelopment of their country, switching from poppies to wheat or pomegranates or anything else, but recognizing that it is not just military power that will be the solution here, and your comments today, if you can talk to us about the National Solidarity Program, your thinking on whether it is working, how it is working, the notions of the transparency, the money going in, outcome, coming out, and obviously that as well as the coordinated effort.

Mr. Chairman, we heard about the reconstruction teams that the United States is putting forward, we heard a lot about European—different countries doing it, and not a lot of coordination, and we all know that the effectiveness of this thing will be the effective coordination, and the ability to share information and strategies, so if you could comment as well on those, I would appreciate it, and I thank the chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Ellison.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, thank you for this excellent hearing, very timely. I would also like to thank our witnesses, Dr. von Hippel, Dr. Cordesman and Dr. Jones, appreciate all of you being here to share with us.

I am very pleased about the new strategy of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I am also encouraged to see that the United States is intending to pursue a smarter, more comprehensive strategy, particularly on more constructive diplomacy through enhanced cooperation with local leaders and international partners to promote a reconciliation process. I would like to hear about that in the course of the witness testimony.

I also welcome the policy to support basic human rights for Afghan people and the focus on regional and civilian-led approach, and the emphasis on reconstruction and development that has been accompanied by a regular monitoring and evaluation.

I am concerned and I would like to hear some testimony about yesterday's suicide bombings in Kandahar that killed 13 people, including two provisional council officials, and by a missile strike in northwest Pakistan yesterday that killed about 10 people. I would like to get some information on that and be brought up to date, if possible. I would also like to be interested to hear your views, I mean, all the panelists, on the analyses of these incidents and what they mean in the larger framework.

I would also like to know—we have talked about Pakistan and the important regional role it plays, but I am also aware that Ambassador Holbrooke met briefly with Iran's deputy foreign minister at the Hague conference in The Netherlands, and I would like to

know what role Iran might play in a constructive way regarding the stabilization and development of Afghanistan. I think it is important to take all these factors into consideration, and in this regard I would like to hear your opinions about the different and complementary roles that Ambassador Holbrooke and Ambassador Ross, and Senator Mitchell could play in enhancing a regional approach.

And most importantly, I am interested to hear about the implementation aspect of the new strategy and how we can avoid repeating past mistakes. I am glad to hear the level of passion on both sides of the aisle about the importance of a new way forward in Afghanistan and hope that we can work in a bipartisan way to see a stable, productive, and prosperous Afghanistan. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank you for organizing this hearing, and thanks to our witnesses for appearing today. Running a little bit late because I have a hearing in oversight and government reform at the same time, so forgive me for running back and forth.

After reviewing President Obama's plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan, I am optimistic about the progress we can achieve in the region. We must commit ourselves to the goal of attaining long-term stability in South and Central Asia by dismantling al-Qaeda. However, we must not let our enthusiasm for peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan temper our firm insistence on accountability for all parties involved.

After my own recent visit to Afghanistan, I agree with the President that all who have a stake in the security of the region should cooperate to stabilize that country. Not only must we work with the people of Afghanistan, however, we must also look to Pakistan, a key regional player in the Asian subcontinent. We have an opportunity to work with Pakistan and we must ensure that Pakistani, American and Afghan interests are aligned toward one goal—peace and stability in the region.

The State of Pakistan can be a formidable ally in our desire for regional stability, but the remain and unanswered lingering doubts about Pakistan's full commitment to these objectives in Afghanistan. Congresswoman Harman and I, along with Congresswoman Tauscher and Congressman Royce, a fellow member of this subcommittee, have introduced H.R. 1463, to condition future military aid to Pakistan on two things: That the Pakistani Government make A.Q. Khan available for questioning by United States authorities, and that it monitor Mr. Khan's activities.

With the cooperation of the United States, Afghanistan and Pakistan, we can work to eliminate Taliban's strongholds which threaten the peace-loving citizens of three nations as well as peace-loving citizens in the rest of the world. As the President has stated, our NATO allies and our other partners, the Central Asian states, gulf nations, Iran, Russia, India and China, have a stake in the promise of lasting peace and security and development in the region.

Mr. Chairman, if I might ask, I would be interested in the panelists' reaction to the legislation I made reference to, introduced by Congresswoman Harman and myself and others, about the need for Pakistan to produce the scientist who has been credited perhaps as

being the number one nuclear proliferator in the history of human kind, to make sure that he is available to United States authorities as a precondition for continued military cooperation and assistance to Pakistan, Dr. von Hippel. Any reaction to that legislation or that notion?

Mr. ACKERMAN. We are just making opening statements.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Oh, excuse me. I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. I yield back my time, Mr. Chairman. I am so sorry.

Mr. ACKERMAN. No problem. Thank you very much. You will have a chance to go around again with questions.

Mr. Green.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding the hearing today and I welcome our panel. President Obama recently announced the results of his administration's strategic review of the Afghanistan-Pakistan policy, viewing the two as intertwined, and I could not agree more with the President.

I visited the border with my colleague, Mike McCall, and Congressman Quaire between Pakistan and Afghanistan last summer and saw how porous it is. Pakistani and Afghan militants are increasingly merging and pooling their efforts against governments in both countries, and these militants also threaten supply line. Yet Pakistan has not cooperated as best as they can with us in putting pressure on the Taliban leaders.

Well, what are our recommendations for addressing this issue as this panel has moved forward toward—with a Pakistani bill this spring? Going back to the topic of Afghanistan, General David McCurren, the overall NATO and United States commander in Afghanistan maintains that our mission is winnable, and after my visit I know firsthand how hard our military is working toward this mission, not only fighting the insurgents but through civilian efforts aimed at rebuilding Afghanistan's economy and infrastructure.

I have to admit I flew around to Khost and Gardez in Ghanzi with a one-star general, Mr. Chairman, who told us, he said he is a helicopter—he was trained as a helicopter pilot, and yet his biggest issue now is not only building that road from Khost to Gardez, but also making sure we build health clinics and schools in the area, and he said we are fighting the outlaws, but we also need to make sure we bring a different way of life to the folks, and I think that is our stated mission and we need to stick with that.

While I was there, I visited the 451st civil affairs units army reserve that was from the district I represent, and they were working on building that road and working out in the community in those areas, and I think we are making progress with our civilian efforts, but we need to redouble those efforts and make sure that we not only deal with the military side but also with bringing up the average wage and lifestyle of the Afghans.

I have questions on how well our efforts have been as far as nation building. Some observers say that the Afghan people have become disillusioned with the corruption in President Karzai's government, and this sentiment is causing many to accommodate Taliban insurgents. I am interested in our panel's views on this, particularly with the Presidential election set for August, and what is our understanding of the prospects for President Karzai to be re-

elected, and if he is not, what could this mean for our policy toward Afghanistan.

And again, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for this hearing. It is so important to our country.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much. Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, let me add my appreciation for the continued effort of this subcommittee being keenly current in its assessment of America's foreign policy and as well its impact on America's foreign policy and the hearing today on Afghanistan, I think, gives us an opportunity to probe the positions and the proposals of the administration.

There is no doubt that many of us who had differing opinions on the war in Iraq have consistently said that our focus should have been on Afghanistan. I do think the issue of the 17,000 troops and 4,000 trainers will continue to be monitored by many of us who do not want to see a long extended strategy that puts us somewhat in the predicament of an ongoing 50-year presence, but we recognize that focus, collaboration is crucial.

However, I also believe that partnership is important and certainly the partnership with Pakistan is a must. I also believe that we have to re-frame our sunglasses on Pakistan and recognize that Dr. Khan represented an era, not a totality. All of us want to fight nuclear proliferation, but if we are to overcome the Taliban and the host position that Pakistan seems to have with respect to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda and Taliban interests that want to destroy both countries, then they have to be a viable partner. We have to look at the issues of economic development in Pakistan, education in Pakistan. We have to face the illiteracy rate in Afghanistan. We also have to face the reality that it is a decentralized country.

I do not know how any President, whether it is President Karzai or someone else, is going to alter the structure that Afghanis have lived under for centuries, but I do believe it is important for this committee to have a strategy in collaboration with the administration, and I would offer as I close that strategy should be restoring governance of Afghanistan to its people, letting them have the resources to educate their children, cease and desist or eliminate the Taliban's authority in Afghanistan, recognize the vitality of the Afghanistan people who want to have a democratic nation, bolster their democratic opportunities, and join with them to insist on their participation in the opposition to terrorism.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Costa.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, our witnesses. I think today's hearing and the title, "Achieving Peace and Stability in the Graveyard of Empires" is an apt title for the discussion at hand.

My first visit to Afghanistan was 4 years ago, and like many of my colleagues visiting not only in Kabul but going down to Kandahar and visiting our PRTs or provisional reconstruction team settings and attempting, whether it be clinics or schools or roads, the amazing things that the NATO forces have been able to do, but yet realizing that that is not necessarily the primary effort or operations of a force, a combat force whose principal role is to focus on

the Taliban, and al-Qaeda, and to clear the area for a peaceful government for Afghanistan.

And so how we transfer the soft power in a way that makes sense on roles that I think are really more appropriate of the Department of State and other areas, I would be interested in terms of the witnesses' comments here today. Clearly, the notion that, first 4 years ago when I went, that the President of Afghanistan was not a lot more than the mayor of Kabul, 4 years later is one I think we need to consider vis-a-vis the corruption that has taken place, and I would be interested on your take on the progress of that.

I was there last year, 4 years later, went up to Konar, Kumbar Province, up past Tora Bora, saw again the roads that we are building and the progress that has been made in some areas, but I want to know from the witnesses today about this multi-strategy, how we do it in collaboration with our allies and NATO, where the leads to vis-a-vis an exit strategy, how well you think this has been enunciated just last week by the President's new policy, and whether or not you think it is practical or whether or not in fact it can be implemented in the long haul because I really think this is akin to—I noted 4 years ago and last year when I was there again—Korean, Korea in this sense.

We ended the conflict in 1952, but in the fifties and the sixties it was a tough slog, and the success of South Korea really has not been acknowledged until the last 20–30 years. So I mean, that is the kind of long haul I think we are in for if this is going to be successful, therefore stability in a graveyard of empires, I think, trying to achieve this peace is so aptly named, Mr. Chairman. I want to commend you for your thought in this, and I look forward to the testimony that we will received.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. I will pass the kudos to the staff for coming up with the title of the hearing.

Speaking of long haul, the bells have indicated that there are votes that are beginning in the House. Unfortunately, it is a long series of votes. This is usually the point that the hearing, having heard our conclusions, you would edify us with the facts. [Laughter.]

What I think we will do is forego for now the introduction of the expert witnesses, because some of us are old and by the time we come back we will forget who you were. It looks like we have at least an hour and a quarter worth of votes. So rather than interrupt you we will break now, let you stand down and think of how to respond to some of the questions that you are bound to hear, and go off to the floor. I would encourage members to return, but usually history shows us that there will be few of us and your odds will improve. We stand in recess.

[Recess.]

Mr. ACKERMAN. The subcommittee will come back to order.

We will now turn to our witnesses. Dr. Karin von Hippel is the co-director of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and a senior fellow in the CSIS International Security Program. Her research has focused on analysis of issues related to countries in conflict and transition, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Lebanon.

Prior to joining CSIS, Dr. von Hippel was a senior research fellow at the Center for Defense Studies, King's College London where she managed research projects on issues including, the root causes of terrorism, European counterterrorism reforms, and the future of the U.N. humanitarian system. Before that she spent several years working for the United Nations, and the European Union in Somalia and Kosovo.

Dr. Seth Jones is a senior political scientist at RAND and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School. His areas of expertise include United States and European counterterrorism, and counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and best practices in nation building. Dr. Jones most recent publications include counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and how terrorist groups end, lessons for encountering al-Qaeda, and he is the author of the forthcoming book, "In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan," as well as, "The Rise of European Security Cooperation."

Dr. Anthony Cordesman holds the Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and is also a national security analyst for ABC News. During his time at CSIS, he has led studies on the issues including, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, armed nation building, and counterinsurgency.

Dr. Cordesman formerly served as national security assistant to Senator John McCain and as director of intelligence assessment in the Office of Secretary of Defense. He is the author of over 50 books, including a four-volume series on the lessons of modern war.

The committee welcomes all of you. Sorry for the long wait as we have been voting. Your full, complete statements will be placed in the record in their entirety, and Dr. von Hippel, we will begin with you.

**STATEMENT OF KARIN VON HIPPEL, PH.D., CO-DIRECTOR,
POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT, CENTER FOR
STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

Ms. VON HIPPEL. Thank you very much, Chairman Ackerman and distinguished members of the subcommittee. It is a pleasure to be here and to be invited to testify on United States strategy in Afghanistan. Today, I wanted to focus my remarks on one area that will be critical to our success, and that is in forging a new partnership with the Afghan people and Government.

I think even though we all recognize that the key to a successful counterinsurgency strategy is the build component of the shape, clear, hold, build arrangement, and build here means providing basic services and strengthening governance. Thus far we have not succeeded in building despite the billions of dollars that we have spent so far.

The good news, I think, as we have seen in recent polls, is that the Taliban have not been winning hearts and minds in Afghanistan. Eighty percent of Afghans still view the Taliban as a serious threat. So the political space is still there for the Afghan Government, with the support of the international community, to turn things around.

If President Obama's new comprehensive strategy is to succeed, all Afghans need to become equal partners with the international community and share the responsibility for implementing this new approach. Now, to do this they need a far greater stake in their future than they currently have. Too many decisions are currently being made on their behalf without their involvement.

Even if the rhetoric that is espoused by the international civilians and soldiers in the country is all about Afghanization and building local capacity, and I am sure you have all heard it when you have been out there, the reality is that many donors bypass the government, they often duplicate efforts, and they focus on areas that may be a lower priority for Afghans. Often donors even say that they are informing the government before they launch into policies, and I think that word already tells you that they are not—the word “informed” tells you that they are not really treating them as partners.

Now, these donors will argue—this includes the United States by the way—they will argue that they are forced to manage programs in this manner because of corruption and often to demonstrate a presence back home, where, for some countries, their presence in Afghanistan is not very popular. This is why more and more money goes to projects that are outside the national budget, and which often do not cohere with the national development strategy. According to the Ministry of Finance in Afghanistan, over 70 percent of donor funding goes outside of the national budget.

Today, in Afghanistan, there is very little clarity as to what donors are doing and whether or not successes and failures in one part of the country are informing experience elsewhere. I certainly saw this when I was there a few months ago, and 2 weeks ago I was chairing a panel on Afghanistan at a NATO/OECD summit in Geneva with senior members of the international community, military and civilians, and we definitely heard this again.

Similar to our flawed policy in Iraq, in Afghanistan we are far too reliant on international contractors, as the chairman said earlier, and each of these takes a slice of the pie along the way. One study noted that three-quarters of U.S. development assistance in Afghanistan has gone to international contractors. One wonders what percentage of every dollar gets to the Afghan people.

Even, I think, in our more recent attempts to buy locally—we have heard a lot of people talk about buying locally and using local contracts—the U.S. Government is still using international contractors to do the buying on their behalf.

Now, when I was there in late September, early October, I heard that there were 400 Americans in the U.S. Embassy. There is bound to be an increase due to the planned surge, and it seems to me that those Americans can go straight to the source and hire the Afghan contractors rather than go through a number of international contractors.

Well, what else could be done? Our goal here should be to ensure that Afghans are fully in the lead. That means in building security, building the economy, reestablishing governance and rooting out corruption, as well as generating outrage and revulsion when the Taliban Afghans kill civilians.

The International community really should be focusing on playing a catalytic facilitating and supporting role, and in many cases trying to mentor their government counterparts in different parts of the government at the national and local levels in a very similar way to what the international soldiers and police trainers are doing. They should be embedded in the government and spending most of their time working with their counterparts.

But also I think our assistance needs to be much more direct and accountable. It needs to go straight to the people, and to successful government programs. As Mr. Ellison mentioned earlier, the National Solidarity Program is one great example. I think we should be far more supportive of the programs that are working.

Now, of course, corruption is a problem. I think we all know that, and that is not just within the Afghan Government but it is also among international donors, and here perceived corruption can be just as bad as real corruption among international donors. Afghans hear about billions of dollars that is going into the country, but they often see little result that it is reaching the people.

Now, I think corruption can be reduced through greater transparency over all the money that is pledged and spent by them and by us. We can call it two-way accountability, so that the Afghan people, as well as taxpayers in all of our countries, in all of the coalition countries, can see where their money is going. There are a number of ways to do this, through the media, through Web sites, and through other programs. We need to publish what we spend and monitor what we are spending.

There are some great examples. The Aga Khan development network is already doing this up in the north of Afghanistan. They are working with the shuras and training them how to scrutinize books. They call them social audits. There are other programs like that that we could be supporting.

Now, this new approach, I think, to aid effectiveness should be directed by the United Nations. The United Nations has been mandated to coordinate the international donor community in Afghanistan. It has not been able to realize its goals so far. Yet the United States needs to be far more supportive of U.N. efforts, and to help the U.N. become more robust. A more robust United Nations could be seen as part of our exit strategy, along with a stronger Afghan national security force.

The President could also consider appointing a high level deputy to Ambassador Holbrooke to really be the development and accountability czar to make sure that the monies that are pledged and spent are accountable and are going more directly to the people, and this could also apply, of course, across the border in Pakistan if the \$7.5 billion aid package over 5 years is approved.

Finally, Afghans need to hear that the United States is totally committed to their welfare and security, and that we are not just concerned about the threat posed by al-Qaeda. Only when Afghans view the struggle as a common one, that they are not fighting America's war, will they become full partners. We have seen the negative effects of this already in Pakistan, where too many Pakistanis today see their own struggle against insurgents really is fighting America's war and not their own fight even though we have seen greater attacks within the country.

So just to summarize, more direct aid, two-way public accountability, and a shared struggle with the Afghan people.

Thank you for your time today and the privilege of appearing before this committee.

[The prepared statement of Ms. von Hippel follows:]



**Statement before
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia**

**“U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan: Achieving Peace &
Stability in the Graveyard of Empires”**

A Statement by

Karin von Hippel, Ph.D.

Co-Director, Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project
Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

*April 2, 2009
Rayburn House Office Building*

Chairman Ackerman, Ranking Member Burton, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify on U.S. strategy for Afghanistan. It is a subject of great importance, and I am honored to have the opportunity to share my views with you at this juncture, just one day before President Obama presents his new comprehensive strategy at the NATO Summit in Strasbourg and Kehl. At the Summit, he will aim to secure greater commitments from our allies and promote deeper partnerships.

Partnerships are indeed critical, and today I would like to focus my remarks on reinvigorating our most important partnership: with the Afghan people and their government. While improved coherence with our allies and regional powers will be fundamental to overall success, my statement will instead concentrate on how to ensure that Afghans are in the lead. I would be happy to discuss other issues during the question and answer period.¹

Afghans First. While only 40% of Afghans feel that their country is heading in the right direction, and 60% believe that corruption is a serious problem among government officials,² polls also tell us that 60% still accept the presence of foreign troops, 80% prefer their current government over one led by the Taliban (or others), and 80% view the Taliban as a serious threat.³ These polls reveal that the Taliban have *not* been winning hearts and minds, even though they do adjudicate disputes in some instances. Thus, there is still political space in Afghanistan for the Afghan government, along with international partners, to turn things around.

