

STRATEGIC CHAOS AND TALIBAN RESURGENCE IN AFGHANISTAN

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS SECOND SESSION

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STRATEGIC CHAOS AND TALIBAN RESURGENCE IN AFGHANISTAN

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2008

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

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:07 p.m. in room 210, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Gary L. Ackerman (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

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

The Bush administration seems singularly incapable of pulling together all of the elements of national power into a coherent strategy that will assure us of victory in Afghanistan, but that is not my conclusion.

Listen to what the Atlantic Council has to say: "Make no mistake. NATO is not winning in Afghanistan."

Or the Center for the Presidency's Afghanistan Study Group: "The mission to stabilize Afghanistan is faltering."

Or the International Crisis Group: "Afghanistan is not lost, but the signs are not good."

The President and his administration have proven that they have no strategy to win in Afghanistan.

The Chinese scholar of war, Sun Tzu, said, "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory; tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat."

It did not have to be this way, and luckily there is still a chance that it does not have to end this way. After the Taliban had been removed from power in Afghanistan, there was still smoldering conflict, and that nation became nothing more than an afterthought for the administration. It was not just the invasion of Iraq that distracted them. Even before the Iraq invasion, decisions were made that put the lie the President's rhetoric about the importance of Afghanistan in his new fight against global terror.

All you have to do is look at the differences in resources expended in Bosnia compared to those expended in Afghanistan. To restore law and order and create a nation in Bosnia, the international community put in 19 soldiers for every 1,000 inhabitants. In Afghanistan, that number is 1 per every 1,000 Afghans. It gets worse. Per capita, in assistance in Bosnia, it is \$679, but in Afghanistan, it is \$57, and that is before American resources got diverted to Iraq.

As more and more of us on this committee and in Congress began to raise our concerns about Afghanistan going off the rails, about the Taliban regrouping, about al-Qaeda regaining its safe haven, we were met with dismissal. To calls for additional troops, we were told there were enough troops to secure the country. To calls for more assistance, we were told there was plenty of money to accomplish our reconstruction goals. Only when it became apparent to all except to the delusional, and to those working for the President, that the Afghan Government could not govern outside of Kabul and perhaps not even inside of Kabul were we presented with provincial reconstruction teams, an ad hoc response from an administration with no plan. That set the tone for the next 5 years.

After the attacks of September 11th, there was extraordinary goodwill and support from the international community for the American efforts to rid Afghanistan of terrorists and to establish a functioning democratic state, so we took that goodwill and support and the soldiers and the resources that came with it and divided up responsibilities in the country. We assumed the responsibility of training the army. The British attacked the narcotics trade. The Germans agreed to train the police. The Italians offered to rebuild the judicial system. On paper, this plan looked pretty good with everyone agreeing to contribute to something that was desperately needed. The trouble with this plan was that each nation headed off in its own direction, at its own pace, and the results reflect that. The Afghan national army is still incapable of operating effectively on its own. Opium production in Afghanistan has skyrocketed, providing cash for warlords and terrorists alike. The Afghan national police are uniformly considered a disaster, and Afghan citizens are actually more afraid of the police than they are of the Taliban, and the judicial system has utterly failed to demonstrate to ordinary Afghans that criminals will be prosecuted.

Secretary Rice has said that in Afghanistan there are too many cooks. She is right, but she missed the more fundamental problem. There is no recipe.

This indigestible brew of incoherent internationalism was replicated by the Provincial Reconstruction Team. Again, many different nations stepped forward to lead a PRT, but each nation has different rules of engagement. Some even have to call back to their respective capitals before engaging an enemy at all.

There is an extraordinary quote in the most recent ICG report wherein an Afghan observer expressed his astonishment at the international troop redeployments: "Some will fight day and night. Some will fight only during the day. Some will fight not at all."

Obviously, what is missing here is both the sense of coherence as well as a sense of urgency. Afghanistan is the place from where al-Qaeda attacked us. It is the place where al-Qaeda and the Taliban allies are strongest and still fight us. It is the place where the fight against terrorism began, and it is the place where we have to finish it, but it has taken the Bush administration a terribly long time to wake up to this fact, perhaps too long.

Some 3,200 Marines are either on their way to Afghanistan or will be on their way shortly. Good start. But the administration also needs to organize the melange of international military and civilian efforts in Afghanistan into a strategy where all of the players

are marching in the same direction and at the same pace. The NATO summit that begins today provides an excellent opportunity to address the immediate issue of resource and troop shortages. In that regard, I welcome the pledges of additional troops from France, Britain and Poland, but the summit must be more than a pledging conference. It must produce an effective strategy to defeat al-Qaeda and the Taliban. That strategy must be supported not only by the governments represented at the summit but by their publics, who increasingly think it is time their troops came home.

In order to regain that public support, the strategy must provide a clear and finite path to victory. We are still a long way from that victory, and Afghanistan is still a long way from secure. We need the continued support of our friends and allies in order to prevail in Afghanistan, but to sustain that support, we must also convince our friends and allies that the plan for Afghanistan is more than simply lurching from crisis to crisis. They must believe that what they are hearing in Afghanistan and in the halls of power in Washington is more than just the noise before defeat.

I now would like to turn to Mr. Scott.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ackerman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE GARY L. ACKERMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

The Subcommittee will come to order. The Bush Administration seems singularly incapable of pulling together all the elements of national power into a coherent strategy that will assure us of victory in Afghanistan. But that's not my conclusion. Listen to what the Atlantic Council has to say: "Make no mistake, NATO is not winning in Afghanistan." Or the Center for the Presidency's Afghanistan Study Group: "The mission to stabilize Afghanistan is faltering." Or the International Crisis Group: "Afghanistan is not lost but the signs are not good." The President and his Administration have proven that they have no strategy to win in Afghanistan. The Chinese scholar of war, Sun Tzu, said that "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat."

It didn't have to be this way, and luckily there is still a chance it doesn't have to end this way. After the Taliban were removed from power in Afghanistan, the still smoldering conflict in that nation became nothing more than an afterthought for the Administration. And it wasn't just the invasion of Iraq that distracted them. Even before the Iraq invasion decisions were made that put the lie to the President's rhetoric about the importance of Afghanistan in this new fight against global terror. All you have to do is look at the difference in resources expended in Bosnia compared to those expended in Afghanistan. To restore order and create a nation in Bosnia the international community put in 19 soldiers for every 1,000 inhabitants. In Afghanistan that number is 1 per every 1,000 Afghans. And it gets worse. Per capita assistance in Bosnia is \$679 but in Afghanistan it is only \$57. And that's before American resources got diverted to Iraq.

But as more and more of us on this committee and in the Congress began to raise our concerns about Afghanistan going off the rails, about the Taliban regrouping, about al Qaeda regaining its safe haven, we were met with dismissal. To calls for additional troops, we were told there were enough troops to secure the country. To calls for more assistance, we were told there was plenty of money to accomplish our reconstruction goals. Only when it became apparent to all except the delusional—and those working for the President—that the Afghan government couldn't govern outside of Kabul, and perhaps not even inside of Kabul, were we presented with Provincial Reconstruction Teams: an ad hoc response from an Administration with no plan. And that set the tone for the next 5 years.

After the attacks of September 11, there was extraordinary goodwill and support from the international community for American efforts to rid Afghanistan of terrorists and establish a functioning democratic state. So we took that goodwill and support and the soldiers and resources that came with it and divided up responsibilities in the country. We assumed the responsibility of training the army; the British tackled the narcotics trade; the Germans agreed to train the police; the Italians offered

to rebuild the judicial system. On paper this plan looked pretty good with everyone agreeing to contribute something that was desperately needed. The trouble with this plan was that each nation headed off in its own direction, at its own pace and the results reflect that. The Afghan National Army is still incapable of operating effectively on its own. Opium production in Afghanistan has skyrocketed providing cash for warlords and terrorists alike. The Afghan National Police are uniformly considered a disaster and Afghan citizens are actually more afraid of the police than they are of the Taliban. And the judicial system has utterly failed to demonstrate to ordinary Afghans that criminals will be prosecuted. Secretary Rice has said that in Afghanistan there are too many cooks. She's right, but she missed the more fundamental problem: there's no recipe.

This indigestible brew of incoherent internationalism was replicated by the Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Again, many different nations stepped forward to lead a PRT but each nation has different rules of engagement, some even have to call back to their respective capitals before engaging the enemy at all. There is an extraordinary quote in the most recent ICG report wherein an Afghan observer expressed his astonishment at the international troop deployments: "some will fight day and night; some will fight only during the day; some will fight not at all."

Obviously, what's missing here is both a sense of coherence as well as a sense of urgency. Afghanistan is the place from where al Qaeda attacked us. It is the place where al Qaeda and their Taliban allies are strongest and fight us still. It is the place where the fight against terrorism began and it is the place where we have to finish it. But it has taken the Bush Administration a terribly long time to wake up to this fact. Perhaps too long.

Some 3200 Marines are either on their way to Afghanistan or will be on their way shortly. Good start, but the administration also needs to organize the mélange of international military and civilian efforts in Afghanistan into a strategy where all the players are marching in the same direction and at the same pace. The NATO summit that begins today provides an excellent opportunity to address the immediate issue of resource and troop shortages and, in that regard, I welcome the pledges of additional troops from France, Britain, and Poland. But the summit must be more than a pledging conference. It must produce an effective strategy to defeat al Qaeda and the Taliban. That strategy must be supported not only by the governments represented at the summit but by their publics who increasingly think its time their troops came home. In order to gain that public support, the strategy must provide a clear and finite path to victory. We are still a long way from that victory and Afghanistan is still a long way from secure. We need the continued support of our friends and allies in order to prevail in Afghanistan—but to sustain that support, we must also convince our friends and allies that the plan for Afghanistan is more than simply lurching from crisis to crisis. They must believe that what they are hearing in Afghanistan, and in the halls of power in Washington, is more than just the noise before defeat.

Now I'll turn to my friend, the Ranking Member, Mr. Pence.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for hosting this important subcommittee hearing.

There are a number of questions that, I think, we certainly need to expand upon. This is a very critical juncture. Of course, with the meetings that are starting this month—today, as a matter of fact—with NATO, certainly, perhaps, they will bring some illumination to the issues. I think some of the most important questions that need to be answered are really, Can we get to what is the root cause of the Taliban resurgence? Why and how are they having this resurgence? Has a drawdown of troops or a scale-back of financial commitments by NATO member nations allowed the Taliban to regroup? That really needs to be answered. I mean, how are they scoring points now when we at some point had them sort of on the run?

Would an expanded NATO troop commitment by the Germans, the French or the Canadians or by whoever actually produce the desired results, or is there some other factor at work here? For example, has the NATO strategy of trying to create a stronger central government created resentment among regional and tribal leaders

who prefer more autonomy, and has it, therefore, created more sympathy for or tolerance toward the Taliban?

Things are happening in Afghanistan that are causing this resurgence, and it would be a good point of productivity at this meeting for us to examine, really, what they are if we could get our hands around them. What role has the Karzai Government played in fostering this resurgence by harboring corruption? If that is the case with the corruption, how do we define that corruption? How do we get at the corruption? Is it engrained in the culture here? Is it something that we underestimated?

Then I think we have to examine the role of the opium production, of the opium poppy. I have always felt that we have been weak in examining the role and the very serious impact that narcotics are playing in this whole situation in Afghanistan. I think it is this illicit narcotics trade that is funding the Taliban. That is how they are getting their money. So it is clear to me that this resurgence, I think, has a lot to do with our failure to really understand that what we have got here is not only a war on terror or a war on the Taliban but that we have an extraordinary World War III-type situation in dealing with drug trafficking. I believe that is at the core. Until we develop what I think we certainly need, which is an effective policy in dealing with that, we have got to continue to evaluate our strategies toward opium trade eradication, and we have got to make sure that they are coordinated with those of the Afghan Government, which leads me to the Afghan Government.

I think there are elections coming up soon. I think we need to examine where we are with these elections. I understand that Karzai will be running again. Is there opposition? Where is this opposition coming from? How is this working to aid in the resurgence?

Then, finally, this porous border, this border with Pakistan and Afghanistan, is another very serious, problematic area. Without question, it is the safe haven. Surely, it is the safe haven for al-Qaeda, and it is like a no man's land. It is an area where we have not penetrated. It is an area that is protected, and it is obviously protected with forces under either direct or indirect control of the Governments of Afghanistan and of Pakistan.

So I believe that those are some of the real pressing issues that we really might want to discuss today that I will be looking for, Mr. Chairman. I will yield back the balance of my time. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you.

We turn now to our ranking member, Mr. Pence.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for calling this hearing. I would like to welcome our distinguished panel. I very much look forward to their presentations.

Six and a half years after the fall of the Taliban, the situation in Afghanistan remains a challenge. While I may not go so far as to describe the situation as strategic chaos and while reports of Taliban resurgence have been heard for at least 2 years now, there are, indeed, many disconcerting trends.

Violence and instability are troubling. General Barno's statistics on the exponential increase in all types of brutality over the last 3 to 4 years is especially grave. Growth in suicide bombings is trag-

ic and is threatening stability. More than 90 percent of the world's poppy originates in Afghanistan where the Taliban collects taxes on it. Corruption is pervasive. Our director of national intelligence testified publicly in February that the Afghan Government controls only 30 percent of the country.

I am also struck by Dr. Jones' haunting testimony wherein he wrote, "Insurgents have established a sanctuary in neighboring Pakistan. Every major insurgent group . . . has established a command and control apparatus on the Pakistani side of the border." Given this situation, it is hard to see much hope for short-term success. I am very concerned by the former U.N. envoy nominee, Lord Paddy Ashdown's, warning today that the international community is "pretty close" to losing its battle for Afghanistan.

I think the big questions for our consideration are: Number one, are we adequately resourced there? Number two, do we have an optimal strategy on the ground for success in Afghanistan?

I support President Bush's efforts at the NATO summit underway in Bucharest to get more help from our allies. As this subcommittee knows, our forces, along with Great Britain's, Canada's and the Netherlands', have shouldered most of the burden in Afghanistan. I concur with Dr. Jones' statement that there is no substitute for American leadership. I, therefore, welcome the new addition of more than 3,000 U.S. Marines to the theater.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, I had the opportunity, with your endorsement and along with some of our colleagues, to travel with Congressman Costa, on Codel Costa, to Afghanistan just within the last month. We met with President Karzai at his palace on March 3rd.

President Karzai assured us that he remains committed to waging the war on terror. It has been an exceedingly difficult job, and I believe he needs our support. I should add that he is also a very keen observer of American politics, and I will give you a side-bar conversation of his preferences there.

Now, not all of the news from Afghanistan is bad. Codel Costa also had the good fortune of witnessing some of our efforts with provisional reconstruction teams. We traveled out to Asadabad in the northeastern province of Kunar. It is just 5 miles from the Pakistani border, and it is an area of significant, what is known as, kinetic activity, but we were able to travel out on a convoy and witness the construction of a bridge. Here, American soft power is doing good works and is helping locals in their developments. Of course, our troops are also breaking up terror cells and are repelling insurgents daily. Just this week, former Ambassador Richard Holbrooke testified the former Taliban stronghold of Khost is "an American success story."

I am also encouraged by the polling cited by Dr. Jones that shows the overwhelming percentage of the Afghan public supports the United States presence and our efforts there and opposes the Taliban. Yet, much work remains to avoid a failed state.

I want to thank this panel for their expertise.

