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**ASSESSMENT OF U.S. STRATEGY AND OP-
ERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE
WAY AHEAD**

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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**ASSESSMENT OF U.S. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS IN
AFGHANISTAN AND THE WAY AHEAD**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, January 23, 2008.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:04 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ike Skelton (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. IKE SKELTON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning. Today we meet to continue our discussion on Afghanistan, but I would be remiss if I didn't welcome back our ranking member to our ranks and we look forward to continued work with him.

And, Duncan Hunter, you have our friendship and our admiration, and we thank you for being back with us today.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, it is good to be back at my day job.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you very much for your contributions, and we know they will continue.

We have an exceptionally qualified panel of experts on Afghanistan today. We welcome Lieutenant General David Barno, who is now with the National Defense University; Ambassador Karl Inderfurth, with the George Washington University; and Dr. Barnett Rubin, New York University.

We really appreciate your being with us. This is a very important subject and a very important hearing.

Recently, our committee held a hearing with Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen on this same subject matter. And in his opening testimony, Admiral Mullen emphasized that our main focus militarily in the region of the world right now is rightly and firmly in Iraq. That is his quotes. And he said it is simply a matter of resource and capacity.

"In Afghanistan," he said, "we do what we can. In Iraq, we do what we must." And it gave me some trouble, and I believe that we currently risk a strategic failure in Afghanistan, that we must do what it takes to avoid a disastrous outcome.

We want to be discussing this with you gentlemen this morning, and we must reprioritize and shift needed resources from Iraq to Afghanistan. In my opinion, we must once again make Afghanistan the central focus on the war against terrorism.

The President's recent decision to deploy additional troops to Afghanistan this spring is encouraging. Some 3,200 Marines will help train the Afghan national security forces as part of Operation En-

during Freedom (OEF) and, also, strengthen the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led international security assistance force (ISAF).

However, this deployment is largely a short-term effort to fill the gap in NATO requirements which remain unfilled by our allies. It falls far short of the long-term strategy that is necessarily for lasting success in that country. And it appears there will still be a significant shortage of trainers and mentors for the Afghan national security forces.

At the same time, there are predictions of explosive growth in Afghanistan's poppy fields this year. Economic development continues to lag. Official corruption is still widespread. The authority of the central government remains limited. And terrorist safe havens in Pakistan continue to thrive, at a time when internal instability in that country has been on the rise.

Challenges in all these areas contributed to a record level of violence in Afghanistan last year. If not handled more effectively, I am afraid the security situation in Afghanistan will continue to deteriorate.

Be clear, there have been some truly impressive gains made since 2001. However, any gains could quickly vanish if we don't capitalize on them.

While our NATO allies and our partners must certainly do more, the U.S. must lead by example. We cannot expect our allies to step up if the United States itself does not demonstrate a strong commitment to the success of the Afghanistan mission.

The U.S. effort needs to be commensurate with the importance of our goal to ensure that the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan are destroyed for good and Afghanistan will never again become a safe harbor for terrorists.

Gentlemen, we look forward to your testimony. This could very well be one of the most important hearings of the year and we are anxious to hear what you have to say.

We must do our best to make things better and to make things successful in Afghanistan. We need to hear your thoughts on that.

Ranking Member Duncan Hunter, welcome back.

STATEMENT OF HON. DUNCAN HUNTER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this very, very critical hearing. This is an area that you have focused on for an extended period of time, and lots of other members of this committee, and one which is becoming increasingly crucial to the American mission.

This hearing builds upon testimony that this committee received from Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen last month, and it is especially timely considering the President's recent decision to deploy 3,200 U.S. Marines to Afghanistan to support counterinsurgency operations and train the Afghan police and army.

I would like to recognize our witnesses, who each bring a unique perspective to today's hearing. So, gentlemen, your testimony offers

an important outside assessment of the security challenges and opportunities facing Afghanistan.

Now, in 2001, the United States and our allies from around the globe came together under Operation Enduring Freedom to take the fight to our common terrorist enemy and, in particular, deny al Qaeda safe haven.

Today, in Afghanistan, approximately 11,000 U.S. military personnel continue to serve under the Operation Enduring Freedom banner and are responsible for conducting special ops missions and training the Afghan military.

Additionally, 15,000 U.S. troops serve as part of the International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, which is a NATO-led coalition of 41,000 forces from nearly 40 countries, responsible for conducting nationwide security and stability operations.

And, Mr. Chairman, those figures are important because they reflect that even with the operations in Iraq and the continued leadership, world leadership of the United States in the war against terrorists, even with those burdens, we are supplying roughly half the forces of the free world in the Afghanistan operation, and, personally, I think that reflects an anemic response from America's allies.

Over the last six years, our collective efforts under OEF and ISAF, along with those of the Afghan people, have produced tangible results. A nation that suffered from war and economic deprivation for nearly three decades now has a democratically elected government in which women are represented.

Better access to health care is now there. Signs of improved infrastructure, such as newly constructed roads and education facilities are manifesting themselves. And, today, I am interested in hearing your thoughts on how we sustain and expand these gains.

A stable and modern Afghanistan is important to the Afghan people, America and the international community, but achieving that end state has been hampered by distinct challenges.

During the last year, the security situation has declined, particularly in the south. The insurgents have altered their tactics, increasing their use of suicide and roadside bombings. Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters continue to find sanctuary in the hostile terrain along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, allowing for cross-border infiltration.

Poppy cultivation in Afghanistan continues to rise, reaching its highest levels last year. So I am also interested in your perspectives and recommendations to improve the international effort to mitigate these challenges.

Also, General Barno, given your experience serving as the commander of the U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2005, and I am interested in your thoughts regarding the evolution of counterinsurgency operations, particularly in eastern and southern Afghanistan.

Some consider U.S. troops to be capable of conducting counterinsurgency, while NATO forces are not capable of these very same operations. It is my understanding, however, that U.S. conventional troops, such as U.S. Marines in Al Anbar province, hone their counterinsurgency skills by executing, by doing, by what you might call on-the-job training.

And, therefore, it is my belief that our NATO and coalition partners must not shy away from engaging in the counterinsurgency fight. In fact, joining the counterinsurgency battle is the only way for NATO to build this important capability.

Finally, I want to express my strong concern about the apparent unwillingness that I mentioned of some of our NATO allies to uphold or increase their military commitments to the NATO-led ISAF mission. Also, some allies restrict their forces from certain geographic and operational missions in Afghanistan, effectively hamstringing our commanders on the ground and forcing them to waste time and energy in developing cumbersome workarounds in order to get the job done.

Our 25 NATO partners must seriously consider the possible adverse impacts of heavily caveated commitments. Also, I note that two-thirds of our allies do not commit two percent of their gross domestic products to defense, and two percent is supposed to be the minimum level of defense spending for NATO membership.

So it seems to be that not meeting this minimum requirement and not providing sufficient or sufficiently flexible forces to Afghanistan should have some consequences for these nations.

NATO, as an alliance, is capable of doing more and should be doing more. Toward that end, I recently wrote a letter to all 25 ministers of defense, encouraging them to identify and provide the maximum number of troops, military resources, and civilian support to Afghanistan or risk losing access to defense contracts offered by U.S. taxpayers.

It is my hope that our partners will step up to the task at hand.

In closing, success in Afghanistan, defined as a stable and moderate nation, is vital for Afghanistan and for the common security interests of the U.S. and our allies. NATO nations and our other international partners should join the U.S. and make every effort practical to give the people of Afghanistan the foundation and tools they need to maintain security and stability.

And, last, Mr. Chairman, to go back to this fact that while NATO allies seem to have a problem in cumulatively all together coming up with enough forces to meet that 3,000 troop requirement in southern Afghanistan, they have no problem in marshaling their lobbyists to come over here and try to get pieces of American defense contracts that otherwise would be undertaken by American workers, the very workers who send on the average of 1,000 bucks a year out of their paychecks in taxes for the defense function of government that supports the defense of the free world.

And, you know, gentlemen, we continue to hear the term "interoperability" as a compelling reason for allowing our NATO allies to have big pieces of the U.S. defense budget, so that we can interoperate. And, yet, when we have an opportunity to interoperate, it appears that sending troops becomes mission impossible for a number of the NATO allies.

So I would like to have you comment on that, whether this interoperability is really something that exists or simply exists in rhetoric as a prelude to the acquisition of defense contractors by our NATO allies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A very timely hearing and I look forward to the testimony.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

At this moment, I submit for the hearing record a recent letter, dated January 16, from Dr. Anthony Cordesman, with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, to our committee on the subject presently before us.

Without objection, that will be made part of the record.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 97.]

The CHAIRMAN. Before calling and starting with General Barno, I must express my deep concern, and I hope you gentlemen will address it. Should there be a failure in Afghanistan, heaven forbid, but should there be a failure in Afghanistan, and it be apparent that it be NATO's fault or lack of stepping up to the plate, what happens to NATO thereafter?

I have had various conversations with various people, including our counterparts in Great Britain, and I think they have the same concern that I have. And if you would hopefully touch upon that, each of you, briefly, I would appreciate it.

General Barno, we will begin with you. And we thank each of you for taking the time and being with us. You are the experts in this country on that country. So we thank you.

General.

STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. DAVID W. BARNO, USA (RET.), DIRECTOR, NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

General BARNO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Skelton, Ranking Member Mr. Hunter, and members of the Armed Services Committee, thanks for your very kind invitation to speak today on a subject close to my heart—our efforts in Afghanistan.

I would note to the committee up front that I remain a member today of the U.S. Defense Department in my capacity as the director of the Near East and South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at our National Defense University here in Washington, but my views that I present today are my own.

After 19 months of service in Afghanistan, I remain crucially involved, professionally and personally, in working to ensure the success of our long-term undertaking there.

In my judgment, our efforts today in Afghanistan stand at a strategic fork in the road. We have important choices to make this year, choices which will ultimately determine the outcome of this noble and worthy mission.

I should also note a few brief comparisons between Iraq and Afghanistan for the committee. Afghanistan is a landlocked, mountainous agricultural country, with less than 30 percent of its population living in urban areas. It is among the world's poorest countries, with few to no natural resources.

However, in size, it is nearly 50 percent larger in land mass than Iraq, 647,000 square kilometers to Iraq's 437,000. And Afghanistan also contains 4 million more people than Iraq, with a population of 31 million to Iraq's 27 million.

That is important as we look at our relative commitment in each of these countries and the size and the demands of the geography

and the population involved in each place. Clearly, Afghanistan, a larger country, larger population.

We entered Afghanistan in 2001 in the wake of the 9/11 attacks to destroy al Qaeda, to overthrow their Taliban allies, and to help Afghanistan return to the community of nations as a democratic state.

We remain in Afghanistan today to secure these goals, but, also, in recognition of the strategic importance of the region centered around Afghanistan. Our presence there, with our NATO allies, forms a vitally important and stabilizing influence on a volatile part of the world.

Afghanistan stands at the center of an immensely important strategic region. To the [east] is Pakistan, the world's second largest Muslim state and one possibly armed with several dozen nuclear weapons. Its current crisis should give us pause as we reassess our mission in Afghanistan, a mission with implications that extend well beyond Afghanistan's borders.

On the northeast border of Afghanistan is China, a power with growing regional energy and transportation interests.

To the north of Afghanistan lie three former republics of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, nations always feeling the pull north from Russia and east from China. And, finally, to the west, Iran, a growing regional power whose intentions remain suspect.

Mr. Chairman, this tour of the map sheet around Afghanistan clearly paints the picture of a region with major strategic importance to the United States and one in which we must continue to exert powerful and sustained American leadership.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 107.]

General BARNO. Since your visit to me in Afghanistan, Mr. Chairman, in 2004, much has changed there. Security incidents, defined as reported acts of violence, nationwide totaled 900 in 2004 at the time of your visit. Last year, in 2007, they totaled 8,950 across Afghanistan.

Roadside bombs in 2004 amounted to 325. Last year, 1,469. Suicide bombings, a decidedly non-Afghan phenomenon, totaled three in 2004. Last year, they exceeded 130, a deadly new tactic which has been imported from Iraq.

Total bombs dropped by U.S. and coalition air forces in Afghanistan in 2004 totaled only 86. Last year in Afghanistan, NATO air power, primarily American forces, dropped 3,572 bombs in the country, noteworthy in a war that all of us commonly define now as a complex counterinsurgency fight.

Finally, as you noted, Mr. Chairman, poppy production is on the rise. In 2004, poppy production totaled 131,000 hectares, while dropping to 104,000 in 2005, ballooned once again in 2007 to a new record of 193,000 hectares under cultivation.

These selected trend lines, although certainly not a comprehensive depiction of all the sectors in Afghanistan, are certainly cause for concern.

On the military side of the ledger, we have also witnessed major changes in our approach since your visit in 2004. During 2004, our military forces under U.S. coalition command totaled nearly 20,000,

including typically about 2,000 coalition soldiers from among our friends around the world, operating under an Operation Enduring Freedom mandate, generally with robust counterinsurgency rules of engagement.

NATO back in 2004 comprised only about 7,000 troops, mostly on Kabul and in the northeastern corner of Afghanistan, and those forces were primarily engaged in peacekeeping and reconstruction tasks.

The combined total numbers of international forces in 2004, U.S., coalition and NATO, amounted to about 26,000 all told. Today, international forces in Afghanistan total just over 50,000, with another 3,200 American Marines pledged to join the effort soon.

In the command and control arena, the U.S. three star headquarters, Mr. Chairman, that you visited in Kabul, a headquarters which built a comprehensive civil military counterinsurgency plan that was tightly integrated with our U.S. embassy there, led by Ambassador Khalilzad, that headquarters has now been disestablished.

In late 2006, NATO assumed overall military command in Afghanistan. Our senior U.S. military headquarters today is now a two star organization and it is located once again at Bagram Airbase, a 90-minute drive north of Kabul.

Its geographic responsibility under NATO comprises only Regional Command East, territory representing less than one-quarter of that same headquarters' responsibilities in 2004.

The enemy in Afghanistan, a collection of al Qaeda, Taliban, Hezbi Islami, and foreign fighters, is unquestionably a much stronger force than the enemy we faced in 2004. There are many reasons for this change, but I am afraid it is an undeniable fact. And, of course, this enemy extends in many ways and regenerates itself within the tribal areas of Pakistan.

Mr. Chairman, in the face of these admittedly incomplete, but worrisome trends, I can offer one equation—success in Afghanistan—and I absolutely believe success is attainable in Afghanistan. Success in Afghanistan equals leadership plus strategy plus resources.

Only if we fully commit our best efforts in all three areas—leadership, strategy and resources—and relentlessly integrate these three internally within the U.S. effort and externally within the international effort will we be able to seize the opportunities available to reverse these troubling trends.

Only if we make this a regional effort, most especially connecting Pakistan and Afghanistan in one dimension, will we be able to once again move in a positive direction. And only if we objectively and dispassionately examine both where we have been and where we are today will we be able to correctly shape where we must go.

If we fail to do so, we face great risks, in my estimation, to our prospects for success.

I look forward to being able to expand upon some possible further prescriptions during your questions.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of General Barno can be found in the Appendix on page 51.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, General.

Ambassador Inderfurth.

STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR KARL F. INDERFURTH, JOHN O. RANKIN PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Thank you very much. Chairman Skelton, Ranking Member Hunter, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to take part in this assessment of Afghanistan and especially the opportunity to express my views on the subject of the way ahead.

I would like to begin by commending the committee for taking up Afghanistan as one of its first items of business at the new session. Not only does this reinforce the committee's determination that Afghanistan not become the forgotten war, but I believe it sends a signal to the Bush Administration to put Afghanistan and, I would add, Pakistan at the top of this country's security agenda, where they should have been for the past six years.

Unfortunately, Afghanistan has taken a back seat to U.S. military involvement in Iraq and still does. As Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Chairman Mullen told this committee, "In Afghanistan, we do what we can. In Iraq, we do what we must."

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I believe some way must be found to deal with this perpetual problem of Afghanistan being overshadowed by the Iraq war. I hope this committee will do what it can and must to rectify this situation.

Mr. Chairman, we have been asked to provide our views on a number of critical issues facing Afghanistan today. I have done so in my written testimony, which I am submitting for the record. But in my brief oral statement, I would like to call attention to just one—the challenge Afghanistan faces from the use of Pakistan as a safe haven for the Taliban and al Qaeda and the rising level of violence and political instability, as evidenced by the recent assassination of Benazir Bhutto.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are joined at the hip. There can be no successful outcome for Afghanistan if Pakistan is not a part of the solution. Engaging Pakistan is one of the crucial elements of success in Afghanistan.

So what can the U.S. and the international community do about this fundamental issue? First, the future stability of both Afghanistan and Pakistan depends on the development of an effective joint strategy to counter the Taliban-al Qaeda sanctuary in Pakistan's tribal border areas and the expanding extremist insurgency in other parts of Pakistan.

This means working with Pakistan to root out Taliban ideology from its own society and shut down its extremist madrasahs, the religious schools, and training camps that fuel the Taliban insurgency and cross-border activities.

Countering cross-border infiltration is critical. The trilateral Afghanistan-Pakistan-NATO military commission is an important mechanism in this regard. So is the strengthening of the U.S. military presence along the Afghan side of the border.

There is also a need to reduce the level of mistrust that exists between the U.S. and Pakistani military at the operational level.

The appointment of a U.S. special envoy to work with Afghanistan and Pakistan could contribute to tackling these issues.

Washington also needs to convince Islamabad to work more closely in joint counterterrorism operations that can bring U.S. resources, including intelligence and military assets to bear in the border areas.

But I want to caution here that any large-scale U.S. troop intervention in Pakistan's tribal areas would be disastrous for the Pakistani state and for U.S. interests and would not provide a lasting solution to the problem.

A more effective strategy involves working with Pakistan's military to integrate these areas into the Pakistani political system and, once they are secure, provide substantial assistance to build up the economy and social infrastructure, something to which we should contribute, along with the World Bank and others.

Second, the key to achieving the goal of a stable and peaceful Afghanistan is to improve the longstanding troubled relationship between Kabul and Islamabad, including mutual recognition of their still disputed unresolved border. Again, a special U.S. envoy could be helpful in this regard.

Third, over the longer term, the United Nations should convene a high level international conference attended by all of Afghanistan's regional neighbors and other concerned major powers. The goal would be a multilateral accord to affirm Afghanistan's standing as a permanently neutral state, like the Congress establishes for Switzerland.

Such an agreement would provide an international foundation for the eventual withdrawal of U.S. and NATO military forces from a stable and secure Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude by offering one final recommendation for those of you who have not already done so, and that is to see "Charlie Wilson's War," the film. I am sure many members of this committee already know this story, as well as your former House colleague, Charlie Wilson.

The film is certainly entertaining, but it also contains, at the end, a very serious takeaway message. Simply stated, after spending hundreds of millions of dollars to help the Afghan Mujahideen Freedom Fighters defeat the Soviets and the Red Army, we walked away from Afghanistan after the Russians withdrew their forces in 1989.

We left it to Afghanistan and, I would add, Pakistan to pick up the pieces after 10 years of brutal warfare. Funding and high level U.S. attention to help the Afghans face their new challenges of security and rebuilding evaporated.

We all know what happened after that, up to and including 9/11. So this is my point and this is the takeaway message from the movie. We still have time to get Charlie Wilson's War right, for to have, as they say, a happy ending.

We have been given a second chance to do the right thing for Afghanistan and for the United States. I sincerely hope we don't miss this opportunity. This committee has a major role in assuring that we do not.

Of one thing I am certain—without a genuine and long-term commitment on the part of the United States and the international community, Afghanistan will fail again.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Inderfurth can be found in the Appendix on page 62.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Dr. Rubin.

STATEMENT OF DR. BARNETT R. RUBIN, DIRECTOR OF STUDIES, CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Dr. RUBIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member. Thank you for this invitation.

Actually, I believe the first time I visited the Rayburn Building was sometime more than 20 years ago when I came here to see Charlie Wilson during the first part of this problem.

I very much appreciate the invitation, partly because even before I knew of this hearing, I had noted the testimony of Admiral Mullen and commented about it in my Web blog, and I believe that the Admiral was correctly stating the situation as it is, not necessarily as he wishes it were.

That is that from September 12, 2001, the Administration did not put a priority on Afghanistan, still does not place a priority on Afghanistan, and the invasion of Iraq has done incalculable harm to our ability to succeed in Afghanistan.

I won't go into that, I will try to look forward, but that is the reality that we are living with and there is no simple way out of it.

Now, I think that General Barno made an important point, which is the need for a multifaceted, focused strategy which brings together military, political and economic elements. I will talk about that a little more generally, but, first, I want to tell you—just mention something very specific that has recently come to my attention and which I think is indicative of the problem we have, and the people affected may be in this room. I am not sure.

There are some Afghan-American investors and other specialists who have developed a program for the manufacture of textiles, oilseeds and other job creation industries in southern Afghanistan, which is the area with the highest level of poppy production and the most Taliban activity.

After two years of trying to get it funded through U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), they were told that it could not be funded because it would violate the Bumpers Amendment, which is an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) prohibiting USAID from funding anything that might compete with the U.S. and world markets.

I think this is a remarkable example of the failure to align our tools with our strategy and I hope that Congress will look into it. I do not believe that was the intention of Senator Bumpers at the time.

Now, first, why is this so important? There is a common misconception that both of my colleagues have addressed. I want to make it even more specific. The misconception is to think that

what we are talking about is, one, a war and, two, in Afghanistan. That is not what we are talking about.

What we are talking about is a political, economic and military struggle in Pakistan and Afghanistan. I believe in one of his recent writings, General Barno has said the military part of it is about 20 percent.

Therefore, one of the most important things that we can do is to align the international effort, and it is a fully international effort under U.N. resolutions, with the U.N. mission, not just the U.S. and NATO, every other international organization, as well, with the political and economic—align the political and economic parts of it with the military effort.

Now, there is one proposal I would just address now, which is the proposal to appoint a special international coordinator. The reason that this is potentially important, though risky, is that the center of gravity of this struggle specifically is the relationship between the Afghan people and their government, on the one hand, and the Pakistani people and their government, on the other hand.

That is, in a sense, the strategic goal of this struggle is to help those people build states that can provide security. To do that, we have a problem that while we have military there that can clear the enemy out of areas, it is the state of Pakistan and Afghanistan that have to hold those areas, and we have underinvested in police, the justice system and the administration, which is what can hold those areas afterwards.

We have over-invested even, in a way, in elections rather than in police, justice and administration, which are the key.

The way that we deliver aid in Afghanistan and many other places actually undermines that effort, because it puts the money largely outside of government channels and forces the government to divert a lot of its energy to responding to 60 different donors.

The coordinator could be important, particularly if, one, his main function is not to pressure the Afghan government, but coordinating the international actors and, second, if, to do so, he has some measure of budgetary authority over all of the international aid and if more of it were consolidated into a common fund.

That is an important point for Congress, because often in discussions with the Administration, I am told that Congress will not permit the Administration to provide the aid in a more coordinated way, and I wish you would look into that.

On Pakistan, I will just say a few words. As I say, it is a two-nation struggle. Taliban and al Qaeda are based and centered in Pakistan, not in Afghanistan, though they conduct operations in Afghanistan. They are now operating militarily not only in the tribal agencies of Pakistan, but in the settled areas of Pakistan, and have struck at the very heart of the Pakistani political system.

There is no way to succeed in Pakistan and Afghanistan without a partner in Pakistan whose actions in alliance with us are also supported by the main political forces in Pakistan. Unfortunately, today they are not, because the military regime of General Musharraf lacks legitimacy in Pakistan today.

And a key question for the future of our effort is whether there will be an election in Pakistan whose outcome the people of Pakistan will accept as legitimate and whether those who win those

elections will actually be able to govern rather than being subject to restrictions by the Pakistan military, as has been the case in the past.

That will be the condition for their ability to extend the control of the Pakistani state further into those areas which are now in the tribal agencies and out of its effective governance, which is the key measure that we need in order to secure that border area.

Finally, on the opium question, there was an article by Richard Holbrooke in this morning's "Washington Post" which mentioned me and I endorse the point of view in that article. Opium drug production is a tremendous problem in Afghanistan, but it is the result of insecurity. It is not the cause.

It has migrated to those areas along the Pakistan border where the Taliban are most active.

Second, the way to combat it in a way that is compatible with our goals is not crop eradication. The problem in Afghanistan is not the farmers earning money. The problem is the 80 percent of the drug economy that goes to dealers, traffickers, processors, terrorists, Taliban and corruption.

We need in our drug policy to win the support of the people of Afghanistan, including farmers who are now growing poppy, for their government and for the effort that we are making together with their government in order to break their links with the traffickers and others who are profiting from the drug economy.

And if we proceed down the road we are now going, which is to pressure the Afghan government to undertake a much higher level of eradication of the crop, that is an attack on farmers' livelihood, rather than addressing the roots of the problem in insecurity and corruption, I am afraid that we will—rather, integrate counter-narcotics with counterinsurgency, we will make counter-narcotics into a recruiter for the insurgency.

Done properly, counter-narcotics will give Afghans what they have been demanding—more security, more development, the removal of corrupt power-holders. But done improperly, I am afraid it will contribute to many of those negative trends which were summarized by General Barno and also by Mr. Cordesman in his testimony.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Rubin can be found in the Appendix on page 78.]

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Rubin, thank you very much. And, gentlemen, thank you.

I would like to ask just one question before I call on our ranking member and the other members.

General Barno, it is in regard to your recommendation about a three star headquarters being reestablished, American headquarters being reestablished.

How would we go about that? How would that be integrated into the NATO structure, if at all? We had it, it seemed to work. And if you had the magic wand, how would you reestablish that and make it a success?

General BARNO. Mr. Chairman, let me answer that by describing what I thought was probably the best profile of comparative advantages, if you will, between NATO and the U.S. during the time I

was there, and that occurred right before I left in the spring of 2005.

At that time, NATO was going through its various phases of expansion around the country and they had gotten to what they called phase two and the phase two expansion, the picture looked like NATO having ownership of the northern half of Afghanistan and the U.S. and the coalition having ownership of the southern half of Afghanistan.

I think a version of that could be looked at today, although I still subscribe to the idea that NATO has overall ownership here in Afghanistan.

In this model, in 2005, NATO played to its comparative advantage. It played to its ability to do stability operations or peace-keeping operations in the north, which was a more benign area. The U.S. and the coalition played to its comparative advantage, which was robust counterinsurgency operations across the southern half of Afghanistan, which was the contested area.

And so I think in each case, the alliance and the U.S. elements within were playing to what each of them did best. The headquarters itself in Kabul had the great strength, the U.S. three star headquarters, of being connected to the American embassy there in a way that was the engine of the overall integrated effort, both the military and embassy working hand in glove.