At the same time, given the deep insecurity in many parts of the country and the serious retribution many ordinary Afghans face if found working with the international coalition, there are increasing numbers of “fence sitters” in the country. These Afghans view the United States as not having delivered security, rooted out corruption, or built capable institutions, despite the billions spent in the country. Many Afghans also believe that America abandoned them in the past and will do so again, and hence they prefer to wait and see. The Taliban, on the other hand, deliver a rough sort of justice through parallel systems (which is better than what many

¹ For further information on these and other related issues, see Karin von Hippel and Frederick Barton, “Getting it Right in Pakistan and Afghanistan,” *CSIS Commentary*, January 28, 2009; Karin von Hippel, “Confronting Two Key Challenges: A PCR Project Research Visit,” *PCR Project Special Briefing*, October 17, 2008 (http://www.csis.org/component/option.com_csis_pubs/task/view/id,5093/); and the two PCR Project Measures of Progress in Afghanistan: *Breaking Point: Measuring Progress in Afghanistan (2007)*, and *In the Balance: Measuring Progress in Afghanistan (2005)*.

² Metrics Brief, February 2009, Strategic Advisory Group, ISAF HQ, released on 9 March 2009.

³ “Afghanistan: Where things stand,” ABC News/BBC/ARD Poll, February 9, 2009. See also “Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan” compiled by Jason H. Campbell and Jeremy Shapiro, March 3, 2009.

Afghans are getting from their government), and claim they are there to stay - hence the oft-repeated Taliban refrain: *You foreigners have all the watches, but we have all the time.*⁴

If President Obama's "new, comprehensive strategy" is to succeed, all Afghans - the "fence sitters" as well as those that support the government and international forces - need to become equal partners and share the responsibility of implementing this new approach. (It is already too late for them to have fully participated in conceiving the strategy, though Afghan government officials were brought in towards the end of the process). Afghans need to believe that the risks that accompany association with the international coalition are worth taking. To do this, they need a far greater stake in their future than they currently have. Too many decisions are currently being made on their behalf, without their involvement.

New partnerships need to be developed, with Afghans fully in the lead: in establishing security, building the economy, developing and sustaining governing institutions, rooting out corruption, and in generating outrage and revulsion in their communities when insurgents wound and kill Afghans. How do we change the current paradigm, and ensure that the people and government of Afghanistan are directing efforts, and the international community is playing more of a facilitating and supporting role?

One way is through more *direct and accountable aid*, which goes straight to the people, rather than the current method of being channeled through many layers of contractors and implementing partners, which each take a slice of the pie along the way. According to one study, international contractors have received three-quarters of U.S. development assistance in Afghanistan.⁵ One wonders what percentage of every U.S. dollar gets to the Afghan people today, particularly given the enormous security and other costs associated with international personnel in Afghanistan? Our office did an assessment of this same question for aid in Iraq in 2004 and found that only \$ 0.27 from every dollar was reaching the Iraqis.

Even if the rhetoric espoused by international civilians and soldiers is all about *Afghanization* and building local capacity, the reality is that many donors bypass or supplant government programs entirely, duplicate other efforts, or focus on areas that may be a lower priority for Afghans. Often, decisions are made on Afghans' behalf with no consultation. Some donors say they "inform" the Afghan government before they launch new projects; hardly the appropriate term if they really believe in partnerships and capacity building.

⁴ See the PCR publication, *Breaking Point: Measuring Progress in Afghanistan (2007)*, which warned of the deterioration in security if things could not be turned around in mid-2007.

⁵ That study also noted that 60 per cent of all development assistance goes through only five contractors. Afghanistan Compact Procurement Monitoring Project, Peace Dividend Trust, 1 April 2007, p.11.

Donors often argue that they are forced to manage programs in this manner due to concerns about corruption, and often to demonstrate a presence back home, where their nation's involvement may not be so popular. According to the Afghan Ministry of Finance, more than 70% of donor assistance is provided outside the Afghan national budget, and the government is not able to track all those funds to ensure that they cohere with existing frameworks and strategies.⁶ In addition, far more aid is pledged than spent, adding to the confusion. Some estimate that 40% of pledged funds are not spent, often because of the so-called lack of capacity, though this could be partly attributed to the international community not identifying and understanding local capacity as well as it should, and not taking the necessary risks.

The reality is that there is little clarity as to what donors are doing, how much aid is spent, how decisions are made regarding programs, and whether or not successes and failures in some parts of the country are informing experience elsewhere. President Obama's team does recognize many of these problems, and the appointment of high profile envoys and ambassadors by the United States and many key allies should help refocus international efforts, as should the appointment of a senior official at UNAMA late last year to improve donor coordination.

Yet, it will not be enough to make incremental improvements. The people in Afghanistan have been losing confidence for more than two years,⁷ and it is necessary to make major changes in order to gain their full participation and ownership of the new approach. As much of the funding as possible should be channeled through successful government programs (such as the National Solidarity Program), national non-governmental and civil society organizations, and the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, co-managed by the World Bank and the Afghan government.

Corruption is a problem – not just within the Afghan government, but also among international donors. Here, perceived corruption due to lack of transparency over donor spending can be just as harmful as real corruption (which also exists). Afghans hear about billions being spent but see little evidence that the money is reaching the people. Corruption can be countered in a number of ways: one approach could emphasize greater transparency over all monies pledged and spent – call it “two-way accountability” - so that the Afghan people as well as taxpayers in all coalition countries can see where their Afghans, Dollars, Euros, Pounds, Riyals and Yen are going. Currently this is not the case.

⁶ Figure from a senior UN development official in Afghanistan.

⁷ Op cit, “Afghanistan Index,” March 3, 2009.

President Obama's plans to appoint new Inspector Generals for the State Department and USAID, as well as to bolster the office of the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, should help monitor U.S. funds. But all these offices should be expanded so they can play a preventive role through instituting safeguards and other mechanisms, and not just an investigative role after the fact. Other donors should also be encouraged to do the same, potentially by the United Nations, which is assuming greater responsibility over international coordination. The UN has been mandated to be lead coordinator, but so far has been unable to realize this goal. A more robust UN, supported by the United States, needs to be seen as a fundamental part of America's exit strategy. Thus, when the UN advocates new ways to coordinate international assistance – which will inevitably include changes to be made by donors – the donors, including the United States, will need to listen.

The President could also consider appointing a high-level American deputy to Ambassador Holbrooke, stationed in both Kabul and Islamabad, to be the new development and accountability czar for all U.S. development funds spent by civilians and the military. Similar concerns over corruption and direct aid will apply if the Senate passes the five-year, \$7.5 billion Kerry-Lugar legislation for civilian aid to Pakistan.

The current opaque, non-transparent setup only feeds conspiracy theories and provides fodder for Taliban propaganda efforts. If donors and the Afghan government publish what they spend, and Afghans (and citizens in donor countries) monitor this spending through the media, websites, regular public reporting and other means, there will be greater ownership and less corruption. The ultimate goal is to empower national and local governments to strengthen governance, and fight extremism and corruption on their own terms.

Success can be achieved with clear direction and goals, the assumption of responsibility by all parties, and regular and open information flow to the people in Afghanistan and in allied nations. The overriding need is for a common purpose that is understood and agreed to by all parties, including the Afghan leadership and public, its neighbors, and international actors.

Finally, Afghans need to hear that the United States is fully committed to their welfare and security. Official U.S. statements and policy should ensure equal airtime to the plight of Afghans, along with the focus on the threat posed by al-Qaeda and affiliated insurgent/militia groups to the United States, Canada, and Europe. Only when Afghans view the struggle as a common one – that they are not just fighting America's war – will they become full partners in this endeavor.

Thank you for your time and for the privilege of appearing before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Jones.

**STATEMENT OF SETH G. JONES, PH.D., POLITICAL SCIENTIST,
THE RAND CORPORATION**

Mr. JONES. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and members of the subcommittee. I will keep my remarks brief. They are based on a range of trips to Afghanistan, in particular over the last several years; most recently at the end of 2008, and also in a few weeks I will be back.

What I am going to argue in general, and I have got a range of different points I will make, but one argument that I would like to make is I think over the last several years there has been a focus of U.S. efforts and U.S. spending at a national level, and I think when one visits rural areas of Afghanistan the power is very localized. I will come back to that in a second, but I do think there is a much—there is a much more significant need to understand and then find ways to work with local officials. This came up in some members' comments as we began.

My first comment builds a little bit on Dr. von Hippel's comments about the threat. In my view, there is a very significant and serious threat to the United States homeland from the Afghan-Pakistan front. U.S. intelligence is very clear about this. We have seen it even recently with individuals such as Baitullah Meshud threatening and supporting terrorist attacks in Washington, DC. We heard that this week. We also are aware of Uzbek militant groups that have planned attacks in Europe. There have been arrests in Germany, in Denmark, in Spain and France. The threats to the United States homeland from this area and to its allies and to the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, in my view, are extremely serious, and are supported by significant amounts of U.S. intelligence information along these lines. Therefore, the stakes, in my view, are very important.

Second, I think in general that there is little understanding among many, certainly in reading press accounts, of what is actually going on on the ground. There is continuing over-simplification of this as a Taliban fight, talks with Taliban. In fact, when one gets into rural areas of the country, the situation is much more complicated. There are a range of militant groups operating in these areas, not just the Taliban. There are a range of sub-tribes, tribes, clans, mostly Pashtun involved, criminal organizations, not even just drug trafficking organizations, but timber traders, gem traders. There are state support as we know, not just from Pakistan and Iran, but also even from, we know from Afghan national police in some cases, as well as Afghan district officials.

So, in general, we are talking about a very complicated insurgency that is not just a Taliban insurgency by any means, and where motivations range from at senior levels of the Taliban Intersura, a Deobandi ideology, to financial motivations, tribal motivations, grievances against the Afghan Government, a range of motivations as one looks across this.

The point though is that, in my view, important chunks, the motivation for fighting the Afghan Government, the Americans and others is very locally based, and that is important to realize because it means, in my view, that the solutions are not just about

a central government; they are also about working with and understanding local dimensions. So my comments, very briefly, are going to talk about thinking more concretely about bottom-up rather than entirely about top-down, which is where we have focused.

In particular, I would argue this is either won or lost in areas of the south in particular, but also to some degree the east of Afghanistan. The south, of course, is where our U.S. second marine expeditionary force, the U.S. Marines are moving into, especially Helmand, in particular, and this is quite important.

Now, on force structure, as we talk about a bottom-up, I want to point out if one takes General Petraeus's rough numbers of how many forces are needed to win a counterinsurgency, and this is a—take these numbers with an important grain of salt—one of the suggestions that comes out of the field manual is 20 counterinsurgents per 1,000 inhabitants.

Well, if one looks at the areas where most of the insurgency is focused on in Afghanistan, the provinces from Herat south to Kandahar and Helmand, and up through most of the eastern provinces, that leads to a population of just under 14 million, if we take those force requirements what that gives us is an—and I take these as rough numbers—a force requirement of 271,000 forces.

But this still leaves us with a range of questions: What percentage of these forces should be international? Which should be Afghan? Among Afghan forces, which should be national, that is, army or police in these areas? Which ones should be local forces? And we have even on the local front a range of options from the Afghan Public Protection Program in Wardak to more traditional “lashkars” and “arbakai.”

So the argument here is there is no magic number for numbers, and there is a lot of desire to see numbers, but I would say over 7 years into this counterinsurgency in Afghanistan the United States clock is clearly ticking. In my view, ultimately this is not just going to be about building Afghan national capacity. In my view, this is also going to be about building local capacity at the sub-national level including finding ways to work with key sub-tribes, some of which we know are sitting on the fence. The Alikozai and the Achakzai are probably the premier examples in the south; finding ways.

And what I am really talking about, without going into details yet, is I think an important component of this is a much more sophisticated understanding from the United States of local power, and frankly, rather than large numbers of American forces, a much more significant focus on covert action and clandestine operations in rural areas to work with local entity because, again, I think we have seen public opinion polls in rural areas of U.S. forces have deteriorated over the past year. I think this means a greater emphasis, as the U.S. did in 2001, in spending more time thinking about covert/clandestine operations rather than entirely on overt/large numbers of military forces.

So there are a whole range of other issues that came up during the questions on reconciliation, Pakistan human rights that I would be happy to address as I know the rest of us would. But I would just leave one with this thought: The war in Afghanistan is now longer than—has how occurred longer than World War II. We

are on seven, now going on 8 years in Afghanistan. In my view, we have already seen public perception and support begin to decrease. I think that is probably likely to continue. So I would suggest thinking a little bit more creatively about how to take advantage of a range of issues at the very local level in Afghanistan.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jones follows:]

TESTIMONY

U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan

SETH G. JONES

CT-324

April 2009

Testimony presented before the House Foreign Affairs Committee,
Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia on April 2, 2009

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*U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan*²

Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia
United States House of Representatives

April 2, 2009

This testimony focuses on the way forward for the United States in Afghanistan given the Obama Administration's outline of a new strategy. It explores ways in which United States strategy in Afghanistan should evolve to most effectively achieve U.S. goals and bring about an end to the insurgency. This testimony dovetails fairly well with the U.S. government's recently-released strategy on Afghanistan and Pakistan, which outlines a new way forward that includes developing an integrated civilian-military counterinsurgency strategy, improving local governance, countering corruption, and developing more self-reliant Afghan security forces.³ The key challenge, however, will be in implementation.

U.S. Objectives

The United States should have several core objectives in the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater. The first should be to eliminate the use of Afghanistan and Pakistan as a base of operations for international terrorist groups such as al Qa'ida, which threaten the U.S. homeland, U.S. allies in Europe and other areas of the world, and Pakistan and Afghanistan. Because of the strategic, operational, and tactical relationship between al Qa'ida and Afghan insurgent groups – including Mullah Muhammad Omar's Taliban and the Haqqani network – Taliban successes in Afghanistan will likely provide a conducive environment for international terrorist groups. This development occurred in areas controlled by the Taliban during the 1990s, and it has occurred in Pakistan since 2001. Consequently, preventing the international terrorist threat in Afghanistan and Pakistan will invariably require ending the Taliban-led insurgency. The second objective should be to support the establishment of legitimate governments in Afghanistan and Pakistan – at the

¹ The opinions and conclusions expressed in this testimony are the author's alone and should not be interpreted as representing those of RAND or any of the sponsors of its research. This product is part of the RAND Corporation testimony series. RAND testimonies record testimony presented by RAND associates to federal, state, or local legislative committees; government-appointed commissions and panels; and private review and oversight bodies. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

² This testimony is available for free download at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT324/>.

³ White House, *White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan* (Washington, DC: The White House, March 2009).

national and local levels – that can help provide the governance and security that will give their people a stake in contributing to security.

Understanding the Threat

The current debate about Afghanistan is badly skewed by a naïve and poorly informed understanding of the situation. Most press accounts of Afghanistan erroneously refer to insurgents in Afghanistan as Taliban, including much of the discussion on trying to separate “moderate” from “radical” Taliban. This is a dangerous over-simplification of the insurgency and reflects a fundamental ignorance of the situation on the ground. In fact, the insurgency is much more complicated.

There are several striking themes about the security situation in Afghanistan. Perhaps the most significant is the diffuse, highly complex nature of the threat environment, which is perhaps best described as a “complex adaptive system.” The term refers to systems that are diverse (made up of multiple interconnected elements) and adaptive (possessing the capacity to change and learn from experience). There are at least five categories of actors in this system.

The first are insurgent groups, who are motivated to overthrow the Afghan government and coerce the withdrawal of international forces. They range from the Taliban to smaller groups such as the Haqqani network, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s Hezb-i-Islami, and al Qa’ida. A second category includes criminal groups that are involved in a range of activities, such as drug-trafficking and illicit timber and gem smuggling. The third includes local tribes, sub-tribes, and clans – most of which lie in the Pashtun belt in western, southern, and eastern Afghanistan. A fourth category involves warlords and their militias, many of whom became increasingly powerful after the 2001 overthrow of the Taliban regime. A fifth category includes government officials and security forces in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other neighboring states such as Iran, which have provided support to insurgent groups or become involved in criminal activity.

Over the past several years, there has been a notable increase in the number of groups active in Afghanistan, including the migration of some groups that have been active on other fronts. For example, Lashkar-e-Taiba (or Army of the Pure), which has historically focused its activities on Kashmir and India, is now active in Afghanistan. The proliferation of groups has led to an increasingly complex system. The interaction of these elements is dynamic and facilitated by the ease of communications between and among individuals and groups. For example, drug traffickers have developed close links with both insurgent groups and government officials in moving drugs along cross-border routes. Tribes and sub-tribes have collaborated with insurgent

groups in rural areas of the country, sometimes changing sides depending on whether the Afghan government and NATO forces are able to clear and hold territory. The nature of the threat environment marks a striking contrast from the 1990s, when the Taliban insurgency was perhaps more hierarchically structured.

The emergence of a complex adaptive system in Afghanistan has largely occurred because of a weak government. Afghanistan has historically lacked a strong central government, putting it at the mercy of regional powers like British India, Pakistan, and the Soviet Union. A series of violent civil wars beginning with the 1979 Soviet invasion and continuing through the Taliban conquests in the 1990s further weakened whatever vestigial state was in place. After the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001, governance remained weak. Governance woes worsened in the first few years after President Hamid Karzai's government was established. As one World Bank study concluded, the primary beneficiaries of assistance were "the urban elite." This triggered deep-seated frustration and resentment among the rural population. Indeed, the Afghan government suffered from a number of systemic problems, including fragmented administrative structures, and had difficulty attracting and retaining skilled professionals with management and administrative experience. Weak administration and lack of control in some provinces made tax policy and administration virtually impossible. In many rural areas, the government made no effort to collect taxes. The Afghan government also struggled to provide security outside of the capital. The result was a weak security apparatus after the overthrow of the Taliban regime that could not establish a monopoly of the legitimate use of force within the country.

Weaknesses of the Insurgency

The Taliban and other insurgent groups are not particularly popular. These sentiments are apparent in a range of public opinion polls. A recent ABC/BBC poll indicated that only 4 percent of Afghans support a Taliban government. When asked who posed the biggest danger in the country, 58 percent said the Taliban. In addition, nearly 70 percent said that it was "good" or "mostly good" that U.S. forces overthrew the Taliban regime in 2001.⁴

It's not difficult to see why. The Taliban subscribe to a radical interpretation of Sunni Islam, grounded in Deobandism, a school of thought emanating from the Dar ul-Ulum madrassa (Islamic school) in 1867 in Deoband, India. The objective of senior Taliban leaders is to establish an extreme version of sharia (Islamic law) across the country, which they refer to as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. In the 1990s, the Taliban closed cinemas and banned music, along with almost every other conceivable kind of entertainment. In Kabul, the Taliban carried out brutal

⁴ ABC News, BBC, ARD, *Afghanistan: Where Things Stand* (Kabul: ABC News, BBC, ARD, February 2009).

punishments in front of large crowds in the former soccer stadium. The Taliban were – and still are – unpopular. Most Afghans don't subscribe to their religious zealotry, which the founders of Deobandism wouldn't even recognize. And the rapid collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001, barely two months after the war started, served as a striking testament to the group's weak foundation.

The leaders of many insurgent groups are unified by a common hatred of U.S. and allied forces, as well as opposition to Hamid Karzai's government, which they view as selling out to Western infidels. But they have very different ideologies and support bases. Some, like al Qaeda, have a broad global agenda that includes fighting the United States and its allies (the far enemy), and overthrowing Western-friendly regimes in the Middle East (the near enemy) to establish a pan-Islamic caliphate. Others, like the Taliban and Haqqani network, are focused on Afghanistan and re-establishing their extremist ideology there.

Foot soldiers join the insurgency for multiple reasons. Some are motivated by money. "Some insurgent groups pay better than we do," one U.S. soldier in the southern province of Kandahar told me recently. "It's basic economics." Others are motivated by tribal rivalry or coercion, since insurgent groups sometimes threaten villagers or their families unless they cooperate. What's more, several insurgent groups have a history of fighting each other. In the mid-1990s, the Taliban and forces loyal to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar engaged in intense battles in southern and eastern Afghanistan. They also competed for funding and logistical support from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate. After suffering repeated battlefield losses to the Taliban in eastern Afghanistan and being marginalized by the Pakistani intelligence agency, Hekmatyar eventually fled to Iran in 1997.