I especially want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for using the weight of your position on this subcommittee to pay attention on the front end of difficulties in this theater instead of what may have been the consequence of Congress's waiting with inattention

a few years down the road in having to figure out a much more complex environment.

I yield back.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Klein.

Mr. KLEIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and my esteemed colleagues.

Thank you, gentlemen, for participating as a panel today. We appreciate it and look forward to your comments.

I certainly would like to associate myself with the comments that have been made by the previous speakers on our panel of members. Whether it is strategic cast or something that is described differently, it is clearly a very complicated, difficult situation as elicited by the list of things that are of concern to us by Mr. Pence. I want to just highlight a couple of things.

One is the poppy issue, we understand very clearly that, whether it is the FARC or the paramilitary in Colombia or more significantly in Afghanistan, the funding through the drug trade of these activities—the military activities, the terrorist activities, whatever it may be—is a very, very significant problem. Unfortunately, the inroads that we would like to see have not really been there. Other than, as I understand, there being a reduction of poppy production in certain provinces, the overall production continues, and it continues at very, very high levels. As a matter of fact, 93 percent of the world's illicit opium supply comes from Afghanistan. That has a big impact on the United States. It has a big impact on the worldwide use of drugs associated with the poppy. Most particularly for today's discussion, I am sure it provides a lot of the resources to support these organizations that are fighting our men and women and also our allies who are trying to get control over this country and who are trying to help.

Since, I think, our previous colleagues have already mentioned in great detail some of the issues, I want to mention something I recently saw here. That is, of course, our commitment, and I think all of us in this Congress and, I think, President Bush and most Americans understand that Afghanistan is a very important mission for us and that the steps that we have or should be taking need to be very carefully thought out, and we need to be sending the right messages; of course, that is succeeding in Afghanistan, which we understand is a top priority. It is something where everything we do and everything we consider plays out in a worldwide theater as to whether we are accomplishing and setting forth that positive message.

There was recently a story that has now been played out. Unfortunately, it is from my State of Florida. There is a munitions supplier that had a \$300-million Federal contract to supply munitions for the Afghan military, and this is a \$300-million contract to a company that has no name on the door and has a 20-year-old as one of its executive officers. Apparently, there does not seem to be much behind this company for all practical purposes. Yet, they had a \$300-million contract. I think we certainly as Congress need to look into what oversight and responsibility there was on our State Department and Defense Department. Most particularly, the reason I am bringing this up in addition to that it is a waste of tax-

payer dollars is as to the outcome of this. What this company was supplying in munitions was damaged goods, at least in part. There is verification on that that they were supplying Chinese-manufactured ammunition, which is, as I understand it, against the law and a lot of Cold War material from Eastern Europe that they had acquired that was in dilapidated condition and deteriorated condition. And it was sent over to Afghanistan to supply the Afghan military. Now, that is a big problem. It is a big problem on many levels, but let us just take a look at the Afghanistan side of this thing.

We are supplying and supporting them with our men, with our supplies, and if we are sending them less than the necessary materials to get the job done—because we are not going to be able to do it on our own and we are expecting the Afghan military to do it—that is a big problem. That is a big problem on behalf of United States citizens, our taxpayers and our strategy of successfully dealing with Afghanistan.

So I want to point that out because it requires, certainly, some accountability on the part of our Government in the use of taxpayer dollars, but equally, we have to show if we are serious about this, we have to not only put in our military men and have them risk their lives every day, which they are doing very bravely—and we appreciate every man and woman who goes over there—but also recognize there will be greater sacrifices as we go on. We cannot make missteps like this which create setbacks in terms of impressions that are left by our allies in Afghanistan and around the world.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is just something we ought to be taking a look at or have one of our colleagues or our other oversight committees take a look at and try to get to the bottom of it and make sure that when we are sending supplies and are working with our allies that we are doing it in a way that truly supports our mission.

So, Mr. Chairman, I will turn it back over to you and will thank you for the opportunity to make that statement.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Klein. Thank you for that last suggestion. Our staff is looking at the supplier that you have cited to see if there are any jurisdictional questions as to whether or not that is before our subcommittee or some other subcommittee, and we will take, collectively, the appropriate action.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Chairman Ackerman, for holding this hearing on Afghanistan and our mission there.

I am particularly happy to see Lieutenant General David Barno, the former commander at Fort Jackson in South Carolina, who conducted himself with great distinction and who certainly set a high standard for the young people who are being trained at Fort Jackson.

Let me begin as co-chair of the Afghan Caucus to indicate that I am forever grateful for the hard work and dedication of our military men and women who are serving in Afghanistan. With over six visits to Afghanistan, including Codel Costa with Congressman Pence, I have seen firsthand our troops, including four quarterly visits with members of the 218th Combat Brigade, which is my

former National Guard unit that I served in for 28 years. It is being led by Brigadier General Bob Livingston.

I know so many of the people, Mr. Chairman, who are serving in that brigade. They are dedicated. They are committed. They are concluding their rotation there, and they feel very, very good about, indeed, providing for the training of the police and of the army. Their courage and professionalism is inspiring.

While much progress has been made, there remain many challenges we face in Afghanistan. The Taliban and their al-Qaeda allies are dedicated to perpetuating a violent and tyrannical society upon the freedom-loving people of Afghanistan. We cannot and must not permit them to reestablish a safe haven in that nation that would allow them to plan attacks against American families and our allies around the world.

From my visits with our troops in Afghanistan, I have seen the progress that we have made in training Afghani police and military. I have seen the hard work of the coalition forces and the Afghani Government to build that nation's infrastructure. We are creating the foundation of a society that will no longer be a breeding ground for radical extremism. We must remain vigilant and dedicated to our mission in Afghanistan. In the global war on terrorism, there are many fronts and many missions that demand our attention. The men and women of our Armed Forces will not take their eye off the ball. They are committed to winning this war, and we should support their efforts. I am convinced the best way to protect American families at home is to defeat terrorists overseas.

Again, I want to thank Chairman Ackerman and my fellow committee members for this opportunity, and I look forward to the testimony from our witnesses.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Bilirakis.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do not have an opening statement. I just want to welcome the panelists, and I look forward to their testimony. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. If there are no further members wishing to make opening statements, we will proceed with our panel.

First, Lieutenant General David W. Barno is director of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University. Prior to his appointment at NDU, General Barno served as commander of over 20,000 United States and coalition forces and combined forces, Command Afghanistan, as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. Before assuming command in Afghanistan, General Barno served as commanding general of the United States Training Center at Fort Jackson. During a long and decorated career in the Army, General Barno served around the world in deployments in Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Germany, Granada, Panama, New Zealand, Honduras, and Hungary. General Barno has lectured at Harvard, Yale, Johns Hopkins, West Point, and at the U.S. Army and Navy War Colleges, as well as overseas. And he serves as an expert consultant on the fight against terror and on the changing nature of conflict, supporting a wide variety of government and other organizations.

General Barno was commissioned as an infantry officer from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1976 with a bachelor of science degree. He holds a master of arts degree in na-

tional security studies from Georgetown University and is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and of the U.S. Army War College. He is also a graduate of Syracuse University and of Johns Hopkins' National Security Leadership Program.

Dr. Seth Jones is a political scientist at RAND and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. He has focused on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism missions, including United States operations in Afghanistan, and he has visited Afghanistan over a dozen times since September 11th, 2001, most recently last month. He is the author of a forthcoming book, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*, as well as *The Rise of European Security Cooperation*. Dr. Jones has published a range of journal articles in *International Security*, the *National Interests*, *Security Studies*, in the *Chicago Journal of International Law*, *International Affairs and Survival*, as well as in such newspapers and magazines as the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, the *Financial Times*, and the *International Herald Tribune*. At RAND, he has published widely on counterinsurgency, al-Qaeda, establishing rule of law, and nation building generally. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

Mr. Mark Schneider is senior vice president of the International Crisis Group where he has worked since 2001. Prior to joining ICG, Mr. Schneider served in the Clinton administration as the director of the Peace Corps from 1999 to 2001 and has been assistant administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean at USAID from 1993 to 1999. Mr. Schneider was chief of the Office of Analysis and Strategic Planning at the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization from 1981 until 1993 and was the principal deputy assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs from 1977 until 1979. He has also served as foreign policy advisor to Senator Edward Kennedy. Mr. Schneider received a B.A. in journalism from the University of California at Berkeley, an M.A. from San Jose State University, and an honorary doctor of law degree from American University.

It is a very distinguished panel, indeed. We will begin with General Barno.

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

General BARNO. Chairman Ackerman, Ranking Republican Mr. Pence, and members of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, thank you for your very kind invitation to speak today on an extraordinarily important subject and one that remains very close to my heart, our efforts in Afghanistan.

I would note up front to the subcommittee this afternoon as we begin that I remain a member of the U.S. Defense Department in my capacity as director of the Near East South Asia Center at the National Defense University. However, the views I will present this afternoon are my own.

After 19 months of service in overall command of our forces in Afghanistan, I remain today very closely involved professionally

and personally in working to ensure the success of our long-term undertaking there.

In my judgment, our efforts today in Afghanistan are at a strategic fork in the road. Recent events in Pakistan with the election and with the relationship between the two nations, Afghanistan and Pakistan, only add urgency to this dilemma. We have very important choices to make this year, choices which may ultimately determine the outcome of this noble and worthy mission at the strategic crossroads of the world. Hopefully, the results of the ongoing NATO summit in Bucharest will serve to advance the international efforts in Afghanistan. Simply put, we cannot afford to fail in this region. I would like to draw a few brief comparisons with Iraq just as a general marker because there is sometimes a bit of confusion between the substance of the missions in both places, and I will just highlight this briefly.

Of most importance to note, I think, is that Afghanistan, despite I think most popular conceptions, is almost 50 percent larger in land mass than Iraq. Its land mass is 647,000 square kilometers, and Iraq's land mass is 437,000 square kilometers. So there is about a 50 percent larger land mass in Afghanistan, and Afghanistan also has 4 million more people than Iraq. So, as we draw comparisons frequently between the two theaters, it is important not only to recognize that we have forces committed in both places, but we are actually committed in nations that are considerably different in population and land mass.

Economically, the dispersion of population, infrastructure, et cetera, are very vastly different, with Afghanistan certainly falling on the bottom end of that scale, one of the 10 poorest countries in the world and a very rural country, but in reality, it is a larger place with more people than Iraq. In comparison, our troop numbers, of course, are dramatically shifted in the opposite direction. There are about 160,000 Americans in Iraq—it is coming down slightly now in the aftermath of the surge—versus only about 30,000 Americans, slightly less than that, in Afghanistan today. With international forces in Afghanistan, there are about another 20-some thousand beyond that. So the total with the differing populations and differing sizes weighted toward Afghanistan, our troop levels, of course, are dominantly placed in Iraq right now even with the growing international effort in Afghanistan. It is something I think we need to take into account when we think about the immensity of the mission facing our forces in Afghanistan.

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 those goals, but we also remain in the recognition of the strategic importance of the region centered around Afghanistan. Our presence there with our NATO allies forms a vitally important and a stabilizing influence in this volatile part of the world.

Just to sketch out briefly the neighborhood there. This is extraordinarily important because I find oftentimes many individuals and many very knowledgeable leaders even in our own Government tend to look at Afghanistan as an island of itself and at Pakistan as an island of itself when, of course, they are part of the same re-

gion. Afghanistan is bordered by strategically important nations to the United States.

Pakistan is the second largest Islamic country in the world with somewhere between, we believe, 20 and 40 nuclear weapons that shares a 1,500-mile border with Afghanistan. It is extraordinarily important and is in the midst of great transitions now with the new government coming in place, which is both an opportunity and a threat with our interests there.

To the northeast corner, China, an extraordinarily important regional power who is very interested in warm water access and energy throughout Central Asia.

Across the northern tier of Afghanistan are three former states of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, all of whom are being tugged regularly back toward Russia, back toward China and who have considerable interest to the south and are watching very carefully what the United States position in Afghanistan is going to be.

Then, finally, to the west, Iran, a regional power whose interests are not always aligned with those of the United States, whose influence in Afghanistan grows day by day.

So I think, as we review the future of Afghanistan and not just look at the future that is 2008 and 2009 but look out 5 years, 8 years, 10 years, we need to be very aware of how crucial this region is to the strategic interests of the United States. This is an argument, I think, that we need to continue to make with our NATO allies as they look at this region as well and understand not only the threats from the region but also the opportunities for changing that region and for transforming it into a different place than it was during the era of the Taliban and to take it away from being simply a sanctuary for terrorism.

Since my time in Afghanistan from October 2003 until May 2005, much has changed. I would like to draw a few counterpoints with the centerpiece of my tour there, my full year there, which was 2004, and compare that with last year, 2007, because I think it is notable to see where the trend lines are going, and this is a selection of trend lines, clearly not all of the directions occurring in Afghanistan.

First, I would look at security incidents as an example. This is defined as "reported acts of violence nationwide." In 2004, security incidents in Afghanistan totaled 900. Last year in 2007, they totaled 8,950 across Afghanistan. Roadside bombs in 2004 amounted to 325 attacks. Last year, they tallied 1,469. Suicide bombings, which is a non-native Afghan phenomenon and is not something that was common to their culture, in 2004 totaled three in Afghanistan. Last year, suicide attacks exceeded 130. Total bombs dropped by coalition air forces, the U.S. Air Force primarily, in 2004, for the entire 12-month period totaled 86 bombs dropped. Last year, NATO, again primarily American air power, dropped 3,572 bombs in Afghanistan, which is rather noteworthy in a war that we now commonly all view as a complex counterinsurgency where the population is such a centerpiece.

Then, finally, poppy production, which a number of the members have alluded to, in 2004, totaled 131,000 hectares. In 2007, it was up to 193,000 hectares. Again, these are selected trend lines, but

they certainly point in directions we should not be comfortable with and are cause for concern.

On the military side of the ledger, I mentioned the size of our troop presence. I would highlight up front that, when I arrived in Afghanistan in the fall of 2003, our troop levels were about 14,000 Americans. When I left 19 months later, we had over 21,000 Americans in Afghanistan. So we actually grew rather substantially during that period of time. Today, those numbers have continued to grow both under NATO and under U.S. command such that we have in the neighborhood of 26,000 American troops there, soon to be 30,000 with the Marines, and we have other NATO nations contributing about 20,000, roughly, for a total of in the neighborhood of 50,000 international forces, American and others, in Afghanistan. That is a number we need to examine a bit because the enemy is clearly getting stronger.

In the command and control arena, I think one of the important changes that I have great concern about is that we have stood down our three-star headquarters in Afghanistan. Today, the senior American headquarters is a two-star headquarters. It is located with a 90-minute drive outside the capital at Bagram Air Base. Many of you have been there. It is focused only on the eastern portion of the country, which is a shadow of its responsibilities 3 years ago, 4 years ago, when it had tactical ownership of all of Afghanistan and when we had a strong three-star headquarters in Kabul to work with our Embassy, to work with NATO and to work with the international community. Today, we have no three-star headquarters in Afghanistan.

We have another two-star training headquarters in Kabul and a two-star combat headquarters in Bagram. The NATO headquarters at the four-star level is commanded by an American officer but only under NATO command. I think it is a disturbing trend, again, given the importance of this mission.