I went to meetings every morning with Ambassador Khalilzad there. I lived on the embassy compound. And we had an integrated political, military, economic, social, security strategy for Afghanistan. And that doesn't exist today, of course, because there is no American headquarters with the same functionality for the embassy to link into.

So I think that as I look backwards in time, that was a picture that was about right, in my judgment. It produced a lot of capability that kept each of the different elements in areas where they were very effective, NATO in the north in stability operations, coalition, Americans in the south focused on counterinsurgency.

I think today, if you were to consider reestablishing that, physically, I think, there needs to be an American headquarters in Kabul that connects into the embassy and potentially connects into the Afghan government and the other elements going on there to help be an engine within the international effort.

I think our ambassador and our senior U.S. military commander need to be the engine that helps the international effort be effective. And today, if we do have a special envoy being appointed, Paddy Ashdown or someone else, he may be the senior civil element in the 80 percent international. Clearly, the ISAF commander will be the senior military commander.

But beneath them, I think there is a layer that ought to be an American engine helping to drive that forward. And, again, just looking backwards, without trying to prognosticate to the future, I think the picture I saw that worked the best was that picture at about phase two, with NATO focused on the north, perhaps with a deputy looking at that, U.S., perhaps American deputy with a headquarters focused on the south.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony. I think that some of the recommendations that you have made, especially, Mr. Ambassador, that we must try to fix Pakistan in some way in terms of bringing that border area, that no man's land into an integration with the mainstream in Pakistan is a long, long bridge to cross.

I mean, you have got a remote area divided by politics, by lots of tribal crosscurrents and by massive geographical challenges. And the idea, also, of trying to seal up that porous border with those rugged mountain ranges and canyons, mountain ranges up to 18-19,000 feet, all of the physical challenges that that brings, I think that is a very, very difficult thing to accomplish.

It is easier to say than it is to accomplish. And so the borderlands is not an easy fix. You have got 100,000 troops there right now, including, as I understand, the division that they moved over from the Indian border, which is supposed to have some level of competency.

I guess, General Barno, for you, the one question I would like to ask is this: what is the pressure point that we have been trying to use to move the NATO allies, the 25 recalcitrant allies, let us say maybe 20 recalcitrant allies, with a few that are fairly strong, to participate in this operation, because obviously the decision to move the 3,000 Marines into the southern operations is really basically a result of a failure to bring even an anemic response from the allies in participating there.

So when our leadership sits down with the NATO defense ministers, what is the point of leverage? Is this simply jawboning or a few speeches in between the courses?

I get to the point where I think that the NATO boys are spending more money on catering than they are on military operations in Afghanistan. But have we really been exercising any real attempts at leverage in terms of bringing about participation?

General BARNO. Well, sir, I am not sure I have got a good answer for that. I know that as I have watched the reporting on our interactions with NATO over the last six months, and Secretary Gates, in particular, and his various visits there, I think our outlook publicly and our rhetoric has changed a bit and I think it has changed, to some degree, in recognition that there is a limited amount of political will within NATO to do more, certainly in the south.

I think as I traveled around Europe last year, what I heard in visiting various NATO countries was that the populations in those countries, in their own mind and in the minds of their government, had not necessarily signed up to go to Afghanistan to fight a counterinsurgency war against the Taliban.

In their mind and I think their governments', to some degree, in many cases, viewed that they were going to Afghanistan to do a peacekeeping operation of sorts, and that was the degree of political support they had.

Now, that is untrue of the people fighting in the south, clearly, in terms of the British, the Canadians, the Dutch, but many of the nations that are in the north, they are in the north because their populations are, it would appear, only willing to be in Afghanistan to do something other than combat operations.

So I think it would take a fairly significant change in their perceptions about the purpose of NATO in Afghanistan, in the case of these members, the purpose of those NATO members in Afghanistan to take on the combat mantle.

Several nations have done that. We should be very impressed by what, I think, the casualties certainly in the fighting that the British have been involved with, that the Canadians have been involved with, but there are a number of other NATO nations, as you well know, that have not been willing to go to the south and, in my judgment, it appears it is because their populations are not necessarily willing to do that.

Mr. HUNTER. And, General, don't we have a leadership problem? If you have got—if, in fact, we are in this global war against the terrorists and we have a major forum for that and the center of that struggle is Afghanistan, the idea that we are not able to impress upon the leaders of the NATO membership that this is, in fact, a war of enormous consequence to them, it is kind of remarkable.

Are we working this thing at the high level to show them the big picture that we feel that we understand?

General BARNO. I can't speak personally for the degree to which we are doing that. What I read is clearly that that is a major effort the U.S. is undertaking.

But I think that those countries themselves, the leadership in those countries have a responsibility to make that case to their people. Their national leaders have got to make the argument why the Afghanistan effort is an important strategic arena to be involved with and why there is an extraordinary threat that is emanating from there.

Mr. HUNTER. Okay. I guess bottom line, then—and, Mr. Chairman, thank you for the time here. Bottom line, then, do you think we are making the strong case to the NATO leadership? Do you think U.S. leadership is making the strong case to the national leadership of the NATO member?

General BARNO. I think we are, yes.

Dr. RUBIN. May I comment?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, please, Doctor.

Dr. RUBIN. I believe it is fundamentally mistaken to blame the NATO allies for what is going on, for the problems in Afghanistan.

Mr. HUNTER. Well, Doctor, hold on a second. I am not blaming them for what is going on in Afghanistan. I am blaming them for not being able, among 25 member nations, to comprise a force of 3,000 required troops in the southern piece. That is roughly 100 people apiece.

And the idea that the NATO membership can't come up with 100 soldiers apiece is quite remarkable.

Dr. RUBIN. Well, first, I just want to say that Canada's casualties in Afghanistan are proportionately higher than America's casualties in Iraq.

Second, there is, indeed, as you say, a failure of the—

Mr. HUNTER. And Canada is doing a good job in the south.

Dr. RUBIN. Yes.

Mr. HUNTER. But there are only a few people in the south working, as you know.

Dr. RUBIN. But the failure of leadership, I am afraid, is in Washington. I myself have gone to many of the NATO member countries trying to argue with the members of parliament and so on that they should increase their commitment to this important operation, which I have been working on myself.

I can tell you people in other countries around the world do not want to cooperate with this Administration and this Administration has not made the case for American leadership, and that is one of the main problems that we are facing in Afghanistan.

And there is a limit to how much you get by bullying and threatening them about defense contracts.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Mr. Chairman, may I also—

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, Mr. Ambassador.

Ambassador INDERFURTH [continuing]. Inject a comment, perhaps a diplomatic comment into this discussion?

In my written testimony, I have attached a recent poll, in June of 2007, by the Pew Global Attitude Survey, which shows you the problem we are facing, and that is the attitudes of the publics of the countries that we are working with about whether to keep troops there or to take them out.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 70.]

Ambassador INDERFURTH. And only two countries listed, and you can see this in the testimony, in only two countries is there a majority of those of the publics saying keep the troops there, and that is the U.S. and the U.K.

So there is a public support problem that all of these nations have to address.

I am a little bit encouraged by the fact that as we are approaching a very important NATO summit in Budapest in early April, that a number of the leaders, world leaders, I think, recognize that they have to do more to convince their publics that they are in a fight with us and that it is in their interest to be there.

You have had visits to Kabul in the last several—at the end of December by Gordon Brown from the United Kingdom (U.K.), France's president, Sarkozy, Australia's new prime minister, Kevin Rudd, Italy's prime minister. Canada has just issued its Manley's report.

I think there is a growing recognition among world leaders that they have got to do more to inform their publics about the stakes involved in Afghanistan and I think this is leading up to a very important summit in April in Budapest.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Ortiz.

Mr. ORTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you so much for our witnesses that we have today.

Last week, the Terrorism Subcommittee hosted a briefing with special forces who recently returned from a mission in Afghanistan.

The team members stated that the alliance of the locals is tied to commerce, basically who is perceived as winning, and I think that is human nature. You go with whoever you think that is winning the war.

But they also acknowledged the importance of reconstruction on winning the hearts and the minds of the Afghanistan people. We

know that operations in Iraq are consuming most of the resources, equipment, money, and readiness, and the U.S. strategy only to do what we can in Afghanistan reminds me of the statement that was made some time back by the secretary of defense—you go to war with the army you have got, not with the army that you want to go with.

I think that what we are going to have to do is work [it out so] that the majority of the resources be committed to counterinsurgency or to reconstruction. And I think that one of the problems we are having now is that we just don't have enough troops.

I mean, how are we going to be able to do that? And I think this is having an impact on readiness, it is having an impact on retention and recruitment, because when we send young men and women to war, they want to be sure that they have got the equipment, their families are taken care of, and I think that we are lacking.

So maybe you can answer that question. Where do we go, operations or to reconstruction? Where do we put the money or the manpower?

Ambassador INDERFURTH. I don't think there is a choice. I think we have to do both. I think we have to do more operations. I think that the focus on security is a precondition to being able to do reconstruction.

So security is key. I think that there have been some important steps in the right direction of late. I think the decision to send in the 3,200 Marines is an important step.

Secretary Gates, when he was in Kabul, on his last visit, said that the U.S. would see an increase in the Afghan national army, which is key to success there, from 70 to 80,000, and that the U.S. would support that.

In the past, actually, Secretary Rumsfeld had recommended that those numbers be reduced to 50,000. So we are heading in the right direction. There has also been a \$7.5 billion increase in U.S. assistance to Afghan security forces, including the police, by the way, which is in need of even greater need of support right now than the army. They are in a terrible state.

So security is absolutely essential. But if that doesn't also lead the way toward a greater degree of construction, reconstruction, you will see in my written testimony that the head of the Army Corps of Engineers says there needs to be a construction surge in Afghanistan, construction surge. That is the right kind of surge right now in Afghanistan.

And so more money has to go there. Afghanistan has been underfunded, undermanned, and given less attention than it has needed, and that is one reason that we are in the state we are today.

So I think that it is both security and construction.

Dr. RUBIN. If I could just elaborate a little bit what we mean by security. General Barno mentioned that Afghanistan is tied for last place as the poorest country in the world. I don't know if everyone fully appreciates that.

It is tied for last place with Burundi and Sierra Leone in terms of its income.

Now, its government is also in last place in terms of the amount of taxes that it collects. It has tripled its tax collection since this

intervention. It now collects five percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in revenue. That means it has an extraordinarily weak government, which is not even present in most of the territory.

The most important thing we can do is help Afghans strengthen those governmental institutions, the army, for one, but equally or even more important, the police, the justice system, and the administration. We have lagged behind very badly on that.

Finally, no matter how well we do within Afghanistan itself, it will ultimately be a stopgap measure as long as the situation in Pakistan continues to deteriorate and the Taliban and al Qaeda continue to have their headquarters in Pakistan.

Mr. ORTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The gentleman from New York, Mr. McHugh.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, welcome.

Dr. Rubin, I couldn't agree more with your very last statement about the realities, and it is been endorsed in the comments of your two colleagues, about the need to integrate our approach in Afghanistan with the problems we now face in Pakistan.

Mr. Ambassador, you mentioned that you felt it would be a grievous error for us to introduce troops into the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA). I assume you would make that statement. And I don't want to assume, so I will ask you.

Of course, the official Musharraf position, and I would assume any possible successor, would have that same position, is to tell us not to come in. But if that were to change, if Pakistan were to welcome, if that is the right word, U.S. forces present in Afghanistan, whether it is in Swat or FATA or wherever, would that change your position?

AmbassadorINDERFURTH. Well, one thing we are dealing with is the fact that the United States has only a 15 percent favorable rating in Pakistan. We have got a real problem there in terms of Pakistani support for American efforts.

The government is actually more supportive of our efforts than the Pakistani people. I think we can turn that around, but it is going to take some time and including demonstrating to them that we are fully behind free and fair elections on February 18 in their country.

But I think that the military connection, the fact is, I mean, this is coincidental, but we have just seen in Islamabad today Admiral Fallon, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) commander, meeting with the army chief of staff, General Kiyani. They are talking about military cooperation.

I think what we need to do with Pakistan is to work with them and their armed forces in a cooperative way. We can't inject ourselves unilaterally or with large numbers of troops, but we can find ways to cooperate with them. We can actually have greater intelligence and military training, assistance, military equipment.

We have been providing a number of things to them. They have got the 80,000, 100,000 troops along that border area. We have been providing things like night vision goggles and the rest.

Unfortunately, there has been—I mention this in my testimony—a level of mistrust that has developed between the U.S. and Pakistani military, because they have to turn in those night vision goggles for accounting purposes every 30 days, at least that was the last report that I heard.

We need to work more closely with them. We need to have more of the International Military Education and Training (IMET) training. We need to get closely connected with them to address not only the issue of the cross-border infiltration into Afghanistan, but what is a spreading insurgency in Pakistan itself, out of the tribal areas, into the settled areas, as they call them, into Swat. A lot that we need to do there.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you.

General Barno, I have been to Afghanistan and up in the mountains with the 10th Mountain Division and been to Pakistan, but I don't think anybody has a better on-the-ground perspective, at least in this hearing today, than you do on the circumstance.

Do you feel, given the realities, the historical lack of control in that area, whether it is Shah Massoud or any other of the warlords, that Pakistan has in the near term and, by that, I will say the next decade, a reasonable chance to get control of those areas where none has ever existed? Do you view the frontier corps as a plausible approach to this? What is your perspective on that?

General BARNO. I think Pakistan is going to have to assert further control in those areas. In the near term, in the next several months, I think with the turmoil in Pakistan recently, the military has been very focused inwardly toward the settled areas, toward the urban areas, maintaining stability inside of Pakistan during this time of some degree of confusion and uncertainty.

So I think that that will limit their ability to be effective in the tribal areas in the near term.

However, as the year goes on and, presumably, as things stabilize, I think they are going to have to turn their attention to more effective counterinsurgency efforts in those tribal areas.

I am hopeful the U.S. can assist with that. I know Admiral Fallon, prior to this visit, has been there and has discussed the possibility of additional U.S. trainers and assistance and support to help work with the Pakistani military to improve their counterinsurgency capabilities, because as you know, they were very focused for their entire existence on the major conflict with India as their primary focal point.

They had not spent any time in counterinsurgency. In fact, the regular army in Pakistan had never been in the tribal areas in the history of the nation until 2004, when they conducted their first offensive out there. And those were very uneven in performance and outcome.

They sustained a lot of casualties, they inflicted a number of casualties. But counterinsurgency is not something that is, I would argue, one of the core competencies right now as a military. So I think we are going to have to work with them very carefully to grow their capacities and to help make them, with their support and a mutual effort, more effective in counterinsurgency efforts to be able to reassert control in these areas, because the areas I think

are probably more problematic today than they certainly were three or four years ago.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Lieutenant General Barno, I was curious. You said if several factors occur, then you would have success in Afghanistan. I would be curious to hear how you would define success in Afghanistan and I would be curious how the other two members of the panel would react to your definition.

General BARNO. I have actually sketched out a few thoughts on that that I can share. One is I think success equals a stable, sustainable Afghan government that is broadly representative of the people of Afghanistan.

Second, I think, regionally, success equals Pakistan stabilized as a long-term regional partner, friendly to the United States and in control of its military and its nuclear weapons.

Third, I would say having regional states around Afghanistan confident about U.S. staying power and commitment as their partner in a war on violent extremism in the region.

Fourth, I think the Taliban and al Qaeda defeated in the region and denied useable sanctuary in this part of the world and that further attacks against the United States and our friends are prevented.

And then, finally, I think a final objective defining success would be a NATO presence that is recast into a sustainable set of objectives that NATO can be able to be a part of over the long term in Afghanistan.

So that is a few ticks, I think, in terms of what success might look like.

Mr. TAYLOR. Dr. Rubin.

Dr. RUBIN. Well, just to refine that a little bit. A government in Afghanistan, to be stable, is going to require foreign assistance for a long time. It always has required foreign assistance for as long as it has existed within these borders.

For that foreign assistance to stabilize it, there must be a political agreement among the major powers and the regional powers to support the government and not to support other armed contenders for power.

Therefore, there has to be some kind of regional security arrangement of the type that Ambassador Inderfurth was talking about. Our forces there may be necessary to stabilize it, but whether our forces are stabilizing or, in the long term, destabilizing depends on how they are perceived by Afghanistan's neighbors.

If they perceive our forces as using Afghanistan as a base for destabilizing others in the area, such as Iran, or for power projection into other areas, such as central Asia, then they will not want U.S. forces to play a stabilizing role.

So it is not only about what we can do to them, but also how we relate to them politically. It is ultimately a political issue.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Ambassador.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Well, I would agree with those definitions of success. I do want to say one thing, that success does not

mean, in my mind, a narcotics-free Afghanistan. We are not going to see that.

We can see a turning of the corner on that problem. It keeps going up—92 percent of the world's opium comes out of Afghanistan and maybe higher this year. It is becoming a sole source supplier to the world.

That corner has to be turned, but it will have to take years to do it. Thailand took decades to reach their point of moving away from a reliance on narcotics. Alternative livelihoods took years to take hold.

So it is not going to be a narcotics-free Afghanistan and it is not going to be an insurgency-free Afghanistan. There may be long-term Taliban elements, extremist elements. But taking into account the ability of the international community and the United States to have a long-term commitment, including the kind of foreign assistance that is necessary, including a continuing effort to make the region of Afghanistan, as I mentioned in my remarks, one that will ensure neutrality for that country.

There are a lot of things that can be defined as success, but it is not going to eliminate all the problems we see today.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Bartlett, please.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much.

Just a bit before we went into Afghanistan, I was privileged with a small congressional delegation (CODEL) to go visit the king of Afghanistan in his village just outside Kholm. It just happened that our visit coincided with the visit of about 10 of the tribal leaders who had come there to see the king of Afghanistan.

We went next to Turkey and perhaps the most insightful discussion that I have ever had was with a deputy prime minister there, who pointed out that the northern alliance, the tribal leaders, if we assisted them, that the Taliban would collapse within 30 days. Now, it didn't collapse in quite 30 days, because we weren't very aggressive in the kinds of weapons we gave the tribal leaders and the northern alliance.

What has happened to those tribal leaders and the northern alliance, which was powerful enough then to overthrow the central government, the Taliban, and are they a resource that we can employ to help bring stability to Afghanistan?

General BARNO. Well, I will let Dr. Rubin talk to part of that, but I know, during my tenure there, that many of these tribal leaders have now become integrated in the political establishment. Some are in the parliament. Some of them, the chief of staff of the army is one of those tribal leaders that was one of the generals under Ahmad Shah Massoud.

So there is quite a bit of that leadership still present and, generally speaking, in legitimate arenas of political life there. Again, many of them have been in the electoral process. So they are out there, but they are not a bloc in the same way that they were seven, eight, nine years ago, although they are still very influential, especially in the northern half of Afghanistan.

Dr. RUBIN. Well, I would try to just summarize a very complex question. First, I don't think it is accurate to say that the northern

alliance defeated the Taliban. I believe that what happened is the Taliban decided to retreat in the face of U.S. air power and that the northern alliance then occupied the territory, and that is why the Taliban were in a position to make a comeback after going to Pakistan.

Second, the northern alliance never entered the parts of Afghanistan where the insurgency is taking place today. It had nothing to do with the change of power in those areas. In those areas, it was basically a tribal struggle in which some of the Pashtun tribes took power from the Taliban and then became integrated with the government.

So as General Barno said, different figures who were in that alliance have now assumed different roles, but we are now at a point in the development of the struggle in Afghanistan where uncoordinated paramilitary forces that can occupy ground, but not govern, are not really what we need in order to succeed. What we need is more effective government institutions.

Mr. BARTLETT. How long has it been since there was a stable central government in Afghanistan to which all of the people felt allegiance?

Dr. RUBIN. Well, I can't answer for what is in people's hearts, but in 1978, there was no organized armed opposition to the government of Afghanistan. And since that time, there has been one form or another of armed opposition to the government of Afghanistan operating on the territory of Afghanistan and also with support from neighboring countries.

Mr. BARTLETT. What changed that incited this opposition?

Dr. RUBIN. What happened basically was at that stage of the Cold War, due to many geopolitical factors and some internal ones in Afghanistan, rather than both supporting the government, as they had for the previous several decades, the United States and Soviet Union and their allies began to support different contenders for power, with the result that you had a proliferation of various armed forces which undermined the ability of the government to control the territory.

And we saw it at the time as an ideological struggle between communism and the anticommunist Islamic forces, but it had a fundamental structural effect, which was that the administration and army of Afghanistan collapsed and instead power was exercised by these various militias in different parts of the country.

And we are now still trying to pick up the pieces from that process of the destruction of the state in Afghanistan.

Mr. BARTLETT. There is an old saying that adversity makes strange bedfellows. Was it a common enemy that united them that now doesn't exist?

Dr. RUBIN. A common enemy helps, but so does a common flow of funding. At that time, there was one flow of funding from the Soviet Union going to the government, one flow of funding coming from the U.S., Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia going to the opposition, which, nonetheless, was somewhat fragmented.

As soon as the Soviet Union dissolved at the end of 1991 and as soon as the U.S. disengaged, the structure of the conflict changed very radically and it instead became multi-sided and factionalized rather than bipolar.

Part of the problem we are having, as I mentioned today, again, is the way that assistance is provided and including military assistance through the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) structure is not always helpful in consolidating and making the Afghan government itself more coherent.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The gentleman from Arkansas, Dr. Snyder, please.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wanted to ask just one question and get each of you to comment. We will start with you, Mr. Ambassador.

We currently are involved in two shooting wars, Afghanistan and Iraq, both of which depend on the military operations well at the same time the reconstruction efforts go well in order for us to ultimately be successful.

There has been an increasing amount of discussion for the last months, year or so, about this topic of interagency reform and how Secretary Gates made his speech a few weeks ago at Kansas State about the terrible underfunding in the State Department, the civilian side of things.

Would each of you comment on how you see the issue of the relationship between our military and our civilian side, now, we are talking about just U.S. components of this, and things that—obstacles that may be built structurally into our system of administration that is delaying the achievement of the kind of results we want in both Afghanistan and Iraq?

Mr. Ambassador, you go first and then down the line.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Well, that is a terribly important question. I think that Secretary Gates's address in Kansas was one of the most important ones that I have heard him give and I think he has given several, but that whole issue of what I call the "Pop-eye syndrome," the strong right arm fueled by the spinach is exactly what we see in the anemic left arm.

Our efforts to compete with the military requirements in terms of funding and resources on the diplomatic reconstruction side is just overwhelming and I think that there needs to be, as Secretary Gates said, a great deal more attention given to the whole issue of how our government is structured.

The State Department tried with a new office for reconstruction post-conflict resolution. It has never been well funded. It has never been given the attention that it needs.

I think that we fundamentally need to look in this environment that we are in where the kinds of wars that we fight, the kind of conflicts that we are involved in do require a joining of both military and civilian components so that the civilian side can get the same kind of attention and funding that the military requires, as well.

This is a very important issue that I hope that the committee can look into, because we are not doing well there and we are not very well organized. We have been talking about the fact that the international community has finally recognized that it needs a high envoy, Paddy Ashdown apparently being the choice, although I think that there are some questions in Kabul about exactly what mandate he will have.

I think we need to have a higher level U.S. official responsible for Afghanistan within the U.S. Government. General Lute is trying to do what he can at the National Security Council, but that is not integrating all of the civilian side of this.

So I think that there should be a high level appointment within the U.S. Government to bring our efforts to bear, military, civilian, reconstruction on Afghanistan.

General BARNO. I think it is interesting to do some relative size markers, of course, and we hear this often between defense and state and I talk to military alliances about this quite a bit.

The total number of deployable military forces out there, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, well over a million, within the Army, over 500,000, the vast majority of the number of deployable forces, individuals. State Department foreign service officers, which is the deployable part of the State Department, although there are some other segments, as well, is about 6,500.

As the military folks like to say on occasion is that all of them would fit on one carrier battle group and could sail away out there, and that is the entire State Department worldwide deployable force of foreign service officers.

So there is probably a capacity problem there that we run into in manning PRTs in Afghanistan and growing larger embassies in conflict zones. So that size is one part.

I think the funding aspect clearly is a factor of 10 to 1 or so with Defense Department, as well, and that has an impact. But I think, also, the culture is important. The culture of the State Department in the 21st century, in an environment where the diplomatic end of this has got aspects of being a prosecutor of parts of the conflict or being a partner with the military in prosecuting these conflicts, we have to work at the culture of what State Department officers do in the field.

They have got to be able, in Afghanistan or in Iraq, the two current cases, to partner with military officers who are trying to prosecute a very complex counterinsurgency campaign in which, as we have heard several times, only 20 percent of the effort is military. The other 80 percent is going to have to be led by probably someone outside the military, and that is not part of how we train or develop our State Department officers today.

So I think we have to look at that aspect, the culture of what the 21st century State Department officer needs to look like.

Dr. RUBIN. Well, I do agree. There is a severe imbalance on the civilian side of our international relations apparatus, it has been underfunded and downsized in many respects in a way that is very harmful to our ability to prosecute this type of effort.

That is particularly evident on the aid side, where the downsizing and privatization of the aid apparatus has meant that in a situation like Afghanistan, we have a very small number of professional employees who are basically reduced to the role of contract administrators, trying to—and then bringing in primarily U.S. contractors who have no experience operating in this kind of environment and then spend a lot of money on subcontracting and so on in a way that is generally considered by those on the ground to be extremely wasteful.

So we do need to professionalize our aid system much more and, to some extent, of course, we face that problem on the military side, with the growth of private military contractors, as well, though that is not as big a problem in Afghanistan as it is in Iraq. It still is a problem.

If we are going to address our national security needs, we need to have a government that is capable of doing that in an accountable way.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

And I want to thank you three gentlemen.

Dr. Rubin, the reason that I—you and the ambassador, your comments about the fact that we are not getting more help from NATO because the leaders of those nations, for whatever reason, don't seem to feel a closeness to this Administration. I believe I understood you correctly.

In 10 or 11 months, there is going to be a new President, whether it be a Republican or a Democrat. I want to ask you—I have got two questions. I will be very quick.

Do you think that the next President, if it is a he or a she, that if they put Afghanistan on the front burner, understanding—I think one of your answers to Mr. Snyder was that what we need over in Afghanistan is a high level position for a person even above the ambassador's position to try to get a handle on a direction for Afghanistan.

Do you believe that if that could be done in the first 90 days of 120 days of the new Administration, that we could start down the road of getting these other countries to understand, as Mr. Hunter said, the war on terrorism and how important Afghanistan is?