Security challenges don't stem from a strong insurgency, but rather a weak and increasingly unpopular government. Opinion polls show a growing belief that government officials have become increasingly corrupt and are unable to deliver services or protect the public. In short, the unpopularity of the government has created a vacuum that is being filled by insurgent groups, all of whom enjoy sanctuary in Pakistan. The fractured nature of the insurgency and the limited popularity of insurgent groups means that there is an opportunity for breaking apart key elements of the insurgency – especially those who are motivated by non-ideological reasons.

U.S. Footprint

What does the fractured, localized nature of the insurgency mean for a U.S. footprint and U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan? How many U.S. troops are needed? Table 1 highlights the

challenge in answering the question. Some studies argue that a rough estimate needed to win a counterinsurgency is 20 security forces per 1,000 inhabitants. As the U.S. Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual notes: "Twenty counterinsurgents per 1,000 residents is often considered the minimum troop density required for effective COIN operations; however as with any fixed ratio, such calculations remain very dependent upon the situation."⁵ Table 1 lists the population estimates in provinces where most of the insurgency is taking place, which translates into a force requirement of approximately 271,652 forces.

Table 1: Example of Counterinsurgency Force Requirements

Province	Population Estimates ⁵
Helmand	745,000
Kandahar	886,000
Nimruz	149,000
Farah	338,000
Oruzgan	627,000
Herat	1,182,000
Ghazni	931,000
Zabol	258,000
Paktika	352,000
Khowst	300,000
Paktia	415,000
Lowgar	292,000
Wardak	413,000
Parwan	726,000
Kapisa	360,000
Kabul	3,314,000
Laghman	373,000
Nurestan	112,000
Konar	321,000
Nangarhar	1,089,000
Day Kundi	399,600
Total Population	13,582,600

Security forces needed for counterinsurgency (20 forces per 1,000 inhabitants)	271,652 forces
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But this still leaves several critical questions unanswered. What percentage of these forces should be international and what percentage should be Afghan? Among Afghan forces, what percentage should be national and what percentage should be local forces (including tribal

⁵ U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps, *Counterinsurgency*, FM 3-24, MCWP 3-33.5 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army and Headquarters Marine Corps Combat Development Command (December 2006), p. 1-13.

⁶ The population data comes from the U.S. Agency for International Development. Note that since Afghanistan has not had a recent census, these population figures are only rough estimates.

forces)? Even among Afghan national forces, what percentage should be police and what should be army? Among Afghan local forces, what type should they be, since there are a range of options from the current Afghan Public Protection Program in Wardak to more traditional *lashkars* or *arbakai*?

There is no clear-cut answer – and certainly no magic number – of U.S. and Afghan forces. However, the current problem that the U.S. faces is that the clock is ticking more than seven years into the Afghan insurgency. Local perceptions of the U.S. have deteriorated over the past several years from high levels in 2001. This suggests that the percentage of Afghan security forces (both national and local) needs to increase in the south and east. A relatively small U.S. and international footprint of, for example, 50,000 forces in the south and east may be more than adequate if they can effectively leverage a mixture of Afghan National Police, Afghan National Army, National Directorate of Security (Afghanistan's intelligence agency), and tribal forces in urban and rural areas.

Based on the increasing Pashtun aversion to outside forces, it is unlikely that the United States and NATO will defeat the Taliban and other insurgent groups in Afghanistan through a heavy international military footprint that tries to clear, hold, and build territory. Virtually all counterinsurgency studies – from David Galula to Roger Trinquier – have focused on building the capacity of local forces.⁷ Victory is usually a function of the struggle between the local government and insurgents. Most outside forces are unlikely to remain for the duration of any counterinsurgency, at least as a major combatant force.⁸ Most domestic populations tire of their forces engaged in struggles overseas, as even the Soviet population did in Afghanistan in the 1980s. In addition, a lead outside role may be interpreted by the population as an occupation, eliciting nationalist reactions that impede success.⁹ And a lead indigenous role can provide a focus for national aspirations and show the population that they – and not foreign forces – control their destiny.

This reality should lead to a strategy that involves conducting clandestine operations by leveraging local entities and building Afghan capacity – rather than a large U.S. footprint.

⁷ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 2006); Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, trans. Daniel Lee (New York: Praeger, 2006).

⁸ Kimberly Marten Zisk, *Enforcing the Peace: Learning from the Imperial Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Amitai Etzioni, "A Self-Restrained Approach to Nation-Building By Foreign Powers," *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (2004); Etzioni, *From Empire to Community: A New Approach to International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Stephen T. Hosmer, *The Army's Role in Counterinsurgency and Insurgency* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, R-3947-A, 1990), pp. 30-31.

⁹ David M. Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Summer 2004), p. 51.

A Bottom-Up Strategy

The United States and others in the international community have focused the bulk of their efforts since 2001 in trying to create a strong central government capable of establishing security and delivering services. This goal is ahistorical in Afghanistan and it is not likely to be effective. In addition, the local nature of power in Afghanistan – including in Pashtun areas of the country, which are populated by a range of tribes, sub-tribes, clans, and qawms – makes this objective unpopular among many Afghans, who remain skeptical of a strong central government. This may be one reason why a recent Asia Foundation opinion poll indicated that Afghans still turn to local institutions – including tribal elders – to help resolve disputes.¹⁰

Security and stability in Afghanistan have historically required a balance between top-down efforts from the central government, and bottom-up efforts from local actors. During the reign of King Zahir Shah (1933-1973), for example, security was established using a combination of Afghan *national* forces – police, military, and intelligence – and *local* entities. Much has changed since then. But the weak nature of the Afghan state, the inadequate level of international forces, and the local nature of the insurgency require building a bottom-up capacity to complement national forces.

The most effective bottom-up strategy in Afghanistan is likely to be one that taps into already-existing local institutions in two ways: by helping legitimate local actors provide security and services to their populations, and by better connecting them to the central government when necessary. A bottom-up strategy should be deeply inter-linked with counterinsurgency goals, especially in recognizing that the local population – including their security – should be the center of gravity. Local tribal and religious leaders best understand their community needs, but need help in delivering services. In some areas they also need security, since many have been killed by insurgent groups or forced to flee to urban areas. If organized and run appropriately, village- and district-level institutions that include legitimate local actors can effectively (a) assess local needs, (b) design aid programs to meet these needs, (c) help ensure sufficient security for their projects and their constituents, and (d) monitor the adequate completion of programs.

One component of a bottom-up strategy should be to co-opt key tribes, sub-tribes, and clans that have sometimes cooperated with the Taliban and other insurgent groups – such as the Alikozai in the south or Achakzai in the west and south. There are numerous disenchanting and aggrieved tribes that exercise a historical tendency of defying the central government. Their motivations are often local, defensive, and non-ideological. And their struggle is aimed at re-establishing an

¹⁰ Asia Foundation, *Afghanistan in 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People* (Kabul: Asia Foundation, 2008).

equilibrium that has been disrupted at the local level, or to returning to a previous political and social arrangement that has been compromised. President Karzai's reconciliation process has tended to focus on negotiating with insurgent groups, such as the Taliban and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami, that do not have compatible goals with the Afghan state. But reconciling with tribes and aiding them in turning against the Taliban and other groups is likely to be a more effective strategy. This ultimately requires a clandestine effort.

Building Afghan Capacity

More U.S. forces in Afghanistan may be helpful, but *only* if they are used to build Afghan capacity. A key need is to address the partnering gap that has plagued Afghanistan police and army efforts. It does not appear likely that organizations such as the European Union will fill this vacuum. A few steps may be helpful with the limited resources. One is to concentrate on mentoring senior-level police in the field, not rank-and-file, since they have influence over subordinates. Corruption is often a top-down phenomenon. This means embedding partnering teams with district-level police chiefs and their deputies. It also means focusing on areas where the insurgency is most severe, especially in Afghanistan's south and east.

A second step is to push incoming military units into partnering roles, rather than engaging in direct action. This will be easier for U.S. and other international units to do with Afghan army than with police forces. Most soldiers are not ideal for police mentoring and training, since there are stark differences between the police and military cultures. But a shortage of resources in Afghanistan requires coming up with sub-optimal solutions. This could be done in several ways: providing incoming brigade combat teams with several months of training to play a mentoring role; and reallocating Military Police companies to do mentoring and training, as the United States did in Iraq. European governments, the United States, and the UN should devote more human, technical and financial resources to mentoring and professionalizing the Ministry of Interior. Given the serious personnel shortages crippling police training, the international community will have to redouble efforts to reform the Ministry of Interior. Without significant reform, the ongoing efforts to build a competent police force will be undermined.

In addition, NATO should more directly involve Afghans in campaign planning and operations, including integrating Afghan military and intelligence personnel into joint operations centers.

Role of Neighbors

Afghanistan, by reason of its poverty, isolation, and geography, has always been a weak state at the mercy of its more powerful neighbors. When those neighbors see a mutual benefit in a peaceful Afghanistan, the country is stable. When they do not, it is in turmoil. Reconstituting the post 9/11 regional consensus in support of the government that emerged from the Bonn process should be the central focus of Western diplomacy. In 2001, the U.S. government effectively involved regional powers in negotiating a way forward after the overthrow of the Taliban regime. Senior officials from Pakistan, India, Iran, Russia, the United States, and Europe were present at Bonn to help put together a stable Afghan state. All of these governments played helpful roles in brokering the outcome of that conference, helping secure both international and domestic support for the successor regime under Hamid Karzai. But this regional approach quickly floundered. The Bush Administration rebuffed concrete offers of assistance from Iran, and eventually cut off all contacts with Tehran. In 2006 the U.S. administration reluctantly resumed discussions with Iran over Iraq.

The U.S. needs to revive this regional approach – and it has already begun to do so. The costs of continued regional tension are severe. The most serious danger would be a continuation of (1) Pakistani assistance to Pashtun groups such as the Taliban and (2) Iranian, Russian, and Indian assistance to Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara elements in the country, should NATO's efforts begin to falter and the Karzai regime increasingly weaken. This would be a formula for renewed civil war on a much larger scale, as Afghanistan experienced in the early 1990s.

There is a great deal at stake for both sides of the Atlantic in the growing instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Recent publicly-released intelligence estimates in the United States have directly linked the security of the U.S. homeland to terrorist groups operating out of Pakistan's border region. Resolving the growing challenge in Afghanistan and its neighbor, Pakistan, will take time. Research that the RAND Corporation has done indicates that it takes an average of 14 years for governments to defeat insurgent groups. Many also end in a draw, with neither side winning. Insurgencies can also have long tails: approximately 25 percent of insurgencies won by the government and 11 percent won by insurgents lasted more than 20 years. This means that any U.S. strategy must be long-term, or it will never succeed.

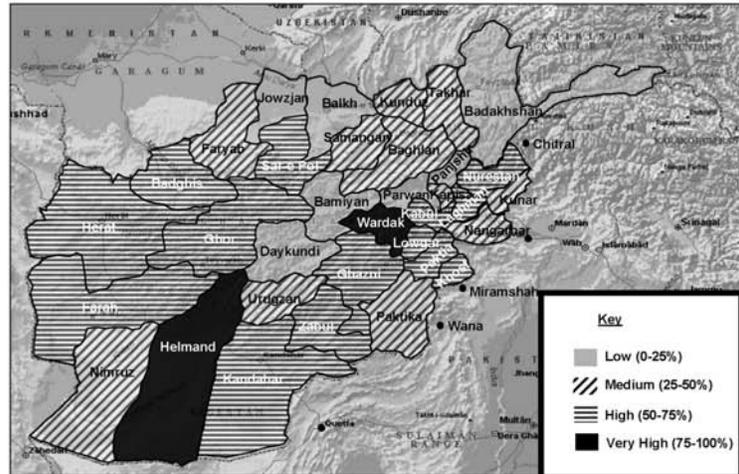
The costs of failing to deal with the regional problem are severe. The Pakistan-Afghanistan border region is the headquarters of al Qaeda, which has close links with the Taliban. Al Qaeda possesses a robust strategic, logistics, and public relations network in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This infrastructure has enabled it to play an important role in orchestrating international terrorist

attacks and plots, including in the United States, United Kingdom, Denmark, Germany, France, and Spain.

Improving Governance

Afghans are clearly lacking security. Figure 1, which is based on Asia Foundation data, shows that the most insecure provinces of the country are Helmand and Wardak, followed by a swath of provinces in the West (Herat, Farah, Ghor, Badghis), North (Sar-e Pul), South (Zabul and Kandahar), and East (Khost, Ghazni, Logar, Paktia, Kabul, Laghman, and Nurestan). There are a few surprises. Locals appear to feel more secure in Uruzgan, Paktika, Nangarhar, and Kunar than is often recognized. Kunar, for instance, has witnessed some of the most intense fighting in such areas as the Korengal and Pech valleys, yet most of the fighting has occurred in areas that are sparsely inhabited. In the majority of these provinces that emerge as the most insecure and experience high levels of violence, residents express greater levels of fear about traveling, encountering the police and participating in a range of democratic processes.

Figure 1: Areas of Insecurity¹¹



¹¹ Asia Foundation, *State-Building, Security, and Social Change in Afghanistan: Reflections on a Survey of the Afghan People* (Kabul: Asia Foundation, 2008), pp. 27-44.

But the key solutions are not just military. Afghans need better governance. One key step must be to address the massive corruption at the national and local level, which has steadily alienated the local population and fueled support for insurgent groups. While corruption is endemic in many societies, several forms of corruption have specifically contributed to the Afghan insurgency: drug-trafficking, bribery among senior officials, and pervasive extortion among Afghan police and judges. Indeed, one of the key counter-narcotics steps that has been missing is effective judicial prosecution in Afghanistan of senior-level individuals involved in the drug trade, including government officials.

While there are no universally applicable anti-corruption strategies, there are a number of insightful lessons from successful cases such as Singapore, Liberia, Botswana, and Estonia. Effective efforts have generally included the immediate firing of corrupt officials, bolstering of the justice system, professionalization of new staff, and incentive and performance assessment programs. Even then, broader reforms have frequently played an important role. In Uganda, for example, the Museveni government that came to power in 1986 implemented a strategy that involved passing economic reforms and deregulation, reforming the civil service, strengthening the auditor general's office, empowering a reputable inspector general to investigate and prosecute corruption, and implementing an anti-corruption public information campaign.

Corrupt Afghan government officials, including those involved in the drug trade, need to be prosecuted and removed from office. Ambassador Thomas Schweich, who served as U.S. Coordinator for Counternarcotics and Justice Reform in Afghanistan, revealed that "a lot of intelligence ... indicated that senior Afghan officials were deeply involved in the narcotics trade. Narco-traffickers were buying off hundreds of police chiefs, judges and other officials. Narco-corruption went to the top of the Afghan government."¹² The United States and other NATO countries also have intelligence on who many of these officials are, though a substantial amount of information is kept at the classified level. Senior officials within the Afghan government have thus far been unwilling to target government officials involved in corruption, partly because they do not want to alienate powerful political figures in the midst of an insurgency. President Karzai's efforts to establish a High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption and create special anti-corruption units in the Office of the Attorney General and in the Judiciary were largely window-dressing.

The United States and others in the international community should encourage Afghan leaders to draft sweeping anti-corruption legislation, arrest and prosecute corrupt officials at the national and local level, create Inspector General offices in key ministries, provide support to the justice

¹² Thomas Schweich, "Is Afghanistan a Narco-State?" *New York Times Magazine*, July 27, 2008.

system (including protecting judges, prosecutors, and witnesses involved in corruption trials), and conduct a robust public information campaign. Undermining high-level corruption in Afghanistan is just as much about finding the *political will* to implement effective anti-corruption programs as it is about developing them.

A Generation of War

The struggle in Afghanistan and Pakistan is for the hearts and minds of Afghans and Pakistanis. As Ayman al-Zawahari wrote in a letter to Abu Musab al Zarqawi in 2005, “we are in a ... battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma. And that however far our capabilities reach, they will never be equal to one thousandth of the capabilities of the kingdom of Satan that is waging war on us.”¹³ Afghanistan is now entering its thirtieth consecutive year of war, which began in 1979 with the Soviet invasion. Several generations of Afghans have endured far too much violence. The average life expectancy at birth for both Afghan males and females is 44 years, which means that most people have never experienced peace and security. The centerpiece of any successful counterinsurgency strategy must be the Afghan population, especially ensuring their protection and security. Tragically, this has not been the case since 2001, but it must be a priority for the future.

¹³ The quote is from Her Majesty’s Government, *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering International Terrorism* (London: Home Department, March 2009), p. 153.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Dr. Jones. Dr. Cordesman.

STATEMENT OF ANTHONY H. CORDESMAN, PH.D., ARLEIGH A. BURKE CHAIR IN STRATEGY, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Mr. CORDESMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you for your patience.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Well, thank you, and thank members of the committee for the opportunity to testify. I am not going to try to recap my testimony, but there are a couple of key points I would like to make in introduction.

We are not in a state of stalemate; we are losing this war. We are not losing it simply because of the kinetic events, the military outcome, although frankly we have seen a 30–50 percent rise in casualty incidents in the course of this last year. We are losing it for reasons we do not map very well. We are seeing a steady increase in the expansion of Taliban, Haqqani and Hekmatyar influence. These measured in public opinion polls in the areas where they operate indicate they are not having the kind of unpopularity they had in the past, and a lot of this is occurring because we do not have the presence there.

One problem we have we do not have good intelligence on this increase in influence. We do not have the ability to map Afghan on Afghan violence. We describe these areas often as support areas because there are not combat going on in them, and as a result many of our assessments badly understate what is happening in Afghanistan, and add to this the fact we de-couple the analysis of Afghanistan from what is happening in Pakistan.

I say this because we have essentially probably 2 years in which to reverse this, and in which we have to focus essentially on war fighting. Development, human rights, all of these things have to be done, but to do them with limited resources simultaneously with the combat load we face is not something that is practical.

I believe that President Obama has outlined a concept that may well work, and has begun to allocate resources that may succeed. The fact is, however, that the people who worked on this would be the first to admit we do not yet have a strategy, a plan, a budget, for using these resources in detail, and we will not for several months. That is not an indictment to come into office in a losing war, it is not something where you can instantly develop the kinds of plans and detail you need to win.

We now at this point have a plan which will build us up from what used to be 32,000 troops in NATO/ISAF to more than 70,000. We do not know exactly where they will go. We do not know how they will be allocated to try to achieve a strategy which is now clear hold/build. We do not know how many will have to be used in aid functions, but many will. We do not know how many of the so-called trainers will have to stay embedded, but there will have to be a team with every single Afghan battalion for at least several years. We do not yet have a clear credible plan for building up Afghan forces. Our police efforts have been largely unsuccessful over the last 7 years.

We have some hope in what is called the Focus District Development Plan, but it is far from clear that is working.

Only about 15 percent of the Afghan army units are yet able to achieve the highest level of readiness. They will move forward, but it will be several years before this happens.

I have to say I would join with what Dr. von Hippel said, but I would make a stronger point about aid and echo what the Secretary of State has said. We have seen a nightmare in the U.S. administration of aid. There has been no real coordination between USAID, the State Department, and the Corps of Engineers. We cannot tie what they have said to meaningful measures of effectiveness. It has not been related to the war. We do not have meaningful accounting systems, and no one ties this together. That aid is critical, initially for war fighting, and then for effective action.

I have to say that I do not believe that the United Nations is efficient or any less corrupt or disorganized than we are. It has no audits. It cannot demonstrate what it has done, and the same is true of far too much of our aid activity. To win we have to change that.