Then, finally, the enemy in Afghanistan—al-Qaeda, Taliban, Hezbi Islami, and foreign fighters like the Haqqani network—is unquestionably much stronger today than the enemy we faced in 2004. In fact, I call this a new Taliban. This is not the same force we saw when we were actually measuring how close they were to defeat in 2004 when the Presidential election took place and in early 2005 before I left. This is a much stronger, a much more resilient, certainly a regenerated enemy, and we do need to explore why that is and what caused that change and what has happened since the relatively benign days of 2004 and 2005 where we held two nationwide elections in the space of 13 months without interference from the Taliban and with very little Taliban activity around the country. That is a much different place than we are in today.

Mr. Chairman, in the face of these admittedly incomplete but troublesome trends, I can offer one 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, both within the U.S. effort and within the international effort, are we going to be able to seize the opportunities available to reverse these trends. Only if we make this a regional effort, not just Afghanistan

but Pakistan and the whole region, within a United States strategic approach and the approach with our friends, are we going to be able to once again shift the trend lines in a positive direction. Only if we objectively and dispassionately examine both where we have been and where we are today and be absolutely clear and objective on that are we going to be able to correctly shape where we are going. If we fail to do so, in my judgment, we face great risks in our prospects for success.

I look forward to being able to expand upon some possible further recommendations during your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Barno follows:]

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

Chairman Ackerman, Ranking Republican Mr. Pence, and Members of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia.

Thanks for your very kind invitation to speak today on an extraordinarily important subject, and one which remains close to my heart—our efforts in Afghanistan.

I would note to the subcommittee as we begin this afternoon 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 are at a strategic fork in the road. Recent events in Pakistan and the relationship between the two nations only add urgency to this dilemma. We have important choices to make this year—choices which will ultimately determine the outcome of this noble and worthy mission in this strategic crossroads of the world. Hopefully, the results of the upcoming NATO conference in Bucharest will serve to advance the international efforts in Afghanistan. Simply put—we cannot afford to fail in the region.

Frequently, Americans compare and contrast our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. I should note a few brief important comparisons between the two for the subcommittee: Afghanistan is a land-locked, mountainous agricultural country with less than 30% of its population living in urban areas—compared with highly urbanized Iraq. Unlike Iraq, Afghanistan 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. Yet at the same time, our troop presence in Iraq—and that of our coalition partners—exceeds 160,000. By comparison, NATO and the US combined field fewer than 60,000 troops in Afghanistan—of which nearly 55% are American.

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 present environment reflecting an emerging new government which may well have a much less supportive view of the war on terror should give us pause as we re-assess our mission in Afghanistan—a mission which, as we all know, has 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 my time in Afghanistan from October 2003 until May 2005, much has changed. I'd like to draw a few comparisons between the mid-point year of my tour, 2004, and last year, 2007. 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 2004. During 2004, our military forces under US Coalition command totaled only about 20,000, including 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. As I noted, almost 30,000 of those 50,000 total troops are American—some serving under NATO command and some under US, with different rules of engagement and command relationships.

In the command and control arena, the US three star HQ which I commanded, based 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 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 responsibilities which the same US HQ at Bagram held in 2004. Its immense capabilities to oversee a broad counter-insurgency fight all across southern Afghanistan—much as it did in 2004—in my judgment are being under-utilized.

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. Recent events there—particularly the worrisome prospect of a new Pakistani government entering into some sort of negotiations with the Taliban and other terrorist groups in the tribal areas—are developments which give cause for grave concern.

Mr Chairman, in the face of these admittedly incomplete but worrisome trends, I can offer one 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 in the US strategic approach, and the approach with our friends and allies—will we be able to once again shift the broad trend lines 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.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much.

Dr. Jones.

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

Mr. JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Pence and other members of the committee.

I wanted to briefly begin by concurring with one important aspect that General Barno mentioned, and that is that we are, I think, talking about a regional issue. What the United States faces is what I would call a regional insurgency or regional insurgencies, not just in Afghanistan but also linked to other theaters, especially in Pakistan.

We will focus a lot on challenges. I did want to begin by noting at least some positive trends in the country and then move on to challenges. In my view, the data is clear on the economic trends. For example, economic growth has persisted through 2004, 2005, 2006, and into 2007. Inflation remains low. Primary school enrollment has risen considerably over the last several years, including with girls. The security situation in parts of the east from where I came back about 2½ weeks ago, I think, has improved over the last year. There have been successful efforts to capture or kill key Taliban leaders, including Mullah Dadullah Lang last year, as well as al-Qaeda operatives, most recently Abu Laith al Libbi.

At the same time, as General Barno mentioned, there are clear concerns with rising levels of violence across the country, in particular, in my view, in the south but also in the center of the country around Kabul and in the provinces surrounding Kabul. I would characterize this as being the two focal fronts of the Taliban and of other groups, really, the Haqqani network led by Jalaluddin Haqqani's son, Siraj; Hezbi Islami; al-Qaeda; and a range of other groups, including Pakistani and Afghan tribes, Pashtun tribes, sub-tribes. The focus is on the south, Helmand, Kandahar. It is the Taliban's sort of traditional area of support as well as in the center. There has been a push by the Haqqani network in particular into the center of Afghanistan, including links into the Serena attacks with Siraj Haqqani about a month ago.

I would also like to highlight one additional aspect of the security situation. That is, on September 10th, 2001, the United States found itself in a situation where most of the al-Qaeda infrastructure was on the Afghan side of the border in places like the Darunta complex. That has shifted about the distance from New York to Philadelphia now into Waziristan, into North and South Waziristan. So we face a situation and I think a grave threat that is actually, roughly, in the same position as we were in right around September 11th. So I consider this a very serious and significant threat for the al-Qaeda dimension as well. As we have seen in 2005 in the London attacks, in 2006 with the transatlantic plot, in 2007 with the German and the Dutch failed plots, in the January 2008 failed effort in Madrid—thanks to Spanish and other efforts to wrap up a cell—there are significant ties with extremist Islamic militant groups that go back to Pakistan. So, again, this area should be probably the key fundamental national security area, I think, of the United States.

I want to focus for the rest of my brief period here on three issues. One is the strategic challenges. The second is international cooperation. The third very briefly is room for improvement.

What explains the rise of Afghanistan's insurgency? In my view, the critical precondition, I think, is there has been outside of the capital a collapse of governance. The Afghan Government has faced challenges in providing services to the population, especially in

rural areas, and it has run into very serious difficulties in protecting local Afghans, especially with an Afghan national police that continues to be in very, very dire shape.

I think U.S. force levels have also been, as we heard from the chairman, among the lowest levels of any nation-building or counterinsurgency effort since World War II. That is data that Jim Dobbins and I at RAND have collected, and I certainly support that.

On international cooperation, I wanted to make a couple of quick comments. I think the United States experience in working with coalition forces and other international actors in the Afghan theater has been mixed. As we know, the counterinsurgency campaign, as we heard from the chairman, started from a lead nation approach. I think it is time for the U.S., in one sense, to move on. There have been repeated calls for increased NATO assistance in the south. That is really the center now of the insurgency. It is where, I think, the security environment is the most dire, in my view. This is an area where we have to tread very carefully. Many NATO countries have had no recent experience in counterinsurgency operations. You would have to go back to the Korean War or to World War II to find serious ground combat experience. So, in a sense, the unwillingness of many NATO countries to send their forces to the south of Afghanistan is something of a—there is, in my view, a silver lining to that.

So I think, in some sense, part of this debate has missed the bigger picture. I think, as we saw during the Cold War, the United States agreed to play the major role in protecting Western Europe from a Soviet attack. I think what we see now in Afghanistan and what this means as we push forward are a couple of things.

First, I think the United States needs to take the lead for counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, especially in the key areas of the east and the south. Now, that does not mean that other NATO countries, such as the Canadians or the British, cannot and should not play a major role. I think they should. Both have been helpful allies. Both the Canadians and the British have been helpful in the south, but I think the long-term success of Afghanistan will require the United States to provide the bulk of competent international ground forces, especially fighting in counterinsurgency operations and with development assistance.

Second, I want to support General Barno's point on military command and control arrangements. I think there is a strong rationale for making that command and control much more efficient. We have multiple United States chains of command that go through European Command, Central Command, Special Operations Command. It is something that U.S. military forces on the ground are duly cognizant of. I think there are a range of options on the table about making that arrangement more efficient. I would be happy to talk in more detail as we get into the question-and-answer period.

Then, finally, on the international front, there is clearly a need to better integrate the military and the civilian side. As far as the U.S. is concerned, I would also strongly put out on the table something that I know this committee has looked at, and that is the role of U.S. Government civilians in participating in this counterinsurgency. As you visit, as some members of the committee have done,

Provincial Reconstruction Teams, it is clear the number of civilians operating on these Provincial Reconstruction Teams is still way below what is necessary. They are dominated by military soldiers, who are doing a fantastic job, and many of them have had little training in conducting civilian operations.

So, as I wrap up, I do want to say that, in my view, there are some reasons to be at least hopeful. Again, I think the Afghans, by and large, do support the international presence. This is, of course, different from other theaters the United States has operated in, including Iraq. I think, when we look back, America's war on terrorism began in Afghanistan in 2001 when it overthrew the Taliban. I think it is time in general for the U.S. to finish what it started.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jones follows:]

TESTIMONY

Getting Back on Track in Afghanistan

SETH G. JONES

CT-301

April 2008

Testimony presented before the House Foreign Affairs Committee,
Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia on April 2, 2008

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Dr. Seth G. Jones¹
The RAND Corporation

*Getting Back on Track in Afghanistan*²

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

April 2, 2008

I have just returned from my most recent trip to Afghanistan in March 2008, where I visited U.S. forces in the east. The situation in Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan is at a critical juncture. In 2001, approximately 100 Central Intelligence Agency officers, 350 U.S. Special Forces soldiers, and 15,000 Afghans overthrew the Taliban regime in less than three months while suffering only a dozen U.S. casualties. They were supported by as many as 100 U.S. combat sorties per day. Some individuals involved in the operation argued that it revitalized the American way of war.³

This initial success, however, transitioned into an insurgency as the Taliban and other groups began a sustained effort to overthrow the Afghan government. The increase in violence was particularly acute between 2005 and 2006, when the number of suicide attacks quintupled from 27 to 139; remotely detonated bombings more than doubled from 783 to 1,677; and armed attacks nearly tripled from 1,558 to 4,542.⁴ According to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, violence rose another 27 percent between 2006 and 2007.⁵ The spread of the Taliban, al-Qa'ida, and other militant groups in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Baluchistan Province, and urban areas also had serious repercussions for Afghanistan and the United States more broadly. As the 2008 *Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence* argued, "Using the sanctuary in the border area of Pakistan, al-Qa'ida has been able to maintain a cadre of skilled lieutenants capable of directing the organization's operations around the world."⁶

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

² This testimony is available for free download at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT301/>.

³ Henry A. Crumpton, "Intelligence and War: Afghanistan, 2001-2002," in Jennifer E. Sims and Burton Gerber, eds., *Transforming U.S. Intelligence* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), p. 177.

⁴ Pamela Constable, "Gates Visits Kabul, Cites Rise in Cross Border Attacks: Defense Secretary May Recommend More U.S. Troops," *Washington Post*, January 17, 2007. On the deteriorating security environment see also Barnett R. Rubin, "Saving Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 1 (January / February 2007), pp. 57-78.

⁵ The data come from Admiral Michael Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. See, for example, Ed Johnson, "Gates Wants NATO to Reorganize Afghanistan Mission," *Bloomberg News*, December 12, 2007.

⁶ J. Michael McConnell, *Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, February 2008), p. 6.

But there have been some positive trends. Afghanistan's economy continues to grow, as real gross domestic product increased by 14 percent in 2005, 7.5 percent in 2006, and an estimated 13 percent in 2007. Inflation also remains low at 12.3 percent in 2005, 5.1 percent in 2006, and 8.3 percent in 2007.⁷ In addition, primary school enrollment rose from 19 percent in 2001 to 87 percent in 2005.⁸ The security situation also has improved somewhat in several provinces in the east, NATO has helped preserve a fragile peace so far in the north, and U.S. and NATO forces have helped capture or kill key Taliban leaders (such as Mullah Dadullah Lang and Mullah Mansoor Dadullah) and al Qaeda operatives (such as Abu Laith al Libbi).

In light of the Committee's focus on developing an integrated strategy for Afghanistan, my comments will be divided into three parts. The first examines the rise of Afghanistan's insurgency, the second discusses international cooperation, and the third outlines room for improvement.

I. Strategic Challenges

What explains the rise of Afghanistan's insurgency? As with most insurgencies, the critical precondition is the collapse of governance. The Afghan government has faced challenges providing basic services to the population; its security forces, especially police, have had difficulties establishing law and order; and too few international forces have been available to fill the gap.

The new Afghan government has had difficulty providing essential services to the population, especially in rural areas of the country. As one World Bank study concluded, the primary beneficiaries of assistance have been the urban elite.⁹ This has triggered deep-seated frustration and resentment among the rural population. Indeed, the Afghan government has suffered from a number of systemic problems, and has had difficulty attracting and retaining skilled professionals with management and administrative experience. Weak administration and lack of control in some provinces has made tax policy and administration virtually impossible. In many rural areas, the government made no effort to collect taxes.

Electricity is a good example. In 2005, only 6 percent of the Afghan population had access to power from the electricity grid.¹⁰ And most of it was characterized by low voltage, intermittent supply, and blackouts. The dire situation reflected a lack of investment by the government and

⁷ International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, October 2007), pp. 221, 227.

⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2008).

⁹ World Bank, *Afghanistan: State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2005), p. xxvi.

¹⁰ World Bank, *Afghanistan: State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty*, p. 83.

international community, as well as poor maintenance. In addition to insufficient generation capacity (which was augmented by imports of power from neighboring countries), the system was plagued by inadequate transmission, poor distribution, and lack of backup equipment. And most efforts focused on supplying electricity in urban areas of the country, not on targeting rural areas in danger of falling to the Taliban. The Afghan government's electricity strategy was to "increase coverage of the electricity grid in urban areas to 90 percent by 2015."¹¹ For those rich enough to buy generators, electricity was not a problem. The striking feature of Afghanistan's economic structure was the dominance of the informal sector. A large portion of the electricity supply, for example, was provided by small-scale generators.¹² The result was significant. As one World Bank assessment noted, "The bulk of Afghans still do not have a reliable electric power supply and clean water. Thus the situation that prevailed in the 1970s and during the long period of conflict – basic social services not reaching most of Afghanistan's people – has not yet been fundamentally changed with the partial exception of primary education."¹³

In addition, the Afghan government has faced challenges providing security outside of the capital. A major reason has been the poor state of the Afghan National Police. The result has been a weak security apparatus that can not establish a monopoly of the legitimate use of force within the country. The police were not an international priority after the overthrow of the Taliban regime, and they received significantly less money and attention than the army. The United States declined to provide significant assistance to the Afghan police in the aftermath of the Taliban's overthrow, and handed police training over to the Germans. By 2003, however, U.S. officials at the State Department, Defense Department, and White House began to argue that the German effort was far too slow, trained too few police officers, and was seriously underfunded.

Consequently, the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement contracted DynCorp International to train the police. But by 2004, officials in the White House and the Department of Defense expressed concern that the State Department effort was failing. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld wrote a series of "snowflakes" expressing concern that the police program was undermining U.S. and broader NATO counterinsurgency efforts.¹⁴ Key problems included the failure to conduct follow-on mentoring of Afghan police, to provide significant institutional reform in the Ministry of Interior, and to curb deep-seated corruption in the police and Ministry of Interior. In 2005 the U.S. military took the lead in providing training, equipment, and other assistance to the Afghan National Police.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹² World Bank, *Afghanistan: State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty*, Report No. 29551-AF (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2004), pp. 5, 16.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁴ Secretary Rumsfeld's "snowflakes" were internal memos to his staff, and he sometimes produced as many as 80 snowflakes per day.