Dr. RUBIN. Well, as I said, I have visited many of these countries, Spain, Italy, U.K., Canada, Germany, Norway, Sweden, by the way, Turkey, all of whom have troops in Afghanistan, and I have discussed this with some, not, of course, at the highest political level, but with some of the professional level, and there is definitely—they are all very much looking forward to our Presidential elections and there is definitely a hunger for U.S. leadership that they can trust and rely on.

And I think that the next President, let us say there are approximately three candidates who look like realistic possibilities right now, I think all of those individuals are such that they would likely benefit from a tremendous bounce from not being the current Administration and that many countries around the world would want to do something to try to rebuild the relationships with the United States, they have said that to me, and that this would be one arena in which they could do so.

Ambassador Inderfurth. I think that Dr. Rubin's remarks are right. I would add, though, in terms of my suggestion for a—the U.S. should appoint a special U.S. envoy, again, it should be Afghanistan and Pakistan and working with those two countries, both to deal with the military insurgency requirements, working closely with NATO, working closely with the leaders of both countries and their militaries, and, also, trying to do something about these longer term issues, about how to resolve the longstanding dif-

ference which are both historical and ethnic and the rest between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

So I think that a high level envoy—I wouldn't suggest that that person supersede the U.S. ambassadors in those two countries, but that that person would have full-time attention to this issue, because, again, I think that these two countries are truly the central front in the war on terrorism and we need a high level person with authority and backing and direct access to the President to work on it.

Mr. JONES. General, let me ask you a different question, because time will go very quickly.

How many security contractors are in Afghanistan? How many are American companies and how many are foreign companies, do you know?

General BARNO. No, I can't answer that, Congressman, I am sorry.

Mr. JONES. The reason for that, Mr. Chairman, I know that time is about up, I met recently with a former—well, a Marine who was with a foreign security company and his comments to me—he gave me a two-hour report, that there are things going on in that country as it relates to security forces that are not good for the image of what we are trying to achieve in that country.

I intend to take this gentleman before the right Members of Congress, whether it be a Senator or a House Member, and ask them to meet with him, because I was very disturbed by what he told me is happening as it relates to many of these security forces in Afghanistan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Smith, the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Barno, I want to focus in on two of the three points you had there, leadership and resources.

I guess as we were just talking about a little bit, I think one of the major struggles right now, aside from the just inherent difficulties in Afghanistan and Pakistan, is getting the rest of the world, or at least our allies, to sort of see the issue the same way, get on the same page, and—well, have us get on the same page. I am not implying they need to come our way, but get broader agreement amongst our allies so that we can maximize the resources that are available to deal with Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well, and all of the elements that we have talked about: diplomacy, infrastructure, the need for troops, because it just seems to be, as was mentioned in the testimony, about how only two of the countries that are present in Afghanistan currently have popular support for that presence.

And there are a lot of different reasons for this. When I was over there, one of the focuses was it is okay if we are doing counter-insurgency with Afghanistan, but we don't want to get—one of the quotes I received from someone from another country was “dragged into the global war on terror.”

And our perspective is, well, whether you want in or not, you are in. But somewhere along the way, we have sort of lost a message

that everyone can say, "Yes, this is clearly what we are fighting, we are with you, let us work together."

I have had a number of conversations with folks in Great Britain, that they have reexamined this issue. They want to dump the whole global war on terror phrase. They don't think it is helpful. They don't think it works. And sort of reexamine how we fight what it is that we say we are fighting, al Qaeda.

And certainly whatever disagreements may exist about Iraq, you look at the situation, clearly, al Qaeda, the Taliban, that is what threatens not just the U.S., but much of the civilized world, and yet we can't get that civilized world, if you will, sort of on the same page.

So I am curious what your thoughts are in terms of how we exercise that leadership. Certainly, a new President shuffles the deck, gives us an opportunity. But when we move into that phase, how do we take that opportunity? What is the way to get at least our NATO allies, but preferably a lot of moderate Muslim states, as well, more on board?

So take a stab at that and then I will just throw a quick comment out on resources and if any of you want to comment on this. I think it is fair to say that our resources in Afghanistan, whether diplomatic or military, are not going up significantly as long as we are spending \$150 billion, \$160 billion a year in Iraq, and have 130,000-plus troops there, and that is the plan for the foreseeable future.

I am curious about your comments on that, if I am right about that, or if not, where we find the resources.

So in the tiny amount of time you have, take a stab at the leadership and resources issue, along those lines. I would appreciate it.

General BARNO. I think I would start by saying I am less optimistic that any change of Administration, be it Republican or Democrats coming in in 2009, are going to suddenly change the calculus for our allies in Europe.

As I travel around and I talk to militaries in various countries in Europe and I talk to some of the civilian leadership, I sense that their reluctance to get more involved in Afghanistan has less to do with the current Administration than it has to do with just tremendous aversion to being involved in combat operations of a type that don't directly, in their view, in the population's view, affect their countries, and I think they are very extraordinarily sensitive to casualties.

I was at one defense college in Europe last year and I had two of their officers in uniform get up. One asked me the question, "How can you Americans send your soldiers out on an operation knowing that some of them might not come back?" And another one asked me the question or made the comment that, "The first thing in our mission statement for our nation," and he was talking about Afghanistan, "was that we will bring everyone back from this operation." Everyone has to come back from the operations. In other words, no casualties.

And so as I listened to two officers in uniform make those comments to me, I became very unsettled about what the prospects for this country and some of the others that it represents were for prosecuting further operations in Afghanistan.

So I think that there is an underlying thematic in Europe that I seem to detect that views Afghanistan much differently than we in the United States view Afghanistan. We are there, at least we originally came there because of 9/11. We are remaining there because of that, because of the threat that still represents out there. But somehow that doesn't, from my experience, doesn't seem to resonate nearly as well in Europe.

So I am concerned about that and how you either energize or re-energize their view of this in a different way is something I don't have a good answer for right now.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Quickly, Ambassador.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Well, in terms of the resources, I would just call attention to a statement that the Iraq study group made in its report, where it said it is critical for the United States to provide additional political, economic and military support for Afghanistan, including resources that might become available as combat forces are moved from Iraq.

This committee knows much better than I do the difficulties of funding all of these objectives that we have right now with two wars, but I think that there is a consensus that people looking at this say we need to do more, including as we draw down some of our commitment in Iraq, and hopefully we will be able to do that.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The gentlelady from Virginia, Ms. Drake.

Mrs. DRAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here today.

I was on a CODEL this summer that did visit Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan. So it was quite an experience for all of us on the trip.

I did think, in Pakistan, that the U.S. embassy employees were phenomenal. I mean, I just have never been on a CODEL where the people seemed as engaged and I just wanted to comment on how impressed I was by them.

But the thing that always came back to us in Afghanistan was the poppy crop and why we were in Afghanistan spending the money, the effort, the human life, and not able to get our hands around the poppy crop and the flow of money to the Taliban.

And, Ambassador, you just made a point that this is going to stay for a long time. When we were in Pakistan, we asked the Pakistani senators that we met with about the poppy crop and they said that they had been successful in eradicating a lot of their crop and we asked them to help Afghanistan to find out if there is some way that they could do that.

And the second thing that was so glaring, of course, and you have mentioned it, are the ungoverned areas. And it almost made you want to say either go in there and govern that area or give it up so that somebody else can go and provide the security.

So I guess I still just don't believe that we can't do something about the poppy crop and the flow of money and alternative crops for those farmers to grow there.

And I truly didn't leave there thinking it was the farmers making all the money from the poppy. It is the middleman and how we deal with that issue.

So any comments you have on that, I would truly appreciate it.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Well, I will defer to Barney Rubin on the narcotics issue, because I think he has studied that as much as anybody that I know and has addressed many of the same questions that you just had.

Dr. RUBIN. Well, thank you. First of all, the comparison, the way that Pakistan eliminated opium, poppy cultivation in Pakistan was by pushing it into Afghanistan. And Pakistan, of course, you have seen it is a very poor country, but it is much better off than Afghanistan.

There is no comparison. Afghanistan, again, it is the poorest country in the entire world outside of sub-Saharan Africa and it is poorer than almost every country in sub-Saharan Africa, not just in low income, but all the things that you need to produce income, it is not just a matter of other crops, such as roads, financing, agricultural extension, and, most important, security.

You cannot take legal crops to market if you cannot travel on the roads. That is the situation in the most insecure parts of Afghanistan. That is not a problem for drug traffickers.

So, basically, it comes back to the security problem and those areas of Afghanistan that are now relatively secure, actually, poppy cultivation has decreased.

There is still a major problem with drug trafficking and corruption that is related to it and it is the people—associated with the government, not the Taliban, in those areas who are getting the profit from it.

But it is primarily a security issue and a development issue. It cannot be dealt with through military or coercive means primarily.

General BARNO. If I could make one additional comment. I think one of the things we have to be careful about with the focus on counter-narcotics is not to look at it as a single issue of focus, that it is part of an integrated picture in Afghanistan and it relates, very quickly, to the economics in the country.

Unlike Iraq, Afghanistan is an agricultural country. It has no natural resources. It doesn't have an oil industry. It doesn't have infrastructure. So the majority of the people in Afghanistan are involved in agriculture.

Yet, the agricultural sector has been utterly destroyed over the last 25 years and has not been rebuilt, despite episodic attempts to do that by the U.S. and by the Brits and others. The agricultural sector in Afghanistan is still largely dysfunctional, which means that the economy that affects most of the people of Afghanistan is largely dysfunctional.

In my judgment, unless we make a major effort to rebuild the legitimate agricultural sector and measure our effectiveness against acres of crops, of legitimate agriculture that are planted instead of crops of poppy that are planted, which pushes you toward eradication, we ought to be counting how many acres in Afghanistan every year are growing and the number of legitimate farms and working agricultural sector approaches that are going on there.

That is what the country's economy is going to be based on and we really haven't done enough to rebuild that, and I think that is going to be a fundamental part of the ultimate success or failure of the country, whether that agricultural economy works in a legitimate agricultural arena, which it doesn't today.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. And I would just add, in terms of agriculture, as I understand it, going back to an earlier question, I think we have six agricultural experts assigned to Afghanistan right now. The numbers are just dwarfed by the other concerns.

The CHAIRMAN. You will soon have several Missouri National Guard farmers that will add to that and they are due to arrive, I believe, February–March. I would just point that out and take a good opportunity to brag about my Missouri National Guardsmen.

The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the panel.

General Barno tells us that in 2004, there were 900 security incidents nationwide in Afghanistan. In 2007, there were 8,950.

The ambassador, I think, pinpoints the reason for this spike when he says “The future stability of both Afghanistan and Pakistan depends on the development of an effective strategy to counter and uproot the Taliban-al Qaeda sanctuary in Pakistan’s tribal border areas.”

If one looks at the short-term future of Pakistan, it seems to me there are three possible scenarios. The first, although I think it is the least likely, is the survival of the Musharraf regime into the indefinite future.

General Musharraf has, at best, an ambiguous record in recent years with respect to his desire to control the FATA.

The second possible scenario would be the—and I hope it is the least likely—would be a hostile jihadist-type government taking over in Islamabad, which presumably would be supportive of the terrorist activities in the FATA.

The third possible scenario, the most likely one, is this: that a new government does take place, whether by election or some combination of election and popular will uprising, and the Musharraf regime comes to an end.

If we assume that is what happens and there is a new government after Musharraf that is not a jihadist government, but a different government, what incentive do the leaders of that government have to become aggressive in FATA and shut down al Qaeda and the Taliban?

If they were talking to their constituents about Pakistan and said “We are going to commit money and people and resources to flush the Taliban out of the FATA,” what justification would they give to the Pakistani people to do that?

Ambassador INDERFURTH. I will take a first effort here. I think the justification is I think the vast majority of Pakistani people are moderates. They do not want to see the establishment of a theocratic state, a jihadist state.

They have seen what has happened in Afghanistan. They do not want to see the Talibanization of their country.

Mr. ANDREWS. If I may—how probable do you think Pakistani citizens think that is, given the relatively isolated geographic nature of the violence? I know it is spread into the settled areas, but do you think they think that is a real threat?

Ambassador INDERFURTH. No. I do not actually think they think that this is a real threat now. But to President Musharraf’s credit, in a speech that he gave in January 2002, a nationwide address,

he said that the greatest threat to the country is from within, extremist forces on the rise within Pakistan.

He identified the problem then.

Mr. ANDREWS. As I think Dr. Rubin—I think he uses the term “illegitimate” to describe the way the Pakistani people see Musharraf’s leadership. So that is the position of a leader who seems increasingly illegitimate.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. He actually had 60 percent approval rating before he sacked the supreme court justice and since then it has been downhill. And the Pakistani people, I believe that they are—the majority of them, are moderates. They want to see the establishment of a representative democratic state.

I think the February 18 elections are very important. It is very important for the United States to signal in every possible way, including from a very able ambassador in Islamabad, Ambassador Patterson, who has just been mentioned, very important that we are on the right side of speaking to those issues.

But it is also very important that the United States not be seen as trying to micromanage Pakistan’s political future. We need to indicate where we stand on principals, but not try to make our way through this.

But of your three scenarios, the least likely, I think, is the takeover of the government by a radical jihadist movement. That may be well into the future, but I think these other options are more likely.

Mr. ANDREWS. I sure hope so.

General, what do you think the incentive would be for new leadership to get control of the FATA?

General BARNO. I think it will be a challenge for them. I think one of the problems we have today is that the Pakistani populace, and I very much agree with Ambassador Inderfurth’s assessment of their moderate nature, is that the population sees this as America’s right. They don’t see it as Pakistan’s fight.

Mr. ANDREWS. That is my concern.

General BARNO. And I think that we have got to work with this new leadership to convince them that it is all of our fight and that this is a risk to them and their survivability.

Mr. ANDREWS. Do you think they believe that now?

General BARNO. I think the population is ambivalent about the threat, but I think the leadership could be convinced of that and I think it is a very logical argument and there is certainly a lot of history behind it being—

Mr. ANDREWS. What could we do to help change that tide of public opinion within Pakistan? How do we contribute to that effort in a positive way?

General BARNO. I think, in part, probably through how we target our aid programs might be a way to look at that, including education.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Barno, I want to extend greetings—

General BARNO. Good to see you.

Mr. WILSON [continuing]. West Point classmate, state Senator Wes Hayes of Rock Hill. I want to thank you for your service at Fort Jackson, helping provide opportunities to young people to serve our country.

Also, as we discuss Afghanistan, my perspective, the 218th Brigade of the South Carolina Army National Guard is currently at Camp Phoenix and throughout the country training the Afghan army and police units.

There are 1,600 troops. It is my former unit, led very ably by General Bob Livingston, 1,600 troops. It is the largest deployment from our state since World War II. And so our state has developed a keen interest in success and victory in Afghanistan.

I also have the perspective—I am the co-chair of the Afghan Caucus. I have been to the country five times and the people are so impressive.

What I am concerned about, General, is that having visited the police training facilities, having met the very brave people who volunteer to serve as police, what is the status of the police that you helped create? And I am concerned about the pay, if it is a disincentive to corruption or incentive for corruption.

General BARNO. I am probably not fully up to the very most current information on police, but let me give you several thoughts, Congressman.

It is terrific to see you once again. I spent a lot of my life in South Carolina and enjoyed my tour there immensely at Fort Jackson.

The police program I think is a success story that is still to happen in Afghanistan in many ways. We made a strong argument in 2004 and into 2005, during my time, to shift the management of that over to the military and the embassy combined as opposed to having it managed by a very small element within state.

But I also think that there are misconceptions abounding on the police training programs in Afghanistan. The police in Afghanistan aren't the police we see on the corners in Washington. They are in a counterinsurgency war. They are the front line of defense in this war in many cases.

They have to be armed with AK-47s and sometimes rocket launchers and machine guns, because they are fighting the Taliban, not simply petty criminals on the street corner.

So I think that the training programs have got to account for that and they have got to build a program for the police, which I think is underway, that gives them many of the same capabilities and many of the same mentorship opportunities that the Afghan national army has done so well with.

If the Afghans, whether police or military, are given the right training with the right weaponry and have Americans or our allies standing shoulder to shoulder with them as mentors, they will hold fast under difficult conditions.

And to the extent which we can import that idea into the police program, I think it will have prospects for success, perhaps even better than it does today.

Mr. WILSON. Ambassador Inderfurth, I had the privilege several weeks ago, sadly, of visiting with Prime Minister Bhutto at her home for breakfast. I also visited with President Musharraf.

I share your view that we need to be working with the Pakistani army. The military is professional. I was really disappointed to find out that, as you specifically identified, the night vision goggles, that is no way to treat a partner.

Are there other suggestions that you can provide that we can work more closely with this army, which is truly facing the enemy today?

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Let me get to you on that. Let me talk to some people. I would like to give you a considered response to that, and I am glad that you picked up on that.

This is terribly important. This is the key to rising the level of trust between the two militaries.

Mr. WILSON. And, indeed, it has been cited, they have 100,000 troops on the border with Afghanistan. They indeed are taking casualties. The insurgency has spread backward into the Swat region. This just needs to be addressed.

And, again, I just appreciate all of you being here and this country is—the country of Afghanistan is so important to the security of our country.

Thank you.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Could I also mention that I spent time at Fort Jackson in basic training, which was a little bit different perhaps than some of the other experiences there.

Mr. WILSON. And I also want to commend you. I am glad to see someone from Charlotte, which is greater Rock Hill, is doing well. Thank you.

Dr. RUBIN. May I add?

The CHAIRMAN. Please, yes.

Dr. RUBIN. The Pakistan military does have professional characteristics as a military organization, but it also has some very unprofessional characteristics, such as staging coup d'etats and rigging elections.

And the fact that it has done those things is a reason that the people in Pakistan, generally speaking, do not share the regard that some of us have for the Pakistan military and the key to our being partners with them is assuring that the military within Pakistan plays its professional role in a way that the citizens of Pakistan consider to be legitimate.

Mr. WILSON. And one point on that. I did visit with the Pakistani military Muzaffarabad in the earthquake recovery and I was very impressed at their professionalism, but it does need to extend beyond coup d'etat.

Thank you.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. And the Army chief of staff, General Kiyani, has just issued an order that Pakistani military are not to have contacts with the politicians, which may be a step in the right direction.

The CHAIRMAN. With that, we thank the gentleman.

Mrs. Davis, the gentelady from California.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to all of you for being here.

And I must say you certainly, I think, have set the right tone for this hearing. I returned two days ago from Afghanistan and I guess one of the meters that I would use, having been there in the past

and been able to travel certainly on an envoy into the city, into Kabul, that we were not able to do that this time and, in fact, in many ways, in terms of the efforts going on there, it seems to be left to the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), because it is not secure enough even for embassy officials to be able to travel easily and do the work that they clearly want to be doing.

I wanted to just turn for one quick second, because I also—and I think that Mr. Abercrombie will certainly address this in terms of the impressions of our NATO counterparts.

And we did have an opportunity to speak with a few of them on a CODEL and, in some ways, their responses actually surprised us, I think, just a little bit.

It is not that they were interested in going—increasing their troop levels or changing the caveats of where they can fight and under what conditions, et cetera, but that they seem to understand the long-term struggle, and they felt that there were other non-kinetic ways in which they wanted to be asked and to be engaged further, and, clearly, that is something that they can do, but I think that there was a different tone that we weren't expecting there.

On that note, I just think that we haven't necessarily brought our public in, as well, to what this long-term struggle means and the fact that we can't have short successes, that it is a long struggle.

Could you help me out with one area? Having looked at inter-agency coordination, the importance of our PRTs and we have worked with them on Mr. Snyder's committee, on Oversight and Investigation, we have looked at a lot of the PRTs.

We had a chance to visit our PRT in the Panjshir Valley and, also, the Turkish PRT, as well.

What impact do you believe the PRTs are having on the ground, particularly in those areas that are less stable or were less stable and that we have—what impact are they really having?

And I would just question one additional issue in terms of "Charlie Wilson's War." How would you see unintended consequences perhaps for the future and would those PRTs have any role in a positive or negative way in the future?

General BARNO. Briefly on PRTs and then perhaps a bit on your second question.

I think, you know, when I first arrived in Afghanistan, there were four PRTs in Afghanistan. There are over 25 there today. There are different models in different nations out there and some of those are much more effective than others.

I am a big fan of American PRTs. I think American PRTs have a very good model and are focused on getting outside the wire and working closely with the provincial governments.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. I am looking for the measures of success. And how are we measuring that?

General BARNO. That is a very good question and I think if you dig into it, you will find that there has been resistance to establishing a common metric of success or measurement of effectiveness for the PRTs, mostly driven by our allies that are out there on PRTs, that there is a reluctance, at least there [are] reports I have

heard six months or so ago, to establish a standard by which everyone would be held accountable.

I would encourage us to take that step. I think that is important or you can't tell if you are having effectiveness and you can't tell a good PRT from a bad PRT, which I think needs to happen.

On your second point there on unintended consequences, I was at a dinner last night and one of the members of the group was a brigade commander who had just returned from Iraq recently and he said—he was out in the Anbar province area and he said that the biggest change, in his estimation, in Anbar, that was the tipping point there to success in this tribal awakening, was when we changed our message in Anbar from “Don't worry, we are leaving” to a message of “Don't worry, we are staying.”

That is the message that we have got to send in Afghanistan, we have got to send in Pakistan, we have to send in the region. The common question I got in Afghanistan over and over again from Afghans of all stripe was “You Americans aren't going to abandon us again, are you?” going to the “Charlie Wilson's War” outlook at the end of the movie.

And that is a tremendous concern that is always right on the tip of people's tongues, the tip of their issues out there, that we have got to reassure everyone there that we are staying.

Many of them viewed NATO as our exit ramp and we have got to disabuse everyone there of that notion and recognize that we and NATO are there for the long haul and send that message.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you very much. I was trying to just get a response from either of our guests, if you wanted to comment.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Well, that latter point, convincing them that we are staying for the long haul is also going to play into Pakistan. Right now, there are those in the Pakistani government that are playing a double game.

They do not fully believe that we will be there and the whole idea of going into this borderland areas, which, as Congressman Hunter said, this is going to be a tough, long-term thing, unless Pakistan recognizes that we are going to actually stick with them, then they are not going to be able to make that full commitment themselves to deal with this, because once we leave, then they are back to square one.

So a long-term resolve, a long-term commitment for both Afghanistan and Pakistan is essential.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Dr. Rubin.

Dr. RUBIN. Briefly, PRTs, of course, are not solely military units. They are, in fact, designed to provide a security perimeter for political and economic activity in insecure areas.

One of the problems with them is that because they are under national commands, their aid budget and political staffing also comes, generally speaking, from the nation under whose command they are and there is no rational strategic reason for distributing resources that way in Afghanistan.

One of the poorest provinces in Afghanistan, Ghowr has a PRT which is headed by Lithuania, and I welcome Lithuania's contributions, certainly, but Lithuania does not have the kind of aid budget that you need to help Ghowr province and the aid budgets to the

PRTs, despite the good faith efforts of many military commanders, are not institutionally integrated into the aid coordination structures.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, appreciate that.

Two areas. One would be, is the Karzai government doing the job in terms of the antinarcotics, of going after landowners and the upper echelon of the food chain? It is one thing to eradicate sharecropper poppy crops, but to go after the folks who insist that the crops be grown on those properties, is that government going after those?

And the other question would be, how much of Pakistan's military attention is still spent on India and the issues on their eastern border? How does that play into what is going on with the Pakistani military?

Ambassador Inderfurth. I could take the latter question about India. The fact is that there has been a long period of time now where the relations between India and Pakistan have been calm, stable and progressing in a positive way.

I think that the—we saw in 2001–2002 the border between the two countries, a mobilization of over a million people, a million soldiers, because of the attack on the Indian parliament. That period then has been replaced by both what we call front channel and back channel communications, including President Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and back channel intermediaries, trying to find a way to walk away from that past history that has caused three wars in their 60 years and two over Kashmir.

So I think the military concerns right now in Pakistan are far less with India than they have been in a very long time and, therefore, far more focused on what is happening in these northern tribal settled areas.

Dr. RUBIN. If I may. I think we should have—to address the issue of the Karzai government, it is very difficult for the Karzai government to take on powerful figures who have been armed and funded by the United States in order to fight the Taliban. So let us be realistic about what has actually gone on.

And I even know of cases where President Karzai has wanted to do something and has not been able to do it for that reason. I believe that has changed in the past several years, but, again, remember, the Afghan government, as I pointed out several times, is extraordinarily weak. The justice system does not work and the police do not work.

And in order to have access to most of the territory, the Afghan government relies on political alliances with local power holders who actually control the territory, many of whom are involved one way or another with drug trafficking.

You can't use law enforcement against something that is equal to one-half the size of your whole economy. Law enforcement is used against marginal activities.

So in a way, we need a political solution to the drug problem in Afghanistan, just as we do to the insurgency.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, Mr. Rubin, what is your political solution?

Well, in the time left, how would you get the Taliban and al Qaeda out of the ungoverned areas, if you were president?

Dr. RUBIN. You are asking me?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yes, sir.

Dr. RUBIN. Well, I think that the strategy for doing so is to support the programs which have been proposed by the leading Pakistani political parties to politically integrate those areas through a process which they have laid out which has support in those areas themselves.

There is no immediate military way of doing that that has a likelihood of success and I think that is the reason that even most military figures to whom I have spoken do not advocate a primarily military-led operation to gain control of those areas.

On the first question about the political settlement of the narcotics issue, I do have a lengthy report coming out on this which will be available in a couple weeks.

Let me say that the political goals should be, one, to win the allegiance of those in the population who are economically dependent on the drug economy, but they are not the main profiteers from it; second, to offer legitimate options for those who have been profiting from the drug economy, but want to move out of it and into legitimate activity; and then, third, in that context, to use as many instruments as we can, in particular, for the destruction of heroin laboratories, the interdiction of drug trafficking and removal from political positions of people whom we know to be involved in drug trafficking.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman from Texas.

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

What I have heard this morning is that our success in Afghanistan is dependent on our success in Pakistan. Could you briefly tell us why and—well, I will start with that.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Well, the principal reason right now is that, as the National Intelligence Estimate, in July, that was released, the key findings was that al Qaeda has reconstituted itself in these border areas of Pakistan and we have seen for some time a resurgence of the Taliban with a safe haven in Pakistan itself.

They are working together. The insurgency that they have crossing the border is placing the Afghan government and our forces in southern Afghanistan at risk. The militancy, the extremism that al Qaeda-Taliban represents is spreading through the tribal areas into other parts.

There has been a migration of tactics used in Iraq into these areas, the suicide bombings, the assassinations, including, if our CIA is correct, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto.