But I think the most critical dimension we may really face is Pakistan, and I think that as we proceed during this hearing we need to look much harder at what is happening there because of all of the things that people were working on in the strategy exercises the highest single risk was trying to get Pakistan to cooperate, and here I have to say one of the problems that we grossly understate is the extent to which this is not a problem in the Fatah area or the Baluki area, but a national problem inside Pakistan.

We are not just talking about the movements that I have identified, we are talking about Deobandi movements which exists throughout Pakistan. The best unclassified study I have seen of this is by the Crisis Group. There are other studies by Pakistani groups. But if we cannot motivate the Pakistani army, if we cannot develop an effective presence in terms of Pakistani governance, if we cannot change the map of what is happening there, I think most people would say we cannot win in Afghanistan. So we either have one strategy with very clear, detailed plans, which the Congress insists on monitoring, in seeing in terms of facts on the ground, not concepts, or we are going to spend the next 2 years probably wasting resources when we could win.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cordesman follows:]

**Statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia**

***U.S. STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN:
ACHIEVING PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE
GRAVEYARD OF EMPIRES***

A Statement by

Dr. Anthony H. Cordesman

Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

April 2, 2009

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you on an issue that has reached a crisis point. The president and his new national security adviser have both said that “we are not winning.” Others have talked about a “stalemate.”

Let’s be more frank: we may be winning tactical battles, but we are clearly losing the war, and 2009 and 2010 will be years of crisis.

Under the right circumstances, and with the right resources and implementation, President Obama’s proposed shifts in strategy may well be enough to win the war. It is up to this Congress to fully exercise its role in ensuring that resources are adequate and are being used to win, and that we do not again fall into the trap of lying to ourselves about what is happening. For seven years, we have overpromised and underperformed. We have spun what is happening into victory while the enemy has gained, and we have sent men and women home in body bags. It is time to underpromise and overperform.

The trends in Afghanistan are not good. The decline in our position can be measured in crude terms by looking at the trends in violence, although our count ignores many of the most critical trends in Afghan-on-Afghan violence and are far more accurate in some parts of the country than in others.

Some of these trends are shown in the maps and charts attached to this testimony. Others are clear in even the most basic statistics.

- The average monthly number of major incidents rose from only 50 in 2002 to 80 in 2003, 150 in 2005, 425 in 2006, and 566 in 2007. Suicide bombings rose from 1 in 2001 and 0 in 2002 to 2 in 2003, 6 in 2004, 21 in 2005, 123 in 2006, and 160 in 2007, and reached just over 120 by the end of the first six months of 2008.
- The number of IEDs and roadside bombs rose from 22 in 2002 to 83 in 2003, 325 in 2004, 782 in 2005, 1,931 in 2006, and 2,615 in 2007, although the number of effective IED attacks remained low.
- The number of attacks in the peak month in each year rose from 400 in 2005 to 800 in 2006 and 1,000 in 2007, and reach 1,000 in September 2008.
- Attacks causing at least one death rose from 366 in 2005 to 695 in 2006 and 892 in 2007, and the number killed, injured, or kidnapped rose from 1,540 in 2005 to 3,557 in 2006 and 4,672 in 2007. Peak monthly U.S. casualties (killed and wounded) rose from less than 20 from 2002 to 2003 to the mid-30s in 2004, 70 in 2005 and 2006, and 130 in 2007.
- These figures rose by roughly a third between 2007 and 2008, as the NATO/ISAF figures attached to this analysis show.

- During 2008, there was a 33% increase in kinetic events or military clashes, a 27% increase in indirect fire attacks, and a 67% increase in surface to air fire.
- In 2008 the number of IED attacks—the most serious source of casualties—rose by 27%. There was a 119% increase in the number of attacks on government of Afghanistan personnel, and 50% rise in kidnappings and assassinations. The number of suicide attacks dropped by 5%, but their lethality and skill increased, and so did estimates of the number of suicide bombers in training. The number of NATO/ISAF deaths rose by 35%, and civilian deaths rose by 40 to 46%.
- The situation deteriorated further in late 2008 and early 2009, in part because the weather permitted more Jihadist movement. Clashes and attacks in the first two months of 2009 were twice the numbers as during the same period in 2008. They surged by 131% in the eastern province of Kunar relative to the same month in 2008, highlighting the growth of the threat in the east as well as in the south.
- This situation continued to deteriorate in March. U.S. forces reported that “kinetic activity” in eastern Afghanistan increased by 68 percent this year compared to the same 80-or-so-day span last year. In the two provinces bordering Pakistan’s Waziristan Provinces, violence involving Western troops is up 90 percent, and attacks rose by 130% in the area across from the Mohmand and Bajaur tribal areas—where the Pakistani military claimed the Taliban had “lost.”

The US and her allies continue to win every tactical engagement. The fact is, however, that tactical victories are irrelevant if the insurgent sanctuaries in Pakistan continue, if the insurgency gathers strength, and if the insurgency steadily expands its areas of influence. We are fighting a battle of political attrition on the enemy’s terms, and they are winning.

U.S. and UN intelligence maps that were issued or leaked during 2005 to 2007, and more recent NATO/ISAF maps issued in January 2009, show that the size of the high-risk areas inside Afghanistan have increased by 30% to 50% every year since 2005. Kabul is scarcely under siege, but it has turned from a city where NATO/ISAF and aid personnel could wander as tourists to one so filled with violence that the U.S. and foreign compounds have become the equivalent of a “Green Zone.” There has been a particularly serious increase in violence in the Afghan-Pakistan border area. There were 431 insurgent attacks in the Khyber border area during January to November 2007, and 625 during the same period in 2008—an increase of 45%.

The president recognized these realities in his speech on March 27, and he advanced a range of concepts that may be able to address them. Let me stress, however, that these were concepts and not a strategy. The president took immediate steps to confirm the deployment of 17,000 more troops and provide some 4,000 more advisers to develop Afghan security forces—advisers that our commanders in the field have needed for more than three years.

He raised the need for more proactive contributions to the fighting by the Afghan and Pakistani governments. He talked about a far better focused and honest aid effort and more aid to Pakistan. He put a critical new emphasis on diplomacy in dealing with both governments and with neighboring states.

He also called for a major shift from our present focus on tactical victories to holding territory, providing Afghans with lasting security, and rushing in civilian advisers to provide jobs, better governance, and development in the field. Put differently, he called for a shift to the “clear, hold, and build” tactics that recognize that counterinsurgency is won at the local level and can never be won by military means.

Those who helped draft these concepts know, however, that they are still concepts. They also do not guarantee victory, even in the sense of destroying al Qaeda and other jihadist power, bring some stability to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and largely replace our forces and allied forces with Afghan and Pakistani forces.

The administration’s shift in strategy, if properly resourced and implemented, can win the war. Our enemies are still relatively weak and heavily dependent on paid part-time fighters and exploiting the power vacuum left by too few NATO/ISAF troops and half-willing, half-able Afghan and Pakistan governments. Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Hekmatyar, Haqqani, and all of their ilk are extreme and unpopular.

The odds are better than even, but they are not good. We face two to three years of bitter fighting to come. We will probably not score significant gains in 2009, and we will need to be involved in armed nation building well beyond the president’s present term and phase into post-conflict reconstruction activities that may well extend beyond 2018. If we are not prepared and willing to this, we will almost certainly lose. Moreover, this is our war. Our allies and host country partners are critical, but it is our actions and resources that will determine whether we win or lose.

Moreover, and this is critical, the president did not really advance a “strategy”:

- There are no clear benchmarks for action, progress, or to measure success.
- We do not yet have a clear plan for using U.S. troops, improving the role of our allies, and solving NATO’s command and caveat problems.
- We do not have a plan or schedule for bringing in the civilian expertise we need in the field or recasting a corrupt and ineffective aid program to put the resources in Afghanistan and where they can defeat the enemy.
- We don’t have a budget or a long-term spending plan; we will have to fall back on supplementals for at least one more year.
- We do not have a detailed plan to build up credible Afghan security forces, to create a fully effective army of the size that is needed, or to correct the near disaster that has failed to produce an effective Afghan National Police. The core of the program may now be there, but the resources are not.

- We do not have a plan to use Afghans to provide the level of local and provincial governance, development, and rule of law that will ultimately be as critical to success as creating effective Afghan forces.
- We do not have a clear plan to implement tied aid to Pakistan, to get Pakistan to play the necessary role in FATA and the Baluchi border area, or to persuade its leaders, its military, and its people that this war is as critical to them—if not more so—than it is to us.
- Our top intelligence and policy officials admit that we do not yet have the range of metrics to fully understand what is happening and measure success or failure.

Let me stress the fact that I believe we may well be able to develop these capabilities—particularly the Afghan part. We do, however, need to stop talking concepts and create real facts on the ground, and we cannot wait to do this perfectly and in ways that deploy as many accountants as troops. We need to operate on the principle that there are no good intentions, there are only successful actions.

And this brings me to my conclusion. The Congress has four critical roles to perform.

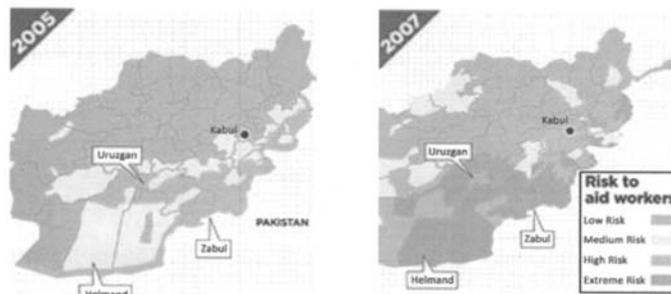
- First, it must decide whether it is as committed to this war as our president. It needs to accept the cost, the risk, and recognize that losing is not an exit strategy, it is defeat. It needs to recognize that killing bin Laden without “win, hold, build” will probably only create a martyr, and that there is no way to inflict a lasting defeat on al Qaeda if you leave a power vacuum in either Afghanistan or Pakistan. It needs to understand that any perceived defeat threatens the future of a nuclear Pakistan, will greatly strengthen jihadists throughout the world, and ultimately end in moving the conflict somewhere else.
- Second, it needs to get critical resources forward and focus on when they actually arrive and whether they meet the need. This is not the time to temporize, delay, or create a long list of legislative milestones. That can come, but not before 2010 at the earliest. We need to move enough resources to give the president and our forces the initiative and the ability to act, and we needed to do it in 2005.
- Third, the Congress needs to look forward to fully exercising its role in ensuring that resources are adequate, and are being used to win. Congress must ensure that progress reporting on Afghanistan is honest, and that we do not again fall into the trap of lying to ourselves about what is happening.
- Fourth, Congress needs to demand that a real, detailed strategy is ready this summer, and it needs to demand honest reporting and real measures of effectiveness. It needs to push the administration into showing it is fully supporting our commanders with the resources they need and into cleaning up the mess that is coming out of far too many U.S., UN, allied, and NGO economic aid efforts. It then needs to insist on regular reviews of our strategy and its effectiveness.

But with all due respect, let me suggest there are things the Congress should not do. It should not make counternarcotics reform, or mid- and long-term development goals and political and social reform, until we have made far more military progress. It should not legislate diplomacy in the form of sanctions or deadlines. It should not try to mandate an exit strategy without a destination. It should not try to turn the chaos of war into an accounting exercise where the focus is how the

last dollar was spent rather than on how to spend in ways that are effective. It should not attempt to micromanage operations or visit our commanders to the point where Codels become a new threat.

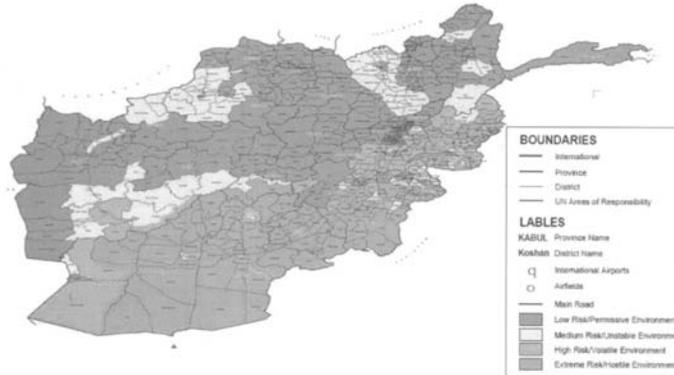
Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, and I look forward to your questions.

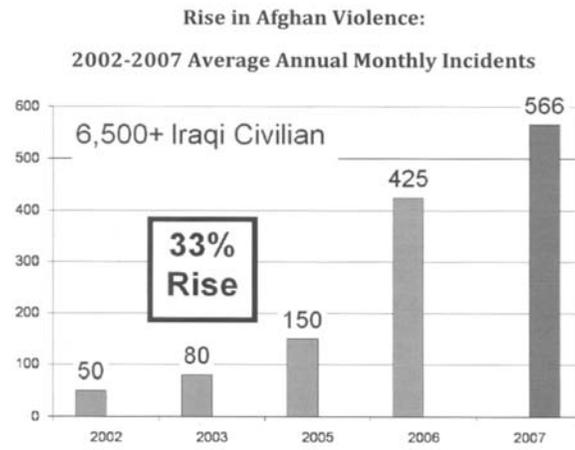
UN Estimate of Expanding No Go Zones: 2005 versus 2007



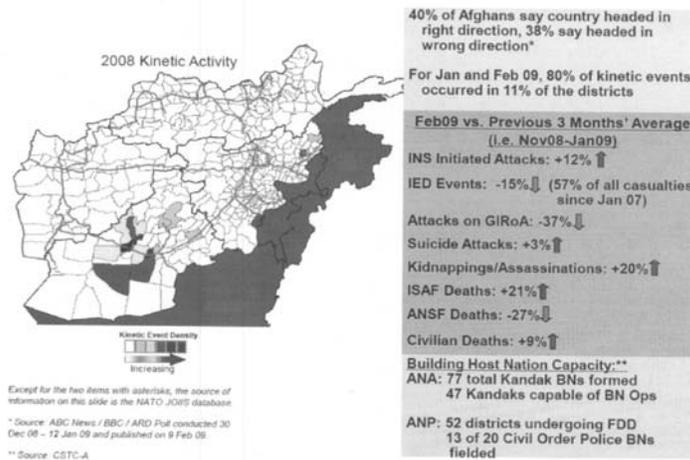
Source: Senlis Council. "Afghanistan, Decision Point 2008", London, 2008, p. 27;

UN Estimate of Expanding No Go Zones: 2008



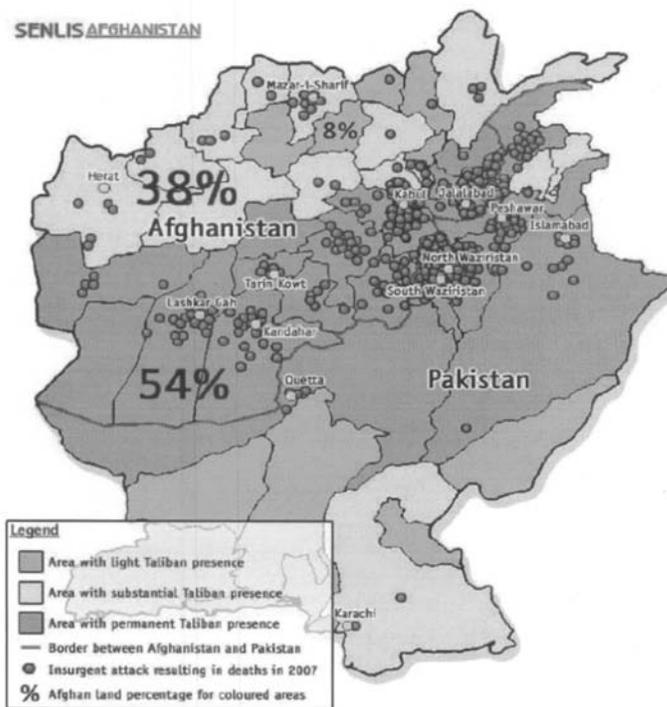


Security Summary: February 2009



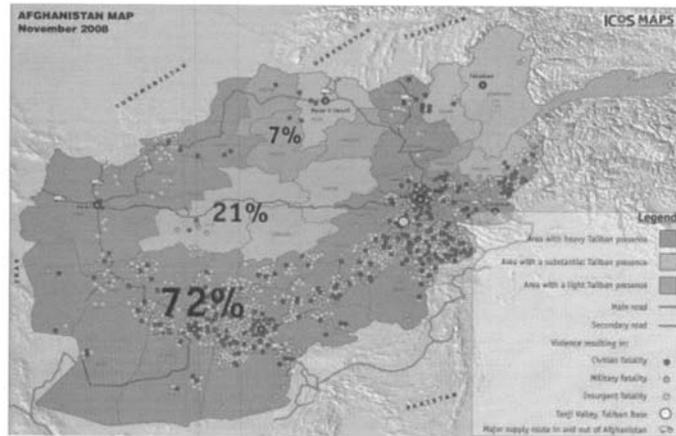
Source: NATO/ISAF "Metrics Brief February 2009." Strategic Advisory Group, HQ ISAF. March, 2009.

Insurgent Activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan: 2007



Source: Senlis Council, "Stumbling into Chaos, Afghanistan on the Brink." November 2007, p. 8.

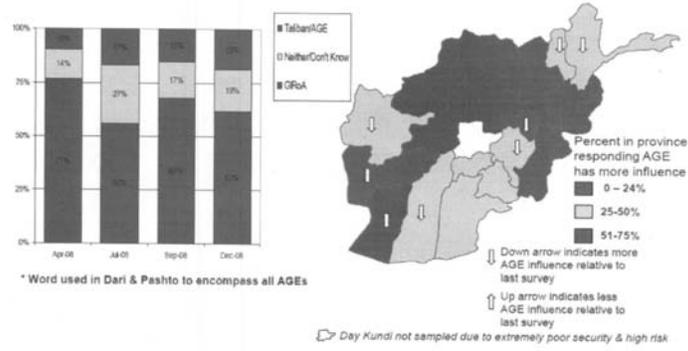
Taliban Presence in November 2008



Source: ICOS, "The Struggle for Kabul: The Taliban Advance," December 2008, p.9.

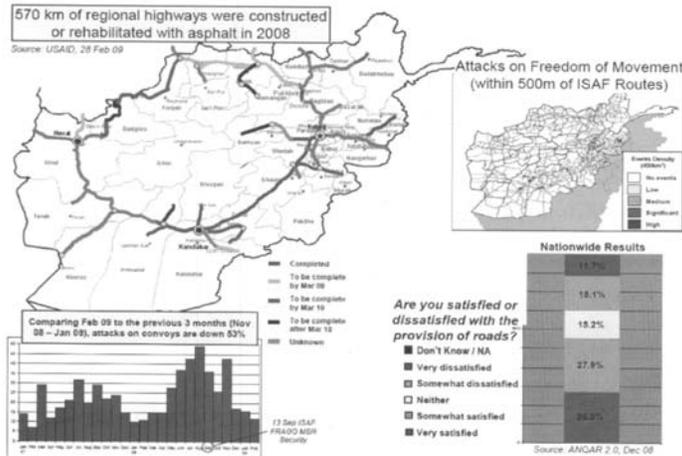
Insurgency vs. GIRA Influence

"Between the Anti-Government Elements (AGE)* and the Government, who has more influence in your area?"



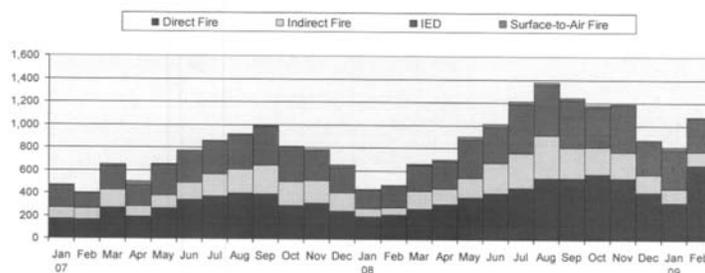
Source: NATO/ISAF "Metrics Brief February 2009." Strategic Advisory Group, HQ ISAF. March, 2009.