Nevertheless, the competence of the Afghan police remained low. As a German assessment of the border police noted in 2006, "Neither the Afghan border police nor the customs authorities are currently in a position to meet the challenges presented by this long border."¹⁵ Internal U.S. government documents expressed deepening alarm at the state of the Afghan police. A report by the Offices of Inspector General of the U.S. Departments of State and Defense concluded that the Afghan police's "readiness level to carry out its internal security and conventional police responsibilities is far from adequate. The obstacles to establish a fully professional [Afghan National Police] are formidable." It found that key obstacles included "no effective field training officer (FTO) program, illiterate recruits, a history of low pay and pervasive corruption, and an insecure environment."¹⁶ The Afghan police were needed to help establish order in urban and rural areas. But they were heavily outgunned by insurgent forces, plagued by corruption, and lacked any semblance of a national police infrastructure. They lacked uniforms, armored vehicles, weapons, ammunition, police stations, police jails, national command and control, and investigative training.¹⁷ An Afghan trucker put it succinctly: "Forget about the Taliban, our biggest problems are with the police."¹⁸

U.S. force levels have also been low, increasing the security vacuum in much of rural Afghanistan. The number of U.S. troops per capita in Afghanistan has been significantly less than almost every nation-building effort since World War II.¹⁹ U.S. military officials adopted a "light footprint" approach for at least two reasons: they wanted to prevent large-scale resistance similar to what the Soviet Union encountered in Afghanistan in the 1980s; and they believed that small numbers of ground troops and the use of airpower were sufficient to ensure security.²⁰ U.S. Gen. Tommy Franks, who developed the operational concept for Afghanistan in 2001, argued that after major combat ended, "our footprint had to be small, for both military and geopolitical reasons. I envisioned a total of

¹⁵ Government of Germany, *Assessment of Doha II Conference on Border Management in Afghanistan: A Regional Approach* (Berlin: Government of Germany, 2006), p. 2.

¹⁶ Inspectors General, U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Defense, *Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Defense, 2006), p. 1.

¹⁷ General Barry R. McCaffrey (ret.), Memorandum of Trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan to Colonel Mike Meese and Colonel Cindy Jebb, United States Military Academy, June 2006; and General Barry R. McCaffrey (ret.), Memorandum of Trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan to Colonel Mike Meese and Colonel Cindy Jebb, United States Military Academy, February 2007.

¹⁸ Quoted in Chris Sands, "Bring Back Taliban to End Police Corruption, Say Afghan Truckers," *The Independent* (London), May 10, 2007.

¹⁹ James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, Andrew Rathmell, Brett Steele, Richard Teltschik, and Anga Timisina, *The UN's Role in Nation-Building: From the Congo to Iraq* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2005).

²⁰ Dobbins, author by interview, Washington, D.C., September 21, 2004; Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004); U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Afghanistan Stabilization and Reconstruction: A Status Report*, hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 108th Cong., 2d sess., January 27, 2004, pp. 14, 17-18; Seymour M. Hersh, "The Other War: Why Bush's Afghanistan Problem Won't Go Away," *New Yorker*, April 12, 2004; and "Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for International Peace and Security," UN Doc A/56/875-S/2002/278, para. 98.

about 10,000 American soldiers, airmen, special operators, and helicopter assault crews, along with robust in-country close air support.²¹ This small footprint was inevitable once planning for U.S. operations in Iraq began. But it was insufficient to establish security in Afghanistan.

In addition, insurgents have established a sanctuary in neighboring Pakistan. Every major insurgent group – such as the Taliban, Haqqani network, Hezb-i-Islami, and al Qa'ida – has established a command-and-control apparatus on the Pakistani side of the border. Al Qa'ida poses a particular concern because of its international scope. It has a core membership, not counting the Uzbek presence, of several hundred people clustered in such Pakistan tribal agencies as North Waziristan, South Waziristan, and Bajaur. Al Qa'ida takes advantage of other militant groups' networks to operate in settled areas of Pakistan. It has revitalized itself and returned to the operating style it enjoyed prior to 9/11. Leadership is divided among functional shura councils, covering such areas as military, political, financial, and media affairs. Finally, parts of the Pakistan government – especially current members of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate and Frontier Corps – continue to provide support to the Taliban and Haqqani network.

II. International Cooperation

The U.S. experience working with coalition forces and other international actors has been mixed. The counterinsurgency campaign – and security sector reform more broadly – was initially based on a "lead nation" approach. The United States was the lead donor nation for reconstructing the Afghan National Army; Germany was lead for police; the United Kingdom was lead for counter-narcotics; Italy was lead for justice; and Japan (with UN assistance) was lead for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants. In theory, each lead nation was supposed to contribute significant financial assistance, coordinate external assistance, and oversee reconstruction efforts in its sector. In practice, this approach did not work as well as envisioned. The United States provided the bulk of assistance in most security sectors – including counternarcotics, police, and the army. In other areas, such as the justice sector, there was little measurable improvement.

NATO's forces in Afghanistan have generally been competent. But the NATO experience in Afghanistan highlights several drawbacks with multilateral operations. One is the variation in political will of coalition partners. NATO's International Security Assistance Force has been severely limited by political-military rules of engagement, which constrain many of the national contingents. Some countries, such as Canada and Britain, have been reliable allies who are willing to fight and die in Afghanistan. Another drawback is the variation in capabilities. Several coalition

²¹ General Tommy Franks, *American Soldier* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), p. 324.

countries lack adequate enabler forces – including attack and lift helicopters, smart munitions, intelligence, engineers, medical, logistics, and digital command and control – to fully leverage and sustain their ground combat power.

The United States' repeated calls to other NATO countries for help have fallen on deaf ears. Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld likened the situation to a basketball team that practices for six months, only to find that most of its players won't play when the game begins. Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, and a range of other NATO countries have repeatedly balked at providing troops for counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan's violent south. This decision has created a two-tiered NATO composed of those involved in ground combat (such as the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands), and those who are not (every one else).

Two factors are at work. First, some NATO countries have a different philosophy about how to operate in Afghanistan. German, Italian, Spanish and some other officials urge a focus on development and reconstruction efforts, saying combat operations are more likely to alienate the Afghan population. But this approach provides little solace in those areas where the Taliban and other insurgent groups control territory. Second, many European leaders hold back because of low support for the Afghanistan mission at home. A recent German Marshall Fund poll found that 75 percent of Germans, 70 percent of Italians, and 72 percent of Spaniards did not support the deployment of their troops for combat operations in Afghanistan.²² So most NATO countries have established caveats, which restrict their soldiers' rules of engagement and limit their deployments to relatively safe areas of the country.

But U.S. handwringing misses the bigger picture. Many NATO countries have no recent experience in sustained ground combat operations. It is foolhardy to expect that soldiers with no meaningful experience can successfully defeat a networked insurgency comprised of hardened Taliban, al Qaeda operatives, and other insurgent groups. U.S. forces have been battling insurgents in Afghanistan for seven years and Iraq for five, whereas most of the allies have only been seriously engaged for the past two years, and are not as far along in the learning curve. Indeed, NATO has always been a two-tiered alliance. During the Cold War, the U.S. military agreed to play the predominant role in countering a Soviet ground or air attack in Western Europe. The United States also provided a nuclear umbrella across most of Western Europe to protect against a Soviet nuclear attack.

²² German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Compagnia di San Paolo (Italy), *Transatlantic Trends. Key Findings 2007* (Washington, DC: German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Compagnia di San Paolo, 2007).

III. Room for Improvement

What does this mean for the United States in practice? How can the United States and NATO better collaborate with the United Nations, the European Union, and non-governmental organizations?

First, the United States needs to take the lead for counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan's east and south – the center of gravity of the insurgency. NATO can continue to play a critical role, especially such countries as Canada and Britain in the south. But long-term success in Afghanistan will require the United States to provide the bulk of international forces and development assistance. Nobel prize-winning economist Mancur Olson coined this paradox the collective action problem. He argued that rational actors typically don't work to achieve their common interests in pursuit of public goods. Individuals in any group attempting collective action, such as NATO, will have incentives to "free ride" on the efforts of others. Someone always needs to provide the public good. It is now clear that the United States has to provide the public good, working with the Afghan government and a few key allies such as Britain and Canada.

This includes Afghan police training, which Germany was supposed to lead beginning in 2002. The United States is also deploying over 3,000 Marines to southern Afghanistan. Unfortunately, international resources are still not adequate. NATO has roughly 50,000 troops in Afghanistan, along with more than 50,000 Afghan National Army soldiers. Based on classic counterinsurgency estimates that a minimum of four troops per 1,000 inhabitants is necessary to establish security, the requirement in Afghanistan is at least 128,000 soldiers. This leaves a gap of 28,000 soldiers, which Afghan soldiers can fill over time. In the near future, however, the U.S. military must fill this gap if the Afghan government is to have a chance at defeating insurgent groups. This requires making difficult choices, such as redeploying some U.S. forces from Iraq to Afghanistan.

Second, military command-and-control arrangements are problematic and somewhat inefficient, though I don't believe that the command-and-control structure will ultimately cause the success (or failure) of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. There are at least three separate U.S. chains of command: through U.S. European Command (EUCOM), Central Command (CENTCOM), and Special Operations Command (SOCOM). Ideally, there should be one U.S. commander of forces in Afghanistan who is dual-hatted and has command-and-control of all forces. In my view, this could be done either under EUCOM or CENTCOM.

Third, in some nation-building operations, such as the one carried out in Bosnia following the signing of the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords, the international community created a High Representative to oversee reconstruction and stabilization. This did not happen in Afghanistan on

either the civilian or military side. On the civilian side, there has been no unity of command among the international community or U.S. agencies. The appointment of Norwegian diplomat Kai Eide as the United Nations Special Representative in Kabul may help improve these efforts. Still, there are problems even among U.S. agencies to coordinate reconstruction and development assistance. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan remain dominated by soldiers, with sparsely few civilian personnel from the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development, and other U.S. government agencies. Recent efforts to triple the size of the State Department in Afghanistan – especially at locations such as PRTs – appear to have run into bureaucratic resistance within the State Department. This needs to change.

IV. Room for Hope

There is clearly room for hope in Afghanistan. According to a recent public opinion poll, many Afghans express optimism in the face of the country's difficulties, though Afghan support is decreasing. Approximately 71 percent of Afghans support the United States' presence in Afghanistan. Most Afghans continue to see the U.S.-led overthrow of the Taliban as a good thing – 76 percent, although down from 88 percent last year – and to support U.S. forces remaining in their country. And 65 percent of Afghans still view the United States favorably overall, down from a peak of 83 percent in 2005 but still remarkable compared with America's image in most other Muslim countries.²³ The key now is to take advantage of a shrinking window of opportunity by providing adequate resources and coordination. America's war on terrorism began in Afghanistan in 2001 when it overthrew the Taliban regime. It is time for the United States to finish what it started.

²³ ABC News / BBC / ARD, *Afghanistan: Where Things Stand* (New York: ABC / BBC / ARD, December 2007).

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you.
Mr. Schneider.

**STATEMENT OF MR. MARK SCHNEIDER, SENIOR VICE
PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP**

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Again, let me express the appreciation of the International Crisis Group for this committee's focus on the "other war," the continuing conflict in Afghanistan where al-Qaeda launched its attack on the United States 6½ years ago.

The International Crisis Group is a nonprofit and a nongovernmental organization which is focused on conflict prevention-resolution. We have been in Afghanistan since November 2001. We have been issuing reports on the situation there since then. You have aptly entitled today's hearing, Strategic Chaos and Taliban Resurgence. I think, to a considerable degree, as you have mentioned, Mr. Chairman, the absence of strategic coherence has been a powerful enabler of that resurgence. Obviously, your timing is also admirable since today in Bucharest begins perhaps one effort to rescue Afghanistan from chaos.

The Taliban resurgence can be viewed both quantitatively and qualitatively. General Barno talked about some of the quantitative aspects. Let me just mention a few others.

Last year, there were 8,000 conflict-related deaths in Afghanistan; 1,500 of them were civilian. There has been an increase of 400 percent in all insurgent attacks since 2005 and a 600 percent increase in suicide bombings since 2005. There is no question about that resurgence. Qualitatively, it no longer is limited in any way to the provinces along the Pakistan border. I stayed at the Serena Hotel in Kabul a few months ago. A few weeks ago, that hotel was the site of a rather extensive attack involving automatic weapons and explosives, while the Norwegian Foreign Minister was visiting there. I also met with a parliamentary opposition leader. Only a few days later he was killed in a suicide bombing in northern Afghanistan. Clearly, the Taliban has demonstrated the capability to reach far beyond the provinces, perhaps their heartland, in the south and in the east.

I think, as Representative Scott has noted, that resurgence is paralleled by and is to some degree financed by a massive increase in opium-poppy cultivation and production. This fuels not only their revenues, but it also fuels corruption within the Afghan Government. The U.N. reported recently in February on its estimates for what is going to happen this year in the harvest. It essentially said that it looked like cultivation is going to stay about the same as it was last year. Remember, that was a 17 percent increase over the year before, and it produced a 34 percent increase in terms of metric tons of opium, the highest ever. What is even more discouraging is that their finding was that the largest increase this year in opium-poppy production is likely to be in the very same provinces in the south and in the west, which are the core battlefields of the Taliban. By the way, they also found that 100 percent of the farmers in the south and about 70 percent of those in the west pay a tax to the Taliban, and to local commanders to be able to produce the poppies.

I do just want to emphasize that the current state of affairs is not and was not inevitable. It results from policy choices made early on, to have a light military and political footprint with the co-opting of local and all too frequently corrupt militia leaders rather than international boots on the ground. There was a failure to permit ISAF, under the Security Council mandate, to extend out into the provinces, and there was no real effort up until very recently to reassess strategic alliances in Pakistan and to ensure that the Taliban sanctuaries across the borders were closed down.

Representative Scott said, "What are the reasons?" Clearly, you have heard some of them here. Fundamentally, it is the failure to close down the Taliban sanctuaries in Pakistan. It is the failure to have adequate resources, United States and international, in Afghanistan, operating under a common strategy. It is the failure to have a coherent counter drug policy. I was there in 2003–2004. There simply was no effective effort to develop a counter drug policy. It was left to a lead nation, and the United States was virtually out of it until very recently, and that was a fundamental error.

Finally, I would say it is not a question of the collapse of governance outside of Kabul. There was not anything to collapse. It is a failure to build governance. Unless the Karzai Government and unless the international community is able to strengthen the capacity of the Karzai Government to provide services and justice outside of Kabul, this whole effort is going to fail. In that regard, there are fundamental differences of view for the past 3 to 4 years on what is the strategy for building an adequate police force.

One of the other reasons that the resurgence has taken place is that we have not been able to establish beyond the Afghan National Army, which has been, I think, very successfully developed by the United States—the rest of the security structure—that means police, judges, prisons—in a way that permits people to feel safe in the country.