So it is dealing with that threat of al Qaeda-Taliban in the Pakistani border areas that is placing both countries at greater risk and that is why they have to be dealt with.

Mr. JOHNSON. And that threat cannot be eradicated by military means.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. By military means alone.

Mr. JOHNSON. So we have got to focus our—

Ambassador INDERFURTH. It has to be a comprehensive strategy that deals not only with the military threat, through intelligence,

through military assets, working cooperatively with the Pakistani government, working cooperatively with, I mentioned, the trilateral commission of Afghanistan, Pakistan.

Afghanistan and Pakistan have to work on this together, too, and there is that trilateral commission that will allow that to take place. We have to enhance that and, again, the appointment of a U.S. special envoy could be a key part in raising the availability and the viability of that mechanism.

So that is what we need to do.

Mr. JOHNSON. Okay. I would say, first of all, we should not lose sight of the fact that the very military in Pakistan with which we are working against the Taliban is the same military that put the Taliban in power and supported them for many years and that they did so for strategic reasons having to do with India, which is partly in response to the question about India.

Even Pakistan's activities that are not directly directed at India are part of an overall strategic vision that the military has, which is focused on India.

We have a tendency to think that the rest of the world is seeing things the way we do in terms of the threats we identify, terrorism in this area. For Pakistan, the big threat is India. The big threat to Pakistan in Afghanistan was not extremism as represented by the Taliban, but the idea that India might get a toehold or, before that, the Soviet Union, which is considered to be closer to India, on Pakistan's northwestern frontier.

So long as the military still has that India-centric focus and regards the tribal area as a platform for covert operations to balance its much larger foe, India, which it has been doing since 1947, we will have a problem.

I would assume that dynamic has changed, though, within the Pakistani leadership regarding Afghanistan.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. I believe it has.

General BARNO. I am skeptical about that. I still think that that is a critical core component of how the Pakistani military thinks and I think one of the things that inadvertently happened when the U.S. announced in 2005 that we were turning the effort over to NATO and, later, at the end of the year, we announced we were actually going to withdraw some combat troops, that the Pakistanis, in my opinion, absorbed that as the Americans were moving for the exits and then they had to make sure that their back door was protected inside of Afghanistan.

I was at a conference earlier, last year, where a senior Pakistani general made the comment that we really need to get out of this counterinsurgency business and get back into major war fighting, that is what militaries ought to be doing, and that is still a very important cultural content of their military.

The diplomatic relations with India are significantly better than they have been in many years, but the military, I think, still views this a bit differently and is very reluctant to put their apples in a counterinsurgency basket focused on the tribal areas.

They had very severe results, very negative results, in many respects, from their fighting there in 2004 and they are not enthused about going back and fighting there again, because it is not the core of their capabilities.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. May I explain my answer? Because I gave a more positive response to whether or not there has been an attitudinal change. I said, yes, I believe there has been, in this way:

The Pakistani military and their leadership recognize that there has been a blowback on them by supporting the Taliban during that period, as well as jihadist groups in Kashmir. These are coming back to attack them and they realize that.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Hawaii, Mr. Abercrombie.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I have here a copy of the report you will be receiving probably today or tomorrow. This is the result of a congressional delegation that I headed as a result of a visit to Afghanistan on another congressional delegation we went on, Iraq and Afghanistan.

We went to Europe to speak with NATO folks and the French and German colleagues with regard to Afghanistan. Obviously, I don't have all the time to summarize that for you, but suffice to say that with regard to two particular areas, the PRTs and the growing of poppies, hopefully this will lead us to some perspective that might reflect on the testimony you have given.

I cannot fathom how we can even begin to think that we are going to deal with this poppy situation with the eradication policy that we have right now. Total failure, nonsense.

The only way you can deal with this eradication is if you do it in what I would call a scorched earth approach involving tens of thousands of troops, absolutely wiping it out, controlling the area militarily and then instituting a crash program of some kind, which you have alluded to, about agricultural alternatives that don't even exist.

There is not a single landfill in Afghanistan. Hydroelectric capacity is, at best, diminished. There are no cooling facilities, drying facilities, transportation facilities associated with alternative agriculture.

I can't see it. We talk about being there for the long run. I have no idea what that means in practical terms. I am the chair of the Air and Land Subcommittee. We are going to deal—I have to make recommendations to the chairman shortly with regard to working with the Readiness Subcommittee with regard to what we are going to do with the Army.

I have to have a summary right now, the mission of the National Guard has completely changed. We don't have a National Guard in this country anymore. It is just an adjunct of active duty operations. We don't have any troops, we don't have any readiness, we don't have any capacity, and now the dollar has sunk out of sight and we are in the middle of a recession.

This discussion seems to me to be totally beside reality. What I want to know is—and I would appreciate it particularly from Dr. Rubin's point of view—why don't we buy the poppy crop? Why don't we buy it and use the—and give the money? If we subsidize agriculture in this country, we subsidize biofuels, we subsidize everything else, why don't we buy the poppy crop, turn it into a pharma-

ceutical derivative of one kind and another and use the money to begin to try and, particularly in the south, start developing an alternative agriculture system, which, according to the PRT people that I talk to, would be welcome, that there are markets for it in the Emirates.

Afghanistan has a reputation of being agriculturally—has terrific possibilities, but you have to have the infrastructure. So if you are going to use the PRTs and you are going to address the poppy problem in the immediate, why not buy the crop and turn it into pharmaceutical activity of one kind and another and begin a comprehensive infrastructure implementation for alternative agriculture, developing markets and so on through the PRTs?

What do you think, Dr. Rubin?

Dr. RUBIN. Well, first, I just wanted to recall something—thank you for that question—something that I mentioned earlier, which is that we have to work on the demand side for agricultural products, as well as the supply side. And as long as we have a Bumpers Amendment that—

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I missed what you said.

Dr. RUBIN. There is what appears to me—I haven't been able to investigate it, but there was a rather promising project for creation of a textile and oilseed industry in southern Afghanistan.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Yes.

Dr. RUBIN. Which USAID said it could not fund because it conflicted with the Bumpers Amendment, because the products—

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Yes, I understand that. I have discussed all this with the AID people.

Dr. RUBIN. Now, the problem with offering to buy the poppy crop is that only three percent of the land in Afghanistan is now planted in opium poppy. If you say you are going to buy all of the crop, then everyone will plant that.

Even if you bought it, no matter how big the legal crop was, there would still be an illegal crop. However, there is a very good idea in that people which you mentioned, which is the question of agricultural subsidies, price supports and so on.

Farmers in Afghanistan, in fact, are asking for that. I haven't evaluated—

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. That is why I brought it up.

Dr. RUBIN. Yes. In Helmand, for instance, which is the leading area where opium poppy is grown, it used to be a major cotton producing area and some of the infrastructure is still there and could be rehabilitated.

So there might be some potential for bringing—for guaranteeing them prices for cotton and other kinds of commercial crops and, in fact, the Afghan government and the U.S. embassy and others in Kabul are working on such a proposal right now and we would like your support for it.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Obviously, I don't have more time to pursue this now. My principal point, Mr. Chairman, is simply to cite that we have to do things in this area, cite agricultural alternatives or cite dealing with eradication or cite dealing with the NATO troops, and ISAF needing a different approach doesn't accomplish it.

We have to have some practical implementation or all is lost there.

Dr. RUBIN. I would like to just add that I am myself a private investor in Afghanistan and with some other investors, I have founded a company for the manufacture of essential oils for perfumes and personal care products.

And from my experience in trying to run a legitimate Afghan agricultural-based industry for the past three years, I can explain to you at length why more people do not do it.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Under present circumstances, I can see it. But you are also there because there is a market, if you had stable security to be able to pursue it. Is that not correct?

Dr. RUBIN. That is correct, but we could use some help on shipping. At the moment, there is no way to ship those products from Afghanistan to the market.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. That is my point.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, gentleman.

Ms. Gillibrand.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to commend you for holding this hearing. The topics of today's testimony are extraordinarily timely, and I have found it very useful.

First, I would like to address the issue of the special envoy and you have all testified that you would like to have a coordinated special envoy with both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I agree wholeheartedly with that recommendation.

If we were able to convince this Administration or even wait for the next Administration to do that, one question I would like your expertise on is, getting America to do it is one thing, but do you think we could ever get the Pakistani and Afghanistan governments to also work together in coordinated operation?

Ambassador INDERFURTH. I do believe that we can do more on that. That relationship has been very difficult to bring together. President Bush actually tried to have President Karzai and President Musharraf to dinner. It was a nice symbolic step, but required a lot of follow-up.

President Musharraf recently went to Kabul to meet with President Karzai and, by all accounts, it was the most productive meeting they have had.

So I think that there is room there for a U.S. envoy to work with both, recognizing that these are their countries, their problem, but to kick up the level of attention and the interconnectedness between the two countries, both on their political difficulties, as well as the military security issues.

So I think that there is an opportunity there and we have plenty of people, I think, that could be called upon that have the trust of both capitals.

I will give one example. General Tony Zinni, people of that stature and that ability I think could be very helpful in this situation.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Thank you.

Dr. RUBIN. I just want to add this is—as long as Pakistan has existed, Afghanistan and Pakistan have been in conflict with each other. There are very serious political issues between the two countries that cannot be solved at a dinner party.

That is why we—and to get them to operate together, whereas they have tended to define each other as threats for six decades,

requires a very serious political effort, not just a professional-level coordination effort.

General BARNO. I would just add that I think the point, whether you agree with the envoy idea or not, in realizing how intractable these problems are, the U.S. has got to, I think, at the military level, at the diplomatic level, perhaps at the economic level, look at this as a two country problem and organize against a two country problem.

We are organized in almost all dimensions on single nation basis. All of our embassies are organized that way. Much of our military efforts are organized that way.

So I think somehow we have got to break that down and come up with a two country solution set for this challenge.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Would you also recommend an inspector general for both countries? Because right now, obviously, we have the inspector general of Iraq and he and his team have done an excellent job in identifying corruption and fraud and trying to prosecute that on the American contractor side and, also, doing thorough investigations in Iraq.

Would you recommend an inspector general for Afghanistan, number one? And would you recommend that inspector general do both countries or have separate ones?

Ambassador INDERFURTH. I would certainly recommend an inspector general for Afghanistan. I think the situation with Pakistan is different. What I do think is required for Pakistan is much greater transparency and accountability for the coalition support fund, the almost \$6 billion out of the \$10 billion total that we have provided Pakistan since 9/11, those funds, nobody knows what they have been spent for and there is no billing and the rest.

That requires a lot more attention.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. And when I was in Pakistan this summer, that is what the general we met with said. He said if Congress can do anything, we have given these folks \$10 billion, with no accountability, no oversight.

So I raised the question with Secretary Gates and he is the one who suggested maybe through the inspector general function, because it hadn't occurred to me to use an inspector general in Pakistan because the role in Iraq is a much more oversight for fraud and corruption and finding misuses of American funds. And so he suggested that.

I wanted your thoughts on whether that kind of structure would work or whether you would recommend some other kind of oversight where we get a receipt back from Pakistan as to where they spend our money or some kind of conversation at least about how they intend to spend our money.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Again, I think the special inspector for Afghanistan would be the right approach, more congressional oversight and making use of our already existing mechanisms within the Pentagon for Pakistan I think would be the best way to proceed.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Thank you. One follow-up question on the crops issue. Obviously, your testimony is that there are some challenges in the way, security being number one. Two, if you do have replacement crops with subsidies and providing the seeds, pro-

viding the business plan about how to make this an effective production of a stable economy.

If you do all that, have you considered other ways to support such a structure besides direct subsidies? One suggestion I would like to give you, as I work on the Agriculture Committee and come from a very rural district, the land grant college system is extremely effective, particularly the Cornell Cooperative Extension program in New York. That is one I am familiar with.

Would you recommend having some kind of facility where we have infrastructure in place to support agriculture, to help these farmers create their business plans? Obviously, you would need to have security first and you have to have roads first and infrastructure.

But do you see that as something that we could have a long-term 10-year investment on?

Dr. RUBIN. Well, first, the opium economy in Afghanistan is not just the crop. The crop part of it is only 20 to 30 percent of it. It is an industry and what Afghan rural families need is not just another crop. They need employment and they need incomes, which does not necessarily have to come from another crop.

So the arguments that another crop is not as profitable are not really valid. Other economic activities are.

Second, of course, we need all of those things, but the main point I think is the one that Rick Inderfurth made, which is that neither the United States nor any of the other donor entities active in Afghanistan has really made agricultural and rural development as much of a priority, and General Barno mentioned this very prominently, as well, as it needs to be in a country like Afghanistan.

Everything you mentioned is potentially part of that program, but with six agricultural experts in the country, we won't be able to accomplish that much.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. In addition to our National Guard, as the chairman said.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

The bill that hopefully the President will sign within the next few days does establish, per this committee, an inspector general for Afghanistan. We thank you for reminding us.

We have two members that have not asked questions. We have a vote on.

Mr. Meek and Ms. Shea-Porter, if you would like to squeeze in before, or we could come back and give you the full time.

So let us give it a shot, Mr. Meek.

Mr. MEEK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief, and I will even slice it in half to two and a half minutes.

Welcome, gentlemen. I am glad that you are here.

As we look at the NATO—I am a member of the NATO Parliamentary Council and there is a great discussion there amongst those of us that serve in the legislative bodies of the long-term plan for Afghanistan as it relates to financing.

I know that we—General, you mentioned earlier that they are wondering if we are going to leave them again, and I think that is the main question not only there, but also in Iraq, because we can't afford to be there as long as we would like to be there and

that is the major discussion that is going on right now as it relates to the economic state of our own country.

The terrorism issue is very, very important to us. So I think that since the EU is there and many of those individuals—I have flown on CODELs to encourage those countries to take part in the Afghanistan effort. EU now has a financial leg of their whole European Union—and I was in Brussels recently—and they are going to be doing all kind of development projects throughout that region, throughout the European Union.

They should take some responsibility, because Afghanistan—financially—Afghanistan is a major contributor to the illegal narcotic flow that is going into their countries.

Do any of you gentlemen see a link of the EU playing a role and the rest of the world playing a role? Because they are definitely doing a lot better than we are doing as it relates to the dollar.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. The answer is the EU does have a role to play. Francesco Vendrell was their special representative, along with the World Bank, along with the United Nations. Again, better coordination among all of these parties would be helpful.

That is why the appointment of Paddy Ashdown or someone to take that lead role for coordination will be very important. And on NATO itself, we have not addressed the chairman's question about the consequences of failure. I think that that would require a full hearing.

I can tell you that in terms of NATO and the coordination issue, there are three reports that will be out within the next 10 days, one by the Center for the Study of the Presidency, Ambassador David Abshire, Afghan study group report, one by the Atlantic Council, one by the National Defense University, all on the subject of Afghanistan, which will be provided to the committee, and they address some of these issues you just mentioned.

Mr. MEEK. Financing.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Financing, as well as the future of NATO.

Mr. MEEK. Thank you.

Dr. RUBIN. If I may, there is another financing issue which I just want to mention that is very important, which is not just for development projects, but how will Afghanistan ultimately support and sustain the security institutions that we are helping the country build, because we are—by necessity, we have instituted a salary structure which is necessary for recruitment, morale, and anticorruption measures, but which, so far, the Afghan government is not going to sustain.

We cannot build up security forces, an educational system and so on, relying on year by year supplemental appropriations from a variety of donors. We need a much better and more reliable system.

Mr. MEEK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Shea-Porter, do you want to give it a shot?

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Yes, and it will only take 30 seconds. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Iran's influence in Afghanistan, on a scale of 1 to 10, economically, where would you put it, 10 being very, very influential for Afghanistan right now?

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Economically?

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Right.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. They have great interests economically with Afghanistan and, actually, good relations economically. The problem recently has been what is Iran up to in Afghanistan to make our life and the life of the coalition there more difficult.

I believe that we should be engaging Iran on these issues, not trying to isolate. I actually worked with them when I was in office in something called the U.N. six-plus-two process. During the bond process, they were actually constructive in that process.

I think we need to find out, with our friends and allies, more what Iran is actually up to and find ways to draw them into the process. We don't want to have Iran as the adversary.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you.

And my question for Dr. Rubin, please, political influence, on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the most influential, where would you put Iran's influence on Afghanistan?

Dr. RUBIN. It is very hard for anyone to influence Afghanistan. I would say maybe four, in the sense that, generally speaking, the Afghan government regards Iran as being a positive force for stability and assistance more than it is a negative force, whereas it has the opposite view of Pakistan.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Several people have not voted. Do you have one more question, Ms. Shea-Porter? Ms. Shea-Porter?

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I am sorry. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. You may have time for one more question.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. The last question is do you think that we need to be working harder, and that was part of it, working harder to talk to Iran about Afghanistan? And you had indicated that you thought we did need to—

Ambassador INDERFURTH. Yes, yes.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER [continuing]. Include them in these conversations.

Ambassador INDERFURTH. That is right, including in any regional approach to Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, the other neighbors, India, China, all have to be part of the solution.

General BARNO. Just a comment. There were ongoing informal discussions with Iran in Kabul between our embassy and the Iranian embassy while I was there and it was noted that they were generally playing, during that era, 2004, 2005, more of a positive role.

I think one of the concerns we have looking forward to the Afghan presidential election in 2009, which is just over a year ago, is what role Iran will play in that election, behind the scenes or in front of the scenes.

Dr. RUBIN. The United States and Iran collaborated very closely in removing the Taliban regime and in putting the current government in place. And in the past couple of years, Iranian diplomats have approached me as a nongovernmental person repeatedly to signal that they would like to engage more with the United States on Afghanistan.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady. I thank you.

And, gentlemen, thanks for your excellent testimony. I wish we had a few more minutes to discuss this all important issue, but it is an excellent way for us to get a start this year on the most important topic, and you have our appreciation.

[Whereupon, at 12:26 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JANUARY 23, 2008

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JANUARY 23, 2008

Testimony of
Lt. General David W. Barno, USA (Ret.)
Director
Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies
National Defense University
Washington, DC

Before the
House Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

**“ASSESSMENT OF U.S. STRATEGY AND
OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE WAY
AHEAD”**

January 23, 2008

Chairman Skelton, Ranking Republican Mr. Hunter, and Members of the Armed Services Committee.

Thanks for your very kind invitation to speak today on a subject close to my heart – our efforts in Afghanistan.

I would note to the committee up front that I remain a member of the US Defense Department in my capacity as the Director of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at National Defense University, but the views I will represent today are my own. After nineteen months of service in Afghanistan, I remain very closely involved professionally and personally in working to insure the success of our long term undertaking there.

In my judgment, our efforts today in Afghanistan stand at a strategic fork in the road. We have important choices to make this year – choices which will ultimately determine the outcome of this noble and worthy mission.

I should note a few brief comparisons between Iraq and Afghanistan for the committee: Afghanistan is a land-locked, mountainous agricultural country with less than 30% of its population living in urban areas. It is among the world's poorest countries, with few to no natural resources. However, in size it is nearly 50% larger in landmass than Iraq – 647 thousand square kilometers to Iraq's 437 thousand – and it has 4 million more citizens, with a population of about 31 million to Iraq's 27 million. Note: Afghanistan is a significantly larger country with a larger population than Iraq.

We entered Afghanistan in 2001 in the wake of the 9-11 attacks to destroy Al Qaeda, overthrow their Taliban allies, and to help Afghanistan return to the community of nations as a democratic state. We remain in Afghanistan today to secure these goals, but also in recognition of the strategic importance of the region centered around Afghanistan. Our presence there with our NATO allies forms a vitally important and stabilizing influence on a volatile part of the world.

Afghanistan stands at the center of an immensely important strategic region. To the west is Pakistan – the world's second largest Muslim state, and one possibly armed with several dozen nuclear weapons. Its current crisis should give us pause as we re-assess our mission in Afghanistan – a mission with implications which extend well beyond Afghanistan's borders. On the northeast corner of Afghanistan is China, a power with growing regional energy and transportation interests. To the north lie three former republics of the Soviet Union – Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan – nations always feeling the pull north from Russia and east from China. And to the west, Iran – a growing regional power whose regional intentions remain suspect. Mr Chairman, this tour of the map around Afghanistan clearly paints the picture of a region of major strategic importance to the United States – and one in which we must continue to exert powerful and sustained leadership.

Since your visit to me in 2004 Mr Chairman, much has changed in Afghanistan. Security incidents – defined as reported acts of violence nation-wide -- totaled 900 in 2004; last year, in 2007 they totaled 8,950 across Afghanistan. Roadside bombs amounted to 325 attacks in 2004; last year, 1,469. Suicide bombings – decidedly a non-Afghan phenomenon – totaled 3 in 2004; last year they exceeded 130, a deadly new tactic being imported from Iraq. Total bombs dropped by Coalition air forces in 2004 were 86; last year, NATO dropped 3,572 bombs in Afghanistan – noteworthy in a war all now commonly define as a complex counter-insurgency fight. Finally, poppy production in 2004 totaled 131K hectares, and while dropping to 104K in 2005, ballooned in 2007 to a new record of 193K hectares. These selected trend lines -- although certainly not a comprehensive depiction of all sectors in Afghanistan – are certainly cause for concern.

On the military side of the ledger, we have also witnessed major changes in our approach since your visit in 2004. During 2004, our military forces under US Coalition command totaled nearly 20,000, including typically about 2000 coalition soldiers operating under an Operation Enduring Freedom mandate, generally with robust counter-insurgency rules of engagement. NATO in 2004 comprised only about 7000 troops, in Kabul and the northeast quarter of Afghanistan – and were primarily engaged in peace-keeping and reconstruction tasks. The combined total numbers of international forces in 2004 – US, Coalition, and NATO-- amounted to about 26,000. Today, international forces in Afghanistan total nearly 50,000 with another 3,200 American Marines pledged to join the effort soon.

In the command and control arena, the US three star HQ you visited in Kabul – a HQ which built a comprehensive civil-military counter-insurgency plan tightly linked to our embassy led by Ambassador Khalilzad -- has now been dis-established. In late 2006, NATO assumed the overall military command of Afghanistan. Our senior American military HQ – now a two star organization -- is once again located at Bagram air base, a ninety minute drive north of Kabul. Its geographic responsibility under NATO comprises only Regional Command East – territory representing less than one quarter of the same HQ 2004 responsibilities.

The enemy in Afghanistan -- a collection of Al Qaeda, Taliban, Hezbi Islami, and foreign fighters – is unquestionably a much stronger force than the enemy we faced in 2004. There are many reasons for this change, but it is I am afraid an undeniable fact. And of course this enemy extends and in many ways re-generates within the tribal areas of Pakistan.

Mr Chairman, in the face of these admittedly incomplete but worrisome trends, I can offer an equation: Success in Afghanistan equals Leadership plus Strategy plus Resources. Only if we fully commit our best efforts in all three areas – Leadership, Strategy, and Resources -- and relentlessly integrate these three successfully internally within the US and externally within the international effort -- will we be able to seize the opportunities available to reverse these troubling trends. Only if we make this a regional effort – most especially connecting the Afghanistan and Pakistan dimension – will we be able to once again move in a positive direction. Only if we objectively and

dispassionately examine both where we have been and where we are, will we be able to correctly shape where we are going. If we fail to do so, we face great risks in my estimation to our prospects for success. I look forward to be able to expand upon some possible further prescriptions during your questions. Thank you.



Fighting "The Other War"

Counterinsurgency Strategy in Afghanistan, 2003-2005

Lieutenant General David W. Barno, U.S. Army, Retired

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

*Strategy without Tactics
is the slowest road to Victory.
Tactics without Strategy is
the noise before Defeat.*

—Sun Tzu

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PHOTO: The author at TF Phoenix. TF Phoenix was responsible for the training and equipping of the Afghan National Army. Left to right are LTC Lyles, Operations Officer, TF Phoenix; BG Moorhead, Commander, TF Phoenix; MG Weston, Chief, Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan; and LTG Barno. TF Phoenix was based in eastern Kabul. (DOD)

AFGHANISTAN IN MID-2003 was at a point of transition—a strategic fork in the road. Major combat operations had ended in 2001, devolving into a long-term pursuit of Taliban and Al-Qaeda remnants, and humanitarian support was beginning to enlarge the nascent reconstruction effort; but Taliban-related activity was increasing in the south and east of the country, while heavily armed militias continued to dominate many areas. Politically, however, optimism across the nation was almost tangible. Plans were underway for a nationwide *loya jirga* (grand council) to draft a new constitution, an effort to begin the democratic process that would move beyond the 2002 jirga, which had appointed Hamid Karzai the leader of a transitional government. Additionally, presidential and parliamentary elections were being planned for 2004.

The Bonn process had organized the overwhelming international sympathy toward Afghanistan with lead nations designated to oversee security sector reform.¹ International support for stabilizing Afghanistan was strong, focused upon the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), which was led by the renowned and influential Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi. A 5500-person International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) had transitioned into a NATO-led mission, but remained confined to security duties in Kabul. On balance, however, the nationwide writ of the provisional government in Kabul was tenuous at best, and increasing security concerns threatened to undermine both international support and the nascent political process.

Unfortunately, the U.S.-led military coalition was not well postured to counter the rising threat. Coordination between the military and interagency partners was hampered by a U.S. Embassy and military headquarters separated by over forty kilometers. Unity of effort suffered; the military command and control situation was in flux; our tactical approach was enemy-focused and risked alienating the Afghan people; and the substantial draw of operations in

in country. There was much “learning by doing” and even disagreement as to whether the fight in Afghanistan was a COIN fight at all. In fact, unit commanders were forbidden from using the word “counterinsurgency” in describing their operations—they were executing a “counterterrorist” mission in keeping with U.S. strategic guidance and an operational focus on the enemy.⁷

In view of this situation, the commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) recognized the need for a different headquarters configuration. In October 2003, he ordered a new three-star coalition headquarters to stand up in Kabul and focus on political-military efforts, permitting the two-star JTF headquarters at Bagram to focus more fully on tactical operations.⁸ This initiative represented a distinct break from the previous belief that the overall military headquarters should be somewhat removed from the capital, in part to avoid entanglement in the political complexities of a city of three million Afghans. Kabul was interlaced with all manner of international embassies, special envoys, NATO ISAF units, UNAMA, and a plethora of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), all working to bring a better future to Afghanistan—but in a free-wheeling, confusing, and sometimes counterproductive mix. “Kabul will consume you,” warned one senior U.S. commander who had served in Bagram.⁹

A Counterinsurgency Strategy

Although the story of how we created a three-star operational headquarters with no existing core staff (and from a start point of six members!) in an ongoing operational environment holds important lessons of its own, the centerpiece of this article is the evolution of a COIN strategy for Afghanistan.¹⁰ The latter story began shortly after my arrival in country, when Lakhdar Brahimi asked us to develop an approach to address the deteriorating security situation in the south and east of the country. The UN had responsibility for devising and implementing a plan to hold Afghan presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004, and it was becoming clear that the organization would be unable to extend its reach into significant parts of the Pashtun southern half of Afghanistan if the security situation continued to remain dangerous there. Moreover, a strong Taliban offensive was expected in the spring of 2004, which

would further threaten the elections and thus undermine the “roadmap” set forth by the international community in the Bonn Process.