Transportation Infrastructure



Source: NATO/ISAF "Metrics Brief February 2009." Strategic Advisory Group, HQ ISAF. March, 2009.

Insurgent Attacks

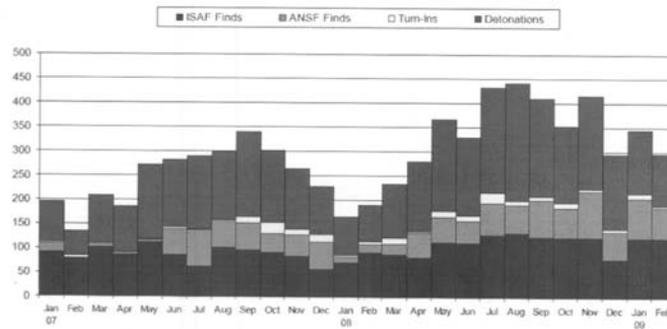


Comparing Feb 09 to the previous three month period (Nov 08 –Jan 09), insurgent attacks are up 12% overall:

- Direct Fire attacks are up 54%
- Indirect Fire attacks are down 32%
- IEDs are down 15%
- Surface to Air Fire is down 50%
- Mild weather, increased troop strength, and an offensive spirit resulted in significantly more kinetic events this winter
- Insurgents shifting tactics toward softer targets

Adapted From: NATO/ISAF "Metrics Brief February 2009," Strategic Advisory Group, HQ ISAF. March, 2009.

IED Events (Found and Detonated)

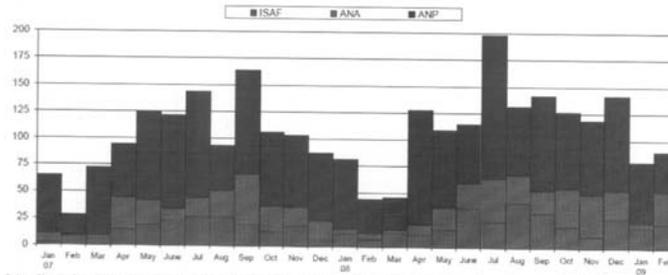


- Comparing Feb 09 to the previous three month period (Nov 08 –Jan 09):
- Total IED events were down 15%
- Total casualties from IED events were down 26%(for ISAF, IED casualties down 45%)
- For the 3-month period ending Feb 09 relative to the same period ending Feb 08, discoveries (IED finds by ISAF / ANSF plus turn-ins by local nationals) were up 66%
- Since January 2007, discoveries account for 52%of all IED events

Adapted from: NATO/ISAF "Metrics Brief February 2009," Strategic Advisory Group, HQ ISAF. March, 2009.

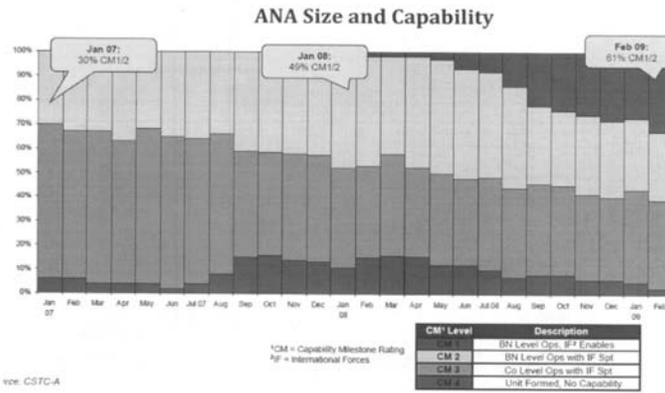
Military Deaths *

- Comparing Feb 09 to the previous 3 month period (Nov 08 – Jan 09) :
 - Total military deaths are down 21%
 - ANSF deaths are down 29% (though ANA deaths are up 21%)
 - ISAF deaths are up 21%



*Attributed to insurgent initiated attacks (direct fire, indirect fire, IEDs, and surface-to-air fire)

Source: NATO/ISAF "Metrics Brief February 2009." Strategic Advisory Group, HQ ISAF. March, 2009.

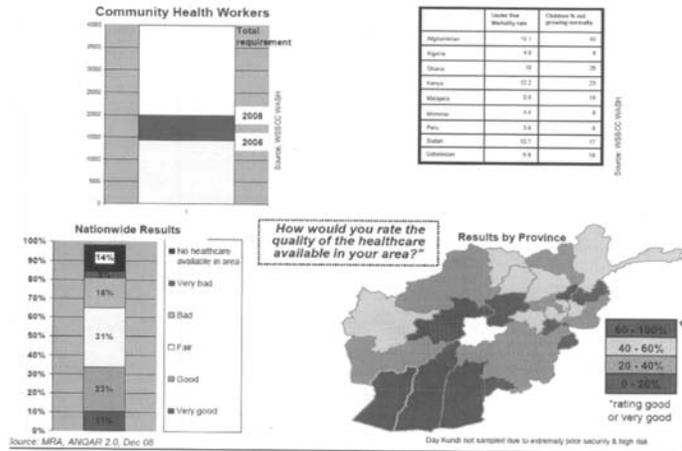


Source: CSTC-A

- ANA Increasingly Conducting and Leading Operations (56% in last 90 days)
- 95 of 160 units fielded; 82,781 assigned (will grow to 134,000 by Dec 2011)
- ANA Air Corps have over tripled monthly troop and cargo capacity since Feb 08
- Air Corps flying 90% of all Afghan missions

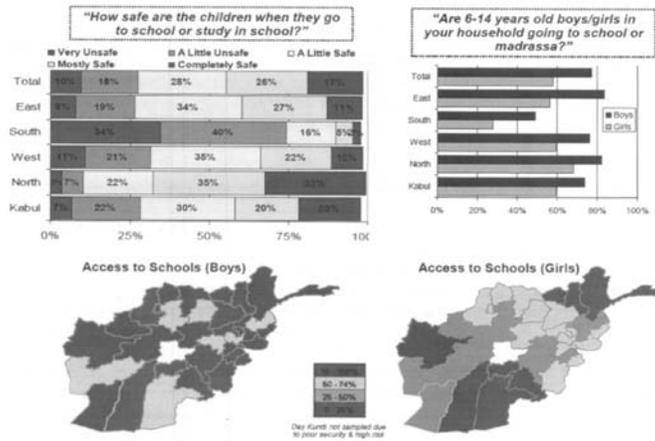
Source: NATO/ISAF "Metrics Brief February 2009." Strategic Advisory Group, HQ ISAF. March, 2009.

Healthcare



Source: NATO/ISAF "Metrics Brief February 2009." Strategic Advisory Group, HQ ISAF. March, 2009.

Education



Source: NATO/ISAF "Metrics Brief February 2009." Strategic Advisory Group, HQ ISAF. March, 2009.

The Challenge of Reporting on the War

New NATO/ISAF reporting that maps and charts the course of the war in Afghanistan is now available provides important insight into the trends in the war in Afghanistan, and show the situation at the point the President announces his new strategy. It is important to note, however, that many of the "favorable" trends are favorable because they use a 90 day rolling average as a basis of comparison for February statistics which means they reflect a downward trend in threat activity because they compare the worst winter months for fighting with an earlier period where fighting is more intense. NATO indicates that it will return to comparing rolling trends to a similar timeframe in 2008 from March onwards. These comparisons of multiple years are far more useful than comparisons of one sequential period to another in a highly seasonal war.

The Limits to the Analysis We Have

The new NATO/ISAF data are extremely helpful, and do a much better job of explaining the tactical situation. At the same time, they fall short of providing meaningful transparency into what is a war of political attrition fought in two different countries, and what is really happening in the political and economic dimensions.

NATO/ISAF does not map the combined situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and there are serious limits on the scope of its analysis which still focuses on the tactical or "kinetic" situation, and which does not cover NATO/ISAF's ability to provide lasting security or "hold" capabilities, and the level of aid and development or "build" capabilities. Security is also an issue.

These data are also more favorable in describing Jihadist influence and activity than the UN estimates and maps and those of groups like the Senlis Council, although this does not mean that they are not correct. As a result, one UN and two Senlis maps are added to the NATO/ISAF data.

Even these data understate the scale of the problem since they do not count all the Afghan violence that does not attack government officials and forces, and kidnappings, night letters, and Taliban attacks on Afghan civilians have spread to cover nearly half of the country. The UN rates nearly half the country as unsafe for movement by aid workers not supported by troops, and security has deteriorated sharply in Kabul, particularly in the last year. The level of violence, incidents, and casualties continues to rise, as does the frequency and intensity of combat. A new threat has also developed to US and NATO/ISAF lines of supply, as well as imports from Pakistan, during 2008. This is critical because at least 60% of all supplies come from ports in Pakistan across the border in the Khyber and FATA areas.

While detailed NATO/ISAF and US maps that show the growth of Taliban, Hekmatyar, and Haqqani areas of influence are classified, it is clear from unclassified briefings that these insurgent groups continue to expand their influence at the local level. Although they are controversial, estimates by the International Council on Security and Development (formerly the Senlis Council) indicate that the:¹

Taliban now holds a permanent presence in 72% of Afghanistan, up from 54% a year ago. Taliban forces have advanced from their southern heartlands, where they are now the de facto governing power in a number of towns and villages, to Afghanistan's western and north-western provinces, as well as provinces north of Kabul. Within a year, the Taliban's permanent presence in the country has increased by a startling 18%. Three out of the four main highways into Kabul are now compromised by Taliban activity. The capital city has plummeted to minimum levels of control, with the Taliban and other criminal elements infiltrating the city at will.

The increase in their geographic spread illustrates that the Taliban's political, military and economic strategies are now more successful than the West's in Afghanistan. Confident in their expansion beyond the rural south, the Taliban is at the gates of the capital and infiltrating the city at will. Of the four doors leading out of Kabul, three are now compromised by Taliban activity. The roads to the west, towards the Afghan National Ring Road through Wardak to Kandahar have become unsafe for Afghan or international travel by the time travelers reach the entrance to Wardak province, which is about thirty minutes from the city limits.

The road south to Logar is no longer safe for Afghan or international travel. The road east to Jalalabad is not safe for Afghan or international travel once travelers reach the Sarobi Junction which is about an hour outside of the city. Of the two roads leaving the city to the north only one – the road towards the Panjshir valley, Salang tunnel and Mazar – is considered safe for Afghan and international travel. The second road towards the north that leads to the Bagram Air Base is frequently used by foreign and military convoys and subject to insurgent attacks.

By blocking the doors to the city in this way, the Taliban insurgents are closing a noose around the city and establishing bases close to the city from which to launch attacks inside it. Using these bases, the Taliban and insurgent attacks in Kabul have increased dramatically – including kidnapping of Afghans and foreigners, various bomb attacks and assassinations. This dynamic has created a fertile environment for criminal activity. The links between the Taliban and criminals are increasing and the lines between the various violent actors becoming blurred. All of these Taliban successes are forcing the Afghan government and the West to the negotiating table.

The Taliban are now dictating terms in Afghanistan, both politically and militarily. At the national level, talk of reconciliation and power sharing between undefined moderate elements of the Taliban movement and elected government officials is commonplace. At a local level, the Taliban is maneuvering skillfully to fill the governance void, frequently offering a mellow version of localized leadership than characterized their last stint in power.

At the same time, the Afghan government remains absent or ineffective in much of the country, most foreign aid has no practical impact on the security and stability of threatened areas, and the

¹ See International Council on Security and development, *Struggle For Kabul: The Taliban Advance*, December 2008, pp. 3-5

combination of US, NATO/ISAF, and Afghan security forces is far too small to secure the countryside. Refugee problems and poverty are made worse by the problem of both personal and organized crime. While narcotics output is down -- largely because of a saturated market and dropping street price as well as drought issues -- it remains a key part of the national economy and a force behind both crime and corruption.

These problems are compounded by the situation in Pakistan. The Pakistani Army and government have not provided reliable reporting on military operations or a meaningful assessment of the growth of the threat inside Pakistan. Whatever the Pakistani military may have been, the steady politicization of Pakistan's military forces since Zia has left it largely an inept flatland army steadily more focused on internal control and whose finances and use of outside aid have become progressively more suspect. Few unclassified or reliable data are available on the expansion of Islamist extremist influence and control in the FATA (tribal areas) along the Afghan-Pakistan border in the east, but it is clear that this region has become the center of Al Qa'ida operations. Furthermore, it seems apparent that near sanctuaries exist for two increasingly independent centers of Taliban activity as well as the Hekmatyar and Haqqani movements.

The Scope of the Analysis We Need

If we are to win this war, we need a far greater degree of transparency, and a recognition that the war is extremely complex, that it cannot be solved by focusing on one element or country, and the use of information and metrics can be used both to show the need for sacrifice and sustained effort, and to put pressure of those who do not perform, in ways that can offset any negative impacts for disclosing such data to the enemy.

This does not mean disclosing sources and method, or truly sensitive data that could compromise operations or strategy. But, the Congress, media, and analysts, need a clear picture of the war that they can believe in. They do not need spin. They need data that show why this is a "long war," the impact of new tactics and forces, and that ties military action to aid. They need reporting that shows whether NATO/ISAF forces, military trainers and embeds, and aid workers have the level of resources required. They need reporting that shows the extent to which both Afghan and Pakistani forces and governments are active in the fight.

To be specific, a fully meaningful picture of developments would have to provide the following additional information:

1. A matching picture of the situation in Pakistan, and one that located and characterized the role of key threat forces in Pakistan, their strength, growth in areas of influence, and ties to other Jihadist and extremist movements.

2. Summary data on Pakistani Army and Frontier Corps activity to show the Pakistani military level of activity, and maps showing the scope and level of Pakistani civil government and aid activity. These need to be broken out in detail to cover the FATA and Baluchi border areas.

3. Security trends affecting NATO's key supply routes through Afghanistan and Pakistan.

4. Data that support an understanding of the key non-military elements of success in a counterinsurgency strategy.

- Key economic trends with an emphasis on the south, east, Kabul, and Kandahar, FATA, and the Baluchi border area.
- There needs to be a focus on key sectors affecting the insurgency, the motivation of young men, and the "build" aspects of operations, such as
 - Employment, status of agriculture, urban migration, etc.
 - Ratings of local governance.
 - Ratings of local police and rule of law.
 - Maps of PRT areas of operation and influence.
 - Maps show actual flow of aid expenditure in key provinces.
 - Detailed analysis of aid flows and impact that tie such activity clearly to its impact on warfighting.
- Polling of relevant Afghan and Pakistani attitudes towards Jihadist movement by movement, activity, and location – including negative and positive reactions.

5. ANA and ANP charts that show force growth against force goals, and ANP readiness. Similar data need to be developed for the Pakistani Frontier Corps and relevant elements of the Pakistani Army.

6. ANA and ANP, and Pakistani Frontier Corps and Pakistani Army, charts that show expanding areas of operation. These maps should show how ANSF forces are expanding their areas of operation and serve as metrics of operational success in giving "win" and "hold" an Afghan face. The same is needed for Pakistani forces.

7. Breakouts that show similar data in more detail for the East and South and that show activity in both Afghanistan and Pakistan relative to maps of location of the insurgent groups.

8. Data that show the threat in non-kinetic terms, that characterize each key element separately -- including the role of Al Qa'ida and foreign volunteers – as it exists and operates in both Afghanistan and Pakistan:

- Descriptions of activity, ideology, estimated force size, and objectives by individual movement and that define and characterize the threat.
 - Divisions in the Taliban by area of operation should be clearly shown and characterized. The same is needed for the Hekmatyar and Haqqani groups.
 - A detailed section is needed on Al Qa'ida and foreign volunteers to highlight the continuing threat of international terrorism and regional impacts.
 - Maps that counterbalance the UN maps and show the area and level of Jihadist influence in Afghanistan and Pakistan by district and how they have expanded and contracted since 2005. Detailed breakouts should be provided for the East and South
 - Maps that show areas where Jihadists conduct operations against the local population – including breakouts of activity in addition to casualties that cover night letters, killings of tribal leaders, kidnappings, and the broader patterns of Jihadist violence.
 - A summary analysis and mapping of levels of activity and influence in key cities like Kabul and Kandahar.
 - Maps and charts by Jihadist element show growth in areas of influence and operation, breaking Kinetic activity out by movement, and describing goals and methods. These data should clearly cover both Afghanistan and Pakistan.
 - Summary maps and metrics that cover crime and narcotics and show the overlap – if any – with Jihadist activity.
 - Polling of Afghan and Pakistani attitudes towards Jihadist movement by movement, activity, and location – including negative and positive reactions.
9. An analysis of NATO air and UCAV strikes that shows levels of fixed and rotary wing activity, estimated casualty effects, and ties strikes clearly to levels of success in striking at Taliban and other Jihadist cadres. NATO/ISAF need to explain and justify the air dimension of the war. I'd also add a summary slide here showing how the US and NATO/ISAF screen attack requests and the level of restraint and care in rules of engagement (ROEs).
10. Summary reporting on which elements of NATO are actually in the fight:
- Measures of activity by NATO/ISAF country in the field
 - Data on the growth of forces, aid workers, and aid by country; and
 - Maps of PRT areas of operation versus PRT location.
 - Open reporting of member country caveats and problems in using national forces effectively, and of limits to aid and PRT activity that keep such activity too local and limited to be effective.
 - Polling of Afghan and Pakistani attitudes towards US, NATO/ISAF, Afghan government, and Pakistani government activity – including negative reactions to the use of force.
11. Analysis of aid efforts that clearly recognizes the fact that this is armed nation building during a state of war, and not post-conflict reconstruction. Like every other aspect of

counterinsurgency, aid and development “is local.” It either supports a “win, hold, build” strategy or it doesn’t.

- Maps that show what level of aid actually reaches into key threat and high-risk areas, which provides, and estimated effect.
- Reporting that focuses almost exclusively on auditing how aid is spent by function and location with measures of effectiveness clearly tie to “win, hold, build” impact.
- Polling of Afghan and Pakistani attitudes towards aid activity – including negative reactions to the use of force.
- Summary analysis of aid activity by country, NGO, and UN element that rates effectiveness, actual flow of money into activity in country, and that separately names groups and individuals believed to be ineffective or corrupt.

12. Open analysis of the success or failure of key elements of Afghan and Pakistani government activity that puts direct pressure on both governments to act, eliminate the corrupt and inept, use aid honestly and effectively, avoid ties to narcotics, and avoid covert links to Jihadist forces like those of the Pakistani ISI.

- Maps that show what level of government activity actually reaches into key threat and high-risk areas, which provides, and estimated effect.
- Reporting that focuses almost exclusively on auditing how aid is spent by function and location with measures of effectiveness clearly tie to “win, hold, build” impact.
- Polling of Afghan and Pakistani attitudes towards, Afghan government, and Pakistani government activity.
- Summary analysis of activity by province and high threat or key that rates effectiveness, actual flow of money into activity in country, and that separately names groups and individuals believed to be ineffective or corrupt.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Well, thank you. Thank the whole panel. I think it is some of the most interesting testimony we have had in quite awhile.

Let me start on a comment first by Dr. Jones when he mentioned that the war in Afghanistan is going on longer than the war we had in World War II. It is interesting, but I would also observe that in World War II in each of the countries with whom we were at war we only needed one guy to surrender. I think here we have a very complicated circumstance of who surrenders. We are not talking about the national leadership, to whatever extent that exists seriously in either Afghanistan or Pakistan, but somebody else has to surrender, and I do not know that we could identify one person or 10 people that if those 10 people surrendered that this deal would not still be going on into the unforeseeable future.