Finally, I would say that there is some good news. The Security Council on March 20th extended for another year the mandate for UNAMA. That is positive. It, to some degree, expanded the mandate for the new UNSRSG to coordinate but, to be very frank, with very vague terms. Also, it did not make a long-term commitment. Instead of a year's extension, it really needed to be a substantial multi-year commitment, and it has done that at times in the past, for example, in Kosovo. We need to do it in the case of Afghanistan. There needs to be a long-term commitment and, as the general said, to both Pakistan and to Afghanistan and to the region, and there needs to be a coherent regional strategy. The failure here would not just be a failure that threatens U.S. interests. The failure is European interests as well. That is a return to civil war, a narco-state, a Pashtun-dominated south, controlled by largely extremist lawlessness, and increased intervention by regional powers. All of those are not in either the United States national interests or in anyone else's interests and definitely not those of the people of Afghanistan.

Finally, I think there really has to be now, as we look to the future at the NATO summit in Paris, the meeting of donors in June, there has to be a decision by the international community that

there will be a single coordination for civilian leadership of the international community. Kai Eide, a distinguished Norwegian diplomat, hopefully can be given that mandate, but you cannot ask the international community and you cannot ask the U.N. to coordinate international support if the largest player, which is the United States, is not willing to be coordinated. I spoke to several diplomats in Kabul in November, and they said that there is no chance to get an internationally coordinated effort if the United States is not willing to go along with that coordination.

Mr. Chairman, I think that, as the general indicated, we can come up with a much better way of avoiding separate commands within the U.S. and between the U.S. and ISAF. Ultimately, we need a unity of command as well as a unity of effort, but in the end, even with an effective military operation, that is not going to end the insurgency. We need effective governance in Afghanistan.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Schneider follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. MARK SCHNEIDER, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,
INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

I want to express once again the appreciation of the International Crisis Group for this committee's continuing attention to the "other war," the continuing conflict in Afghanistan, where al Qaeda launched its attack on the United States 6 1/2 years ago.

You have aptly entitled today's hearing "Strategic Chaos and Taliban Resurgence." To a considerable degree, the absence of strategic coherence has been a powerful enabler of that resurgence. Your timing also is admirable since a major opportunity to rescue Afghanistan from chaos begins this evening in Bucharest at the NATO Summit.

RESURGENCE

The Taliban resurgence can be measured quantitatively or qualitatively.

With respect to the former:

- Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified earlier this year that suicide bombings were up 27% in 2007 over 2006. He should have added that they are up 600% over 2005; and that all insurgent attacks are up 400% over 2005.
- The UN Secretary General reported last month the looting of 40 convoys delivering food for the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2007, 130 attacks against humanitarian programs, 40 relief workers killed and another 89 abducted.
- There were 8000 conflict-related deaths in 2007, 1500 of them civilian.

On the qualitative side, the Serena Hotel in the center of Kabul, where I stayed last fall, was the subject of a fierce attack with automatic weapons and explosives in mid-January during the stay there by the Norwegian Foreign Minister. The Afghan opposition spokesman with whom I met during my visit, Sayed Mustafa Kazemi, went to inaugurate a sugar factory in Northern Afghanistan a few days later and he and around 70 others were killed in a suicide bombing. Probably the single worst suicide bombing since 2001 occurred in February of this year with dozens killed and nearly a hundred wounded in the southern province of Kandahar.

The Taliban and associated groups are using terror tactics to spread fear far from their heartland in the southern and eastern provinces bordering Pakistan, where NATO and US forces battle them in nearly daily combat.

Opium poppy cultivation and production, which fuels both corruption within the Afghanistan government and is taxed by the Taliban to supply their own financial needs, has reached all-time highs. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that in 2007 Afghanistan produced 93% of the world's opium, on 193,000 hectares with a potential production of 8,200 metric tons. In February 2008, in its winter rapid assessment survey as to what is likely to happen this year, it essentially said "about the same."

Even more worrisome is the finding that opium poppy production in the southern and western provinces, many of the same areas that are the core battlefield of the insurgency, show a likely increase in opium over last year when they already constituted 78% of Afghan poppy cultivation. In its survey, the UN found that 100% of the poppy farmers in the southern region reported being forced to pay taxes on the opium to various groups and 72% in the western region. The majority of those taxes are paid to the Taliban, to mullahs and to local militia commanders.

The current state of affairs was not inevitable. It resulted from policy choices early on in the international community; light military and political footprints with the co-opting of local and all too frequently corrupt militia leaders rather than international boots on the ground. There was a failure to get UNSC-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) out into the provinces. In 2002, Crisis Group was arguing for a peacekeeping force of 25,000 to 30,000. Instead, there were 4,500 ISAF troops confined to Kabul. There was no reassessment of strategic alliances in Pakistan to ensure the Taliban sanctuaries across the border were closed down.

STRATEGIC COHERENCE

Today the lack of strategic coherence within the international community effort is reflected in separate civilian special representatives of the United Nations, of the European Union and of NATO, with no clear authority one over the other; and in a reluctance on the part of the United States and other major country contributors to be coordinated by any one of them.

On the military side there remains the US led Coalition Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) undertaking training of local security forces as well as its own operations, with separate commands, reporting to EUCOM and to NATO, reporting to CENTCOM and at least one reporting to the Special Operations command in Tampa.

The NATO-led ISAF has 40 contributing nations acting under a UNSC mandate and NATO command with five regional commands and 26 national-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT's) underneath it. Many of the nations involved have national caveats that restrict where the ISAF commander can send his troops and what they can be required to do. This means that the burden of risk and casualties is unevenly borne by the U.S., UK, Canada, the Netherlands and others whose forces are permitted to go to the areas of heavy fighting.

The PRT's were established with the reasonable purpose of the military being able to provide some direct community benefits where insecurity prevented other, more appropriate, civilian actors from doing so. But there are serious questions about the use of PRT's as instruments to achieve the wider goal of national development. While one could argue that differing local conditions may require flexibility in defining activities in a province, except for the 12-U.S. run PRT's, there is little commonality among them and they operate without any transparent or common doctrine or even reporting lines for non-military actions.

The PRT's may provide some capacity to undertake efforts in insecure provinces; however, many of the areas where the PRT's operate are no longer high risk security. Reconstruction and development are not the role, responsibility, or comparative advantage of the military. In more stable areas, Afghanistan civilian agencies with their international civilian counterparts should be in the lead. Yet, there are no agreed-upon benchmarks for determining when that transition can take place and when it should take place. Today, the PRT's often seem a supply-driven phenomenon, a way for nations to fly their flag in Afghanistan, but with little evaluation as to comparative impact or effectiveness.

Such an approach, particularly without strong civilian leadership, has meant a lack of a comprehensive international cooperation strategy. Instead, each country involved often appears to see Afghanistan largely through the lens of where they are based—the UK sees Helmand as Afghanistan; the Dutch, Uruzgan; and Germany, northern Afghanistan.

The lead nation approach to security sector reform has added to the stove-piped nature of the response so that, except for the fledgling Afghan National Army, with the U.S. as the lead nation, the other elements in the security structure—police, judiciary, prisons—remain largely dysfunctional. Today, the Ministry of the Interior, which stands at the heart of all these efforts, is receiving much greater attention than before but remains largely unreformed. Ensuring much greater—and coordinated—improvements in all of those elements is crucial to a functioning criminal justice system that assures the safety of Afghan civilians.

The situation with respect to the police underscores the problem of coordination. What began with a German-led effort to create a new professional civilian-led officer

corps simply did not produce the numbers needed and saw local powerbrokers seize the title of police commanders. Many of these men had backgrounds including both human rights abuses and drug trafficking linkages. The U.S. inserted itself to remedy that situation and fairly rapidly pumped out 70,000 field-level “beat” patrolmen—most with two weeks training—who were inserted back under a mostly unreformed command structure.

Now the European Union has taken the nominal international lead; but its members have produced only 200 police trainers. The U.S. has 500 contracted police trainers—again a less than ideal management arrangement—and 700 military police trainers. The effort is being managed by a U.S. Major General who is now seeking to go district-by-district to make-over the police, including new training programs. But once again, it is not fully clear that the plan has the endorsement of the rest of the international community, let alone all elements of the Afghan government. There are fears that the U.S. still sees police reform primarily as a counter insurgency measure, with a consequent focus on militarizing the police as opposed to the European civilian law enforcement approach.

Without once again taking the committee through the opium poppy problem, conflicting policy views exist on how best to control illicit narcotics. We continue to believe that political will on the part of the Karzai government to halt drug trafficking and to prosecute all officials linked to drug trafficking is the prerequisite for success. The U. S. Ambassador still is wildly enthusiastic about aerial eradication despite the opposition of the Afghan government and of other nations, but fortunately their objections thus far have prevailed. The reality is that U.S. use of aerial eradication in Colombia also failed to reduce the supply of cocaine, but its negative consequences with respect to population displacement and alienation of local farmers would seem likely to be even more extreme in the Afghanistan environment. They are, after all, communities with unhappy memories of Soviet helicopter gunships.

STAYING THE COURSE

Despite these serious concerns—and it seems much better to acknowledge their existence than to ignore them—the U.S. and the international community must stay the peacebuilding course in Afghanistan. But they must do it better. The potential costs of failing to increase resources, attention, priority and energy to Afghanistan would be unacceptably high:

- a return to civil war, with factions divided along regional and ethnic lines
- a narco-state with institutions controlled by organized criminal gangs and influenced by terrorists
- a Pashtun-dominated south largely abandoned to extremist lawlessness
- increased intervention by regional powers

That is why the Crisis Group would hope that the NATO summit in Bucharest starting tonight and the forthcoming donors meeting in June in Paris will adopt a fundamental course correction with respect to international coordination. It will mean critically reviewing the degree to which NATO countries, donors and the Karzai government have kept faith with the Afghanistan Compact.

The Afghanistan Compact adopted following the London conference in January 2006 together with the interim-Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) was to be a partnership of some 60 nations and institutions in support of Afghanistan. But the agreed priorities and resource allocation by contributors have not been met.

Equally if not more serious, the Afghan Government has not been held accountable to its commitments on disarmament, transitional justice and human rights, and anti-corruption. The creation and demise of the Special Consultative Board for Senior Government Appointments, part of the Compact, deserves special mention—as the very first benchmark and critical to nearly everything else to be achieved in Afghanistan. The commitment was that “a clear and transparent national appointments mechanism will be established within six months, applied within 12 months and fully implemented within 24 months for all senior level appointments to the central government and the judiciary, as well as for provincial governors, chiefs of police, district administrators and provincial heads of security.” Although its members were appointed with much fanfare, the board has never properly functioned, does not have adequate staff or support and is rarely consulted. We fault the Bush Administration, the other embassies, the UN, the EU and NATO for not standing firm on that key systemic reform for transparency, human rights and institution-building.

While effective military action may deny victory to the insurgency-only effective governance will defeat it.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Six and a half years after intervention in Afghanistan, positive developments include a popularly elected government, a stable new currency, two million females back in school and access to basic health care for a large percent of the population, according to UN and government figures. However, Afghanistan's social indices still rank it 174th out of 178 nations in the UNDP Human Development Index.

Good news is reflected in the extension a week ago of the UN Security Council mandate resolution for one year—although it might well have considered a 5-year extension to make absolutely clear that the commitment to Afghanistan is strategic not tactical.

Finally there is good news in the approval of an experienced Norwegian diplomat UNSRSG Kai Eide whose direct mandate is to “lead the international civilian efforts” to promote coordination of the international effort, to strengthen civilian/military cooperation with ISAF, to support the electoral process which will require either a combined presidential and parliamentary election next year and in 2010 or separate ones in 2009 and 2010; and to support the rule of law.

I also would underscore that the resolution “stresses . . . the importance of (the Afghan government's) meeting the benchmarks and timelines of the Compact” and also gives Eide a responsibility for promoting regional cooperation among Afghanistan's neighbors.

The test for the NATO summit is whether its members make a long-term commitment to Afghanistan, pledge and rapidly fulfill that pledge of more troops, make real political efforts to remove caveats if it can be done by executive order or to seek their government's approval, and agree to address the outstanding coordination challenges.

A test for Paris is whether there is a long-term commitment and a frank review of what pledges have not been fulfilled and what benchmarks the government has not met and a timeline for reversing those failures. It also will be vital to see whether the UN itself will be able to say it has met its own staffing gaps and whether the donor community and particularly the EU and its member countries, and above all, the United States, will agree to serious coordination by the UN. While there is much ongoing talk of coordination there is too little evidence of countries and institutions realigning programs and resources according to collectively agreed priorities.

Steps we suggest to promote coordination:

1. establish a Contact Group made up of the NATO, EU, US, UK, Germany and Canada under UN leadership to steer strategic planning of the international engagement and work out common positions in Kabul, in capitals and in New York.
2. use that Group to reinforce commitment to the broader Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board and to support Eide in his regional efforts.
3. abolish the lead nation/key partner approach and allow the UN to coordinate everyone's efforts in areas such as subnational governance and justice.

When it comes to coordination, the real question as one diplomat mentioned to me in Kabul is that UN coordination is desirable and essential but the elephant in the room has to be willing to be coordinated. He was referring to the United States. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I thank all three panel members. The House is in the process of taking a series of three votes. The chair's intention is to recess until the end of those three votes and then resume with the questioning of our witnesses. The approximate time to our return is 30 minutes or so, for your planning purposes. The committee stands in recess subject to the call of the chair.

[Recess.]

Mr. ACKERMAN. The subcommittee will resume. I thank everybody for your patience, the panel especially. I hope some of the members will be returning in short order as well, and we will begin.

First, I would like to ask a general question of the entire panel. The NATO summit begins today, and among other things on the agenda is a discussion on NATO's role in Afghanistan. Aside from gathering pledges for increased troops and commitments, what else

should the President try to achieve in Bucharest in regards to Afghanistan? And maybe we can begin with you, General.

General BARNO. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. A tough question I think. But to echo some of the observations by my contemporaries here, in addition to the resource part of this, I think coming to a unanimity on a strategy, a single unified strategic outlook for objectives in Afghanistan that take into account both American interests and the interests of our NATO allies is very important. The appointment recently in the United Nations of Kai Eide as the new U.N. senior representative of the Secretary-General, which is intended to help coalesce the nonmilitary parts of the effort in Afghanistan, what I would call the 80 percent of the counterinsurgency that is not military in the words of many experts on counterinsurgency, I think that will be an important first step. But he also has to have a strategy in which all the other players operate. And I think NATO has struggled with what that strategy is. So I think as the alliance moves forward and deepens its commitment to Afghanistan, having what they sometimes call a comprehensive approach but having that articulated, having it put in writing and having it broad enough but specific enough to be implemented would be an important additional step.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, that is a great question. I would argue there are at least two additional issues that would be usefully discussed at the highest levels during the NATO summit. One is dealing with growing concerns of governance within Afghanistan and in particular dealing with corruption, including involvement of government officials in the trade, in the narcotics trafficking, and answers to questions like, how many senior level drug traffickers or government officials involved in drugs have been prosecuted in Afghanistan? I would venture that the answer is probably either zero or one or two. That feeds, I think, the insurgency. It contributes to local support for the Taliban and other groups and disillusionment with their government.