After 10 days of intense staff work led by my talented director of planning, a British colonel whose 22-man J5 (future plans) shop now comprised over two-thirds of our entire staff, we were able to propose a new approach to security and stability to take into 2004.¹¹ Initially called “Security Strategy South and East,” this effort quickly grew into a comprehensive COIN approach for Afghanistan. Ultimately, it evolved into a detailed campaign plan co-written with the U.S. Embassy and broadly shared by the Afghans and international community. Titled “Counterinsurgency Strategy for Afghanistan,” the plan was crafted in the absence of U.S. military doctrine, but reflected a solid knowledge of classic COIN approaches. The bookshelves in my Kabul offices at the embassy and military compound were well stocked with my own COIN readings and several senior British officers on my staff supplied important operational insights from their Northern Ireland tours.¹²

To outline our strategy in simple terms, we created “The Five Pillars” diagram (figure 1). This graphic became a powerful tool for explaining the basics of our strategy to civilians, and within the command it circulated down to the very lowest tactical levels. In addition to providing an extraordinarily effective means of communicating complex ideas, it helped us implement the strategy’s fundamentals.¹³

Overarching Principle 1: The People as Center of Gravity

The core principle animating the new strategy was our identification of the Afghan people as the center of gravity for COIN (roof of the five pillars).¹⁴ This constituted a sea change in practice from earlier approaches, which had held that the *enemy* was the center of gravity and should be the focus of our military effort (a determination driven in part by the U.S. strategic outlook in 2003, which viewed nation-building as an inappropriate military task).

In making this change we were motivated by both classic counterinsurgency practice as well as thoughtful consideration of Afghan military history. In late 2003, international forces comprised nearly 20,000 armed foreigners living in the midst of 31 million (often armed) Afghans who, throughout

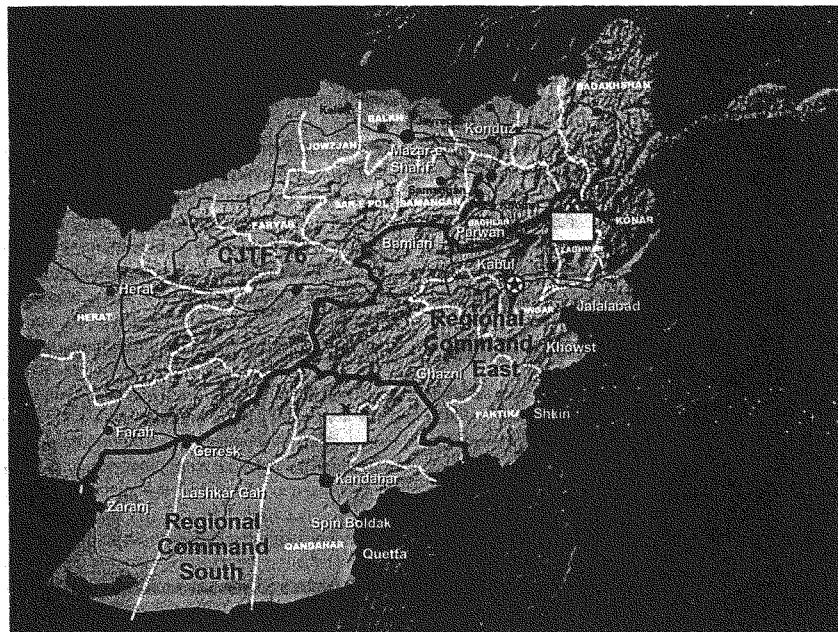


Figure 2. U.S. and Coalition Battlefield Geometry, May 2004

in-country had only begun to establish what would become long-term operating bases. During 2002, Bagram and Kandahar became the primary base locations for large units, logistical infrastructure, and coalition airpower. As more units were added to the mix, and as the coalition presence continued long beyond initial expectations, a patchwork line of command authorities had evolved—an unsurprising situation given the need to cover a huge country with a small sliver of forces.

Our moves over the next months focused on establishing two ground brigade-level headquarters, one assigned the hazardous south and the other the volatile east (figure 2).¹⁶ (The northern half of the country remained largely free from any enemy threat, and thus became an economy-of-force area.) The brigades' headquarters in the south and east became centers for regional command and control of forces in the vast southern half of the country. Each brigade was assigned an area of operations spanning its entire region. All organizations operating in this

battlespace worked directly for or in support of the brigade commander. This was a striking and powerful organizational change.

Establishing unity of purpose in the non-military sphere was much more difficult. Arguably, the greatest flaw in our 21st-century approach to COIN is our inability to marshal and fuse efforts from all the elements of national power into a unified whole. This failure has resulted in an approach akin to punching an adversary with five outstretched fingers rather than one powerful closed fist.

Oftentimes, this rift has had its origin in relations between the U.S. chief of mission (i.e., our ambassador) and the military commander—each reporting to different chains of command in the midst of a nation embroiled in a counterinsurgency war. Afghanistan in 2003 was no exception—a situation made even more difficult by personnel turnover. After the U.S. ambassador departed in July without a replacement, the deputy chief of mission served as the acting chief for four months, and the presidential special

- Sustain area ownership.
- Enable reconstruction and good governance.
- Engage regional states.

Linking these pillars together was information operations (IO)—winning the war of ideas.

The keys to delivering on our COIN strategy were to implement and integrate the actions called for by these pillars, and to have every platoon, squad, and team in Afghanistan clearly understand their intent. We had departed notably from previous, more constrained approaches by naming the Afghan people as our operational center of gravity and by focusing on unity of purpose across diverse stakeholders. The five pillars reflected our reassessment of how to apply even long-standing military capabilities in new directions.

Defeat terrorism and deny sanctuary. As we switched our focus from the enemy to the people, we did not neglect the operational tenet of maintaining pressure on the enemy. Selected special operations forces (SOF) continued their full-time hunt for Al-Qaeda's senior leaders. The blood debt of 9/11 was nowhere more keenly felt every day than in Afghanistan. No Soldier, Sailor, Airman, or Marine serving there ever needed an explanation for his or her presence—they "got it." Dedicated units worked the Al-Qaeda fight on a 24-hour basis and continued to do so into 2004 and 2005.

In some ways, however, attacking enemy cells became a supporting effort: our primary objective was maintaining popular support. Thus, respect for the Afghan people's customs, religion, tribal ways, and growing feelings of sovereignty became an inherent aspect of all military operations. As well, the "three-block war" construct became the norm for our conventional forces.²² Any given tactical mission would likely include some mixture of kinetics (e.g., fighting insurgents), peacekeeping (e.g., negotiating between rival clans), and humanitarian relief (e.g., digging wells or assessing local needs). The 2001-2003 notion of enemy-centric counterterrorist operations now became nested in a wholly different context, that of "war amongst the people," in the words of British General Sir Rupert Smith.²³

Our forces in the field once again demonstrated their remarkable ability to adjust to changing situations with only general guidance—and deliver results. When I asked a superb battalion commander

how, in the absence of doctrine, he was able to shift his leaders toward a largely new COIN approach in the middle of their combat tour, he laughed and said: "Easy, sir—Books-A-Million.Com!"²⁴ Reading classic counterinsurgency texts in the field became a substitute for official doctrine. The realization grew that "First, do no harm" must be a central consideration, and that Afghan security forces must play a visible role in coalition military operations. Even local elders were enlisted, for we knew that intelligence could often be manipulated to settle old scores and discredit our efforts.

Our growing recognition of the need to respect the population eventually led us to develop the "Fifteen Points," a coordinated set of guidelines (see sidebar) that we proposed to President Karzai in response to his growing concerns about the impact of coalition military operations. Together, we publicized these efforts in order to assure the Afghans that we recognized and respected the sovereignty of their country. This had the intended effect. It extended the freedom of action granted to coalition forces for perhaps years, allowing us to spend the "bag of capital"—Afghan tolerance—that much more slowly.²⁵

Enable the Afghan security structure. Under this pillar, we extended and accelerated the training of the Afghan National Army, and ultimately turned our scrutiny to the police as well. The development of the ANA and the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MOD) were significant success stories in the two years after the fall of the Taliban. Despite intense tribal rivalries, the ANA and MOD were re-created with an ethnically balanced, merit-based leader selection process that, by late 2003, had established both as models among the most-reformed bodies of the Afghan Government.

The ANA training effort produced ethnically balanced, well-trained formations down to platoon level. The strikingly positive reaction these units evoked when they entered villages alongside their embedded U.S. trainers stood in stark contrast to the reactions elicited by the repressive tribal militias then still common in Afghanistan. In fact, villagers often assumed that ANA units were foreign forces until their members began to speak in local dialects. Their professionalism, discipline, and combat effectiveness stood out; they became sources of national pride. The Office of Military

Of course, they also had the authority to effect those outcomes, along with Commanders Emergency Response Program funding to address pressing civil needs with a minimum of bureaucracy. Commanders could become experts in their areas, build personal relations with tribal elders and key government officials, convince the population that they were there to stay—and then see the results.²⁷ The areas were unavoidably large—one battalion had an area the size of Vermont, another the size of Rhode Island—but those areas were *theirs!* Again, this is classic counterinsurgency, although it was new in Afghanistan.

Enable reconstruction and good governance. Extending the reach of the central government was fundamental to helping Afghanistan become a nation that embraced the rule of law and entrusted its elected government with a monopoly on violence. As Said Jawad, Afghan Ambassador to the U.S., often notes, “Afghanistan is a strong nation, but a weak state.” Afghanistan, over its long history, has stayed together as a country despite many opportunities for powerful interests to fracture the nation into separate tribal parts. At the same time, the power of the nation’s legitimate institutions grows weaker with every kilometer of distance from Kabul. Effective local government remains elusive, and traditional tribal and clan cultures hold powerful sway even today throughout much of the countryside—and will likely do so for generations. The primary military instrument designed to address this challenge was the provincial reconstruction team.

Conceived in 2002 by a British officer, PRTs were 80- to 100-person organizations normally posted to provincial capitals. Led by a colonel or lieutenant colonel, they typically comprised a security force, medical and logistics components, a civil affairs team, a command and control element, and senior representatives from the Afghan Ministry of Interior, U.S. DOS, USAID, and in certain areas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The mission of the PRTs included security and reconstruction, in fine balance. A PRT’s very presence in an area served as a catalyst for both, and it signified the international and Afghan commitment to bettering the lives of the people through improved government support. A multinational PRT executive steering committee in Kabul, co-chaired by the Afghan Minister of Interior and U.S./coalition commander, coordinated the PRT effort.²⁸

PRTs became a powerful offensive weapon in our strategic arsenal as we crafted our plans for 2004 in Afghanistan. The four existing PRTs, as mentioned earlier, were deployed in largely quiet areas (Gardez, Konduz, Mazar-e-Sharif, Bamian) with the next four being developed at a very deliberate pace. We soon accelerated the latter by largely disassembling the combined and joint civil-military operations task force headquarters in Bagram and sending its well-resourced pool of civil affairs experts to form new PRTs in the field. The immediate goal became eight new PRTs in the south and east of Afghanistan, so that when the snows melted in the spring of 2004, we would have newly deployed PRTs confronting the Taliban across the most contested areas. (figure 3)

This bold move sent an incontrovertible message about the progress of the security and reconstruction effort into the most dangerous areas of Afghanistan. It was a calculated risk. PRTs had little ability to defend themselves, but the enemy well understood that 20 minutes after a distress call, any PRT in southern Afghanistan could have combat aircraft with bombs overhead and a rapid reaction force ready to arrive soon thereafter. The 2001 offensive that toppled the Taliban had produced a healthy respect for American airpower that allowed us, among other things, to conduct small patrols far from our bases in relative security. PRTs similarly benefited from air support, and leveraged it regularly.

Engage regional states. This task fell largely into my in-box, but senior leaders at our tactical headquarters in Bagram ably supported me.²⁹ Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan’s (CFC-A) combined joint operations area for USCENTCOM included all of Afghanistan, all of Pakistan less Jammu and Kashmir, and the southern portions of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Our forces conducted combat operations only in Afghanistan, but my charter gave me authority to travel and interact regularly with the senior security leaders of the other three countries—with particular emphasis on Pakistan.

This Pakistani component of engagement was necessary to address border-security issues between Afghanistan and Pakistan (the Taliban operated in both) and to assist the Pakistanis in their own efforts to disrupt and defeat so-called “miscreants” in their tribal areas adjacent to Afghanistan. Quarterly

Winning the war of ideas and communicating effectively in a wholly foreign culture was among the most vexing tasks in our COIN strategy.

challenge was to do everything we could to be truthful, to get the facts out, to let success speak for itself, and to create the unshakeable story of good outcomes—all uncompromised by “spin.” Results ultimately speak for themselves. Without demonstrably positive results, information operations can be perceived as spewing empty words that corrode credibility and legitimacy.

Evaluating Results of COIN, 2003-2005

In retrospect, the late 2003 shift in strategy from an enemy-centric counterterrorist strategy to a more comprehensive, population-centered COIN approach marked a turning point in the U.S. mission. While dedicated forces continued unabated the hunt for Al-Qaeda leaders and remnants, the overall direction of the U.S.-coalition effort shifted toward a more classic COIN approach (albeit with a very light footprint) that would have been familiar to Louis Lyautey, Sir Gerald Templer, or Creighton Abrams.

Results over the 2003-2005 period were positive and dramatic. Meeting in a national loya jirga, Afghans drew up and approved the most moderate constitution then extant in the Islamic world. Throughout the spring and summer of 2004, 10.5 million Afghans—twice as many as had been expected to do so—registered to vote in the first-ever Afghan presidential elections. In the face of significant insurgent threats, intimidation, and violence, 8.5 million Afghans actually voted that fall, electing Hamid Karzai as president with 55 percent of the vote from among 18 candidates. By year’s end, a respected cabinet was in place and a peaceful inauguration completed. The year 2005 built on this success with a nationwide effort again turning out millions of voters to elect members of the *wolesi jirga*, or lower house of parliament. The winners took their seats by year’s end.

All in all, as 2005 came to a close, we had achieved significant progress toward accomplishing the objectives of the 2001 Bonn conference and the follow-on 2004 Berlin conference, but most importantly, we had built a solid basis of hope among the Afghan people for a better future. Without hope among the population, any COIN effort is ultimately doomed to failure.

Afghanistan since 2005

Much has changed in Afghanistan since 2005 ended so promisingly. The Taliban and Al-Qaeda have gathered strength, changed tactics, and significantly increased both their capabilities and their attacks. As one measure, there were 139 suicide attacks in 2006, as compared to 17 in 2005, 5 in 2004, and 2 in 2003. In the first six months of 2007, there were over 80 suicide attacks.³¹ Across the border in Pakistan, further offensive operations against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have been largely suspended since the aggressive Pakistani military efforts in 2004 disrupted much of the terrorist base structure in tribal areas of Waziristan.³² Consequently, a large potential sanctuary for the Taliban and Al-Qaeda has gone largely unmolested for nearly three years.

On the American side of the ledger, the U.S. publicly announced in mid-2005 that NATO was assuming full responsibility for military operations throughout Afghanistan. By the end of that year, the U.S. declared that it was withdrawing 2,500 combat troops.³³ Unsurprisingly, this was widely viewed in the region as the first signal that the United States was “moving for the exits,” thus reinforcing long-held doubts about the prospects of sustained American commitment.³⁴ In my judgment, these public moves have served more than any other U.S. actions since 2001 to alter the calculus of both our friends and adversaries across the region—and not in our favor.

All in all, as 2005 came to a close, ...we had built a solid basis of hope among the Afghan people for a better future. Without hope among the population, any COIN effort is ultimately doomed to failure.

to the east lies Pakistan, the second largest Islamic nation in the world, and likely armed with dozens of nuclear weapons; to the northeast is China, with growing regional energy and security interests; across the north, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, three former states of the Soviet Union, are struggling against internal forces of instability while confronting powerful neighbors; and to the west is Iran, whose looming nuclear program and

support for terrorism in the region is cause for grave concern. This neighborhood defines strategic interest for the U.S. and the West—and without it, Afghanistan remains a friendly state anxious to increase its connections to the West and especially to the U.S. At this juncture of history, the U.S. and its alliance partners in NATO can ill afford to walk away from this region with any other outcome save long-term success in Afghanistan. **MR**

NOTES

1. Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Reestablishment of Permanent Government Institutions (Bonn: December, 2001), henceforth referred to as the Bonn Process. This UN-supported response assigned lead nations to oversee varied security-sector reform efforts in Afghanistan: police—Germany; military—U.S.; justice; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration—Japan; counter-narcotics—United Kingdom.
2. Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)-180 (now comprising Headquarters, 10th Mountain Division) retained its name upon the departure of XVIII Airborne Corps until March 2004, when it became CJTF-76. Its focus became tactical and low-end operational as Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, the senior coalition headquarters in Kabul, assumed the role of high-end operational and theater (i.e., regional) strategic levels. NATO's ISAF in October 2003 consisted of approximately 5500 troops located exclusively within the city of Kabul.
3. Author's conversation with chief, Office of Military Cooperation, September 2003.
4. Conversations with senior U.S. commanders, 2003; see also Nicholas D. Kristoff, "The Wrong Lessons of the Somalia Debacle," *New York Times* (5 Feb 2002).
5. See *The CIA World Factbook* online entries for Afghanistan and Iraq, <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>>.
6. Author's first visit to Afghanistan, pre-deployment, September 2003.
7. Author's conversation with an infantry battalion commander, December 2003.
8. Author's conversation with General John Abizaid, October 2003: "... your mission is 'big Po' and 'little mil.'"
9. Conversation with a former senior U.S. commander for Afghanistan, August 2003.
10. This headquarters officially became Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan (CFC-A) in early 2004. Command responsibility was assumed in November 2003.
11. The first augmentation of our staff beyond an original six members came by moving the entire CJTF-180 CJS (future plans) section to Kabul under Combined Forces Command. Colonel (now Brigadier) Ian Liles, U.K., was the CJS largely responsible for drafting the initial "Security Strategy South and East." By May 2005, CFC-A staff stabilized at just over 400 members.
12. See, for example, *The History of Revolutionary Warfare*, Vols. I-V (West Point, NY: United States Military Academy, 1974). Among other valued texts I read during my nineteen months of command were John Nag's *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (University of Chicago Press: 2005) and Louis Sorley's *A Better War* (Harvest Books, 2007).
13. General Barry McCaffrey, U.S. Army (retired), comment to the author on the depth of consistent understanding of CFC-A COIN strategy during his visits to units across Afghanistan, 2004.
14. "Strategy" here is used as a more commonly understood interagency and international substitute for what would be called in military parlance a "campaign plan." Our complete campaign plan addressing all elements of power eventually became a 400-page document.
15. The footprint of fewer than 20,000 Western forces in Afghanistan in 2003 was light compared with over 100,000 Soviet troops at the height of their ill-fated military involvement. My belief remains that the "light footprint" approach in Afghanistan holds great advantages, despite its many challenges. See Rory Stewart, "Where Less is More," *New York Times*, 23 July 2007.
16. This occurred under CJTF-76, which succeeded CJTF-180 in April 2004.
17. This was a powerful advantage. Direct access and a personal relationship with the president, vice-president, and secretaries of state and defense gave Ambassador Khalilzad and the Afghan enterprise a strong voice at the most senior policy levels in Washington.
18. Christopher Griffin, "A Working Plan: Hope Isn't the Only Strategy for Afghanistan," *Armed Forces Journal* (April 2007).
19. Our entire headquarters staff at this point had fewer than 40 people.
20. Our six-day-a-week Security Core Group meetings brought top U.S. interagency leaders together to "synchronize" outlooks and information almost every morning. Among the attendees were the ambassador, military commander, USAID chief, Afghan Reconstruction Group (ARG) chief, intelligence chief, OMC-A chief, and deputy chief of mission. All left updated with a common view of events in Afghanistan, thus insuring our daily efforts remained well coordinated and mutually supportive.
21. The Embassy Interagency Planning Group (EPIG) was led by Colonel John Ritchie, USA.
22. General Charles Kruick, Commandant, USMC, created the three-block-war construct.
23. General Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 5.
24. Discussion at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Shkin with LTC Mike Howard, USA, Commander, 1-87 Infantry, 10th Mountain Division, winter 2003-4.
25. Personal observation. The reaction of President Karzai, his cabinet, and outward reactions of the Afghan people to this effort were very positive.
26. Herat riots, August 2004; preparations for civil disturbances in Kabul, August 2004.
27. Paraphrasing LTC David Paschal, Commander, 2-87 Infantry, 10th Mountain Division: "The longer I spent in one place, the more people became comfortable with me and were more willing to share information. At first, they were fearful, then they watched with curiosity but then they gained confidence in us and our ability to provide security and services. With ownership we were able to build a level of trust." Outbrief to Headquarters, CFC-A, 5 May 2004.
28. The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Executive Steering Committee met monthly and comprised senior representatives of all nations contributing PRTs or considering such a contribution. It was typically attended by the UN senior representative of the secretary general and co-chaired by the Afghan minister of interior (who oversaw PRTs in the Afghan governmental structure) and the senior U.S. (and later NATO) military commanders.
29. After the departure of Headquarters, XVIII Airborne Corps, in the spring of 2003, CJTF-180 was formed around Headquarters, 10th Mountain Division; later, CJTF-76 formed around Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division (Light), and subsequently, Headquarters, Southern European Task Force (SETAF).
30. Personal observations and discussions with senior Pakistani military officers 2004.
31. Figures on 2003-2006 suicide attacks are from former Afghan Minister of Interior Ali Jalali.
32. Situation as of mid-July 2007. The Pakistani military response in the FATA to the outbreak of nationwide terrorist attacks following the government's 10 July assault on the Lal Masjid ("Red Mosque") in Islamabad had yet to fully develop as of this writing.
33. As reported by the Associated Press and AFX News Limited. See *USA Today*, "NATO to take over Afghan security in 2006" 4 August 2005; and *Forbes.com*, "U.S. to reduce troop numbers in Afghanistan soon," <www.forbes.com/financesfeed/afx/2005/12/26/afx2414408.htm>.
34. A remark we commonly heard from Afghans of every stripe was "You Americans are not going to abandon us again, are you?" The Taliban were often noted for saying "the Americans may have all of the wristwatches, but we have all of the time."
35. CFC-A during this era operated with two generals: one U.S. three-star commander and one U.K. two-star deputy commander. U.K. deputies were, in succession, Major Generals John Cooper and Peter Gilchrist, both exceptional talents. The CFC-A staff principals were entirely composed of colonels or Navy captains; CFC chiefs of staff were, in succession, COL Tom Shukis, USA, and COL Dave Lamm, USA, whose efforts were nothing short of heroic.
36. For example, forces under the "Operation Enduring Freedom mandate" (e.g., U.S. Special Forces) in Afghanistan report through a U.S.-only chain to Admiral Fallon, Commander, U.S. Central Command, in Tampa; forces under the "NATO mandate" (e.g., U.S. infantry battalions) report through Headquarters, ISAF, in Kabul (tactical level), to Commander, Joint Forces Command, Brunsum, the Netherlands (operational level) to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, General Craddock, in Mons (strategic level).
37. Ambassador Finn, Deputy Chief of Mission David Sedney, Ambassador Khalilzad, Ambassador Neumann, Ambassador Wood, LTG Mikolajczyk, LTG (now General) McNeill, LTG Vines, LTG Barno, LTG Eikenberry, and MG Rodriguez.
38. President Karzai press conferences; April 2006 riots in Kabul; protests to civilian casualties.
39. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger Security International Paperback, August 2006). According to Galula, successful counterinsurgency is 20 percent military effort, 80 percent non-military.

**Statement by Amb. Karl F. Inderfurth
House Armed Services Committee
January 23, 2008**

***“Assessment of U.S. Strategy and Operations in
Afghanistan and the Way Ahead”***

Chairman Skelton, Ranking Member Hunter, Members of the Committee:

Thank you very much for your invitation to take part in this assessment by the Committee of U.S. strategy and operations in Afghanistan and, especially, the opportunity to express my views on the subject of the way ahead.

I would like to begin by commending the Committee for taking up Afghanistan as one of its first items of business in the new session of the 110th Congress. Not only does this reinforce the Committee's determination that Afghanistan not become "the forgotten war," but I believe it sends a signal to the Bush administration to put Afghanistan -- and I would add Pakistan -- at the top of this country's security agenda where they should have been for the past six years.

I will remind the Committee that in its 2004 final report the 9/11 Commission identified three countries that would be critical to the successful prosecution of the "war on terrorism." Afghanistan and Pakistan were the first two; Saudi Arabia the third.

Unfortunately, since even before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Afghanistan has taken a back seat to U.S. military involvement in that country. It still does. As the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, told this Committee on December 11: "Our main focus, militarily, in the region and in the world right now is rightly and firmly in Iraq. It is simply a matter of resources, of capacity. In Afghanistan, we do what we can. In Iraq, we do what we must."

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, some way must be found to deal with this perpetual problem of Afghanistan being overshadowed by the Iraq war. I hope the Committee will do what it can -- and must -- to rectify this situation.

Afghanistan Study Group (ASG)

I would also like to mention here that others agree with the higher security priority this Committee is according Afghanistan.

The Center for the Study of the Presidency, led by former U.S. ambassador to NATO David Abshire, was closely engaged in the work of the Iraq Study Group. During the discussions of the group it became more and more evident that Afghanistan was at great risk of becoming "the forgotten war." Participants and witnesses pointed to the danger of losing the war in Afghanistan unless a reassessment took place of the effort being undertaken in that country by the United States, NATO and the international community. In its final report, the study group made this recommendation: "It is critical for the United States to provide additional political, economic and military support for Afghanistan, including resources that might become available as combat forces are moved from Iraq."

In the spring of 2007, recognizing the importance of making policy makers in Washington aware of the deepening crisis in Afghanistan, Amb. Abshire decided to establish a smaller scale study group. This bipartisan group, co-chaired by Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering and General (ret.) James L. Jones, includes 15 former government officials and experts on Afghanistan and the region. The goal of the Afghanistan Study Group is to provide policy makers with key recommendations that will lead to a re-vitalization and re-doubling of the United States and international community commitment and effort in Afghanistan.