I guess the first question I would ask is based the idea that we are really not in national wars. We are in wars with entities, groups of people, and varying interests. I guess the first question I would ask is what is commonly called the insurgency, what is the insurgency?

America's overriding interest here is to protect our national security, and some of that insurgency is not necessarily in and of itself a threat to American security, but if they are all combined up somehow, and allied up, then that becomes a force multiplier in the threat that we face, and we are talking not about just the borders of Afghanistan. But I congratulated by the way—I hope I am making a connection here—I congratulated the outgoing Ambassador of India on finally becoming de-hyphenated. He had one half of a hyphenated problem, and now I think we have come to all realize that the major problem here is Afghan-Pakistan, and that is the new hyphenated problem, and I think you are right, Dr. Cordesman. It is like love and marriage, you cannot have one without the other. Well, you cannot—well, maybe you can, I do not want to get into that fight with any of my colleagues. But certainly you cannot solve one problem with one of these countries without solving both problems, because it is not a problem of the traditional nature when it comes to war.

How much of the insurgency is what we would call terrorist as opposed to what we would call the guys who are fighting for this, that, and the other thing, and the real threat is when they all hook up and feed each other's needs and interests, and feed off of each other that all the insurgency becomes terrorist? Is that the real threat that we are facing? And how many of the people involved percentage-wise are ideologically based other than in it for whatever they are in it for, these miscreants of various tribes?

Start with anybody who raises their hand first. Dr. Cordesman.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I think we need to be very honest. We really have not done a competent job of measuring motivation. We have not really mapped out the networks and the informal structures because these are not formal that tie together many of these movements. And when you talk to people, as I am sure members of the committee have in the intelligence community, you get very different views, and I think there is a clear recognition that much more needs to be done to fully understand this.

But having said that, I think the word “terror” is very dangerous. Insurgents always use terror. The Maoists did it, the Vietnamese, the Vietcong did it. The Vietnamese main force divisions had organized elements during the Vietnam War dealing with this.

Mr. ACKERMAN. If I may just rephrase that, and I think you are absolutely right. There are two different brands of terrorism that we have looked at historically. One is the traditional terrorism where people terrorize their own people for whatever power motives that they have, and the kind of terrorism that we are looking at currently, which are ideological movements that look to internationalize their problems that go beyond national, traditional national borders.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Well, let me just very briefly, because I know that Seth has a lot to say in this area too, I think what you have seen is a very steady increase in al-Qaeda influence in the East with much closer ties to the two main groupings of the Taliban there, to the Hekmatyar and the Haqqani network; that you have seen a similar expansion of ties to the various Deomandi groups. Those Deomandi groups play a major role in international terrorism already in Europe, in India, and other places.

So what we are really saying is if we have a power vacuum of any kind in Afghanistan or Pakistan you will see, I think, a steady expansion of international terrorist activity even though these movements in the past have largely been nationalist and more focused on their internal goals.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Sure. It is a very, very important question. In my personal view, just starting from al-Qaeda, what al-Qaeda has done, I think fairly effectively, is embedded itself in an area, as Tony mentioned earlier in the testimony, not just in the tribal areas or in Baluchistan, but also in a range of other places. Al-Qaeda has embedded itself in a range of militant groups; mostly Sunni, mostly Deobandi. So we know, for example, among Afghan insurgents we know al-Qaeda connections, regular connections, meetings, assistance to Haqqani network, to Mullah, Mohammed Omar’s Taliban organization. So we know that there is—so what that broader series of militant groups does, it provides an operating environment for al-Qaeda in a range of areas which poses a threat to us. Again, it is not just al-Qaeda as we have seen with the range of countries too. There are some Uzbek militant groups, the IMU, for example; Tohir Yuldeshev, that have posed a direct threat to a range of United States allied countries, in Germany and Denmark and other places.

Now, just to be clear about this, when we talk about these range of groups, including al-Qaeda, which really does not play a major role in the actual fighting in Afghanistan, its role is primarily to help. If you remember the German pharmaceutical company ran a series of ads, BASF, a few years ago. We do not make a lot of the products you buy; we make a lot of the products you buy better. That is al-Qaeda’s modus operandi. They have improved suicide attacks information operations for the Afghan groups.

But what we see as we look across these groups, I would say just in concluding, is that we see a lot of different interests across them, and some of them have clearly fought against each other histori-

cally. We have seen Hekmatyar and the Taliban fight, a lot of the 1990s they fought each other until Hekmatyar had to flee from Afghanistan. So we have seen a range of fissures historically against some of these groups, and even some of the sub-tribes that are supporting elements of the Taliban we have seen actually fight each other historically. So by no means is this a unified movement: Variations in scope, how much they are interested in a global jihad; some are interested primarily in parochial things. But again I do think it is important, as Tony mentioned earlier, just to understand who we are dealing with, what their interests are, what they are motivated by, and how they are cooperating or not with each other.

Ms. VON HIPPEL. Could I just add one final point to reinforce my colleagues'?

Dennis Blair recently said that the United States still lacks intelligence about the power structures inside Afghanistan and the same certainly applies on the Pakistan side of the border. The Pakistani officials do not know fully who is operating in their country. You can get a range of figures from 800 foreigners to 8,000 foreigners, and so really we are lacking knowledge on both sides of the border. We are not nearly where we should be.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. My time is up. Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I am sorry I was a little late. I have another hearing after this, and I actually had to have a little bite to eat some time today, so I grabbed a quick bite before I came back.

Let me just note again, as I stated as we opened this hearing, that I am deeply concerned that the strategy that we are talking about is not a strategy, and that instead we have a series of ideas and many of the ideas that I have heard will not work. And when we talk about a regional solution, which has become, you know the watch word, we are going to have a regional solution, it appears to me what we are really talking about here is a willingness of our leadership in the United States to try to cut deals with political leaders who are not in Afghanistan, foreigners, foreign political leaders, and expecting the people of Afghanistan to go along with it.

The people of Afghanistan, and we can make any deals we want with the people of Pakistan, with the leadership in Pakistan, or the leadership in various countries, Iran, et cetera, but when you get right down to the village and the provincial level in Afghanistan, they will not follow the orders and obey the deals and agree with the deals that we cut unless, of course, they are part of the decision-making process and they are included.

Mr. Chairman, I need to answer these—let me just ask the panel this question, and again everybody keeps talking about bottom-up, nobody is willing to really give me a strategy with bottoms-up. Is this administration willing to permit from what has been said for local people to elect their own people who govern them at the local level, at the district level, at the provincial level, or is this administration, as what I have heard in the last few days, insisting that these be appointed from Kabul?

And how do we expect to enlist the people at the local or the tribal leaders and the other community leaders that exist and have mi-

littias at their disposal unless we are willing to have faith that through elections local people will make the right decisions?

So are we going to permit local people to elect their people or are we going to insist that they just have to accept appointed people from Kabul?

Mr. CORDESMAN. May I suggest, and I am sure each member of the panel will have a comment, I do not believe that you can hold local or provincial elections in the most threatened provinces at this point in time. The fact is that our PRTs, the troop strength we have, can only hold an extraordinarily limited area.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay. Well, you have—

Mr. CORDESMAN. The number of killing—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Before you go on, the caveat was in those areas, in specific areas. Let me note there are huge areas of Afghanistan where you can basically create the type of stability and strength that may give us leverage on the areas that you are talking about, but instead if we insist on corrupt officials being accepted at the provincial level there just because down in Kandahar there is too much chaos to have an election, then we have cut ourselves off from that option, have we not?

Mr. CORDESMAN. Well, let me say that I think that one of the rules that was not followed by the Bush administration but virtually everyone in the nation-building field would say, you do being with local and provincial elections. Your problem now is you have created levels of infiltration and violence which go far beyond this limited number of districts.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Sure. Sure.

Mr. CORDESMAN. And holding an election would be extremely difficult, but if I may, I think in fairness I do not believe the people developing this strategy put heavy emphasis on the regional approach. They will attempt it but they did not believe it would succeed. I think they saw, with the exception of Pakistan, three key elements: One was building up Afghan forces, a process which will take a least 2 years; another was to reenforce the United States and allied presence to the point where you can shift to a win/hold/build tactics and strategy in the most threatened area, bringing in aid workers to provide the build capability and focusing—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. You know, I have only got a couple of minutes, and so I am sorry that I—

Mr. CORDESMAN. All right, could I—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. There are a couple of points that I want to make sure I get on the record in this hearing. Number one, from what I see we are not going—as has been confirmed—we are not going to have provisional and local leaders elected, thus we will then, of course, have them cooped by—because we have put them outside the circle—we are going to have corrupt officials being appointed by Kabul instead. The militias, here we are building up a national force so that we can pacify an area, that sounds really familiar does it not? It does not work. Everyone of these areas have local militias.

When we drove the Taliban out of Afghanistan, it was not us, it were the local militias of the Northern Alliance that drove the Taliban out in the first place, and I might add defeated the Soviet Union. The plan of building up a centralized force will not work un-

less it includes the local militias. Are the local militias included in some sort of national guard thing? I do not see that.

One last element, and I have got to—again, I have only a short period of time—put these thoughts on the record.

Mr. Chairman, this is being fueled, the money that we are talking about that finances these radical groups in Pakistan and in Afghanistan, it is oil money from our good buddies elsewhere in the Arab world, and it is the poppies, and again the briefings that I have had on this plan deemphasizes—let me repeat that—deemphasizes poppy eradication, and we have an option with a micro-herbicide to eliminate those poppies, and to come forward with a bold, very expensive operation to build their economy. That is the only thing that is going to work as far as I can see. It is not included anywhere in the plan, and a micro-herbicide needs to be addressed, and I will just throw that out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. The gentleman is a minute-and-half or so over, but if there is no objection, I would like to restore an additional 2 minutes to the gentleman, and ask if he would yield to me to make a point.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Certainly.

Mr. ACKERMAN. And I hope to leave enough time for you to respond to it as well.

In addition to the President's speech, which we listened to, which was indeed a speech, you do not get everything in a speech, there was an accompanying white paper which probably comes a lot closer to talking about what we would consider strategy, and within that I would just point out, I would hope a wider level of comfort and the rest of us as well, there is a small section that says "including provincial and local governments in our capacity-building efforts" and it very briefly reads what you would have written for the President, I would think.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Does it include elections?

Mr. ACKERMAN. "We need to work with the Afghan Government to refocus civilian assistance and capacity-building programs on building up competent provincial local governments where they can more directly serve the people and connect them to their governments." It does not specifically say "elections" but I think that is more what it is pointing at than not, working with the local governments. So I just offer that—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, if I could note, it does not say "elections" because there will not be. We are going to make the same mistake we made in Vietnam where we send the powers in from the capitol, and we expect them not to be corrupt, and they will always be corrupt. For the center core in these developing countries, when you send them out to take charge of the countryside, they end up turning people off. Without local elections, the local people feel desperate and alienated from the system. So I hope that the President—

Mr. ACKERMAN. I do not want to divert from our—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN [continuing]. Panel, and engage in a debate with my knowledgeable, learned and distinguished colleague who has probably been to the region more than the rest of us probably combined. The fact of the matter is elections are not necessarily the

cure-all, and does not mean that you have democracy. Witness Hezbollah's victories in Lebanon and Hamas's victories in Gaza, and the National Socialist Party in Germany. You do not always get what you want. It does not always mean you have an ideal democratic society.

But let us work together on that with the administration and use the tools that we have here, and I would, with the tolerance of the rest of the committee, and Mr. Ellison, who would be next, just ask if the rest of our panel just wanted to respond to that, and then we will turn to Mr. Ellison, if that is okay with Mr. Ellison.

Mr. ELLISON. Certainly, I will be happy to defer to the chair.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, and you will have your full time, as much as you need.

Dr. von Hippel first.

Ms. VON HIPPEL. Just two quick points. First of all, it is a sovereign state obviously, Afghanistan is a sovereign state. They have a highly centralized form of government that may not be appropriate, as you are saying, to their very fragmented society, but that is what they have agreed on during the Bonn process. That is the constitution they agreed on. Now—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. We ran the Bonn process.

Ms. VON HIPPEL. But that does not mean—

Mr. ACKERMAN. Let her finish.

Ms. VON HIPPEL. That does not mean that there is not a degree of—a lot of local involvement at a number of different levels through the National Solidarity Program, through this program I mentioned earlier that the Aga Kahn network, they are working with shuras, and the shura can vote out the people who are in charge of certain projects. So there are a number of ways at the local level where local Afghans are voting out people who are implementing projects, shura, et cetera. So it is not to say that there is not a democracy there.

On the regional point, just one quick point I wanted to make is that India, Iran, Russia, and China all have motivation to prevent the Taliban from returning to power. Drugs hit them far more than they hit us, so we do have common cause with them, and we can work together as you were saying earlier in closer partnerships to make sure that this happens.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Yes, just two brief comments, and I support the direction of Mr. Rohrabacher's comments on local, a focus on local power because I think in visiting numerous times rural areas of the south and east, in particular, we actually, interestingly, there are several bottom-up models. One of them is the one the United States used in 2001, again not just Northern Alliance in the north, but also U.S. intelligence and special forces operating in the south, working with Pupelsei tribes, or the sub-tribe, for example, in Kandahar, the Baraksai, and a range of others, recognizing the inherent local dimension of power.

One also has to realize that the Taliban strategy, campaign planning and tactics, techniques and procedures in areas they operate, especially in the south, is a bottom-up strategy. We have pursued a top-down strategy. They have pursued a bottom-up strategy. I would argue that has been more effective in rural areas of the

country than ours has been. They approach a range of tribe and sub-tribes and clans. I think what will be interesting along these lines is monitoring U.S. efforts in Wardak province whereas now the first effort to try to put together a bottom-up strategy.

The other thing that I would note very briefly when we talk about democracy, in Pashtun areas of the country—again the primary areas where the insurgency is happening—we do have government-appointed district shuras—sorry—district governors and provincial governors, but we also what you might call the Pashtun version of democracy which is the jerga or the shura at the village level and at the district level, and these are their sub-tribal/clan representatives.

So I would say in addition to thinking about elections, although as Tony noted earlier, in an insecure environment there may be problems, there is a form of Pashtun democracy. That is what is called the shura or the jerga, and in my personal view we have not successfully managed, (A) to understand; and (B) to work with that portion of Pashtun society that is somewhat democratic.

Mr. ACKERMAN. If I could just ask a question on that. Is it we that have to learn how to work with them or the Afghan Government?

Mr. JONES. Well, I mean, “we” collectively. I mean the Afghan Government and the United States. If you look at 2001, this was a combination of locals and U.S., so I think it is both actually.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Could I make a brief comment, Mr. Chairman? I think that there are over 360 districts in Afghanistan. At this point in time you could not under U.N. rules hold a local or provincial election in more than half of them, and that is because of the map of insecurity of the area. I think the key, as Seth has pointed out, is to take the local authorities, provide security, provide build assets, and build from the bottom up. I think that is one of the key goals of this strategy, is it bring enough aid workers, enough people in EPRTs, and work with local people after you have established security to begin to build up local authorities, local loyalties.

One of the ideas people are looking at is some kind of variation on what we had in Vietnam by way of local security forces, but the truth is that as yet we do not have this by way of a detailed plan, and given the number of U.S. troops we intend to deploy, this will only affect the most critical districts at best during the course of 2009, and early 2010.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Ellison.

Mr. ELLISON. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Picking up on the prior theme, I wonder if you all would offer your views on how well the United States, and at this point I am not really talking about the Afghan central government so much, but I am talking about things under our control, how well the United States can integrate a local/national type strategy because it does seem, based on everything I have heard today as well as Mr. Rohrabacher’s comments and the chairman’s comments, that the action is at the local level, but there is no way we can simply ignore the national level. How well can these efforts be integrated for maximum United States security and Afghan stabilization? Mr. Jones, maybe you can start.

Mr. JONES. Sure. Just to briefly respond, I would like to use an example. An area that I have been to a number of times is the Asadabad area in Konar Province, and I think where the U.S. has been effective along these lines is the PRT in Konar has done under a range of different navy commanders actually who have backgrounds in general in commanding ships, is to work both with the provincial and the district governors in Konar. This is, the provincial governor is Governor Wahidi. And then in key areas, to sit down at the village level and the district level with the shuras to understand what are the primary needs. So I will give you one example.

There is a lot of agricultural activity in Konar. There have been some problems in getting goods to market because it is a mountainous area. So one of the issues that was identified for locals is road construction for a very specific economic purpose, to get goods to Asadabad. So what the PRT did under a range of different people, including Commander Larry Legree, sit down with a range of villages along the routes, see if this was something they wanted, and employ their villagers in the construction as it went through their area. That gave them, (A) stake involved in planning it, stake involved in actually doing it, and stake involved in actually protecting the road.

So I think where we have done it effectively, that kind of model has actually been very useful, and again there was input from the Afghan Government level.

Mr. ELLISON. Dr. Jones, is there a document out there that perhaps we could put into the record or share around to colleagues describing this effort?

Mr. JONES. I do not believe it has been written up anywhere, which is quite sad.

Mr. ELLISON. Would you mind volunteering for that effort?

Mr. JONES. Sure.

Mr. ELLISON. Thank you. I mean, I am serious. It really would be helpful if you could sort of describe that. You know, we are looking for ways forward, and I think one of the problems is that no one really knows exactly what to do, and so we are all trying to—we are looking for that collectively, and it is not necessarily that elegant or pretty.

I also would like unanimous consent to put an article into the record. This is a document prepared by the United States Institute of Peace, and it is entitled “Killing Friends, Making Enemies: The Impact and Avoidance of Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan.”

Mr. ACKERMAN. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information referred to follows:]

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Killing Friends, Making Enemies: *The Impact and Avoidance of Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan*

By J Alexander Thier and Azita Ranjbar

Synopsis:

This *USIPeace Briefing* discusses the enormous problem of civilian casualties in Afghanistan; the “troops-in-contact” dilemma regarding air power; challenges in intelligence gathering; losses in the information war with Taliban forces; and policy recommendations to mitigate this trend.

Background:

The inadvertent killing of Afghans by U.S. and NATO forces undermines the international community’s efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and has resulted in a decline in approval and support for international military forces in the country. While the U.S. is in its seventh year of intervention in Afghanistan, the insurgency continues to grow. From 2002 to 2006, insurgent-initiated attacks increased by 400 percent and deaths resulting from these attacks jumped by 800 percent.¹

The low number of ground troops stationed in Afghanistan, combined with an increase in insurgent attacks, has resulted in a dramatic increase in the use of air power from an average of 5,000 pounds of munitions per month in 2005 to an average of 80,000 pounds per month since June 2006, peaking at 168,000 pounds in December 2007. As a result, civilian casualties increased by 62% in 2008, compared to figures from the first six months of 2007.² According to the Afghan government, an air strike by international forces on July 4 in Nangrahar province allegedly killed 47 civilians, including 39 women and children, although NATO has claimed that those killed in the strike were insurgents.³ This incident came just 1 day before a terrorist car bomb in Kabul killed 41 and injured 130, mostly civilians.⁴

Reducing civilian casualties is a moral and strategic issue. The overall effectiveness of air strikes in a counter-insurgency environment is debatable, as a large number of civilian deaths undermines battlefield successes. In order to win the confidence of the Afghan people and to counter the growing insurgency, it is critical that civilian casualties be minimized.

USIP's Afghanistan Working Group hosted three experts to discuss this important and timely issue: Elizabeth Rubin, *The New York Times*; Nader Nadery, [Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission](#); and Marc Garlasco, [Human Rights Watch](#).