Second, I would like to broaden General Barno's comments on a strategy and argue—and he mentioned this in his comments earlier—I think NATO needs to develop a regional strategy. In particular, what is NATO's policy toward Pakistan? Again, there is clearly a sanctuary for every major insurgent group operating in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, whether it is down in Quetta with the Taliban, up in Peshawar and in the North Waziristan area for the Haqqani network. What is the broader NATO strategy for dealing with a regional insurgency? And the reason this is a concern—there is a study that is going to come out within the next month that I did for the Department of Defense. It has been unclassified. It indicates that, since 1945, two of the biggest factors that have contributed to the failure of counterinsurgencies are the ability of groups to get external support from states and the ability to get sanctuary. So, in my view, this cannot be won if this continues to be treated as an Afghan insurgency and the sanctuary is not dealt with.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. If I could. I agree with everything that was said and let me add a few other points. One is the caveats. NATO can't continue to let the countries maintain their caveats saying, you

can't send my troops here, and they can't be asked to do this. If NATO members are serious about winning in Afghanistan, the ISAF commander has to have an ability to deploy force where and when he needs them under a common strategy. It seems to me if they are not able to do that by executive decision, then NATO really needs to go back and say, we are going to seek the political approval to remove the caveats.

A second is that NATO has to make a long-term commitment. I mentioned that the U.N. had extended the UNAMA for 1 year. I would argue that one demonstration that would have an impact inside Afghanistan and in Pakistan and elsewhere in the region is if NATO were to say, we are committed to Afghanistan for the next 5 years or the next 10 years. And again, I mentioned this earlier. I think that the United States should do the same. When we talked about the Nunn-Lugar commitment to help the Soviet Union remove the nuclear waste, that was an important commitment that said, This is not short term. The same kind of commitment needs to be made to state building in Afghanistan.

And third, I think NATO has to begin to ask itself, what is our responsibility with respect to helping Afghanistan get control over drug trafficking? This is a country where we now have some 50,000 troops total, U.S. and NATO. What is the role of NATO in providing military intelligence about convoys and helping to essentially get at the high end of the drug production chain, not—not the spraying or eradicating of small farmers but getting at the high end, where the value is.

And, finally, I would say, there needs to be a rethinking of—not a rethinking. There needs to be a common strategy and doctrine on what the Provincial Reconstruction Teams are there for, what the benchmarks are for transitioning from those mechanisms for providing reconstruction to a—the normal civilian reconstruction responsibility the Government of Afghanistan and civilian development agencies.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I am having a tough time lately getting my hands or arms around this, the whole picture here, whether it is Afghanistan or Iraq. When you are talking about what should NATO strategy be and that we need a comprehensive strategy, strategy to do what? I mean, usually, when you have a strategy, you have a goal. And I don't know any more that we have a clear goal in either Afghanistan or Iraq. I know the goal that got us in there was we have got to kill them over there before they kill us over here. This was preemptive, whether nuclear, and then we shifted to this and that and the other thing. A strategic goal against who? Who are these people? We are talking about a counter insurgency. If we have a counter insurgency that we want to prevail, who are the insurgents, I guess is the question. Are the insurgents people looking to attack America? Are we fighting this to build a government? Are we fighting this to end drugs in the world? You know, I mean, this has been so confused in the minds of Americans that we are arguing pieces of this that may not have to do with the original goal, strategy to do what, and I don't know that we can have a successful strategy because when do you define it, successful has something to do with whether you have achieved your goal. Is our goal just to turn this country over to its democrat-

ically elected leaders once they get a handle on how to run things and are educated and sophisticated and drug-free and crime-free and capable, efficient, and competent, and able to do all the other things they can put into prose and so on?

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Let me take a shot at it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. How much of this insurgency is a threat to the United States? And I know there is a connection when you have drug guys, they fund the terrorist guys, and the terrorist guys will destabilize those guys. But this is the picture all over the world. Is this our new mission? Whether it is Afghanistan or Iraq or Kalubistan or something else that shows up on the radar screen next year or next month because there are terrorists and dealers—are these insurgents that just want us gone so they can run their own playground, or are these the guys that want to attack the United States? Because in all the discussion, I haven't heard anyone talk about the terrorists who are going to attack the United States. And I know they are the mix somewhere, but is that our real threat or are those just people trying to leverage the situation to their own advantage, and we are not even worried about them because they are such a small piece of this. And the answer, I don't know. Who wants to start in?

General BARNO. All three of us.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Everybody wants to start.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I will start. I will start in the following way, Mr. Chairman. The initial reason for our removing the Taliban government was because it provided a sanctuary to al-Qaeda, which carried out the 9/11 attack. Currently, al-Qaeda still operates from the Waziristan area in Pakistan. And if the Taliban were able to reassert control over Afghanistan, it would provide al-Qaeda a platform again. From the narrow standpoint of the United States national interest, it is essential to deny them the ability to have a platform to carry out additional terrorist actions.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Al-Qaeda?

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. So if we were able to have a tactic that was part of a strategy that says, cut a deal with the Taliban, that they no longer provide the platform for al-Qaeda. Do we leave the place to the Taliban? We just want to terrorize our own family, and we are not interested in having the al-Qaeda types here anymore.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I don't think we trust them. I think we believe that the only way that we can achieve the end goal of their not being a platform for terrorist attacks is by ensuring that they do not have the ability to run Afghanistan. And for that reason, we are attempting to support Afghanistan in developing institutions that permit it to at least effectively deny the Taliban the ability to take over control. And the kinds of efforts that we have taken—the kind of efforts that we are suggesting in terms of a greater strategic coherence that would permit those institutions to be built in Afghanistan, we believe would ultimately deny both the Taliban the ability to come back and take control and therefore their allies, al-Qaeda. But we don't think it can be done without denying the sanctuaries in Pakistan as well.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Public opinion on the Taliban in Afghanistan right now. What is it?

Mr. JONES. It depends on which, Mr. Chairman, public opinion poll you are reading. I would say some of the more recent ones—there was one commissioned by U.S. Central Command which noted a slight increase up to a 15, 16 percent support for the Taliban. So it is still quite low. But I would argue that the issue is not just support for the Taliban, it also is support for the government, because in a sense, I think what happen you have is a significant loss of support for the Afghan Government. So this is not—this is not a sense of people necessarily supporting the Taliban; it is losing support for the government. I would argue that is probably the more realistic way of looking at this. If I can just add one comment.

Mr. ACKERMAN. What you have just described I think it is a slide to chaos. If the government is losing support substantially and the Taliban is only incrementally becoming more popular, then this place is really not supporting any of the above. I am looking for an option that we somehow hopefully wish to provide that they would like. Right?

Mr. JONES. Yes. I think we—

Mr. ACKERMAN. Have we articulated that? Does anybody buy into that over there?

Mr. JONES. Buy into—can you—

Mr. ACKERMAN. Buy into that the population would rather have a third option, the American dream that they would buy into. The American dream Afghan-style.

Mr. JONES. I think historically the way Afghanistan has worked is government is very decentralized. Most individuals at the village and district level are primarily not interested in central government. They are interested in governance at the very local level. As long as there are some services and some protection, I think they are happy to be left alone.

Mr. ACKERMAN. So all politics is local?

Mr. JONES. I think all politics is certainly local in Afghanistan. Yes. And I would just like to restate this argument. I think if you look at the strategic, the operational and the tactical levels, the links between the Taliban and al-Qaeda as well as links between al-Qaeda and other groups, such as the Haqqani network, in my view are notably stronger today even than they were in the 1990s leading up to the September 11, 2001, attacks. I do not believe that at the top levels of the Taliban there is any willingness to really cut a deal. Their vision, their Deobandi visions of what Afghanistan should look like are simply not, in my view, not reconcilable with our views. And they are reconcilable to some degree with what you see with al-Qaeda. So I think there are very strong links.

Mr. ACKERMAN. So what you are saying is, despite our efforts, we have gone backwards in our efforts vis-à-vis the Taliban? They are more determined not—

Mr. JONES. No, I am just saying that I think the relationship between the Taliban and al-Qaeda, and al-Qaeda and other groups, such as the Haqqani network, are stronger today than they were, and they are primarily based on the Pakistani side of the border.

Mr. ACKERMAN. So, again, despite our efforts, that is going in the wrong direction?

Mr. JONES. Yes, I think that is fair to say.

General BARNO. Mr. Chairman, I would address your original question there, what are our strategic objectives? And I think there are five. I have actually thought about this a bit and written it out a bit to reflect on it. The overall objective is a stable region that is not a threat to the United States, that we don't have another 9/11 attack emanate from. But the five objectives I would name here first, to this end, is a sustainable Afghan Government which is broadly representative of the people. The second one I believe would be a Pakistan that is stabilized as a long-term regional partner which is friendly to the United States and in control of its military and its nuclear weapons. The third I would state would be that regional states are confident of American staying power and commitment as their partner in the war on violent extremism. Fourth, that the Taliban and al-Qaeda are defeated in the region and denied a usable sanctuary and that further attacks on the United States are prevented. And finally, to the NATO issue, that the NATO presence is recast into what I would characterize as some sustainable set of objectives, the term I use is to find a soft landing for NATO, as it were, in our next 3 to 5 years in Afghanistan that might look considerably different than today. So those would be the five that I would highlight as our strategic objectives toward this goal for stability for the region so it is not a threat to the United States which is what it certainly became in the 1990s.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you.

Rather than dominate all the time all at once, I will dominate in bits and pieces.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And indeed, I have certainly enjoyed learning as we are here. And I regret, with all of the confusion, the votes back and forth, that I have missed some of the testimony. But earlier, General Barno, you in your testimony indicated about the new Taliban. And how would you describe what you were identifying as a threat to our country?

General BARNO. Thanks, Congressman. What I would reflect back on is, in the spring of 2005, a few months before I left, I remember going down to my subordinate headquarters at Bagram, our two-star headquarters, and sitting in a briefing for General Abizaid, who was my boss at the time, the CENTCOM Commander, and watching our tactical headquarters that watched all of the enemy around Afghanistan put a chart up that said, How do you know your enemy is defeated? On that chart, they had a series of boxes with different labels on of, well, and when this happens and this happens and this happens and when those collectively all happen, your enemy is defeated. And this was about the Taliban. And they had checked one half of the boxes on that chart in the spring of 2005. The Taliban was in some ways flat on their back. They hadn't interfered with the election the year before. They had not done much in the spring up to that point time, which was probably about April time frame. And their overall activity level was very, very low. And we were wondering where they were going, what was next, if they in fact had not been set back fatally in their effort.

Now, we made a number of changes in our approach that year. We changed command. We changed strategy. We announced we

were withdrawing combat troops. We announced we were handing the effort over to NATO. And I think that, in some ways, became a turning point perhaps in Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan for the Taliban to begin to regenerate itself and to take on a new set of objectives. So as I have watched the Taliban in the last 2 years in particular in the amount of suicide attacks, the number of roadside bombs, they were reaching the northern and the western parts of the country, the amount of activity in the tribal areas of Pakistan that are both Taliban and al-Qaeda mixed together in what has really been a tremendous regeneration of capacity. I think I would agree with Dr. Jones, in some ways more dangerous than 1999. There is a very different Taliban out there today. They own parts of Afghanistan that they had essentially no presence in in 2004 and 2005. That is very disconcerting to me. And we do have to ask the question, which was brought up early on in the hearing, how did this happen? What was the cause? What was the turning point, and how do we reverse that back so that they are back nearing defeat once again?

Mr. ACKERMAN. Yes, Dr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. If I could just add to that. We often talk about a Taliban insurgency. And I would just like to point out or reiterate that what you are talking about is what some have called a network insurgency. It is not a hierarchal insurgency. There is not one organization. As you move from the northern parts of the Afghan-Pakistani border, you have got elements of Hezbi Islami. This is Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's organization. You have several other organizations, one called TNSM. That is the acronym.

As you move further south down the border, that is where you get into al-Qaeda and Siraj Haqqani and his Haqqani network. As you move further south, you also get into the key Taliban area in the south of Afghanistan as well as drug-trafficking organizations and Pashtun tribes, subtribes and clans. So, in a sense, it is an insurgency that is quite redundant. There is no head that one can cut off. There are multiple organizations actually even within the Taliban itself.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. If I could, the only other thing that I would emphasize is the essential need to go after the command structures of those organizations in Pakistan. In many instances, we have had testimony from our military and others, and when I was in Pakistan I raised with United States officials, it is clear that command structure, both military and political of the Taliban and of the other groups, are not located in some cave, that they are in and around Quetta, and they are in and around Peshawar. The assumption was that the Pakistan military intelligence knew where they were. The need is to ensure that there is cooperation in going after them. That has not yet been done.

Mr. WILSON. Additionally, I had the extraordinary opportunity to accompany Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee to Afghanistan. Our first visit 4 years ago, it was really shocking to see the level of destruction of Kabul. The rubble was right up to the side of the road, and every time I have been back—and I have been back 6 times now and I was there a month ago—the rubble has been moved a little bit further and a little bit further, and now it has been removed. For the 10th poorest country on earth, I am startled

at the level of vehicular traffic. I have actually seen in the level of paving, I have seen the roads go from nonexistent to really very first class. In addition, I have had the opportunity to visit Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Khost, in Bagram and Jalalabad twice. So I have seen significant efforts being made.

My main interest, though, because of my National Guard unit, which is the largest deployment from South Carolina since World War II, we have 1,600 troops serving, and they have been now for 9 months. They have been working with the police, with the Army. I really thought that they would be going to a say Camp Phoenix or a central facility to train and then send the police and army out. But, actually, they are themselves spread all over the country serving as mentors. How would you assess the efforts being made to train—and I will ask General Barno first, and then pass it along—how would you assess the efforts being made?

General BARNO. I think that has been a tremendous success story and particularly with regard to the Afghan National Army. The Afghan National Army, or ANA, and the Ministry of Defense, which is their civilian leadership, is broadly deemed in the country as the most successful multiethnic merit-based organization in Afghanistan. If you look at institutions across Afghanistan, far and away, in most people's estimation, the military and the Defense Ministry are one of the very few functioning organizations that are based on merit, not cronyism, are relatively uncorrupt, are well-trained and equipped to do their job. And I think all of the soldiers that I spent time with in Afghanistan that had served with the ANA were very positive on their attributes that they were, in the words of some, genetically bred to be warriors, which I thought was an interesting observation I heard from several people, and they were willing to fight. They had not been defeated in any engagements in Afghanistan. So it is a very impressive form. The police training effort has been much more problematic, as we have all heard, and the military only began to take ownership of that as I was leaving. We spent 12 months making that argument to transition that from state leadership to defense leadership. So that program has many miles further to travel. But the efforts of our American trainers in both capacities have been extraordinary, and that is probably the future of Afghanistan in terms of defeating the insurgency. There is both an effective police force and effective military. Ultimately they will replace American and NATO soldiers in Afghanistan.