As a member of this group, along with Dr. Barnett Rubin on this panel, we look forward to providing the Committee our report with its findings and recommendations in the near future, both for your consideration and, hopefully, for your action. I should add that some of my comments this morning will draw from the work we have done over the past six months, including our preliminary report.

A Brief Assessment

I do not believe it will be necessary for me to go into detail about the current situation in Afghanistan or how we arrived at this point. You heard from Defense Secretary Gates and Chairman Mullen in December and you will hear from my expert colleagues on the panel this morning. But, in very brief form, let me offer this assessment of U.S. strategy and operations in Afghanistan:

The United States has tried to win the struggle in Afghanistan with too few military forces, insufficient economic aid, and without a clear and consistent comprehensive strategy to fill the power vacuum outside Kabul and counter the combined challenges of reconstituted Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan and Pakistan, a runaway opium economy, and the stark poverty faced by most Afghans.

It is time to re-think our military and economic strategies to ensure the level of our commitment is commensurate with the threat posed by failure in Afghanistan.

This requirement to re-think U.S. strategy is further supported by polls that show a weakening of resolve in the international community to see the effort in Afghanistan through to a successful conclusion. The Pew Global Attitudes Survey of June 2007 (relevant portion attached to this testimony) reported that the publics of NATO countries with significant numbers of troops in Afghanistan are divided over whether U.S. and NATO forces should be brought home immediately, or should remain until the country is stabilized. In all but two countries, the U.S. and the United Kingdom, majorities said troops should be withdrawn as soon as possible. Many don't really see this as their fight. They see Afghanistan as a sinkhole.

Moreover, recent polls in Afghanistan reflect a downward turn in attitudes toward the ability of the Afghan government and the international community to improve those conditions the Afghan people identify as the most critical problems facing the country: insecurity, weak governance, widespread corruption, a poor economy and unemployment.

This is discouraging news. But, fortunately, there are some recent, encouraging signs that the U.S. and its partners in Afghanistan have recognized the hard truth that defeat in Afghanistan is a possibility -- and are beginning to adjust strategy and resources accordingly.

Steps in the Right Direction

In recent weeks, announcements have been made -- and signals have been sent -- that would constitute steps in the right direction for the overall U.S. and International effort in Afghanistan:

To enhance security, it was announced last week that the U.S. will send an additional 3,200 Marines to southern Afghanistan this spring, where NATO forces face the brunt of the Taliban insurgency. Also, Secretary Gates, on his trip to Kabul in December, said the U.S. will support the expansion of the Afghan National Army (ANA) by up to 12,000 over its target strength of 70,000; accelerate shipments of M16s rifles and armored Humvees; and triple the number of helicopters scheduled for delivery. This is made possible by the significant increase in funding provided by the Congress in FY 2007 for Afghanistan's security forces, including the Afghan National Police (ANP) that is in dire need of greater assistance (see attached *New York Times* article "Lacking Sufficient Support, Afghan Police Struggle to Work a Beat in a War").

To accelerate reconstruction, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says it is planning a “construction surge” in Afghanistan this year worth nearly \$2 billion. A sizable portion of that money will go towards building facilities for the Afghan security forces, but badly needed road, power and water projects are also included. Last year the Corps built a \$37 million bridge between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, a symbol of a more promising commercial future for both countries.

To strengthen international coordination, the U.N. is appointing a new high level civilian envoy for Afghanistan. Paddy Ashdown is the highly respected and experienced former international coordinator for Bosnia. Working closely with the Afghan government, it will be his task to formulate a more comprehensive strategy for achieving success in Afghanistan. This would include a more coordinated application of military and civilian instruments, including the UN, the World Bank, non-governmental organizations and international organizations.

To raise Afghanistan’s international profile – and underscore the stakes involved for the international community – several world leaders recently traveled to Kabul to meet with President Karzai and their national contingents in the country. These included British Prime Minister Gordon Brown (who said U.K. troops will have to remain in Afghanistan for more than a decade), French President Nicolas Sarkozy (the first French head to travel to Afghanistan), newly elected Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd (who announced his country will stay for the “long haul”), and Italy’s Prime Minister Romano Prodi (his first visit to Afghanistan). These visits are pointing toward the critical NATO summit that will be held in early April in Bucharest, where the alliance will have the opportunity to demonstrate the strength of its resolve and its long term commitment to a stable and secure Afghanistan.

The Way Ahead

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, you asked the panel to provide our assessment and recommendations on the full range of issues facing Afghanistan today, including U.S. and NATO-ISAF military operations, the insurgency, counter-narcotics efforts and development, governance and anti-corruption issues, and regional matters affecting Afghanistan (particularly Pakistan).

I have already touched on several of these. In the remainder of my testimony I would like to focus on just one -- the challenge Afghanistan faces from the use of Pakistan as a “safe haven” for the Taliban and al-Qaeda and the rising level of violence and political instability in that country, as tragically seen by the December 27 assassination of former Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto (whose last meeting before she died was with Afghan president Hamid Karzai).

Afghanistan and Pakistan are inextricably linked. There can be no successful outcome for Afghanistan if Pakistan is not a part of the solution. As General Bantz Craddock, the head of NATO operations in Afghanistan has said, engaging Pakistan is one of the crucial elements of success in Afghanistan.

Over time, with sufficient and sustained international support, and Afghanistan's own efforts, I believe the many difficulties facing Afghanistan today can be addressed. But the Taliban poses a special type of threat. They can lose every firefight with superior NATO, U.S. and Afghan National Army forces and still turn southern and eastern Afghanistan into a "no development" zone and stir insecurity in Kabul and elsewhere. And as long as the Taliban has a haven in Pakistan, they can continue their insurgency indefinitely, making it virtually impossible for Afghanistan to become a country at peace with itself and its neighbors.

What can the United States and the international community do about this fundamental problem?

First, the future stability of both Afghanistan and Pakistan depends on the development of an effective strategy to counter and uproot the Taliban/ al Qaeda sanctuary in Pakistan's tribal border areas, particularly in North and South Waziristan. The Taliban and associated militants are operating out of safe havens in Pakistan, raising money, recruiting and training fighters. These extremists have begun to make inroads into the settled areas of the Northwest Frontier Province in Pakistan, most recently in the Swat valley.

Despite Pakistan's counterinsurgency efforts over the last four years (or lack thereof according to the critics), the Taliban and al Qaeda have developed a strong-hold in this region that bolsters the Taliban's capabilities against coalition forces in Afghanistan, facilitates al Qaeda planning and execution of global terrorist plots (as noted in the July 2007 National Intelligence Estimate), and increasingly threaten to destabilize the Pakistani state. The U.S. and its international partners will need to work closely with Pakistan to make every effort to root out Taliban ideology from its own society and shut down the extremist madrassahs (religious schools) and training camps that perpetuate the Taliban insurgency and cross border activities.

Countering cross border infiltration is critical, but it will require closer coordination and cooperation than we have seen to date. The Trilateral Afghanistan-Pakistan-NATO Military Commission is an important mechanism in this regard. So is the strengthening of the U.S. military presence along the Afghan side of the border. The appointment of a U.S. special envoy to work with Afghanistan and Pakistan could also contribute to tackling these issues.

Washington also needs to convince Islamabad to work more closely in joint counter-terrorism operations that can bring U.S. resources (including intelligence) and military assets to bear in the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. That possibility exists. As Admiral William Fallon, head of US Central Command, said recently: "They see they've got real problems internally. My sense is there is an increased willingness (in Pakistan) to address these problems and we're going to try to help them."

But a large-scale U.S. troop intervention in Pakistan's tribal areas would be disastrous for the Pakistani state and for U.S. interests and would not provide a lasting solution to the problem. A more effective strategy involves working cooperatively with Pakistan's military to integrate these areas into the Pakistani political system and, once they are secure, provide substantial assistance to build up the economy and social infrastructure. To make it easier for Islamabad to undertake costly reforms needed to integrate the tribal areas, the United States, the World Bank and other donors should provide Pakistan with substantial additional economic assistance.

Second, a key to achieving the goal of a stable and peaceful Afghanistan is to improve the long-standing, troubled relationship between Kabul and Islamabad. The meeting last month between Presidents Musharraf and Karzai focused on the need for more cooperation on intelligence to meet – in Musharraf's words – "the menace of extremism and terrorism, which is destroying both our countries." Although their meeting was described as "unusually cordial," Afghan and Pakistan leaders are a long way from dropping their mutual suspicions. Afghans resent past and, many believe, present Pakistani interference, including ties with the Taliban. Pakistan fears Kabul's close ties with New Delhi.

To allay some of their mutual suspicions, Washington and other key capitals should urge Afghanistan to officially accept the so-called Durand Line of 1893 as the border with Pakistan. The border has been in contention since Pakistan became an independent state in 1947. Although Karzai does not publicly dispute this border, his government has been reluctant to accept it officially lest this cause internal political trouble. A comprehensive settlement to secure Afghanistan's border with Pakistan is long overdue and urgently required.

Washington should also urge the Karzai government to take greater account of Islamabad's sensitivities in dealing with India. Islamabad fears that the main function of Indian consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad is to stir trouble across the nearby border, especially to fan the flames of the anti-Islamabad insurgency in Baluchistan. Even though India continues to provide generous economic assistance to Afghanistan, Kabul would be wise to try to assuage Pakistani concerns.

Third, and over the longer term, as Afghanistan makes progress toward standing on its own feet, the United Nations should convene a high-level international conference attended by all Afghanistan's neighbors and other concerned major powers. The goal would be a multilateral accord that recognizes Afghanistan's borders; pledges non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs; explicitly bans the supply of arms to non governmental actors; affirms that, like the Congress of Vienna accord for Switzerland, Afghanistan should be internationally accepted as a permanently neutral state; and establishes a comprehensive international regime to remove obstacles to the flow of trade across Afghanistan, the key to that country's economic future.

Such an agreement would not end all external meddling in Afghanistan, but would help. It would also provide an international framework for Kabul's acceptance of its frontier with Pakistan and a basis for the eventual withdrawal of U.S. and NATO military forces from a stable and secure Afghanistan.

A Word on Iran

In addition to promoting and assisting these steps with Pakistan, the U.S. should develop a strategy toward Iran -- Afghanistan's other key neighbor -- that includes the possibility of resuming discussions with Iran to engender greater cooperation to help stabilize Afghanistan, beginning with the issue of counter-narcotics where common ground already exists.

There were productive contacts and exchanges between the U.S. and Iran during the Taliban years (in the so-called "6 Plus 2" UN process) and at the Bonn conference after the Taliban were removed from power. In the last year, however, serious concerns have been raised about Iran's role in Afghanistan, with reports of Teheran supplying arms and other support to the Taliban despite its history of hostility toward that movement. Washington, with its allies, should develop a comprehensive picture of what Iran is up to in Afghanistan (both negative and positive) and map out a sound approach that seeks to convince Teheran to develop a more constructive role there, including the possibility to reestablish direct talks on Afghanistan. The present U.S. stance of not speaking with Teheran about Afghanistan risks increasing the likelihood that Iran will step up its covert interference as a way of undermining U.S. interests and the international effort in Afghanistan.

'Charlie Wilson's War' Continues

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I would like to offer one final recommendation for those of you who have not already done so -- take an hour and a half to see the recently released film "Charlie Wilson's War."

I am sure many members of this Committee already know this story -- and probably the protagonist, your former House colleague Charlie Wilson with his Texas - sized personality. The film is certainly entertaining, but it also contains a very serious 'take away message' for the audience at the close of the movie, which is why I am calling it to your attention.

Simply stated, after spending hundreds of millions of dollars to help the Afghan mujahideen 'freedom fighters' defeat the Soviets and the Red Army, we walked away from Afghanistan after the Russians withdrew their forces in 1989. We left it to Afghanistan -- and I might add, Pakistan -- to pick up the pieces after ten years of brutal warfare. Funding and high level U.S. attention to help the Afghans face their new challenges of security and re-building evaporated.

We all know what happened after that, up to and including 9/11. So this is my point -- and this is the 'take away message' from the movie: we still have time to get 'Charlie Wilson's War' right, for it to have, as they say, a 'happy ending.' We have been given a second chance to do the right thing for Afghanistan -- and for the United States. I sincerely hope we don't miss this opportunity. This Committee has a major role in assuring that we do not.

Of one thing I am certain -- without a genuine and long-term commitment on the part of the United States and the international community, Afghanistan will fail again.

THANK YOU.



June 27, 2007

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		Q.58 Do you think the U.S. and NATO should keep military troops in Afghanistan until the situation has stabilized, or do you think the U.S. and NATO should remove their troops as soon as possible?				
		Keep troops in Afghanistan	Remove their troops	DK/Refused	Total	
North America	United States	50	42	7	100	
	Canada	43	49	8	100	
Latin America	Argentina	3	85	12	100	
	Bolivia	10	80	10	100	
	Brazil	19	74	6	100	
	Chile	19	62	19	100	
	Mexico	17	70	14	100	
	Peru	16	67	16	100	
	Venezuela	14	79	7	100	
	West Europe	Britain	45	42	13	100
France		48	51	1	100	
Germany		44	49	8	100	
Italy		32	55	13	100	
Spain		22	67	11	100	
Sweden		34	45	21	100	
East Europe	Bulgaria	21	60	19	100	
	Czech Republic	45	45	10	100	
	Poland	24	63	13	100	
	Russia	12	73	16	100	
	Slovakia	29	58	13	100	
	Ukraine	11	72	17	100	
Middle East	Turkey	11	74	15	100	
	Egypt	12	82	6	100	
	Jordan	15	78	7	100	
	Kuwait	29	58	13	100	
	Lebanon	27	70	3	100	
	Morocco	7	67	26	100	
	Palestinian ter.	3	89	8	100	
	Israel	59	31	10	100	
Asia	Pakistan	3	75	22	100	
	Bangladesh	6	89	5	100	
	Indonesia	8	80	12	100	
	Malaysia	9	74	17	100	
	China	5	80	15	100	
	India	34	49	18	100	
	Japan	29	47	24	100	
	South Korea	28	60	12	100	
	Africa	Ethiopia	44	48	8	100
		Ghana	50	37	13	100
Ivory Coast		43	57	1	100	
Kenya		60	36	4	100	
Mali		37	59	4	100	
Nigeria		48	42	11	100	
Senegal		19	76	5	100	
South Africa		33	46	20	100	
Tanzania		19	67	14	100	
Uganda		38	47	15	100	

New York Times

January 13, 2008

Afghan Police Struggle to Work a Beat in a War

By **C. J. CHIVERS**

NAWA, Afghanistan — Many of the problems frustrating Afghanistan's efforts to secure its dangerous eastern and southern provinces were evident in the bizarre tour of duty of Shair Mohammad, a police officer who spent 18 months in an isolated swath of steppe.

Until December, when a colonel arrived to replace him, Mr. Mohammad, 30, had been the acting police chief in the Nawa district of Ghazni Province. The job gave him jurisdiction over hundreds of square miles near Pakistan that the Taliban had used as a sanctuary since being ousted from power in 2001.

But his ability to police his beat was severely compromised.

Mr. Mohammad had no rank, no money for food and not enough clothing or gear to operate in cold weather. Two of his six trucks were broken. The ammunition the Pentagon provided him came in cardboard boxes that immediately crumbled, exposing cartridges to the elements on his storeroom's dirty floor.

Compounding his woes, the possibility of mutiny was on his mind. It was a natural worry, he said, because since April none of his men had been paid.

"My commanders always just give me promises," he said. "They never send the money."

In its simplest distillation, the strategy driving this American-led war is straightforward. Western troops are an interim force to provide security, spur development and mentor indigenous security forces until the Afghan leadership can govern alone.

But in the past two years, the insurgency has blossomed, making control of many provinces a contest. The Afghan Army, under American tutelage, has made considerable progress, American officers say.

The police lag far behind. Lightly equipped, marginally trained, undermined by corruption and poor discipline, they remain weak, though their expected role is daunting. They are not asked merely to police a country that lacks the rule of law. They are being used to fight a war.

The American and Afghan governments say improving the police's capabilities is a priority. American financing has sharply increased to do so.

"If you look at how the Afghan Army has changed for the better, and project that kind of change for the Afghan police, there is reason to be optimistic," said Lt. Col. Timothy J. McAteer, who commands the Second Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry, the principal American unit working in Ghazni Province.

But Mr. Mohammad's tour, undermined by mismanagement from above and the poor discipline that surrounded him, suggested how difficult any transformation might be. As his tour ended in mid-December, he spent his last evenings crouched by a hissing space heater in a mud-walled fort, sipping tea and waiting for his government to provide the help the police needed.

Mr. Mohammad himself, and his sense of commitment, provided reason to be hopeful, American officers said. Tiny, bearded, wild-eyed and bedecked with long strands of unkempt black hair, he led with a style that was variously whimsical, pragmatic, resolute and cunning.

"He is a true patriot," said First Lt. Mordechai Sorkin, a platoon leader who worked alongside him. "He has been here almost all alone, trying to make Afghanistan better."

In the deadpan lexicon of infantry life, several soldiers nicknamed him “Charles Manson,” to whom he bears a slight resemblance. The name was meant in good humor. The soldiers said Mr. Mohammad was a character of his own: he managed a gentle and wry demeanor, but never declined to join them on patrols and was courageous under fire.

In a Taliban ambush in October, they noted, one of his officers was killed and four others wounded. Mr. Mohammad survived and tried to rally his penniless ranks.

He was also steadfast in the face of intimidation. Another day, the mutilated body of an elderly man who had spoken against the Taliban was found on the road. The man had been beheaded. Afghanis, the national currency, had been stuffed in his nose.

On patrols with Americans through villages that harbor the Taliban, Mr. Mohammad gathered elders and gave speeches against the insurgents and such behavior, telling villagers that siding with the government was the surest route away from barbarism to a more secure life.

Resolve was not enough. As his tour ended, Mr. Mohammad said, his own government had failed to match his sense of duty.

His district had long been a transit corridor for insurgents between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and had had almost no government presence. Since 2006 the area had been covered only by Mr. Mohammad’s detachment and one American platoon, roughly 40 soldiers. Many villages in the district had never been visited by either the military or the police.

In early December, Colonel McAteer, the American commander, augmented the firebase with most of his battalion’s Company B — more than two more platoons. The company commander, Capt. Christopher J. DeMure, moved to Nawa with a detachment of Afghan Army soldiers and about a dozen Afghan police officers, including a colonel to relieve Mr. Mohammad.

The officers in Nawa, the only government representatives that had ever entered much of Nawa, were surviving on donations — some might call it extortion — from a local bazaar.

When Captain DeMure arrived, Mr. Mohammad told him the government's logistics system was such a failure that he owed \$3,400 to shopkeepers for goods he had commandeered to keep his police station fed and supplied. The sum equaled roughly three years of his salary.

Lt. Col. Amanuddin, the police supervisor who arrived with new officers, appeared to be just as disappointed as Mr. Mohammad. (Like many Afghans, Colonel Amanuddin has only one name.) "I need 20 good police officers, and could use 100," he said. "Good people — not any hashish smokers. And I need sleeping bags and mattresses and a generator for power."

Without more officers and better equipment, he said, it would be impossible to conduct night patrols with American soldiers.

But there were signs as well that Mr. Mohammad, for all of his courage and sense of loyalty, lacked other fundamental leadership traits. The station Colonel Amanuddin was inheriting was a picture of disorder and filth.

Its front yard was a junkyard of scrapped vehicles and broken artillery pieces. Inside was a garbage pit. The garbage was not confined to this hole; it was everywhere. The courtyard was overrun by dogs that fed on it.

At least three unexploded rockets littered the grounds, and the police had taken to using a guard tower as a toilet. Human waste covered its floor.

Seeing the depth of the problems, Captain DeMure contacted a provincial coordination center that supervises the police. He hoped to get more gear, wages for the officers and more officers for the district.

He also organized the police into patrols, led by Americans, to search for Taliban fighters and meet villagers for introductions.

But on Dec. 6, Mr. Mohammad's fear of mass desertion came true. Destitute and dispirited, most of the officers under his command abandoned their posts at sunrise; it was not the first time, he said, that such a thing had happened.

Nine of Colonel Amanuddin's officers announced that they were leaving, too. Only one new officer remained: Amir Mohammad, a driver with only one arm.

The only other officers to agree to work were three of Mr. Mohammad's relatives — cheerful but largely untrained men. At one point, Mr. Mohammad had commanded more than 15 men.

Captain DeMure urged the new chief to ask the men to keep working. It was no use. "None of the officers have been paid," the colonel said. "If we force them, they might kill us." Mr. Mohammad nodded knowingly.

Captain DeMure was soon back in contact with Ghazni, asking for police officers again. The patrols he had organized had been encouraging; many villagers had seemed friendly and said they wanted the government to move into the district.

"There are people here who welcome the government and the change it can bring," he said. "But we need the police down here to help make that happen."

A few days later, at the captain's urging, eight more officers arrived to work with Colonel Amanuddin. More were expected soon, he said.

Mr. Mohammad's tour was over at last. Earlier, he had said that when he was relieved he would confront the supervisors he suspected of embezzling his officers' wages.

But even this wish showed how much work was ahead. He would have to travel in an American convoy, he said, because if a police officer risked driving to the capital alone, he would almost certainly be shot.

“This looks like a fortress,” he said, gesturing to the compound where he had lived for a year and a half. “Really it is an island. The Taliban is all around.”

Testimony of Barnett R. Rubin
Director of Studies, Center on International Cooperation, New York University¹
House Armed Services Committee
Hearing on "Assessment of U.S. Strategy and Operations in Afghanistan and the Way Ahead"
Wednesday, January 23rd from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. in Rayburn 2118.

I welcome this hearing on U.S. Strategy and Operations in Afghanistan. The effort in Afghanistan has some important successes to its credit, but strategically it is not succeeding. The center of gravity of this struggle is the people of Afghanistan, while in Washington the focus remains unfortunately on the Taliban and al-Qaida. In Washington the most common questions asked about Afghanistan are whether we have enough troops there and if the NATO allies are doing enough. These are issues, but they are not the main issue. The struggle in Afghanistan involves warfare, but it is not primarily a military struggle. It is primarily political and economic. The administration has never given adequate attention to these aspects of the operation. Indeed, as Admiral Mullen stated before this committee, the administration has always treated Afghanistan as an "economy of force" operation, that is, a second priority after Iraq. This mistaken priority began on September 12, 2001.

In addition, the conflict in Afghanistan remains a regional conflict. Today it is in fact a two-nation war and civil conflict, equally affecting Pakistan and Afghanistan. Terrorism and insurgency are rising in both countries. If anything, Taliban and al-Qaida have been more active and successful in Pakistan than in Afghanistan these past few months. The US, NATO, and the UN need a coherent regional strategy for the stabilization of Afghanistan which takes into account the ongoing warfare in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the interests and activities of Iran, India, Russia, China, and other major powers.

The single most important immediate objective for the stability of both Pakistan and Afghanistan is the holding of parliamentary elections in Pakistan on February 18 that are fair and that the people of Pakistan believe to be fair. In addition, those who win the elections must exercise the power to govern, which has not been the case with past civilian governments in Pakistan, which remained under the veto power of the military. Military rule in Pakistan is the problem, not the solution.

Pakistan cannot be an effective US ally while its government lacks basic credibility with its own people. The vast majority of Pakistanis do not regard Pervez Musharraf as a legitimate president, and they want him to leave. Nearly 50% of Pakistanis believe that the government or its political allies were complicit in the murder of Benazir Bhutto. I am not endorsing this view, but it illustrates the vast gulf between Pakistan's military regime and its people. U.S. unstinting

¹ Affiliation for identification only. All views are those of the author, not of CIC, NYU, or any other organization.

support for Pakistan's military rulers has made Pakistan one of the most anti-American countries on earth. It is not possible to carry out a protracted and complex struggle with the Taliban and al-Qaida, including its core leadership, in partnership with a government that is opposed by its own people.

The first condition for progress in either Pakistan or Afghanistan is a legitimate government in Pakistan that can articulate a view of national security that will win wide support. President Musharraf cannot do that. I append some thoughts on Pakistan I recently posted on my blog.

The international effort (not just a US effort) in Afghanistan is in trouble not just because of lack of coordination, but because it is not treated as a priority in practice. The appointment of Paddy Ashdown or another individual as a high-level coordinator may help, but only if it is clear that this office's main mandate is to discipline the international community behind a common strategy, not to act as a more powerful international custodian of Afghanistan, which jealously guards its independence. I append a comment on this subject that I wrote after Admiral Mullen's and secretary Gates' testimony before this committee.

Finally, the production of narcotics in Afghanistan has broken all records. The U.S. is actively engaged in an effort to make the situation deteriorate still further by pressuring the government of Afghanistan to engage in an effort of crop eradication that will harm the poorest people in the most insecure areas. I append a brief analysis of that situation as well.

I. Comment on Admiral Mullen's testimony and the High-Level Coordinator (December 15, 2007)

II.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, at a NATO meeting in Edinburgh, has decided to change tactics in dealing with NATO allies in Afghanistan:

"We're going to try to look at this more creatively than perhaps we have done in the past when we basically have just been hammering on (allied governments) to provide more," Gates said in a post-meeting interview with a small group of reporters traveling with him from Washington.

Why the change? Maybe Gates was embarrassed when Europeans pointed out what happened just last Tuesday when he testified at the House Armed Services Committee with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen:

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff acknowledged Tuesday that the U.S. military's primary focus remained the war in Iraq, not Afghanistan, prompting criticism from Democratic lawmakers who want the Pentagon to devote more attention and resources to the Afghan conflict.

Adm. Michael G. Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the war in Afghanistan was an "economy of force" operation, a military label for a mission of secondary importance.

"Our main focus, militarily, in the region and in the world right now is rightly and firmly in Iraq," Mullen said before the House Armed Services Committee. "It is simply a matter of resources, of capacity. In Afghanistan, we do what we can. In Iraq, we do what we must."

Maybe Gates should speak to his own Commander-in-Chief about the importance of Afghanistan (which has no dedicated link on the White House website).