The Cause of Civilian Casualties

Stabilizing Afghanistan requires the support of the Afghan people. This presents a fundamental dilemma in that stability requires security, and security requires targeting insurgents, which, in turn invariably leads to civilian deaths. These civilian casualties have led to the erosion of civilian support for the counter-insurgency.

Troop levels in Afghanistan have been insufficient given the geographic and demographic scope of the challenge, resulting in increased reliance on air power as a substitute for ground forces. In early 2004, prior to the resurgence of the Taliban, the total combined International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was 6,500 troops, with an additional 12,000 troops in the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Overall troop levels have tripled since then, with approximately 65,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, including 30,000 non-U.S. soldiers in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF), 23,000 U.S. ISAF troops, and an additional 12,000 mostly U.S. forces under Operation Enduring Freedom command. The U.S. continues to lobby NATO allies for a greater commitment of troops and military assets for Afghanistan.

Although air strikes have somewhat successfully targeted militants, they have also significantly increased the number of innocent deaths. The correlation between the increase in insurgent attacks and air strikes parallels the relationship between utilizing aerial munitions and civilian casualties.

"Troops-in-Contact" Dilemma

NATO and the U.S. military use both preplanned and spontaneous air strikes based on combat conditions. Largely due to increased intelligence, strikes planned in advance have caused zero civilian casualties in the past two years. Collateral damage mitigation procedures range from requiring positive identification to altering the angle, depth, and type of bomb used. Approximately two-thirds of bombs currently used are low-collateral munitions. A "pattern of life" analysis—an assessment of who lives in a particular structure or area—is also required prior to calling in an air strike. The daily activities of suspected militants are tracked and analyzed to ensure that civilians are not mistakenly targeted.

The second type of air strike is a result of "troops-in-contact." This generally occurs when a small number of troops confront militants and, after an initial exchange of fire, call in an air strike. During impromptu strikes, there is not sufficient time to complete a formal collateral damage assessment, resulting in property damage, injury, and death of innocent Afghans. *In 2006 and 2007, almost every civilian casualty caused by NATO was a result of this type of incident.* The increase of insurgent tactics that include firing from homes and other populated areas has significantly boosted civilian casualties. Instead of calling in troops-in-contact air strikes, soldiers are increasingly being encouraged to withdraw and disengage when confronted by overwhelming force.

The Intelligence Challenge

One of the main challenges that NATO and the U.S. military face in successfully targeting militants is incomplete or faulty intelligence. There are many instances where soldiers have to make quick decisions based on incomplete data that is difficult to verify, and even some cases where the military has been manipulated into targeting the rivals of informants. Often, if soldiers wait for confirmation of intelligence, the suspected militants have already moved. Other means of gathering intelligence can often conflict with Afghan culture. Searches of compounds and forced entry into houses are deeply offensive, especially when women and children are present. Arbitrary detentions also provoke anger and frustration.

The military needs better intelligence to avoid civilian casualties and seeks cooperation with local Afghans in order to acquire information. Civilian casualties, however, lead to a lower probability that Afghans will provide accurate information in the future. Even if intelligence is accurate, if Taliban reside in a particular locale, strikes against them are also likely to take civilian lives, further decreasing the likelihood of any future cooperation. Knowing this, the Taliban provoke air attacks and use civilians as human shields. The Taliban also threaten and kill alleged informants.

Losing the Information War

Given the remoteness of many Afghan villages and the difficulty of distinguishing between civilian victims and combatants, it is difficult for international forces and the Afghan government to release casualty figures immediately following air strikes. Even when the numbers are available, these forces frequently refuse to comment. Meanwhile, the Taliban have become increasingly effective at manipulating the media by providing inflated numbers of civilian casualties immediately following air strikes and inciting anger against international forces through exploiting such incidents in frequent propaganda campaigns.

The Way Forward

It is critical that international forces continue to develop collateral damage mitigation procedures in order to prevent civilian casualties. International forces should avoid calling in air strikes whenever possible until thorough collateral damage assessments are completed. It is also necessary for forces to conduct thorough evaluations following each air strike to evaluate the effectiveness of preventative techniques and intelligence sources.

In order to decrease the frequency of close air support strikes, long-term strategies must be developed, including an increase in the number of ground troops engaged in offensive and defensive operations to decreased reliance on air power. Such an increase in ground forces should prevent troops-in-contact incidences, which typically occur when militants outnumber NATO troops patrolling the ground. Recent announcements by the U.S., Germany, Britain, and France for planned troop increases are a step in the right direction, but these forces must also be equipped with sufficient maneuverability to get to less accessible areas.⁵

Collateral damage assessments require greater transparency, and investigations of alleged civilian deaths should be carried out in conjunction with the government of Afghanistan. Partnering with the Afghan government will increase the legitimacy of these evaluations and

demonstrate international commitment to preventing future casualties. International forces must also become more effective at communicating openly with the media and Afghan people to counter Taliban propaganda. Therefore, results of collateral damage assessments should be published and provided to the general public in a timely manner, and families impacted by U.S. and NATO actions should be offered condolence payments, as well as reparations for property damage.

This is a critical time for NATO to reevaluate its strategy in Afghanistan. International forces face challenges, particularly the growing insurgency and mounting instability along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. If NATO hopes to successfully counter these challenges it must retain the support of the Afghan population by preventing further injury to innocent civilians.

¹ Jones, Seth G., "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency: State Failure and Jihad," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (Spring 2008): 7-40.

² Graham, Stephen, "UN Official: 62 Percent More Afghan Civilians Killed in Fighting," *Associated Press Worldstream*, July 30, 2008.

³ The Washington Post, "Afghan Panel: U.S. Airstrike Killed 47 in Wedding Party," July 12, 2008.

⁴ Abdul Wahed Wafa and Alan Cowell, "Suicide Car Blast Kills 41 in Afghan Capital," *The New York Times*, July 8, 2008.

⁵ Peter Baker and Josh White, "Bush Vows to NATO: U.S. Will Add More Troops," *The Washington Post*, April 5, 2008. BBC, "Extra UK Troops for Afghanistan," June 16, 2008. Judy Dempsey and Alan Cowell, "More German Troops to Afghanistan," *The Washington Post*, June 25, 2008.

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About the Rule of Law Center of Innovation:

USIP's Rule of Law Center of Innovation builds upon and refines principles on the rule of law articulated by various international bodies and provides practical guidance for their implementation. The Center aims to transform societies emerging from conflict by promoting stability, democracy, economic development, and social reconstruction.

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Mr. ELLISON. Are you all familiar with this document? You know, could you all talk for a moment, perhaps Dr. Cordesman, a little bit about what it means when we, in an effort to eradicate a violent, hostile person, do that perhaps but also kill a whole lot of other people like wedding parties and stuff like that? What does it mean? What is the impact of it?

Mr. CORDESMAN. First, with all due respect, I think that report needs to be taken with a great deal of reservation.

Mr. ACKERMAN. So ordered.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I think what we have seen—Dr. Jones pointed out—where we have been able to put together PRTs and troops that provide security, where we win kinetically and defeat the enemy, and then provide security rather than go in and fight again and again with civilian casualties and losses and alienation, when we bring in jobs and we bring in some kind of aid—

Mr. ELLISON. I am sorry, Dr. Cordesman.

Mr. CORDESMAN [continuing]. That works, those kind of—

Mr. ELLISON. Dr. Cordesman, I do control the time.

Mr. CORDESMAN. All right.

Mr. ELLISON. And I want to thank you for your—

Mr. CORDESMAN. Sorry.

Mr. ELLISON [continuing]. Explanation, and I appreciate it, but I mean, I have heard you say what you seem to be saying, and I am listening to you carefully, but I would like to just get something on the record, if somebody would, about what the casualties mean. What are they doing? And I am going to go to Dr. von Hippel because I think she may be more interested in answering that question. Thank you.

Ms. VON HIPPEL. Sure. The civilian casualties are very divisive. It is one of the most important issues that Karzai raises time and again with the U.S. Government. Now, we have made great efforts to reduce civilian casualties on the Afghan side of the border. On the Pakistan side of the border we are not doing as much, especially because the drone strikes are killing civilians. But we are not fully admitting that we are doing it on the Pakistan side of the border. We do need to reduce civilian casualties. We need to protect the population. That is the whole point of counterinsurgency.

Mr. ELLISON. Yes, Dr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Just to put some cultural component in this, in Pashtunwali society killing a civilian is met by revenge. It is a core tenet of Pashtunwali society. So from a cultural standpoint, civilian casualties by nature need to be met with revenge. So that is the kind of cultural mindset that we fall into, and frankly, the Taliban too during their suicide attacks, they run into the same issue, but there is a cultural dimension that is important to understand.

Mr. ELLISON. And if I may, I am running out of time, but I was reading as I was trying to form my own views on this, or reform them, I ran into some material about what The Netherlands was doing in Uruzgan, and again you all have information way above my head, and so I am not trying to compete with what you know and what I know because you would win that one, but could you talk about—I read about the Dutch effort in Uruzgan, that they have not had any troop increases, and they have had quite a bit of success and stabilization. Could you offer your views on how the

Dutch are doing, if there is anything they are doing that we might look at, Mr. Jones? Dr. Jones, excuse me. I know you worked hard for that Ph.D.

Mr. JONES. I would just point out in a range of polling data there are notable security concerns among Afghans in Uruzgan province, so both the Dutch and the Australians who are there, I would say there still has been a problem in understanding and working with local entities in Uruzgan. So I think the Dutch have faced the same problem that the British have had and the Canadians have had in the south, which is working with local entities.

I do not believe the Dutch have succeeded in stabilizing Uruzgan by any means.

Mr. ELLISON. I will get to everybody.

Mr. ACKERMAN. What I will do because I want to make sure everybody gets in because I know everybody has other things. I am going to come back for another round if it is okay with the panel. It will be a brief round.

Okay, Mr. Ellison? Mr. Inglis.

Mr. INGLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As sort of a follow up to that, I guess I should point out that having been to Afghanistan twice I sure am impressed by the work that our armed forces are doing there; incredible people doing what we ask them to do, and they really are impressive folks.

I am also impressed by how difficult a place Afghanistan is. A friend who served in Iraq was talking to me recently about comparing Iraq to Afghanistan in terms of the long-term prospects, and he pointed out Iraq has water and the ability to really feed much of the Middle East if they had peace and stability, and an economy that would work, surely starting with agriculture and going into many other things.

The challenge in Afghanistan has a lot to do, it seems to me, with just the geography of the place. Very little water, very remote mountain passes. It is just sort of lends itself to small fiefdoms and not a unified governing structure, and it sort of makes it natural as to why people would be involved in illegal drug trade, because what else are you going to do in a mountain pass that if you can divert some water to it, pretty soon the salt has built up and now you have got to move onto another patch of ground. So you have got to have a pretty high-value crop or high-dollar crop in order to make agriculture work.

So, comparing those two give me some reason for hope, that there is a way to unify that country and not have the experience the Soviets have had there of eventually the warlords winning. Anybody got any hope for me there about how you deal with the very difficult geographic features of Afghanistan?

Mr. CORDESMAN. If you look at eastern Afghanistan, and understand how few troops NATO/ISAF has had, and how few aid workers there have actually been in the field, because out of our PRTs we have 1,000 military and less than 40 civilians, you see often in the east where we were able to provide sort of a critical mass of troops and aid workers, where we did provide security and aid as well as troops, we won once rather than constantly inflicting new civilian casualties. There we had significant success.

We have never had that in the south because we have never had the resources. We have never had it in parts of the east because when you look at the numbers, and it is hard to remember this, through 2005 all of NATO and the U.S. had less than 10,000 troops actually present in the area. Even today we are talking about 47,000 to 56,000, because a lot of those forces are not really deployed, and many are held up in national caveats.

So now we are talking about putting in enough aid workers, putting in enough troops, building up Afghan forces while we build up governance at the local level, and if we can take the examples we have had in the east and move them to the south, then, as the strategy I believe calls for, we have some chance of success. But the people I know who helped formulate this would say it will be a close run thing. Nobody can guarantee that the current plan will win, but there is a reasonable chance it will provide that level of security and stability.

Mr. INGLIS. Anybody else going to—

Mr. JONES. Yes, if I can just comment. There is hope. I mean, there are—I think part of what we need to do is look at the periods in Afghanistan's history where it has been stable.

Now, a lot has changed, a lot had changed during the Soviet period, during the civil war, then early 1990s during the Taliban years, but one thing I would submit has historically been true, when stability has occurred in Afghanistan, for example, between 1933 and 1973, during the Sahir Shah period, you had a central government that could establish order and deliver services in urban areas of the country and along key roads, and sub-tribes, clans that did it in rural areas and some ability of cooperation between those two, but you never had a strong central governmental that could establish order in rural areas.

Ms. VON HIPPEL. Yes, if I could just add to that. You are absolutely right; we are dealing with extraordinary challenges. We are doing development aid while we are getting shot at. We are doing development aid in places where literacy rates for police officers and judges is maybe 10 percent, and so these are enormous challenges. But I would agree with Seth and Tony that if we can provide basic services, if we can protect the people, and help them build justice and the rule of law at the local level, we do not need to worry as much about building a strong center. They will be very happy going about their lives at the local level with some—you know, with less corruption at the center.

Mr. INGLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. The chair would announce that we have to abandon the premises at 1:30, so we will go around the whole room again if we can each do 3 minutes, if that would be all right, if we could try to stick to that. We will run the clocks at 3 minutes, and if you get your stuff in in 3 minutes, it would be great.

Mr. Green.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I know in my opening statement and it is frustrating because whatever happens in the Presidential race in Afghanistan the United States is going to be blamed for. If we support President Karzai with all the problems of his administration, then we will be

blamed for imposing him. But if there is someone else that could actually do a better job, obviously he has not united the country as we have heard from previous questioning because it is a country that is difficult to be united because of the diverse area, but we do have examples of very diverse area around the world who do come under a national government, be it maybe a more loose federation than what we expect.

I guess my question is, you know, the corruption issues, and the Afghans refusing to cooperate with United States-led forces, is there someone else other than President Karzai that could do a better job that the Afghan people can turn to whether we like it or not? And that will be my first question, I guess, if I have time in the 3 minutes.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Let me answer that very quickly because I watched people try to bring down Diam with all the success that had. If we knew that person, they would know his name and he would be running with great popularity. If they do not know the name, it does not really exist.

Mr. GREEN. Any other comments?

Ms. VON HIPPEL. Yes. The official policy of the Obama administration, which I do support, is that it is up to the Afghans to elect their new government. If we interfere it is going to, as you were saying, it potentially could harm the candidates. So the best thing for democracy in Afghanistan is to have several transitions of government. It is going to be a rocky road to get there, but whether or not it is Karzai or someone else, hopefully it will not be Karzai because hopefully we will have different leaders that are democratically elected, which is what they need.

Mr. JONES. I would just point out in answering the question that again we go back to the local population is the center of gravity in a counterinsurgency, and that means what we do not know, we do not have good public opinion polls that are telling us support bases among Gulag Asherzi and Ahadi, and Ashraf Ghani, and the range of others that look like they will probably run. But again, I think from a U.S. position this has to be supporting the process, not supporting a candidate; again, it has to be a local answer to who they want to represent them in Kabul. I think that is the only way around this one.

Mr. GREEN. Well, it sounds like what I do when I go to one of my union halls, and I will stand up and say, you elect whoever you want as your President because I am going to work with you, and Mr. Chairman, sometimes that works out, keeps me out of union politics, but maybe that is what we need to do because we know the problems that President Karzai had. I mean, his brother, his family, the lack of support around the country, again some of it is geographical, some of it is tribal, but again I do not want us to foster his continuation if the Afghan people can actually develop some other things.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. The chair is announcing that I will pass on my questions and give each person 4 minutes, if you have another minute you want you can—

Mr. GREEN. What can be done to enhance and promote additional regional security and stability between Afghanistan and Pakistan?

And like I said earlier, I was there. We stayed at the hotel in Islamabad that is no longer there, and that was at that time the safest in Islamabad, and it was very protected. I do not know how many security screenings we had to go through to get there. But to work to get Pakistan and Afghanistan to realize they are all in this together.

Mr. CORDESMAN. I think Secretary Clinton has said that negotiation will be key. It may be. But quite frankly, I think we will be dealing with a fractured Afghanistan and Pakistan for at least several years in the future. Pakistan will be torn apart by its own internal political issues. It will have the same problems with the army. It will take it at least 2 to 3 years to really even move, if it can, into the Fatah and Baluki area effectively.

So I think, should we negotiate? Yes. Should we count on practice and success? No. We will have to try to work these countries together and separately because we have no choice.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two questions.

The first is in my trip to Afghanistan something that alarmed me, candidly, was the use of CERD funds. Essentially originally intended to augment the resources available to military commanders on the ground, to help complement the work they are doing by winning hearts and minds and helping provide potable water, or do something with a health clinic. Those funds have grown, as I understand it, from about \$26 million a year to a projected \$900 million. That would make CERD, if it were a bilateral aid program, one of the biggest in the world.

What is your take on whether this is maybe outgrown its utility because I am not at all convinced the military make the best folks in running development programs? They do many, many things well, but we may be asking just a little bit too much with them with respect to that.

Ms. VON HIPPEL. Sure. I will start. As far as my understanding, it was \$200 million a year in 2006 and 2007; 2008, it is supposed to be \$400 million. This is in addition to the funds that USAID and other people have.

Now, for some Afghans, this is their only support that they see, the only visible means of support. So, yes, you could argue that the military are doing the bulk of development, and being seen to deliver the bulk of development aid is a negative thing. On the other hand it does help them establish the fact that they are there to protect the community. They are there to work with the community.

So I think that you see CERD funds as different from USAID funds. We are spending a lot more money on other types of funding in Afghanistan in addition to CERD funds.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yes. By the way, Dr. von Hippel, when I was in Kabul the auditors on the ground cited \$900 million.

Ms. VON HIPPEL. Really?

Mr. CONNOLLY. But I guess the pending request. Dr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Just quickly, I think the problem we have in looking at—with all due respect—to other organizations, the problem we have had is other options have simply been sub-optimal. USAID in many cases takes too long. It uses a range of international contrac-

tors. There are positive, there are also negatives to use of CERD funds.

I think where it has been done well in places, I will use the Konar example as one, there were State Department reps on the ground in helping figure out and negotiating with the Afghans on where it should be placed. There were also USAID people on the ground.

So the benefit of CERD is that it does—able to get into Afghan hands quicker, local hands quicker. Locals tend to use that money, but I think in the PRTs that have used CERD most effectively have been ones that have actually integrated civilians into the CERD decision.

But if USAID can figure out ways to get its funding quicker, and to minimize the use of international contractors, including American ones, I would be all for more USAID money.

Mr. CONNOLLY. But you are not troubled by the fact that our military is now looking at hundreds of millions of dollars of what are in effect aid dollars, something that it is not trained or equipped to manage.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Well, Congressman, actually it is far better trained than most of the field people that will go in as part of the surge and aid who will come in with no prior experience because they are just being trained for the first time. Many of those military are on their second or third rotation. The PRTs that we talk about, again, the latest report from the Department of Defense, over 1,000 military, less than 40 civilians. Those are the people in the forward areas and in the high risk areas. The aid people, the others, which have limited personnel, do not move there. We are talking about surging aid workers in there, but they would have to then have equally flexible aid and they will not be there under these plans until 2010, and we are fighting now. So these are grim realities.

I do not like these numbers, but they are the reality we have, and if we are going to win, we have to live with it.