Mr. JONES. Just to reiterate, this should be our exit strategy. Our exit strategy is getting competent Afghan National Army and Afghan national police forces who can lead efforts. In my view, actually, the Afghan National Army has been so successful, relatively speaking, that I would actually argue, as there have been discussions on this of increasing the size of the army, part of the discussion in Afghanistan within the military has been increasing it to 120,000/125,000 over a period of time. But I would argue those are worth supporting. On the police side, again, part of this goes back to our discussion on governance. There are deep problems not just setting aside training for a moment, with corruption, within the police forces including police involved in growing poppy, taking bribes from individuals at checkpoints along major roads, in some cases

even operating with the Taliban or other insurgent forces. That gets to more than just the capability in the training per se of the police. This also gets to issues of governance and will. And I think that is probably some of the hardest, including the Ministry of Interior in general, it is probably one of the hardest parts of the police program is this governance corruption side.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. If I could. Let me just take that—I think we all agree that training for the military has been successful. The training for the police has been a disaster. We put out a report on this last summer, and there is an effort now of essentially 70,000 police that had about 2 weeks' training. The U.S. military now is in charge of essentially going district by district, taking out those police, retraining them, vetting them to make sure that the ones that are going to come back are not engaged in drug trafficking and, during the time that they are out putting in what they call the ANCOB, the civil order police, to hold the line. This is going to take a long time. The fact is that right now you not only have a problem at the local level, but you have a problem in the Ministry of Interior. In terms of changing the system, one of the areas that we are very concerned about is to put into place and to make functional this—what was called the special consultative group on senior appointments that would appoint provincial police, appoint local police chiefs, and that has not been functioning. Until you get the kind of mechanism that says before we appoint these police chiefs, we are going to look at their human rights background, we are going to look at their corruption background, I am afraid there is a lot of money that is being wasted.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you all for your testimony, and I do want to point out that one of the attributes of the National Guard—and I appreciate Congressman Costa arranging our most recent visit to Afghanistan. But in the National Guard, nearly 20 percent of our personnel there are local sheriffs' deputies and police officers at home. So they have had an extraordinary background of civilian acquired skills to work and try to help the training. And I am just—again, obviously very proud of what the National Guard has done. Thank you very much.

Mr. ACKERMAN. As we all are.

Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

Ms. Jackson Lee.

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

I think, as we reflect, this hearing might be much more appropriately timed than even when we scheduled it in February in light of the upcoming hearing that we will be having with Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus. And I thank the chairman for this hearing and make mention of my colleague as well, both of them having been to Afghanistan recently and myself having studied it and also been in Afghanistan during the good times and what was at one point bad times and what was at one point the good times.

I would like to follow a line of questioning that includes Afghanistan and Pakistan, but I do want to point out and get from each of you—maybe you have already commented on it, and forgive me if you have—that there is a tendency to paint a rosy picture from the outside if you haven't had recent visits to Afghanistan. It is always good to do that in the backdrop of Iraq. What we were told

is that violence is limited; that it is in areas in the south, and every place else is, if you will, a shining star to be recognized. I am just going to ask that plain question. Is that a statement of fact that is truthful, or should we as Members of Congress be aware that violence is not limited?

Mr. Snyder, I will start with you, and then Dr. Jones, and then, General, if you would. Thank you.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you very much. I think all three of us have been clear that one of our concerns is that the resurgence of the Taliban has been reflected in expanded violence, not merely in the south and the east, but as well in the north and central Afghanistan. If you just do it in terms of numbers, there has been almost a 400 percent increase in attacks by the Taliban over the last several years. There has been a huge increase in suicide bombings. And the magnitude of the attacks, you just had in February the most civilian casualties from a single suicide bombing attack since 2001 that occurred in Kandahar. So the capacity of the Taliban and their willingness to carry out these kinds of attacks on civilians has clearly increased. It reflects our concern that we are taking the steps necessary in order to prevent them from continuing this kind of resurgence.

Mr. JONES. This is an excellent question. I am going to break my question down geographically. I think the center of the insurgent push at the moment is focusing on both the center that is the area in and around Kabul, provinces like Wardak and Lowgar, as well as the south. Those are the primary pushes of insurgent activity. Taliban in the south, the Haqqani network in the center. But violence is also pushed into the west in places like Herat, especially southern Herat and Shindand. It has obviously pushed into the east. Kunar, from some military statistics, is the highest level of kinetic operations at the moment. So parts of the east clearly are violent. North is fragile, but I would not classify it as an active insurgency in the north. And then just going back to the east, there are—I think there are some provinces that have seen a slight decline in violence in the east as well. Just to reiterate, center and south are the clear focuses. There is violence in the west and some in the east. North is fragile. So that is sort of my geographic breakdown.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I figure about 80 percent of the violence is increasing versus 20 percent that may be stable. Is that a good number, 80 to 20?

Mr. JONES. I couldn't give you a specific answer without having the data in front of me. But it is—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. It is a large number where violence is occurring, a large area where violence is occurring?

Mr. JONES. Yes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. General?

General BARNO. I think this panel has been fairly surprisingly unanimous on our view on Afghanistan that it is anything but a rosy picture. And we have laid out a number of different metrics on why that is the case. One of the risks I think that each of the commanders that serves in Afghanistan has is having a bit too short of a focus. Since we arrived in Afghanistan in December 2001 by my count, we have had six different military commanders and

five different chiefs of mission at ambassador levels there if we don't count those that only served 60 days or less. That is a tremendous rotation. So there is a tendency to measure yourself against last year as opposed to looking at the longer trend lines. So, in some of my early comments, I noted that the significant differences between the midpoint of my tour, which was 2004 and last year, 2007, just a 3-year period. But the—really, fairly astronomical increases in everything from suicide attacks to roadside explosions. But the number I think that tells an interesting story, regardless of how many or how few provinces it occurred, is that the coalition and the United States dropped 82 bombs in all of 2004, and last year, NATO and the United States forces dropped over 3,700 bombs in Afghanistan. Whether that is in 1 province or 12 provinces or 36 provinces, that is a telling number in terms of those longer-term trend lines. So I think that we have to be very careful that we are objective and very clear-eyed about how many provinces are involved in violence and how many years across time we look at that. Each of us has a map in front of us that we have got in various forms which is the U.N. security map for Afghanistan. And if you track that as the U.N. does over many years, the map goes from having only a few grey areas to many grey areas to grey and black areas to many black areas. And it is still not the majority of the country, but we ought to be concerned about where that trend line is taking us. It is not taking us in the right direction. So I think those are—I always use that U.N. map as a good objective marker of how we were doing because it wasn't designed by us to serve our own purposes within the military or within our Government. It was designed by somebody who had no particular vested interest in the outcome. And I tried to use that to kind of measure where we needed to go and what was working or not. If you look at those, you know, graphic depictions, I think they tell a different story than simply saying it is only X number of provinces.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I have never had the privilege of being a teacher, but I am going to put on a teacher's mode and say that Afghanistan is a kid with a lot of promise, and we have had some ups and downs. Frankly, I think there are concerns of the utilization of our strategy. So my next question goes to why, and I will just focus on the Taliban, their disgruntlement. Are they not the type that can be integrated into society and made happy? Or is the Taliban group that we came to, and they were there when we got there, do we have to completely weed them out? And from a diplomatic perspective or a policy and leadership perspective, how tired is President Karzai? I was not only there with my colleague, but I was there when he was Chairman Karzai before he was elevated to President. And we know that he is a man of Western training but with a big heart and commitment to Afghanistan, and I am always worried that he is getting exasperated, and what does that do with our foreign policy? So it is a twofold question. How do you assess Chairman Karzai's stick-to-itiveness, and is there anything we can do to make the Taliban happy, to remove them from the actions that they are now doing, other than dropping the 3,700 bombs that we did in the last year? I will start with the general first.

General BARNO. Very good question. We, along with the Afghan Government were very forceful and very supportive of the idea of low-level Taliban reconciliation during my time there. And we felt that ultimately the Taliban, not the senior leaders, not those that had blood on their hands, those that were really criminal activists that were looking to simply kill and destroy, but those in the rank and file, the foot soldiers, that that group could be brought in from the cold as it were and reintegrated into society. And there was a fairly substantial movement led by the Afghan Government in 2004 and 2005 that continues today. I don't have a sense of its effectiveness right now. But it was a very popular program in the 2004/2005 timeframe. In part because—my assessment was that the population's view was that there was no future in the Taliban. There was no place for them to go. They had no positive vision. And I generally think that is true today. So I think that if you tied rank and file reconciliation to jobs, which is what many Taliban fighters are in the Taliban for, because it pays better than anything they can find, which is generally no job, on the outside, that there are very good options for reconciliation of those fighters; not, again, the very senior leadership but certainly the fighters. I think that would help take that movement apart. It would help implode the movement.

On your question on President Karzai, I saw him for a short chat in Doha, Qatar, in February of this year. We were speaking at a conference. And I know—I work with several people that have regular contact with him. I think he is still very much in the fight. He was wobbling for a while there about whether he was going to run for re-election. I have seen recently he has announced he is going to. I think he very much believes in his role as a leader in Afghanistan and has a lot of confidence in the future of Afghanistan and certainly understands the international community better than most. So I think we have to try and preserve his abilities and his stamina. I know it is frustrating for him with the number of different international players that constantly are rotating in and out of Kabul. One of my arguments would be, we need to find a winning team on the U.S. side, military and diplomatic, and keep them there for as long as we can once we have got those relationships built. I saw that work very successfully with Khalilzad when I was there. And my portion of that I think was success in teaming with the Afghans as well. But I think that has been a bit uneven for—because of the transitions and the number of transitions we have had since then.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Dr. Jones, thank you.

Thank you, General.

Mr. JONES. On the motivations of Taliban, I would break this down into two types. First are what I would call the tier one Taliban, which are Mullah Omar, Berader, the whole—the Taliban Inner Shura, which I think the motivation is primarily ideological. We saw in the 1990s what their vision of Afghanistan looked like. It is not one that is pretty from a Western perspective. We saw the treatment of women. We saw what they did to individuals who wanted to fly kites, listen to music. But I do think, when you get down to what I would call tier two and tier three Taliban, motivations primarily are not ideological. In fact, I think they tend to be

largely governance driven. That is, they are not employed. They are upset at the quality of government at the local level or, in some cases, the national level. They may have tribal motivations. They may be upset that NATO dropped a bomb on a village that was a member of their tribe. So I do think at that category, that lower tier category, there are—there is the opportunity to separate and deal with motivations of the Taliban at that level. I think at the upper level, it is purely ideological, and I think in that case you were dealing with capturing or killing high-level Taliban.

On the Karzai, I would just like to reinforce, he is Afghanistan's democratically elected leader. He should be supportive—he should be supported. His vision, like ours, is for a stable Afghanistan that is at peace with itself and its neighbors. One issue I would like to add is the tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan that have become so vocal I think have been up helpful. I would actually argue, a better strategy over the long run is to have the United States do the discussions with the Pakistanis and to try and limit the Afghan-Pakistani tensions because I frankly think they have been very unhelpful. The Musharraf-Karzai public denunciations of each other I think have fuelled conflict rather than decreased it.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. If I could, I agree with what has been said. I would change it just a little bit. I think that the key question is, Are the Taliban political and military leaders willing to accept any kind of outcome that would guarantee us that they would not in fact be a sanctuary for al-Qaeda? And the answer to me is, no. That Taliban leadership ideologically has demonstrated its willingness to carry out attacks on U.S. forces and its linkage to al-Qaeda. But instead of saying tier two and tier three, it seems to me that you can say that the base is larger in the Pashtun communities, and their desire is governance, economic opportunity and to receive basic services. And that is where, it seems to me, that we do have an opportunity to try to more effectively support the Karzai government in that effort. And I would add here that, when we talked about bringing together, it is not just us. We need to have a coordinated view and a coordinated program for the international community. When I was in Afghanistan, people around Karzai were saying, one of our problems is that we get different messages from the international community. We try to respond, but we get different messages from the U.S. and from the U.K., let's just say, on the question of what the right counter drug policy is, or from Germany and the United States on what the police reform policy is. So we need to have a common voice coming from the international community. And, again, hopefully the new naming of Kai Eide will help to bring that about, but it hasn't yet.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Chairman, can I ask one quick question, yes or no? I would appreciate it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Sure.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. As I said, your timing is everything. And of course, we will be addressing the question of our actions in Iraq and the next steps. So your wisdom on this whole idea of the resources utilized in Iraq and the resources needed in Afghanistan, and of course, it has been an ongoing debate since I guess 2002/2003 when we went into Iraq, and we were obviously in Afghanistan before that, and how that relates to the increased needs be-

tween the Afghan and Pakistan border. The fact that we are utilizing the resources, we already used both diplomatic and military, and whether or not that is draining the focus that we need to have on Afghanistan? Dr. Jones, I see your pen moving. I have started at both ends, so I will start with you.

Thank you.

Mr. JONES. Thank you very much. I think to begin to answer that question, I would argue or ask where the primary threat to the United States is coming from, especially the threat to the homeland. And I would argue that the primary threat to the homeland comes from groups operating out of the Afghan-Pakistani frontier region. So, in that sense, I would argue this is and should be our number one priority abroad. Again, also links with attacks or attempted attacks at a number of European countries, I think as General Barno has already noted, based on the population, size, geographic area of Afghanistan, it is a larger country than Iraq. So, in my view, actually—and this has been said publicly—I think the number of resources are not adequate at the moment to deal with what I would consider the most serious threat to the U.S. homeland.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you. I will yield to the general.

Thank you all for your service in this manner.

General, thank you for your service as well.

General BARNO. I would broadly concur with Dr. Jones' comments, and I think that even General McNeill, the United States four-star who is commanding ISAF, has acknowledged that his statement of military requirements are not being fully resourced right now in part because the Europeans, of course, who are in NATO, outside of the United States portion of NATO, are contributing less than we have asked them to. So I think, beyond simply the U.S. aspect of this, we have to look at, what is NATO's proper role in this? What can be done, if anything, to change the contributions of the NATO countries? Some of them, obviously, with us in the south fighting have taken a number of casualties, the British, the Danes, the Dutch, the Canadians, and others are not. And those that don't serve in Afghanistan at all don't pay any money either into this because you pay for your own forces in the NATO model. So I think there are many things that can be looked at there to add to some of these capabilities that General McNeill and our military commanders have asked for. And the diplomatic part of that of course is in a similar straight. So I broadly concur with the previous comments.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you, Doctor, General, Mr. Schneider.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Okay. Let me just say that I think that there is an absolute need for increased resources across the board: Military, civilian and diplomatic. One of the things we urged in trying to promote a strategic vision among the international community in each area was a contact group that the U.S., the U.N., EU, U.K., and Canada would pull together and that would essentially try and develop, for the first time, a common strategy in each area, not simply a lead nation doing what they want but a common agreement on what would happen on police reform, on rural development. The fact is that if you are not going to deal effectively with rural development, you are not going to deal with the problem of

drug trafficking coming out of Afghanistan. And the other, I would say—I want to mention because it has been mentioned today, on the question of the border. This is not just a border problem between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The FATA area, the Waziristans, are ungoverned spaces. They are not even within the formal administrative or legal structure of Pakistan. They are more like Native American reservations, and they don't have access to any kind of legal structure. One of the things that we should be doing is supporting—both secular parties, by the way, would propose putting the FATA under either the Northwest Frontier Province or as a separate province. That would begin then to provide some mechanisms to bring in institutions that hopefully over time would begin to provide governance in that area. And ultimately, I think that is the only thing that is going to be successful.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Is that a greater threat—is Iraq drawing resources away from an area that you believe is—

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Everybody in Afghanistan and, General Barno, I think while you were there as well, acknowledged that their requests for resources were not needed, and the rationale they believed was that they were going to Iraq.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Costa.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As has been noted, a group of us went 4 weeks ago. And I concur with much of the testimony that has been given here. I had last been to Afghanistan 3 years earlier, and so I could see the changes in certain areas as certainly some progress has been made. In Kabul, things are, in terms of economic activity and other things, I mean, 5 years ago, there were no cell phones and there were no cell phone companies. And now, obviously, that has changed.