More troops might be useful in Afghanistan, if they had the right mission. Put in more troops with the wrong mission, and they will just fail more quickly and more messily. But the whole "blame Europe" trope is just an exercise in the Bush administration's favorite activity: avoiding accountability. (By the way, is authorizing the use of torture an impeachable offense, like covering up illicit sex? Just wondering.) A few facts:

- In 2001 the administration rejected an offer from the UK, France, and Germany to place the entire Afghanistan mission under NATO.
- Until 2003, the administration rejected increasingly urgent requests from President Karzai, the United Nations, and many others to expand the International Security Assistance Force.
- The administration continues to claim that Afghanistan and Iraq are one struggle, knowing full well that most NATO members did not support the U.S. invasion of Iraq.
- Before major deployments of Canadian and European NATO troops to southern Afghanistan in 2005, the administration assured its partners that it would take care of the infiltration of Taliban from Pakistan; the administration had completely ignored Pakistani support for the Taliban until then and had not even deployed any intelligence resources to track it. Since then infiltration has increased, and Pakistani Taliban allied with al-Qaida now have free reign in much of the border region, as the authority of the administration's chosen partner, General Pervez Musharraf, continues to crumble, and Europeans continue to be killed by guerrillas and suicide bombers trained, funded, and equipped in Pakistan.
- The administration continues to press relentlessly for an escalation of eradication of Afghanistan's opium poppy crop, even though the conditions for successful use of this counter-narcotics tool do not exist, and the UK, Canada, and the Netherlands, whose troops will bear the brunt of the resulting increase in insurgent activity, have opposed these pressures.

In any case, a retired four-star general speaking at a private meeting recently characterized the lack of troops in Afghanistan as a "sixth-order problem." The key problems are the lack of a coherent regional strategy, especially toward Pakistan and Iran, and the failure from the very beginning to invest adequately in governance and development and in any aspect of security but the Afghan National Army. All of these resulted from decisions taken by the Bush administration in 2001-2002, not from our European allies.

Some of these same allies may have made some of these points in private at Edinburgh. As a result of Gates' new attitudes, he is now working with other NATO members to address these shortfalls:

Nicholas Burns, the undersecretary of state for political affairs, who joined Gates at the conference, told reporters afterward that he and his counterparts agreed that the nonmilitary part of the effort to stabilize Afghanistan also needs to be re-energized and improved.

"There was a strong sense that the civilian side, run by all of our governments and by the U.N., needs now to be elevated and expanded and be made as strategically purposeful as what we see on the military side," Burns said.

Gates said the Edinburgh talks produced a consensus on the need to fashion an "integrated plan" for what needs to be achieved in Afghanistan within the next three to five years as well as specifics on how those things can be accomplished.

The major proposal circulating to address these issues is the appointment of a high-level coordinator. The leading contender for this position, former Bosnia High Representative Paddy Ashdown, has argued:

"I've always said that Afghanistan was more likely to succeed if the international community coordinated itself and spoke with a single voice," the former Bosnia chief told Sky News television.

"Its failure to do so has led us to a position I think where the relatively low level of resources we are putting into Afghanistan are seriously wasted," he added.

Such coordination is badly needed. But calling someone a "high level coordinator" does not enable him to produce high-level coordination. The position is reported to include being appointed both UN SRSG and the NATO Senior Civilian Representative and perhaps eventually EU Special Representative as well. But the UN SRSG has no budgetary authority over the UN agencies, let alone the bilateral donors (led by the U.S.) that provide aid through their own parallel (and very wasteful) channels. The NATO SCR has authority over neither military activities nor the civilian assistance provided by the Provincial Reconstruction Teams. The EUSR has no authority over the aid provided by the European Commission. Unless the "coordinator" presides over a pooled international budget for Afghanistan, including security sector reform, development aid, and counter-narcotics, he will just become another agency that needs to be coordinated. Inevitably, he will be tempted to spend his time hectoring the Afghan government rather than coordinating the international actors.

The Afghan government badly needs coherent support from the international community; but a high-level "coordinator" without real authority will not deliver it. Afghans will listen to such a coordinator only if he actually produces more coherent assistance. Otherwise he will be a focal point not for coordination, but for blame. I hope that's not the point.

III. Comment on Pakistan (January 1, 2008)

The Pakistan Electoral Commission's decision to postpone the elections scheduled for January 8 because of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto could be justified on technical grounds, but few people in Pakistan will believe the decision was made on technical grounds. Under current conditions in Pakistan, which are worse than most U.S. reporting indicates, it is impossible to

hold a free and fair election. But there is little indication that the government ever intended to hold a free and fair election, even when it could have.

I called a friend in Lahore this morning. The obstacles are not just that electoral materials (possibly including those prepared for rigging) were destroyed in the rioting. The country's infrastructure is under severe stress. In Lahore there are only 7 hours of electricity a day, and water pressure is also reported to be unreliable (I know those of you in Kabul may not feel their pain). Optic fiber lines were cut in Sindh, blacking out telecommunications for a while. The front page of Dawn online yields the following: There has been massive damage to the country's rail network. Fuel is in short supply, and the shortages are likely to get worse. The stock market and the currency are both crashing. Government ministers are charging "foreign elements" (i.e. India) with organizing the riots, a useful excuse for martial law.

In Pakistan there is a massive outburst of rage against Musharraf and everything associated with his government, including the government's claim that it has evidence that the Pakistani Taliban, led by Baitullah Mahsud, carried out the assassination. I still lean toward the hypothesis that the operation was carried out by organizations connected to al-Qaida. Given the relationship of the Pakistani military to jihadi organizations that by no means absolves the Musharraf regime of responsibility.

But what recent events demonstrate even more clearly is that the Bush administration's policy of relying on a personal relationship with a megalomaniac manipulator like Musharraf to fight al-Qaida has strengthened that organization immeasurably and perhaps fatally damaged the U.S.'s ability to form the coalition it needs to isolate and destroy that organization.

Many, probably most or nearly all, Pakistanis don't see the "War on Terror" as struggle of "moderates" against "extremists." They see it as a slogan to legitimate the military's authoritarian control. Through the classic psychological mechanism of reducing cognitive dissonance, it is only a short jump from believing that the threat of al-Qaida is being manipulated to strengthen authoritarian rule, to believing that the threat of al-Qaida is a hoax perpetrated to strengthen authoritarian rule. A similar mechanism of reducing cognitive dissonance has led many Americans to accept propaganda that the "anti-American" Saddam Hussein and the "anti-American" Islamic Republic of Iran must be allied with the "anti-American" al-Qaida. (Before some member of the nutosphere calls me out for using quotation marks around "anti-American," let me stipulate that the purpose of the quotation marks is to call attention to the fact that every organization that opposes the U.S. is not defined solely or even primarily by that opposition. It is not to claim that these entities are in fact "pro-American.")

The Bush administration's terrible simplification has not only harmed U.S. security interests; it has also done perhaps irreparable damage to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Some readers protest

when I lead with the implications of such events for U.S. foreign policy, as if I didn't think it worthwhile to mention the effects on those directly concerned. Believe me, I understand that Afghanistan, Pakistan, and all those other countries out there have purposes other than playing a role in scripts drafted in Washington.

But I am an American writing for a primarily American audience. I don't think that Pakistanis are looking to me to explain their country to them. I am trying to use my experience and expertise, such as it is, to convince my compatriots, our allies, and the international organizations to which we belong, to change their relationships with other countries. Sometimes I appear on the media here (the US) or speak to non-specialist audiences. They always ask me to explain the implications for them.

There is a connection, however, between the foreign policy interests of the U.S. and the direct effect on, in this case, Pakistan. That is because the script writers in Washington impose their own terrible simplifications on the people whose behavior they are trying to affect, without understanding who those people are and what they want, often with disastrous consequences.

The current situation in Pakistan is a case in point. The Bush administration has decided that in the "Muslim world" a battle is going on between pro-American "moderates" and anti-American "extremists." According to them, the "Muslim world" has a two-party system organized around how Muslims feel about America. In Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf is a "pro-American moderate." Benazir Bhutto is a "pro-American moderate." Therefore it is only logical (and in U.S. interests!) for the U.S. to realign Pakistan politics so that the "moderates" work together against the "extremists."

This ignores a few problems. It is not just a random problem that the "pro-American moderate" institution headed by General Musharraf executed Benazir's father and held her for years in solitary confinement. Despite Musharraf's propagation of the PR slogan, "enlightened moderation," the institution that he headed, and which put him in power, supported the Taliban unstintingly for many years and failed to deliver any results against al-Qaida when it would really have counted. This is the same institution that massacred hundreds of thousands of its own countrymen in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

The administration's plan for Pakistan was based on a model of transition from authoritarianism that took place in several Latin American countries, which is known as a "pacted transition." (If you want to know more about it, Google "transitology.") The basic idea is that the "moderates" in the bureaucratic authoritarian regime and the "moderates" in the democratic opposition negotiate a peaceful process of extrication of the military from power through elections, which may initially be "guided" rather than "free and fair." Of course the administration seem to have neglected one of the research's main findings: pacted transitions give rise to "democracies with

birth defects." Among those birth defects are continued control by the military over key areas of policy and the limited consolidation of democracy. Much depends on what the leaders of the military are actually trying to accomplish.

This already happened in Pakistan. In 1988 General Zia-ul-Haq's hand-picked Prime Minister, Muhammad Khan Junejo, got in several conflicts with Zia over Afghanistan (the negotiation of the Geneva Accords and the explosion of weapons destined for the Afghan mujahidin at an ISI warehouse in Rawalpindi). After the as yet unsolved Case of the Exploding Mangoes, which killed General Zia, ISI Director General Akhtar Abdul Rahman, and U.S. Ambassador Arnie Raphel, the military dismissed Junejo and agreed to a reasonably free election, which was won by Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party. After the death of General Zia, whom Bhutto and many Pakistanis held responsible for her father's death, she was able to return.

But her electoral victory did not settle the issue. Bhutto first had to negotiate with the military and agree not to remove military authority over security issues, notably Afghanistan, the nuclear program, Kashmir, and senior military appointments. After the failed attempt by the ISI with U.S. backing to orchestrate the conquest of the Afghan city of Jalalabad in March 1989 (using not only Afghan mujahidin but also al-Qaida), Bhutto sacked ISI director General Hamid Gul. Other conflicts with the military ensued. As a result, the military had President Ghulam Ishaq Khan remove her on corruption charges in August 1990. The military and bureaucracy rigged the elections in October 1990 so that she would be defeated by Nawaz Sharif.

I will come back to the election rigging, because the government used the same technique that it was apparently planning to employ this time as well, namely the establishment of "ghost polling places" to return fake ballots in key constituencies identified by the ISI's Electoral Cell. This method of rigging is not visible to foreign election observers.

When Nawaz Sharif in turn became too independent, it was his turn to be sacked. This was followed by two rounds of alternance determined by the military (Bhutto in 1994, Sharif in 1996). The final confrontation between Nawaz Sharif and General Musharraf was provoked again by a struggle over the military's prerogatives. Sharif charged that Musharraf organized the Kargil campaign in Kashmir on his own initiative, while Sharif was pursuing negotiations with the U.S. over Bin Laden behind Musharraf's back.

The leaders of the Pakistan military, of which Musharraf is a typical example, do not see themselves primarily as "pro-American moderates" battling with "anti-American extremists." They see themselves as responsible for building a powerful militarized state in Pakistan representing the heritage of Islamic empires in South and Central Asia against the threat from India and the selfish maneuvers of politicians (not necessarily in that order). In the course of doing so, they have enriched themselves and gained control of much of the economy and civilian

administration. The military has always aspired to control the judiciary as well, and Musharraf has now restored to that institution the supine illegitimacy that it possessed under General Zia. This means of course that the use of institutional power for private gain by the military is legal (as the judiciary has no power over the military), while similar use of institutional power by civilians is "corruption."

The military allies with the U.S. because that is the only way to get the weapons and money for their national security project and to prevent the U.S. from aligning with India. It has nothing to do with "moderation." The "pro-American moderate" Pakistan military has used the "anti-American extremist" jihadis for its national security project. (By the way, the Afghan Taliban were not originally anti-American. In 1997, Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkil, who later became foreign minister, told a meeting I was chairing at Columbia University that the Taliban would help the U.S. "in its struggle against international terrorism," and nobody wanted to build the Unocal pipeline more than they did.)

The goal of the Pakistan military has been neither moderation nor extremism as defined in Washington. Its goal has been to stay in power in order to pursue its national security project, which is also in its institutional interest and the private interest of its members. So why did Musharraf enter into negotiations with Bhutto? As Chief of Army Staff, Musharraf occupied a role similar to that of head of the ruling party in a one-party dominant system. His party, the military, unlike the other parties, is a disciplined cadre organization which, along with its fellow travelers (civilian allies of the military) controls all the key levers of power, including the civil administration and the judiciary. Such control is, it believes, required by the national interest. Musharraf added to this an economic policy under the guidance of his Prime Minister, former Citibank official Shaukat Aziz, that has indeed succeeded to some extent. In fact it helped create the middle class and new communications media that are leading the fight to oust Musharraf.

In order to maintain the essential base of his party's control (U.S. weapons and money) after 9/11, Musharraf had to abandon the military's historic political alliance with the religious right and its allied militants. But Pakistan is not a "banana republic," i.e. a tiny country with a single cohesive landowning elite that can run a dictatorship informally through intimidation, violence, and patronage (though these have a role to play). It is a country of 160 million with one of the largest cities in the world (Karachi) and a well-developed middle class. Running such a country requires a higher degree of institutionalization and political legitimation. Hence Musharraf needed new political allies to run institutions.

But he did not want political allies to negotiate a transition to democracy: he wanted political allies to legitimate continued military rule. The Islamist parties were willing to partner with the military on that basis, because it was their only way of acceding to power. But the PPP and the PML-N (Nawaz Sharif's party) could actually win elections. While the military tried to use

Washington's interest in an alliance of "moderates" to legitimate its own rule, it could not allow a party that actually aspired to rule to come to power. Enter the PML-Q (Musharraf's party, aka the King's Party). The military assembled this party out of notables of various sorts to represent those civilian allies that supported military rule. This description does not apply to every official of the PML-Q (some of whom are friends of mine), who joined for different reasons. Some, in particular, supported the relatively successful economic policies of Shaukat Aziz. But the party exists basically in order to win elections rigged by the military.

Benazir Bhutto, however, probably imagined that the opening provided by the U.S. pressure on Musharraf for a "moderate" alliance (to legitimate Musharraf's power for the sake of the "War on Terror," not democracy) might provide her with an opening she could exploit to regain power. I will not attempt to judge among the various claims about Bhutto -- from heroine of democracy to power-hungry corrupt feudal. I will just note that she knew she was risking her life and did not need to do so. When President Karzai met her the morning of her death, she told the Afghans she feared she would be assassinated soon. She represented the hopes of millions of people. To represent them, she would have had to challenge the military's power. Nor did she take the easy populist route (seemingly chosen by Nawaz Sharif) of belittling the threat of the militants. Though what she said about the militants pleased Washington, many things she said about General Musharraf did not. I believe that events will tragically show that she was right.

Her strategy appeared to be to exploit the military's weakness and the support of the U.S. to enlarge the space for her party's power, and therefore, in the flawed sense this word has in the real world, of democracy. (The family inheritance of leadership has a rational function too: without it, there is a good chance that the PPP would tear itself apart in factional struggles. It still might do so, but the appointment of her son as heir and her husband as regent has provided some breathing space.)

But Musharraf was not going to let her win. On December 11 Dawn published a story purportedly announcing the "official poll results", nearly a month before the scheduled elections. The PML-Q was to win the most seats, with the PPP second and PML-N third. The numbers were chosen in such a way that the Islamist parties that supported the Afghan Taliban, the military's old partners, would have few seats but enough to hold the balance of power.

How to get such results? The ISI has an electoral cell that, among other things, conducts polling. (A friend who is familiar with the operation claims that the polling is not reliable and tends to be driven by the desired outcome.) The purpose is not to win a referendum with 99% of the vote, but to get a balance that leaves the military in charge through its political allies. This does not require rigging every constituency, but controlling the media and administration to create a positive environment for the military's allies, and then rigging only a few dozen constituencies where the outcome is nonetheless in doubt (plus constituencies of key leaders). The principal

technique is the printing of more ballots than are needed and the establishment of "ghost polling places" in the constituencies that are to be rigged. The excess ballots are filled out for the desired candidates and placed in "ballot boxes" belonging to the ghost polling places. The ballot boxes and their fictitious totals are forwarded to the returning officer together with the legitimate ballots. The system needs only to approximate its target to achieve the desired political results.

The PPP now wants to capitalize on the public's anger and sympathy. The time that the electoral commission could use to reconstitute the infrastructure for a free and fair election is also time that could be used to reconstitute the infrastructure for rigging. Hence the PPP probably sees no good reason to allow the electoral apparatus to reconstitute itself.

A genuine free election in Pakistan today could very well confront President Musharraf with a parliament that would not recognize him and that would openly challenge the power of the army. But the military no longer has the capacity or legitimacy to rule Pakistan. The time for a pacted transition is past. The choice before Pakistan is democracy or disintegration.

IV. Comments on Narcotics and Counter-Narcotics

In the past year (2007-2008), opium production in Afghanistan reached a record level, estimated at 8,200 tons of raw opium. Traffickers also refined nearly all of the opium into heroin opiates exporting it. The Taliban-led insurgency supported by al-Qaida spread to new areas in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The level of terrorism, especially suicide bombings, set record levels in both countries, hitting high-profile targets such as Pakistan's most popular politician, Benazir Bhutto, and the Serena Hotel in Kabul. After six years of assistance to the Afghan government by the UN, NATO, the world's major military powers, the world's largest aid donors, and international specialists on all subjects, the expansion of both the illicit industry and the insurgency constitutes a powerful indictment of international policy and capacity.

In response, the United States Government and other major actors decided to make counter-narcotics in Afghanistan a priority in 2007 and 2008 and link it to counter-insurgency. To assure coherence and coordination of this complex policy area, the government of Afghanistan and the United Nations agreed that the February 6, 2008, meeting of the Joint Coordination and Management Board, which they co-chair, should focus on counter-narcotics.² This meeting could reach agreement on effective measures to cope with the opiate industry and insurgency in Afghanistan, but it could also confirm international commitment to escalating eradication of the poppy crop in 2008, a policy that will invigorate both the opiate industry and the insurgency.

² The JCMB, including all the major donors and troop contributors, is the body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact. In January 2006, over sixty states and international organizations adopted the Compact as the framework for their assistance to Afghanistan over the coming five years.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) led off its Afghanistan Opium Survey 2007 with findings linking the opium economy to the insurgency. It first summarized trends in opium cultivation:³

First, the area under opium cultivation rose to 193,000 hectares from 165,000 in 2006. The total opium harvest will be 8,200 tons, up from 6,100 tons last year. . . .

Second, in the centre and north of Afghanistan, where the government has increased its authority and presence, opium cultivation is diminishing. The number of opium-free provinces more than doubled from six to thirteen, while in the province of Balkh opium cultivation collapsed from 7,200 hectares last year to zero. However, the opposite trend was seen in southern Afghanistan. Some 80 percent of opium poppies were grown in a handful of provinces along the border with Pakistan, where instability is greatest. In the volatile province of Helmand, where the Taliban insurgency is concentrated, opium cultivation rose 48 percent to 102,770 hectares.⁴

UNODC then “highlight[ed] three new circumstances,” allegedly linking the increase in opium poppy cultivation to the insurgency:

First, opium cultivation in Afghanistan is no longer associated with poverty – quite the opposite. Hilmand, Kandahar and three other opium-producing provinces in the south are the richest and most fertile, in the past the breadbasket of the nation and a main source of earnings. They have now opted for illicit opium on an unprecedented scale (5,744 tons), while the much poorer northern region is abandoning the poppy crops.

Second, opium cultivation in Afghanistan is now closely linked to insurgency. The Taliban today control vast swathes of land in Hilmand, Kandahar and along the Pakistani border. By preventing national authorities and international agencies from working, insurgents have allowed greed and corruption to turn orchards, wheat and vegetable fields into poppy fields.

Third, the Taliban are again using opium to suit their interests. Between 1996 and 2000, in Taliban-controlled areas 15,000 tons of opium were produced and exported – the regime’s sole source of foreign exchange at that time. In July 2000, the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, argued that opium was against Islam and banned its cultivation (but not its export). In recent months, the Taliban have reversed their position once again and started to extract from the drug economy resources for arms, logistics and militia pay.

³ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghan Opium Survey 2007*, August 2007, p. iv, via http://www.unodc.org/pdf/research/AFG07_ExSum_web.pdf, accessed on December 3, 2007.

⁴ Appendix A explains why it is a fallacy to call areas where poppy is not grown “opium-free.” Trafficking continues through such areas.

These assertions are misleading and partly false (see Appendix B for a refutation of these claims). They have been cited in support of a plan to escalate poppy eradication especially in the South to deprive the Taliban of funding and starve the insurgency. The proponents of this plan have also justified it on the grounds that it will not harm the “poor,” who are in the north, but only the “rich and greedy” in the south. These arguments consist of a series of fallacies:

- First, the difference between the “rich” southern province of Helmand and the “poor” northern province of Balkh, according to UNODC’s own survey of household income, is the difference between an average daily income of \$1 per person in Helmand and \$0.70 per person in Balkh.⁵ Household studies of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan indicate that poor households are most dependent on poppy cultivation for their livelihoods. Poppy eradication in Helmand, especially in insecure areas not reached by development projects, may primarily harm the livelihoods of those earning less than \$1 per day. The first UN Millennium Development Goal aims to reduce by half the number of people living on less than \$1 per day. If these desperately poor people have easier access to armed resistance than alternative livelihoods, they may well choose the former.
- Second, poppy (or coca, or cannabis) cultivation migrates to the most insecure areas capable of producing it. Hence poppy cultivation migrated to Afghanistan and within Afghanistan to the areas most affected by the insurgency. Political and military conflict created the conditions for the drug industry, not vice versa, just as political and military conflict is now creating conditions for poppy cultivation in Diyala province of Iraq.⁶ Field research on poppy cultivation has identified insecurity exploited by drug traffickers, not the greed and corruption of Afghan cultivators, as the primary driver of opium poppy cultivation.
- Third, the Taliban were not solely dependent on narcotics financing in 1996-2000, nor are they now. Research by the World Bank and others indicated that the Taliban derived more income and foreign exchange in the 1990s from taxing the transit trade in licit goods smuggled through Afghanistan from Dubai to Pakistan than from the drug trade.⁷ Today, too, the Taliban have other sources of income.

The advocates of responding to the drug problem by escalating eradication compound these errors with a further fallacy: the claim that poppy eradication reduces the amount of drug money available to fund insurgency, terrorism, and corruption. In 2000-2001, when the Taliban prohibited poppy cultivation with almost complete success in the areas they controlled, they suffered no financial problems. Drug traders are not florists. Trafficking continued from

⁵ Mansfield and Pain.

⁶ Patrick Cockburn, “Opium fields spread across Iraq as farmers try to make ends meet,” The Independent, January 17, 2008.

⁷ Barnett R. Rubin, “The Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan,” World Development 2000.

stockpiles of opiates, and the loss in quantity was compensated by a tenfold increase in price. Eradication raises the price of opium and causes its cultivation to migrate to more remote areas. It does not provide for a sustainable reduction in the drug economy, nor does sustainable reduction of the drug economy start with eradication.

Focusing on poppy cultivation when economic alternatives are not secure conflicts with the broadly accepted view in Afghanistan that poppy cultivation is undesirable, but that it is inevitable in situations of dire poverty and insecurity. Hence pursuing eradication under these circumstances provides evidence that the international operation and the government that it supports derive their legitimacy not from Afghan people but from external powers.

According to a 2007 poll conducted by Charney Research, 36 percent of the national sample in Afghanistan (in both poppy growing and non-poppy growing provinces) believed that poppy cultivation was acceptable either unconditionally or if there was no other way to make a living. In poppy-producing provinces, a third of respondents believed that elimination or reduction of poppy was a bad thing. In Helmand, the main province targeted for eradication, this figure climbed to about one half. Over 60 percent in all poppy growing provinces and 80 percent in Helmand agreed that "the farmers whose opium crops are eradicated are usually poor or don't pay bribes." The following table illustrates the perception of hardship imposed by poppy eradication in poppy-growing provinces (figures for Helmand in parentheses):⁸

Q-107. Are you personally aware of farming families in this province who have had opium crops eradicated who:

	Yes	No	Don't Know
a. Suffered hunger or hardship as a result?	40% (73%)	52%	8%
b. Had to give up children to creditors when they could not pay debts?	14% (25%)	77%	9%
c. Ran away from this province because they could not pay their debts?	26% (52%)	65%	9%
d. Became more sympathetic to the Taliban as a result?	16% (38%)	74%	11%

Note that one out of seven respondents in poppy growing provinces and one in four in Helmand said they knew of farming families who **had sold their children (most likely girls)** in payment of opium debts as a result of eradication. This might help explain why 38 percent of the

⁸ Charney Research survey in Afghanistan, November 2007. Our thanks to Craig Charney for providing this data.

Helmand respondents said they knew of someone who became more sympathetic to the Taliban as a result of eradication.

The Afghanistan Compact requires a different approach to counter-narcotics. That agreement outlines a strategy to achieve two over-riding goals: “to improve the lives of Afghan people and to contribute to national, regional, and global peace and security.” To accomplish these over-riding goals, the Compact prescribes three pillars of activity: security; governance, human rights, and justice; and economic and social development.

The Compact defines counter-narcotics as a “cross-cutting” theme across all these three pillars. It integrates counter-narcotics with the other pillars both because achieving counter-narcotics goals requires policies and programs under all pillars, and to emphasize that counter-narcotics is not separate from or parallel to the overall goal of the Compact and its three pillars. Achieving the Compact’s counter-narcotics goal, “a sustained and significant reduction in the production and trafficking of narcotics with a view to complete elimination,” is part of an overall strategy to build security, governance, and development to improve the lives of Afghans and provide security to Afghans, their neighbors, and the entire international community.

The threat to the Compact’s objectives comes not from drugs per se, but, as stated in the *U.S. Counter-Narcotics Strategy for Afghanistan* (August 2007), from “drug money” that “weakens key institutions and strengthens the Taliban.”⁹ According to estimates by UNODC, the “drug money” to which the Strategy refers comes mainly from the 70-80 percent of the gross profits of narcotics earned by traffickers and processors and partly passed on to power holders, including Taliban, Afghan government officials, and other illegal armed groups, not from the 20-30 percent that goes to poppy farmers and laborers.¹⁰

Counter-narcotics policy in service of the Afghanistan Compact’s goals requires reducing the amount of illicit value created by the drug economy and should focus on the part of the drug economy that “weakens key institutions and strengthens the Taliban.” This distinction has implications for how to define and measure success in counter-narcotics and how to achieve it. The most commonly used measure of both the problem and the progress of counter-narcotics – the extent of cultivation of opium poppy – biases policy in the wrong direction. It focuses attention on the quantity of narcotics rather than the value and toward the smallest and least harmful part of the drug economy – the raw material that produces income for rural communities. A better indicator of success is the one included in the benchmarks for economic and social development of the Afghanistan Compact, “a decrease in the absolute and relative size of the drug economy.”