Mr. CONNOLLY. My time is up, Mr. Chairman. I would love to take some issue with Mr. Cordesman because the issue is not how many tours of duty you have been on, the issue is the resident expertise you possess or do not possess in development assistance, and I think when you get into hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, you are talking very different orders of magnitude now, and the original mission of CERD has changed fundamentally, and that is the question; not whether our military are doing their job and have the courage to be in the front lines, but whether they have the resident expertise, and whether we really want to add that burden to an already full plate for our military.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Ms. Jackson Lee for 4 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

I am not sure if this is accurate, Dr. Jones, but did you in your testimony indicate 271,000 in security forces in Afghanistan?

Mr. JONES. I did, I did in the west, south and east based on the General Petraeus field manual ratios.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And would those include Afghan forces as well?

Mr. JONES. Well, that is the—I mean, this is the question. I was suggesting if you use those ratios, that is what is required if you use those ratios.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Combination of. So you are not pinpointing what troops, you are saying a combination.

Mr. JONES. Yes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Could be Afghan, could be NATO, could be United States.

Mr. JONES. Could be Afghan nationals, could be Afghan local.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. All right. And foreign?

Mr. JONES. Foreign.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Right.

Mr. JONES. That is our question about how we want to answer, I mean.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. But that is a huge number.

Mr. JONES. That is a big number.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. That is a big number, and your basis for that is what? Containment and then security ongoing? How long would you think that would be required?

Mr. JONES. Well, the focus would be protecting the local population. How long that would take is an open question. The average length that it takes to win a counterinsurgency is 14 years.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And you do not sense the comfort and support of the present administration in Afghanistan, is that something you think that would be acceptable?

Mr. JONES. Well, I think if most of those forces were Afghan, military, army, army police and local forces, that—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Do you see any inclination in the present administration in Afghanistan to agree with that?

Mr. JONES. Well, the first test case for this is Wardak province where there is an effort to raise local forces, so I think we have a first test case in Wardak.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And it is local forces funded by the central government or by the local government there?

Mr. JONES. Funded directly through the Ministry of Interior, so by the national.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So it would be the central government.

Mr. JONES. Yes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. What do you think will be the impact of that kind of force on our neighbor, Afghanistan's neighbor, Pakistan?

Mr. JONES. I think if it is able to stabilize the country, I think it should be in everybody's interest.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Do you think it would have some negative impact in terms of that large a force on their border?

Mr. JONES. Should not. I mean, if they are locals, one thing that I am quite sure of in Afghanistan is there is not a lack of guns, ammunition and weapons, so—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So you are talking about an organized security force so that can be stabilized so the children can go to school?

Mr. JONES. Yes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Others can be—the Parliament can function? I had the unfortunate opportunity to hear from women parliamentarians, very difficult to go back to their constituencies. Thank you very much.

Dr. Cordesman, you have just indicated the neighbor Pakistan is falling apart. What then is the nexus that we need to have between a restoration of Afghanistan and Pakistan?

Mr. CORDESMAN. I do not think it is falling apart. I think it faces deep internal political tensions. Hopefully, it will resolve them democratically and with changes in the military.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So there is hope?

Mr. CORDESMAN. There is hope, definitely.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And when you say that change in the army chief of staff or changing the structure?

Mr. CORDESMAN. I think that ultimately the real question for Pakistan more than anything else is whether they can make the full conversion to a successful stable democratic structure, and the military can become a military that—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Can we help them with that with legislation that focuses on democratization and social needs?

Mr. CORDESMAN. You can try to help them. Will it really have much impact? Historically, no. It costs a lot of money, and you feel good afterwards.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Well, let me say that I think we do have a way of strengthening those democratic ideals and I believe we cannot survive if we do not have a regional policy between India, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I believe that this committee has the tools, and I thank the chairman for yielding to me. I look forward to working with him on that issue. Yield back.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Ms. Jackson Lee.

If we could take another 3 minutes total, 1 minute each, to have you answer the question you wish we would have asked you, but did not, or emphasize a point that you think is important that we hear again or hear.

Mr. CORDESMAN. Well, let me begin, Mr. Chairman, by saying that in the testimony I gave you I gave a list of areas where we desperately need transparency, where we need to actually measure whether the strategies are working, whether we need to go from the past where we have had almost no meaningful reporting and accountability on what we are now calling AFPC, to find out whether the President's strategy is being fully implemented and actually working. I think the elements are there, but it is a grim fact that the administration for 7 years has not provided meaningful reporting on what has actually happened in this war.

It is also a fact we have concepts without detailed plans, without derailed matrix of their success, without even a clear picture of their cost. If we are to be successful by the summer of this year, we need to know what is happening, we need to see real progress, and we will need to be able to monitor it and see it more efficiently in the course of these years.

Let me make one other point. For this entire time there has been no real effort within the State Department to tie together the U.S. aid effort, the international aid effort, provide accountability in any kind of real responsibility. How do you solve this? Make the deputy secretary personally accountable for the failures of the people dealing with aid, not only in State but the Department of Defense.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Heard you loud and clear on that.

Mr. Jones, would you like a minute?

Mr. JONES. Sure.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Very briefly, the role of neighbors, we have danced around it a little bit, I think what needs to be understood and for us to find ways to deal with is issues that are causing a great deal of insecurity among Afghanistan's major neighbors in the region. We see serious tension between the Indians and the Pakistanis which is impacting security in Afghanistan. We see Indian schools being built on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. We see a range of consulates. This causes deep insecurity among the Pakistanis. I think we have to do a much better job of addressing a strategic level causes of insecurity between states. We have now marines that are going to be operating on the Afghan-Iranian border. That will also cause tension.

My point here is there are a range of steps, in my view, that can be taken to decrease tension among the major powers in the region, and that is Ambassador Holbrooke's job, but I think there are a range of things he can do.

The only last thing I would say on neighbors is we have members of the Taliban's Intersura operating in some cases openly in Quetta, in Karachi. How can we continue to let that happen? How can senior members, whether it is Barader or Omir or Zeker, continue to operate openly?

I yield my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much. Dr. von Hippel.

Ms. VON HIPPEL. Yes, I would just like to reemphasize a point I made earlier about changing the paradigm from this very heavy contractor-driven development program, one that never really worked in Iraq, and is not working in Afghanistan.

We do not need to spend nearly as much money as we are spending now to make things work. We need to get more aid directly to the people, and I think we need to put a lot more pressure on our international partners to work very closely with us and to build up the capability of the U.N. so that they can make sure that everybody is singing to the same hymn sheet.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. On behalf of our entire committee I want to thank the panel. You have been very impressive, very articulate, very succinct, and made your points with great clarity, and with the thanks of all the members of the committee the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:32 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X



MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia
Gary L. Ackerman (D-NY), Chairman

March 30, 2009

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building**:

DATE: Thursday, April 2, 2009

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan: Achieving Peace and Stability in the Graveyard of Empires

WITNESSES: Karin von Hippel, Ph.D.
Co-director, Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project
Center for Strategic and International Studies

Seth G. Jones, Ph.D.
Political Scientist
The RAND Corporation

Anthony H. Cordesman, Ph.D.
Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy
Center for Strategic & International Studies

By Direction of the Chairman

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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON MESA MEETING

Day Thursday Date 4/2/2009 Room 2172

Starting Time 10am Ending Time 1:30

Recesses 1 (10:45 to 12:10)

Presiding Member(s) Gary L. Ackerman

CHECK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING THAT APPLY:

Open Session [X] Electronically Recorded (taped) []
Executive (closed) Session [] Stenographic Record []
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TITLE OF HEARING or BILLS FOR MARKUP: (Include bill number(s) and title(s) of legislation.)

U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan: Achieving Peace and Stability in the Graveyard of Empires

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carnahan (MO), Jackson Lee (TX), Berkley (NV), Costa (CA), Ellison (MN), Klein (FL), Connolly (VA), Green (TX), Burton (IN), McCaul (TX), Inglis (SC), Rohrabacher (CA)

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: (Mark with an * if they are not Members of HIRC.)

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [X] No []

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)

USIP Article

ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE MARKUP: (Attach copies of legislation and amendments.)

RECORDED VOTES TAKEN (FOR MARKUP): (Attach final vote tally sheet listing each member.)

Table with 5 columns: Subject, Yeas, Nays, Present, Not Voting

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or
TIME ADJOURNED 1:30

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“U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan: Achieving Peace and Stability in the Graveyard of Empires”
Rep. Gary L. Ackerman, Chairman
House Subcommittee on the Middle East & South Asia

The subcommittee will come to order. Last week, President Obama announced his new strategy for fighting extremists in Afghanistan and Pakistan. I wholeheartedly support the President’s new approach. The previous Administration--by its own admission--never recognized that the true central front in the struggle to secure our nation was Afghanistan, where the 9/11 attacks were orchestrated, not Iraq. It’s been clear for years that the last administration took its eye off the ball and allowed al Qaeda and the Taliban to regroup and rearm in Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan. For years, the fight against extremists has been under-manned, under-funded and lacked a coherent strategy. President Obama’s new strategy recognizes those facts and moves aggressively to address them. I am gratified that it contains many elements that I and others in the Congress have been urging for several years.

First, the President laid out a clear objective which is, “to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent their return to either country in the future.” I know that there has been concern expressed that focusing our attention on al Qaeda -- the reason U.S. forces are in Afghanistan in the first place -- somehow means that we are abandoning our efforts to establish functioning democratic government in that country. I think a close examination of the strategy reveals that the President intends to both stabilize the security situation in Afghanistan and continue our work to improve governance there. Successfully focusing on al Qaeda will give us and our allies the “exit strategy” the President wants in order to reduce our military footprint there and to sustain allied involvement. But that does not mean that work on Afghanistan’s democratic institutions won’t continue.

No discussion of an exit from Afghanistan can even be contemplated until the security situation is stable and al Qaeda and the Taliban can no longer use Afghanistan as a base for terrorist operations. In the near term that means more troops. I have been calling for additional U.S. forces for Afghanistan since 2002, so the President’s announcement of 17,000 additional combat troops and 4,000 additional trainers is a welcome development. It is clear that neither we nor the Afghans have sufficient forces to take and hold territory once it has been cleared of extremists. More U.S. forces will allow us to do that. In the long term, more and better trained Afghan forces will be able to do it for themselves, allowing U.S. and other NATO forces to recede into the background and ultimately withdraw.

While we’re on the subject of NATO, I know that the President will use the summit tomorrow to remind our allies that Afghanistan is their fight too. While some NATO allies may not be willing to provide more combat soldiers, there are other capabilities they could provide -- such as strategic airlift and military trainers and mentors -- that would support the overall security mission there. There are also civilian aspects of

reconstruction and capacity-building at both national and local government levels with which our allies could assist.

But more resources from more countries also has to mean more and better coordination by us. A signature result of the Bush Administration strategy of subcontracting Afghanistan to our allies is that there has been little central coordination of either the political or military effort, and many nations sent forces with vastly different rules of engagement. Each nation charged with securing a portion of the country or rebuilding some devastated Afghan institution went off in their own direction, with their own objectives, and reported to their national capital. It should surprise no one that as a result, little was accomplished. Afghanistan is a case study of what happens when the United States abandons its leadership role in an international security crisis. What's most remarkable is that it hasn't turned out even worse.

More resources also means more money, from us and the international community. But as the President's plan makes clear, more of that money needs to reach the Afghan people and much, much less of it should be spent inside the beltway on consultants or on overhead. Our assistance should be used to purchase goods and services from Afghan providers and to put Afghans to work.

We can't talk about strategy in Afghanistan without talking about narcotics and the corrosive effect drug trafficking has on security and governance. Afghanistan is the source of 93% of the world's opium and even though the most recent report by the UN Office on Crime and Drugs shows an increase in the number of poppy free provinces and an overall decrease in the amount of opium produced, there is still far too much drug money sloshing around in Afghanistan tempting everyone from local policemen to provincial governors. Afghans will never believe they have a real alternative to the Taliban as long as they see local and even national officials on the take. Opium eradication, crop substitution, effective transportation for those crops and improved local security all have to be combined in order to make legal crops safe and profitable for Afghan farmers. In a nation where 70% of the population lives in the countryside, safe and profitable alternatives to poppy production are not optional. The President's strategy recognizes the need for an effective counter narcotics strategy by combining the elements I just described with new authorities for US and NATO forces to directly support Afghan counter-narcotics units during the interdiction of narcotics traffickers.

There's one more element necessary for a successful strategy and that is a coherent regional approach. In particular, one that deals effectively with Iran and Pakistan. As usual, Iran has tried to have it both ways in Afghanistan. On the one hand they have legitimate concerns regarding the impact of narcotics trafficking and the attendant instability that results yet there is also significant evidence that Iran has shipped weapons to the Taliban in an effort to gain leverage over us. The United States has talked to Iran before in the context of Afghanistan and it is a positive sign that Iran attended the international meeting on Afghanistan earlier this week. But while we seek their cooperation in Afghanistan, we should also insist they stop arms shipments to the Taliban in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1390.

The question of Pakistan's role is even more complex and frankly merits its own separate hearing. Suffice to say that the entire endeavor in Afghanistan is unlikely to succeed if terrorist safe havens in Pakistan are not eliminated. The government of Pakistan, and more importantly, the people of Pakistan must come to realize that the terrorists they have nurtured for decades have now turned on them as this week's attack in Lahore clearly demonstrates. The fight against extremists is not solely an American fight, nor is it solely an Afghan fight. The fight belongs to Pakistan too. It is a fight for their very existence as a nation and they ignore the problem at their own peril. I cannot say it more clearly: there is a real and present danger to Pakistan's survival, but it comes from inside, not outside the country.

President Obama's strategy for Afghanistan is a welcome, indeed desperately needed change from 8 years of reliance on ad hoc, under-funded, under-manned, uncoordinated, faith-based strategies. It's time to finally devote our attention, energy and resources to defeating the terrorists who attacked us on 9/11. My strong view is that the President has given us a realistic strategy to accomplish that goal.

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Opening Statement
Ranking Member Dan Burton
Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia
Committee on Foreign Affairs
April 1, 2009

**U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan: Achieving Peace and
Stability in the Graveyard of Empires**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing and I welcome all of our distinguished witnesses.

In Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in 2001, the United States and its Afghan and coalition allies inflicted a devastating military defeat on the Taliban regime and its al-Qaeda allies, but the Taliban has regrouped and made a significant comeback in recent years and now threatens Afghanistan's hard-won progress.

Coalition forces have won every major battle with the Taliban and the other insurgents, because they lack the firepower to stand against the superior military strength of U.S., NATO, and Afghan forces. Yet these tactical victories have not amounted to a strategic knockout, in large part because the insurgents are free to retreat and regroup in sanctuaries across the Afghan-Pakistani border in the tribal belt of Pakistan. These sanctuaries have

significantly enhanced the resilience and long-term staying power of the Taliban. NATO and Afghan forces cannot be beaten by the insurgency or by the Taliban, but under the current circumstances neither can Coalition forces eliminate the Taliban by military means alone as long as they have sanctuary in Pakistan. In short, the tactical situation can best be described as a stalemate; and in my opinion a stalemate is unacceptable.

When the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in 1949, NATO's founding members agreed on the Article 5 clause stipulating that "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." As a collective defensive military alliance, NATO rightly invoked Article 5 following al-Qaeda's 9/11 attacks on the United States. The Alliance must now follow through on that invocation and continue to deny al-Qaeda a safe haven in which to operate by winning in Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman, when then-Candidate Obama was running for President he stressed time and again his strong belief that President Bush had lost sight of the true battle against terror when we launched the ground war in Iraq instead of remaining focused on defeating al-Qaeda and the Taliban in

Afghanistan. Now that he is President, I am very anxious to hear his Administration's newly-launched plan for winning and completing our mission there. In addition to committing additional U.S. ground forces, his plan calls for a new series of benchmarks and objectives that must be met, recasts the battle there as a regional conflict, including the crucial issue of dealing with insurgents along the Afghani-Pakistani border, and calls for a more comprehensive nation-building and counter-narcotic plan for moving forward. I look forward to hearing more today about this new strategy and how our expert witnesses think this will impact events on the ground.

Afghanistan is a crucial front in the global struggle against the al-Qaeda terrorist network and Islamic radicalism, and I am hopeful that we will hear today new ideas from our witnesses on how we turn this stalemate into an outright Coalition victory.

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

**“U.S. STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN: ACHIEVING PEACE AND
STABILITY IN THE GRAVEYARD OF EMPIRES”**

APRIL 2, 2009

Thank you, Chairman Ackerman, for convening today’s important and timely hearing. I would also like to thank the Committee’s Ranking Members, and to welcome our distinguished panel of witnesses: Karin von Hippel, Ph.D. Co-Director of Post Conflict Reconstruction Project Center for Strategic and International Studies; Seth G. Jones, Ph.D. Political Scientist for the RAND Corporation; and Anthony H. Cordesman, Ph.D. Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy for the Center for

Strategic and International Studies. I look forward to your informative testimony.

The Taliban continues to pose a very real threat to Afghanistan's stability. After enduring decades of violence and hardship, the people of Afghanistan continue to live in a climate of persistent turmoil, particularly in the southern regions of the country, where there are ongoing and dangerous clashes between coalition-led forces and insurgents. Despite our positive efforts, the Taliban has been able to reorganize, and continues to destabilize the country.

These unfortunate realities remind us of the need to continue U.S. programs in Afghanistan. I have seen this need first hand during my various CODELs to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq.

In Germany, at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center I sat with many injured active duty military and even contractors supporting Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Yet, I have seen the results of their sacrifices in the faces of Afghan citizens especially the women and children. If we are to ensure that Afghanistan is secure and stable in the long run, we must address the underlying

causes of heightened violence, including the still-flourishing opium trade and the nation's lack of infrastructure.

The security and stability of Afghanistan is crucial to our national security. We must work together with partners in the region to strengthen and sustain freedom and democracy in Afghanistan.

President Obama's strategic review of Afghanistan has led to an increase in troops by 17,000 in addition to 4,000 trainers. The review stated a shift in emphasis to training and increasing the size of the Afghan National Security Forces so that they can take the lead in securing their country. The Obama administration has decided through this review that the Afghanistan effort will now finally receive U.S. attention and resources commensurate with the challenge. We will have an exit strategy after meeting the administration's goal to disrupt, dismantle and defeat Al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent their return to either country in the future.

A crucial turning point will occur in August of 2009 when the country holds presidential and provincial elections which will be followed by parliamentary and district elections a year later. The United

States does not have a position on any candidate but does and will continue to put pressure on the Afghanistan government to end corruption. Corruption is creating a distrust of the government among its citizens and making them sympathetic towards Taliban efforts.

However, our efforts will require international support. Further, economic development must be accelerated. The literacy rate in the country is about 30%, and lower than that among women. Afghans lack the skilled labor pool to staff a large, sophisticated economy and require better education and training. USAID spending to promote economic growth has gone substantially towards roads, education, health, agriculture and electricity. Additionally the US is working on trade initiatives with Afghanistan.

International support must also come from Afghanistan's neighboring countries. A vital issue is to further evaluate the extent to which Pakistan is aiding the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan and if Pakistan will cooperate in helping stabilize the region. The Taliban in Pakistan has been merging with the Taliban in Afghanistan to increase their efforts against the governments in both countries. These militants

are threatening supply lines for U.S. forces. Pakistan's policy in Afghanistan is heavily colored in Afghanistan by fears of its historic rival India. Due to the Pakistani fears that India will create significant sway within the Afghanistan government, Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence actively help Afghanistan militants weaken the Afghanistan government. Additionally, the Taliban is using areas in Pakistan as safe havens from which to operate. The core of the Afghan Taliban leadership is believed to be based in Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province of Pakistan. Thus far Pakistan has not cooperated in pressuring them out. President Obama's review calls for Congress to appropriate an increase in economic aid to Pakistan to help develop the tribal areas that now form some of the safehavens.

I urge my fellow colleagues to support President Obama's efforts to improve the contingency operations in Afghanistan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and witnesses. I yield back the balance of my time.