⁹ Citation to US Strategy report.

¹⁰ UNODC Citation from the summary table at the start of the 2006 Opium survey.

The Afghan narcotics industry, the annual gross profit of which is equal to approximately half of the country's licit GDP, makes a significant proportion of the Afghan population dependent for their livelihood on drug traffickers and those who protect them, whether corrupt officials or insurgents.¹¹ That includes not only the one in seven Afghans who depend directly on poppy cultivation according to UNODC, but also all those involved in trafficking as well as the commerce, construction, and other economic activities that narcotics revenue finances. The political goal of counter-narcotics in Afghanistan is to break those links of dependence and instead integrate the Afghan population into the licit economy and polity, which are in turn integrated with the international community's institutions and norms. That effort is the equivalent of the counter-insurgency goal of "winning hearts and minds" and the post-conflict reconstruction goal of strengthening legitimate government and reconstruction.

Both globally and within Afghanistan, the location of narcotics cultivation is the result – not the cause – of insecurity, as shown by the expansion of poppy cultivation into a destabilized Iraq. The essential condition for implementing counter-narcotics policy is "a state that works."¹² Counter-narcotics can succeed only if it political efforts establish the basis for policing, law enforcement, and support for development. Unlike military action, policing and law enforcement require the consent of the population. State building includes military action to defeat armed opponents of the project, but in a weak state such as Afghanistan it succeeds only by limiting the scope of state activity and gaining sufficient legitimacy and capacity so that the population consents to the state's authority over those areas in which it acts. Winning consent for counter-narcotics requires providing greater licit economy opportunities, and providing security for people to benefit from those opportunities. Scarce resources for coercion should be reserved for targeting political opponents at the high end of the value chain, rather than farmers and flowers. Winning a counter-insurgency while engaging in counter-narcotics also requires acknowledging that the transition from a predominantly narcotics-based economy to a licit one will take years. It is not possible to win the consent of communities to state authority while treating their livelihoods as criminal.

Proponents of escalating forced eradication argue that the government and its international supporters do not have years – if the drug economy continues to expand the whole effort will fail. Escalating forced eradication, however, will only make the effort fail more quickly. Escalating forced eradication does not integrate counter-narcotics with counter-insurgency: it integrates counter-narcotics with building the insurgency. What drives rural communities to

¹¹ It is not accurate to add the gross profits of narcotics to licit GDP to obtain a figure for total (licit and non-licit) GDP (reference to IMF chapter in UNODC/WB collection). The gross profits would have to be transformed to value added by including changes in stocks held, subtracting costs of inputs to manufacture (e.g. precursors) and including the net international flow of capital from the industry, among other adjustments.

¹² Colombian Deputy Minister of Defense Sergio Jaramillo, "Fighting Drugs and Building Peace: Toward Policy Coherence," New York City, May 14–15, 2007. For a conference summary, see Barnett R. Rubin and Alexandra Guáqueta, "Fighting Drugs and Building Peace: Towards Policy Coherence between Counter-Narcotics and Peace Building," *Dialogue on Globalization Occasional Papers* No. 37, November 2007.

align themselves with the Taliban is not illicit drugs, but a program to deprive those communities of their livelihoods before alternatives are available. An internationally supported effort to help Afghan communities gradually to move out of dependence on the drug trade without being stigmatized as criminals during the transition will integrate counter-narcotics with counter-insurgency and peace building.

In areas where the government and its international supporters have access to the population (including both poppy growing and non-poppy growing areas), a gradual policy should focus first on: development of licit livelihoods; improving governance, including reduction of narcotics-related corruption; and interdiction, targeted especially against heroin production. The international community must contribute by assuring markets for licit Afghan products, cooperating in interdiction with intelligence and force protection, preventing the export of precursors for heroin production into Afghanistan, and assuring that its operations in Afghanistan do not enrich or empower traffickers. Many international organizations in Afghanistan employ private security companies linked to figures involved in drug trafficking or rent properties from such men. At least two organizations funded by USAID for the Alternative Livelihoods Program rent their premises from men reputed to be major drug traffickers.

In areas where the insurgency prevents regular access by government, the first priority should be to gain access and establish state presence with consent of the local population. Introducing forced eradication whether by air or on the ground before the government is able to provide security or help communities develop alternative sources of livelihood undermines this effort.

The recovery of control over Musa Qala district of northern Helmand followed the pattern of putting access and security first, followed by interdiction and alternative livelihoods. The Afghan government and international forces carried out a joint political-military operation, gaining the support of a major Taliban commander (Mullah Abdul Salaam) and then defeating the remaining insurgents. Once in occupation of the district, government and international forces seized about \$25 million worth of narcotics¹³ and destroyed over 60 heroin laboratories.

Confiscating products from the upper end of the value chain, however, depended on regaining control of the territory. Had the government and international community engaged in forced eradication in Musa Qala before launching the operation, Mullah Abdul Salaam might not have changed sides, the local people might not have supported the government or remained neutral, and the district might have remained under Taliban control. If eradication had destroyed locally produced raw opium, the Taliban-supported heroin laboratories could have purchased opium from other sources. Having first undertaken political and military measures to establish security

¹³ U.S. Ambassador William Wood described the seizure as worth \$500 million in "street value," that is, if it had been sold in Amsterdam or London. Musa Qala, however, is rather distant from Amsterdam and London, and the prices there are correspondingly different.

in Musa Qala, however, Afghan and international forces were able to interdict high-value illicit products without harming rural communities. They now can begin to help communities break their dependence on the drug trade. This is how to integrate counter-narcotics and counter-insurgency.

For both political and economic reasons, crop eradication should be implemented, as stated in Afghanistan's National Drug Control Policy, "where access to alternative livelihoods exists." Where communities are confident in alternative livelihoods, they will consent to the eradication of illicit crops.

From an economic point of view, crop eradication does not meaningfully increase the opportunity cost of illicit cultivation unless the cultivators are able to engage in other cash-earning activities.¹⁴ Afghan farmers do not cultivate poppy out of greed for the highest possible return. They cultivate it because for many it is the only way to supplement their subsistence farming with a cash income for food and social security, which has become essential over the past few decades of war-induced inflation and destruction of the rural economy. The drug economy provides the only access to land, credit, water, and employment. There are many potential cash crops and sources of monetary income other than poppy cultivation, but additional investments and more security are required to make these economic opportunities available to most Afghan communities, especially those more distant from markets and in areas with less government presence.

From a political point of view, where these opportunities are available, eradication is hardly necessary, except to discipline some deviants, which communities can do themselves. Where these opportunities are not available, eradication promotes corruption and insurgency rather than alternative economic activities. Implementation of "forced eradication" in the absence of such conditions will neither reduce the size of the narcotics economy nor weaken the insurgency. Rather, it will strengthen insurgency while weakening and corrupting the Afghan government. Afghans will conclude that foreigners are in Afghanistan only to pursue their own interests, not to help Afghanistan.

¹⁴ Mansfield and Pain.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JANUARY 23, 2008

January 16, 2007

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
Washington, DC 20515-6035

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank you, the ranking member, and the members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify before you on the war in Afghanistan. I regret that the rescheduling of the hearing means I will not be able to appear before you. I will be visiting our forces in Afghanistan when the hearing takes place.

There are, however, several points that I believe should be raised before the Committee and to every member of Congress. Hopefully, my colleagues will raise many of these same points in their testimony, but I hope that this open letter to you, the Committee, and other members of Congress will still be of value.

Facing the Real Levels of Risk

The US and NATO/ISAF are not winning in Afghanistan. Making detailed assessments is necessarily uncertain because of the lack of meaningful unclassified official data and metrics. US, NATO/ISAF, and most allied government reporting on the Afghan War are often little more than political posturing, even in comparison with the level of official reporting on the Iraq War. Nevertheless, enough data are available—from interviews, UN sources, and background briefings—to make some key realities clear. (A summary of these data in map and chart form are available at http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/071203_afghanchallrev.pdf on the CSIS web site.)

The US and NATO/ISAF are able to defeat the Taliban and other Islamist extremist movements at the tactical level, and have won important victories in 2007. However, the Taliban still seem to be winning the battle for political and economic space. US,

NATO/ISAF, and Afghan forces are not strong enough to “hold” large areas after they “win.” There are only limited aid resources and personnel to “build” even in the more secure areas, and the Afghan central government cannot provide effective governance, services, and anything approaching the rule of law in most of the country, and particularly in high threat areas.

The rate of increase in Taliban control and influence in Afghanistan seems to have slowed sharply in 2007. It is clear, however, that the Taliban continues to score gains in controlling or threatening parts of Afghanistan. Moreover, the problems in Afghanistan are greatly compounded by Taliban and Al Qa’ida influence in Pakistan, and the area of direct day-to-day Taliban influence in that country continues to increase.

It is all too clear that this war is not simply an Afghan struggle, but rather an Afghan-Pakistan struggle that is centered on Pashtuni areas, spreading into other ethnic areas, and linked to growing Sunni-Shi’ite tensions. This war cannot be understood or won unless it is seen as a struggle for the future of both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

It also cannot be understood or won unless it is seen as having both a heavily ethnic and religious character. As in Iraq and much of the Islamic world, the ideological battle is largely a battle for the future of Islam and perceptions of legitimacy based on local perceptions and values. It will be won or lost by Afghans and Pakistanis, not by US or NATO/ISAF efforts.

The issue of religion is closely linked to culture and ethnic identity. It is critical to understand that US and other Western efforts to create “democracy,” and introduce Western values in terms of law and human rights, cannot win this critical aspect of the war for hearts and minds. Like Iraq, Afghanistan may evolve towards Western values and concepts of pluralism and the rule of law over time. Important progress is already being made towards these ends, but it will take at least a decade to create effective political parties, create a stable pattern of governance, and determine how the country will actually implement human rights and the rule of law if the Afghans can win the battle of religion and culture.

Like Al Qa’ida, the Taliban is not winning this aspect of the war. A series of different polls show that the Taliban and other Neo-Salafi extremists are not popular even in many Pashtun areas. The Taliban however, is gaining in popularity in the areas where it is active, has persuaded many Afghans that they can only be secure if it comes to play a role in the Afghan government, and is making gains by default. The Afghan government, the US, and NATO/ISAF lack the resources and capability to check its progress at the current time.

It is all too clear that the Afghan Army is years from being ready to “hold,” that the Afghan police development effort is still making slow and tenuous progress, and that Afghan governance and services are largely absent in much of the country, and in almost

all of the high threat areas. A past focus on the central government has left provincial and local governments weak and without legitimacy in much of the country, and displaced much of the previous leadership without replacing it. Counternarcotics efforts have been ineffective, corrupt, and have done more to alienate Afghans than reduce opium output. They have also pushed opium growing into Taliban dominated efforts and helped to finance the enemy.

At the same time, the war in Afghanistan remains eminently winnable. The Taliban is not strong. Its core forces probably number between 10,000 and 15,000, and its gains occur largely because of problems in resources and US and NATO/ISAF strategy for aiding the Afghan government. Some of these problems have already been eased by the increases in NATO/ISAF forces and US aid in 2007. The others can be solved by time, patience, and added resources – *if* the Afghan and Pakistani governments also move forward.

There also are convincing reasons why the US and its allies should provide the forces and resources necessary to win. The risk in losing this war must be addressed as honestly as the risk of continuing the fight. The choice is not one of staying or leaving. If the US and its NATO/ISAF allies lose in Afghanistan, even to the extent of losing effective control of the Pashtun areas, they will create a new sanctuary for both the Taliban and Al Qa'ida and make it extremely difficult for a divided and troubled Pakistan to ever secure its own Western tribal areas.

Virtually every country on Afghanistan's borders will be forced into some form of at least covert intervention, and Al Qa'ida's reputation and influence will be vastly strengthened throughout the Islamic world and wherever Islamist radicals are present. Afghanistan and Pakistan are a far more serious center of terrorism than Iraq, and the risk of having to fight the same ideological and terrorist threat at home and in friendly and allied countries is at least as great, if not greater.

Time and Patience

If we are to win, we need a strategy, plan, and resources that can correct the problems we now face. We need to recognize that success in Afghanistan, like success in Iraq, will require far more time and patience than I have seen the US admit in its policy statements to date, or in the plans of our NATO/ISAF allies and the international community.

Failure can be quick. Success will almost certainly require a sustained effort through the life of the next Administration. This does not mean the same level of forces, aid, or combat. It does mean a commitment to a long effort to bring security and stability to Afghanistan, and help it move towards effective governance and economic development.

The kind of plans and budgets that attempt to rush towards success in the coming year are a recipe for failure and defeat. The same is true of the Afghan Compact. We cannot hope to succeed by February 2009. We must plan to be in Afghanistan for at least the next five

years, and that takes us to 2013. If success happens to come earlier, then it will be so much the better. It is, however, a dangerous illusion to push for unattainable levels of “instant” progress, to promise what cannot be delivered, and to pretend to the American public that success can come quickly.

As in Iraq, we also are dealing with long wars where the most immediate enemy is only part of the problem. Even if we could quickly defeat the Taliban and other Islamic extremist movements, we would still have to deal with ethnic and sectarian tensions, pressures from neighboring states, and the difficulties in creating effective governance, political structures, and economic progress at the national, regional, and political level.

The Iraqi Minister of Defense recently illustrated the realities involved in the timelines for this kind of war when he stated that Iraqi forces would not be ready to assume the internal security burden without US aid until 2015, and would take until 2018 to build up the capability to defend Iraq against its neighbors. Iraq’s security forces, however, have had vastly more aid than Afghan forces and face much less demanding pressures from the outside than Afghanistan does in dealing with the Taliban and Al Qa’ida sanctuary in Pakistan.

Afghan forces are making progress, but will not be ready in 2008 or 2009. Creating an effective police force, criminal justice system, and government presence and mix of services than can sustain itself with only minimal aid will almost certainly take until 2012-2014 at the earliest.

Military Resources

Secretary Gates and senior US and NATO/ISAF commanders have already made it clear that we lack enough military forces to both “win and hold,” defeat the Taliban, and create the conditions where Afghan forces can eventually replace US and NATO/ISAF units. It is not clear just how many additional forces are needed.

Senior commanders have, however, stated in background briefings that they need three key elements: At least four more battalions – some 3,000-7,200 troops; an end to national caveats that divide and limit the operations of many NATO/ISAF forces and relegate French, German, Italian, and Spanish forces to “stand aside” roles; and a far more active and effective Pakistani military effort on the Pakistani side of the border. They have also repeatedly stated that they need more helicopters, and some have made it clear they need additional armor.

These are scarcely demanding requirements by the standards of past wars, or Iraq. They do, however, raise real questions about the role our allies are willing to play. Reports that the US will provide some 3,200 more Marines to aid British and Canadian forces in Helmand and Khandahar are a start, but only a start. It is clear that this new US deployment will not be a “surge” large enough to allow major changes in tactics or cover

all of the areas where more troops are needed, and there is a serious risk that Canada may not continue its presence beyond the end of the Afghan compact in February 2009.

It is important to note that this lack of troops is not a test of NATO. NATO as an organization seems perfectly capable of functioning in Afghanistan *if* member countries would allow it to do so. The test is actually one of member nations. It is a test of whether they will allow NATO to function, to commit their forces fully to missions outside Europe, and see the seriousness of this war for what it is.

It is all too easy to give way to the priorities of domestic politics, and to claim to be seizing the high moral ground and then hide there in safety. The end result, however, is that the primary threat to NATO/ISAF is not the Taliban, but the national leaders of the "stand aside" and "caveat" countries.

Given today's political realities, this situation cannot be corrected in 2008. Secretary Gates and the Bush Administration have done what they can. Further diplomacy and non-binding Congressional resolutions might help, but the fact is that the next Administration will face the challenge of sustaining today's NATO/ISAF force levels and getting added contributions. This is a reality that no candidate of either party has yet chosen to address in a substantive manner. The winner in the November election will have no choice.

As for Pakistan, the US will have little choice but to take action during the course of 2008, and here the Congress needs to face the reality that finding ways to aid and encourage the Pakistani Army in taking aggressive action against the Taliban and Al Qa'ida threat in Pakistan must have priority over using aid as a political lever to try to move Pakistan towards democracy.

This does not mean the US should write a blank check towards all forms of military aid to Pakistan. It does mean that as long as NATO/ISAF forces are too weak in Afghanistan, and Afghan forces are years away from being ready, the US cannot afford to leave the security situation in Western Pakistan and along the southern border of Afghanistan the way it is if there is anything that aid and diplomacy can do to get the Pakistani government to take effective action. It also means that major increases in aid are needed to encourage democracy and the rule of law in Pakistan.

Military Aid to Afghan Forces

It is difficult at a distance to know how much progress is really being made in creating effective Afghan forces. The unclassified reporting does not provide anything like the detail available on Iraq forces. In general, the Afghan National Army seems to be making real progress, but at a far slower rate than NATO/ISAF claims. Senior NATO commanders state on a background basis that the goals set for 2008 will at best be achieved in 2009.

It seems likely that the Afghan forces will not really be able to start reducing the current need for NATO forces until after 2010, and will require substantial aid and US/NATO/ISAF military advice, fire support, and enablers through 2012 at a minimum. Success requires a sustained aid program over a five-year period, not annual surges of money and effort that are not part of a coherent and sustained strategy.

It does seem clear that similar progress is not being made in creating effective police or local security forces, or in supporting Afghan forces with effective governance, services, and a criminal justice system. Like Iraq and many similar cases, creating an effective police cannot be done by training and organizing a force at the central government or national level. Just like the Army, the police can only succeed if it has effective facilities, equipment, pay and services in the field, and embedded advisors. These capabilities are just beginning to be available for the Army. Report after report indicates that they are not available for the police, and that the police remain corrupt, ineffective, and unable to "hold" the areas the military "wins."

There are strong indications that the police effort needs to be zero-based as part of a five year plan that deals with reality rather than slogans and hopes. Such a plan must address the problems and opportunities in using local auxiliary and tribal forces. So far, there has been little meaningful public analysis of such options and their risks, although US and British experts seem deeply divided (the US con and the British pro) and Afghan officials privately express the same divisions as to what should be done.

Moreover, one of the consistent lessons of counterinsurgency and nation building is that going from "win" to "hold and build" requires the simultaneous creation of a criminal justice system and a government presence and services. Wars are won where they are fought, and this means Afghan military forces must be replaced in high threat and Taliban controlled areas by a combination of police, local security, courts, and government presence and services at the local level.

US and NATO/ISAF forces may be able to provide local security for a while – and give Afghans the opportunity to develop such a local presence – but there is no way to "hold and build" unless the Afghans get the training, aid, and sustained advice to take over these roles. Unless they do, the US and NATO/ISAF can win every battle and still lose.

Dollars for Bullets: The Broader Need for Aid

This raises the issue of economic aid. One of the clear lessons of the Afghan War -- as in the Iraq War and every similar war before them -- is that dollars are at least as important as bullets. The US and international community, however, have been slow to raise aid levels to anything like the levels required, still fall badly short of the levels needed, and act as if annual budgets and a compact that only extends to February 2009 are adequate.

The US and international aid efforts to date have already had considerable benefits to Afghanistan at the national level, but this is not how wars are won. War fighting requires aid efforts focused on bringing stability to combat zones and high-risk areas, and that this requires a partnership between the military and aid personnel. The EPRT system is the key approach. PRTs without military security and transport, and pursuing separate priorities, may do good in the more secure local areas, but those areas are not the priority. Moreover, dealing with unemployment, reintegrating young fighters, and providing immediate services is the key to creating the mix of short term security and stability upon which longer term development efforts can be built.

The aid community cannot be allowed to do its thing, and focus on development as if the nation was not at war, or as if creating governances, services, and a rule of law were not as important as the economy and infrastructure. The military cannot be allowed to do its thing, simply buy temporary support to ease its tactical burden, and ignore the aid community. Unless both act together to win, hold, and build at the local level, both are likely to be ineffective and lose. Moreover, longer-term aid efforts will become pointless because the present Afghan government will not survive.

Similarly, the Congress does not need to appropriate for future years, but it must carry out its functions in ways that recognize the need for long-term, consistent efforts. Furthermore, the Congress must recognize the fact that it cannot micromanage victory, but it can micromanage defeat. Aid efforts in a war zone will involve waste and major flaws in accountability. Third world nations must learn to use money efficiently by doing, and there will be substantial corruption if anything is to be done.

The US will not need a foreign enemy, if the Administration and the Congress do not accept these facts. It also will not need a foreign enemy if the Congress attempts to indirectly control military strategy and the nation's foreign policy by placing excessive limits on the use of aid money. It is not clear that this is happening in the case of Afghanistan, but it may be happening in the case of Iraq.

Congress has not been willing to fund additional assistance for 2008. The Omnibus Appropriation the President signed prohibited use of the funds for Iraq with four exceptions: \$200 million for refugees from Iraq (and Palestinians), \$10 million for an Iraqi scholar rescue fund, \$5 million for the Marla Ruzicka victims fund, and use of demining funds in Iraq. The appropriators' logic was that there is a large backlog of ESF funds from the 2007 supplemental.

The end result is that capacity building and short-term employment programs funded with ESF will be out of money by the end of the fiscal year and many of them will be in shutdown mode (notices to staff etc.). The exceptions are the Provincial Reconstruction Development Council (PRDC) program and our Infrastructure Security Program (ISP).

The PRDC is the showcase program of the US provincial government strategy. Out of the \$600 million appropriated in the FY 07 supplemental, the country team took \$25

million to fund QRF grants by PRTs (approximately \$6 million expended so far), and \$100 million to do larger QRF-like projects at the direction of the PRT's (by AID contractor DAI which only started in November; only \$5 million spent so far but ramping up). That left \$475 million.

As part of the mission's program for building local government capacity, we gave provincial authorities notional budgets to ask for US assistance in building small scale projects. This initiative has given the PRTs access and helps build their relationships. The US has already obligated \$100 million to the Army Corps of Engineers to contract to build such projects. There are another \$306 million in projects in the pipeline (submitted by provinces) and there are some provinces that haven't been heard from. The unobligated funds in the original appropriation are sufficient to cover this work. If funded, work on these individually small-sized projects (including schools, parks, and little water supply units) will continue through 2009.

The ISP program is working with a FY 06 appropriation of \$227 million. \$110 million is contracted, and \$117 million has been earmarked for specific projects including \$60 million for the strategically important pipeline exclusion zone between Bayji and Baghdad. Because of long lead times for such construction projects in unstable parts of the country, work using existing appropriations will continue into mid 2009. (The US recently allowed \$20 million to be reallocated from the unobligated funds on this project to help refugees in Syria.) But otherwise this effort is directed at helping the oil ministry increase export revenues in a sustainable fashion.

Aside from these two infrastructure programs, other efforts, including short term jobs for military-aged males (Community Stabilization Program, going through \$30 million monthly), our microcredit and small business support program (Izdihar and follow-on), Community Action Program (local level NGO's), agribusiness (INMA), ministerial capacity support (Tatweer), and economic governance (WTO membership, pension reform) will run out of money in fiscal or calendar 2008.

Democracy programs are in a similar state, and even CERP funds are tighter this year than before. The mission would like to have new funds to catalyze more activity in private investment (Congress has declined thus far to support a request for an "Enterprise Fund" as contained in Ambassador Crocker's September testimony), banking sector revitalization, and housing (for returnees and in general).

Victory requires aid efforts to be planned, managed, implemented, and funded over years, not months. It requires flexibility, and the mission of Congress should be to hold the implementers accountable for their results, not plan their aid efforts for them.

The Need for Transparency and Effective Plans and Budgets

This brings me to my final point. It will probably be June 2009 at the earliest before a new President is in office with his or her team in place. A whole new campaign season

will have taken place in 2008, and the offensive of 2009 will have begun before a new President and a new Congress will be ready to act.

The coming year will not be “decisive.” No one can predict the ultimate turning point in this war. It will, however, be critical, and the program put in place in 2008 and in the FY2009 budget request will shape real-world policy for the new President’s first year in office. But, if we are to make progress in 2008 -- and move forward towards a coherent strategy, plan, program, and budget that can achieve real victory over time -- we need the kind of transparency that can build trust in the American people, in the Congress, in the media, and show our allies they can trust in our judgments and commitment.

Having examined the unclassified official reporting on Iraq, I see no effort to provide such transparency or build such trust. My analysis of such reporting is available at http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/071129_afghan-pakconfl.pdf on the CSIS web site, and I believe that providing broad accountability as to the effectiveness of the overall US, NATO/ISAF and Afghan government efforts is absolutely vital.

A report similar to the quarterly report on security and stability in Iraq would be a first step. There is a clear need for a coherent overview and basic metrics on the threat, military progress, and the efforts of the US, NATO/ISAF and Afghan government to date. The key need, however, is for a realistic plan, program, and budget for the future that looks at least through the life of the next presidency.

Afghanistan will need US and allied combat forces well into the first four years of the next Administration and will need aid dollars even longer than it will need bullets. Force plans and aid levels should be based on a frank assessment of long-term requirements and not structured on the basis of what can be obtained in a given year.

If we are to win in Afghanistan, both the executive branch and the Congress must recognize this fact. The executive branch must develop the plans and aid requests for a coherent program extending over at least five years. Like all plans, this will require constant change and adjustment, but there must be a clear set of goals and resource requirements.

As is virtually every other aspect of national security, the word “strategy” is little more than well-intentioned rubbish unless it is directly linked to a clear plan, program, and long-term budget. This is equally true for US/NATO/ISF force levels, Afghan force development efforts, economic aid, and plans to improve governance and the rule of law. It is also this combination of a plan, program, and long-term budget—not line items in annual budgets or problems in past spending—that should be the basis by which the Congress, the American people, and our allies determine whether we are on a credible path towards victory and accountability in the meaningful sense of the term.

Finally, such a plan, program, and long-term budget must take full account of the risks in providing too little, too late; and in making political accommodation, rather than success, the key priority. Much of the problem in Afghanistan today comes from past failures to provide adequate levels of resources and forces, and from trying to implement plans and goals that attempted to rush towards success because of artificial deadlines.

The end result has been to open up windows of opportunity for the Taliban and Al Qa'ida, to make real progress far more difficult, and to steadily raise the cost of success in future years because too few forces and resources are provided in the present. The result has been to increase US, allied, and Afghan casualties, and to push the military and aid teams in country into asking too little and promising too much. In short, the price of "nickel and diming" Afghanistan in any given year is to raise the cost of the war in future years and make success more difficult.

Sincerely

Anthony H. Cordesman
Burke Chair in Strategy

Afghanistan Map



Source: Website of the United States Army, <http://www.Army.mil>