A couple of areas that just strike me because I have a lot of questions and the time is late here. When you understand the history going back to the 1980s and the Ghost Wars and why we were there at the time and then having left after the Soviets left, and then we know what occurred after that. And this is kind of our chance to, I think, make up for I think a grievous error back in the 1980s. But as I told the President a year ago when the surge began—and I had no doubt that there would be—the military surge would be successful in Iraq—but that we were taking our eye off the ball on Afghanistan. And, of course, there is a correlation in terms of the resources available. I cannot understand for the life of me why, when we look at all of the factors that we have discussed here this afternoon—I mean, you know, I am reminded that the Soviets in the 1980s controlled the cities, but people forget that over 70 percent of the people in Afghanistan live in the countryside. And we find ourselves in a—I mean, we went up to Kunar province 4 weeks ago, built this road up there that didn't exist before, I mean fighting the Taliban. Talk about soft power versus hard power. I mean, we got our American, you know, Army platoons and others doing stuff that soft power—we had one embedded State Department person, to your comment, General, and that person had just gotten there 2 months ago. Yet all of these amazing things—building a bridge with Afghani labor for 500,000 bucks. The CERF money has been very helpful; nonetheless, fighting the

Taliban every day in the process with no balance between our soft power and our hard power in terms of winning the hearts and minds of these people. Why for the life of me with all—even the limited resources we have put in there—don't we have a coordinated strategic plan? I mean, we know the mistakes we have made. Who wants to take a shot at that?

General BARNO. I will start.

Congressman, this is what a coordinated strategic plan looked like at one point in time. [Diagram shown.] And on this very busy chart, some of the bars are social development, economic development, strategic infrastructure, counterterrorism, counterinsurgency. And they go all the way through counter—this was the military campaign plan that we built during my tenure in Afghanistan. It had a lot of other piece parts to it that engaged the other Embassies in Kabul and engaged the—so we have actually had some of this, and through our transitions, I would argue we have moved away from that. And now with NATO of course—

Mr. COSTA. You can have the best plan in the world. If you don't implement it, it doesn't make any difference.

General BARNO. But I think that—you have to start with a plan somewhere. And now to your point, if I were to ask, show me this piece of paper dated 2 April 2008 and let me find someone's stamp on it with a NATO flag, I am not sure I could find that. So that is part of our challenge today because we have so many actors involved now, not only on the international side and the civil sector but on the military side, which we didn't really have. We had a U.S. led effort by anyone's estimation in 2003, 2004, 2005 and before. Today we have a NATO-led military effort. And NATO, in part because of their political issues—they—there is not a common view of what a strategy ought to even look like.

Mr. COSTA. Even though the narco drug traffic accounts for 90 percent of the drugs in Europe.

General BARNO. I think that is the place to start. And in my query from the chairman there about what I think needs to happen in Bucharest beyond perhaps some of the things we have heard today already, this idea of developing a singular strategy that is both civil and military that all players can invest in and then be coordinated and led I think with a very strong amount of leadership is going to be fundamental to success.

Mr. COSTA. In your opinion now from what is taking place with the President's visit in Bucharest, do you think we are trying to do that? Do you think that is the plan?

General BARNO. I don't know if that is a core objective of Bucharest itself. But I do know that that issue of trying to frame an integrated strategy has been a priority for the Defense Department at least for the last year. I went to a conference a year ago, in March 2007, in Munich, with the NATO countries to talk about counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. The first indicator of all was not well was that the NATO countries would not allow the term "counterinsurgency" to be used in the conference, as the title of the conference. It was "comprehensive approach." What I heard over 3 days was 26 different comprehensive approaches from all the different countries that spoke there and to exaggerate a bit. So I think that we have got to get to some common view of what a strategy—

Mr. COSTA. You are not there yet.

Mr. JONES. This problem I think has confounded NATO, but it has also confounded a lot of other problems over the last several decades. A noble prize winning economist coined this paradox, the collective action problem. And in short, it is probably not unsurprising that, in many cases, rational actors do not always work to achieve their common interest in pursuit of public goods. I think what the resolution and what we saw in the mid-2000s when General Barno was there with Ambassador Khalilzad was an effort by the United States in particular to take a lead effort in coordinating the strategy in Afghanistan.

Mr. COSTA. So far unsuccessfully?

Mr. JONES. I think it was successful at the time, and actually levels of violence were fairly low during that period. The real year, if you map the trends over time, the real year where there was a huge increase in violence was 2006, what General Eikenberry at the time called "The Perfect Storm." So levels of violence were minimal at that point, and I think part of that was attributable to leadership at the top levels of the United States Government in Afghanistan to help coordinate efforts. I think that has become more problematic over time.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Schneider.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. If I could, I think that the problem was that the military—there was success in driving the Taliban out. There was no post-conflict, if you will, common reconstruction strategy that incorporated all of the internationals and incorporated ideas of strengthening the Afghan Government's capacity to move in behind it. And, in fact, that is what you are still getting now, it seems to me, when you get 26 different views on what the common strategy should be. By the way, Mr. Chairman, the report that we submitted if you can include that in the record, to some degree that essentially says, look, we began with individual countries being responsible for individual sectors. That results in a diffuse strategy, not a common collective strategy. And the end result is that an area that is so integrated as security and the rule of law, you—right now you have got the army functioning well, the police a disaster, virtually no investment on the judiciary and virtually no investment on the prisons. I just add one other thing which we have never done in Afghanistan. We did this in El Salvador. I had a particular role in that. We had a common fund that the U.N. managed. It was a peace and reconstruction fund. Why? Because there was a view that we didn't want to have money going to the ex-gue-rillas directly from the U.S. Government. So the money went into a common fund that the U.N.—UNDP managed. It seems to me that that wouldn't be a bad idea in some of the areas in Afghanistan today, particularly for expanding the mandate for the UNSRSG and supposedly saying, you are responsible for coordinating the civilian international effort in Afghanistan. Right now, he doesn't have any resources behind his mandate.

Mr. COSTA. One final point, Mr. Chairman, if I may. I mean, to your last comment—I mean, the deal we have with the Sunnis now is not too far different than that. We are paying them \$300 a month, and if they bring in an IED, we give them an extra hundred bucks. And if they bring in a cache of weapons, I mean, we give

them a bonus. We have got 70,000 Sunnis in these militias right now because we are paying them. So I don't know if it is applicable in Iraq, if it is applicable in Afghanistan with the Taliban at that lower level that you are talking about.

But Karzai did two things. One in terms of—he had told us he had met with Bhutto 3 hours before she was assassinated. And so—I mean, clearly, he is trying to reach out to the Pakistanis, and he understands that. And at which point I commented, well, Mr. President, I says, you are in a difficult neighborhood with Iran on one side and Pakistan on the other. And he responded by saying, yes, we have a nice house that could be better in a bad neighborhood. And so it is frustrating because, frankly, I see so much of what we are doing, history repeating itself. And I think with Pakistan and Iran on both sides, we can't afford to blow this one. And it seems to me we better get our act together sooner than later with our allies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. It seems like we are trying to find a national approach to people who are culturally not nationals. And I don't know how we finally resolve that with a weak central government that doesn't seem to be getting any stronger or popular and with the different cultural differences and different leadership challenges and so many different places where there really is no national police force. A different question, the administration in Washington seems to have placed a heavy bet on what they saw as the only horse in a one-horse race, and they lost in Pakistan.

With the Government of Pakistan that was elected, which seems to have strongly indicated that they want to ride the wave of not looking like the toadies or puppets or whatever have you of the United States, and that being part of what they see as their appeal and as their message; with Pakistan's playing so important a role with Afghanistan and with, as the panel has suggested, a situation in Afghanistan which begs for a regional approach and with what has happened in Pakistan seemingly running counter to that kind of a conclusion, how damaging was, not the administration's lack of wisdom—certainly, I would not question that—but how damaging was their action in placing that wrong bet.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I think it has made it much more difficult to begin a relationship with a democratically elected government with secular parties which are now the majority and which are instinctively much closer to our view of what governing should be and our view of political values. I think we are going to have an initial rough patch to get over in dealing with them.

What we should be doing immediately is working with them and saying, How can we help you develop democratic institutions and the economic future in Pakistan? And along with that help them recognize—and I think that they do—their own interest in controlling extremists.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Let me just layer this on here.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Sure.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Can you solve Afghanistan without solving Pakistan?

Mr. SCHNEIDER. No. No. Without any question.

What I am saying, though, is that they cannot solve Pakistan without solving the extremist problem in Pakistan either, and I think that they recognize that. What they are attempting to do is to cut, in a sense, slice the extremist problem into different pieces so that you have the Pakistan Taliban, and they are going to have to make a choice. They are right now ready to go after the foreign extremists.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Do the Pakistanis, the political parties in Pakistan, see this as their problem or do they see this as our problem?

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Part of it they see as their problem. Remember, some of those extremists just carry out—

Mr. ACKERMAN. No. No. You said part of it is their problem. Do they think it is their problem?

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Yes, I am saying that they recognize who it was who carried out the assassination of Benazir Bhutto and the suicide bombings that they have had to deal with. They recognize that there is a threat to their institutions. Whether they recognize that the Afghan Taliban are, in a sense, officially part of that is not clear yet, but I think they can be brought to that.

Mr. ACKERMAN. General, do you agree with that?

General BARNO. I think that there is an internal dilemma inside of Pakistan which, on the one hand, the population, certainly the elites, believe that there is a degree of threat from terrorism, but they also, I think, tend to believe, especially the population, that the reason that there is that terrorist threat is because of the United States, because Pakistan and Musharraf, when he was both general and President, were supporting American policies. I think that is a deeply wrong outlook, but I think many of the people in Pakistan and a number of elites in their heart of hearts think that somehow if they back away from the United States in their role with us in fighting terrorism that this internal problem will diminish. That is a terribly flawed outlook, but I think we are going to have to live through some experimentation with this, as we have heard, as they begin to talk about negotiating with the Taliban and potentially with even al-Qaeda out in the tribal areas. They are looking for other solutions.

So I think one of our challenges diplomatically in the next 6 months or so is going to be to slowly, patiently convincing this new government that this is a threat to them, to the state of Pakistan, to the institutions of Pakistan, and that it is not connected to some allegiance or to support for the United States, that this is a real, no kidding, threat to them and that if they were to walk away from America tomorrow that that threat would still be there, but that is not psychologically, I do not think, where they are today.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. I would like to add one additional comment, and that is there clearly are militant groups operating in Pakistan that have direct links into elements of the government. So there clearly are groups where the government has an interest in keeping his proxy forces, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, for example, that operates on the Kashmir front. Even with the Taliban in the Haqqani network there are elements of Pakistan's inter-services intelligence director that have links in with both of those groups as well for proxy purposes on the Afghan front.

So this is a complicated situation where, I think, parts of the Pakistani Government are supportive and where parts of them are not supportive of United States strategic interests.

Mr. ACKERMAN. General, you said 6 months or so. I am trying to understand that timetable. Let me not ask that.

Given what we have been given up until now, if you were to advise—and I know we only have one President at a time, so let us skip to the next generation and say, if you were the advisor to the next President of the United States, which might be easier, how would you suggest succinctly that he or she tackles this problem? What do they do first? Do they do Afghanistan or Pakistan or both?

General BARNO. I think you have to sustain what you are doing in Afghanistan, but I think that the focus diplomatically—and this would be not necessarily the President but a senior member of the administration who needs to go to Pakistan and take the intelligence we have on al-Qaeda, the Taliban, the Haqqani network inside of Pakistan and lay it out for their most senior leadership—for the Prime Minister, for the heads of the two parties there, for Zardari and for Sharif—and show them exactly what we know about and what they do not know about what is going on in their tribal areas and say this is not a tolerable situation for you nor for us, and we need to sit down and think through what we can collectively do about this. I think that is one approach, but I do not think, again, there is any real appreciation, certainly with this new government, of what the dimensions of the threat are and how widespread they are and how much we have visibility on them right now from what indications I have at least.

So part of this has to be treating the new government with almost a peer-to-peer, bilateral respect as a fellow nation out there. This is the sixth largest country in the world, Pakistan, with 165 million people. In the Pakistani viewpoint—having spent a lot of time in Pakistan and when I was in Afghanistan and having a lot of interaction with them since I have come back, their viewpoint is that they are treated as a third-tier cousin to the United States in effect, that they do not feel like they are treated as equals with the adequate level of respect. So, part of that, of course, is psychological, and that is very important in relationships with nations. So I think we ought to be thinking very hard about trying to approach that new government with that level of mutual respect if we are going to be able to make a compelling case for what we collectively need to do together.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Schneider.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Yes. In November, the PPP and the PML-N were not the government. As a result, it was very easy to meet with the secretaries general of both parties and the leadership.

My view is that they understand distinctions between the extremist groups that are in Pakistan. I do not think they have any desire to permit al-Qaeda to remain in Pakistan. I think the general's view is absolutely right. We have to go to them, present the information that we have of what is the interlinking between those groups and how they pose threats both to them and to Afghanistan and potentially to us. I also think that, when we go to them, we have to go to them and ask them, "What is it that you need from us to help you move Pakistan forward?" At this point, I do not

think we have yet done that in an effective way. We have to be prepared to respond to their requests for, I think, a long-term partnership with the United States. I think we have to have, in a sense, an idea that we are going to be developing now a Pakistan-Afghanistan long-term partnership.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. If I could just add a couple of things.

They obviously know. They have an intelligence service that collects information within their country. They know, I think, what exists in their country. What this would demonstrate, though, is that we knew what was going on in their country, too. So I think that is part of the demonstration.

Second, I think there has to be a clear message sent to them also that it is in not just our but their interests to take these steps as well and also to make some sort of demonstration that there are costs, that there are costs to not doing this.

My final point is the way this subject often comes up publicly is a military response. I think, from the United States standpoint, this is not just a military response in Pakistan. This also is a broader strategy to deal with political and economic grievances in the tribal areas in particular. So we are not just talking about a military response and capturing and killing Pakistanis, which I think is a big fear. So this is a broader kinetic and non-kinetic operation.

Mr. ACKERMAN. One of the reasons I said advise the next President instead of the current administration was that the current administration only had one phone number in Pakistan. Even after the owner of that phone number lost the election, he was the one who we sent our top guns to talk to while the new people were getting sworn in. I think that was a big mistake. So I do not know how helpful your advice to this administration would actually be. Then again, the outgoing or the loser of the election in Pakistan happened to have been a general, or maybe not at the moment but certainly a military man, and I would suspect that the administration relied heavily on our military contacts, with the military people, knowing the position societally of the military in Pakistan. I do not know Pakistan's new administration's relationship with the military and how that is going to evolve.

If you were to talk to somebody in the current administration here in Washington, who would that be? From an ownership point of view within our administration, who owns Pakistan? I am sorry. Who owns Afghanistan? On whose plate is that?

General BARNO. Unfortunately or fortunately, with the way our system is designed, of course, there are multiple owners in a way. There is a military component of Afghanistan on the United States side, which is owned by the people in Tampa and formerly Admiral Fallon and now General Dempsey at Central Command. There is a diplomatic component that the State Department owns for each country over there.

So, as to what I thought your question was on Pakistan, the Secretary of State would be the person to whom I would go to, perhaps, have this discussion about how we approach this new government in Pakistan. The military dimension will continue on a military-to-military, but the new government is clearly a civilian-domi-

nated government, and the State Department would have the lead for that.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Who owns Afghanistan in this administration?

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Right now, you have got General Lute at the NSC who is responsible both for Afghanistan and for Iraq as special advisor to the President. Under him, you have got a senior director for the National Security Council, John Wood, who is responsible for Afghanistan. At State, you have got—really, Deputy Secretary Negroponte at that level has been playing the most direct role with respect to Afghanistan, then, obviously, Assistant Secretary Richard Boucher.

The interesting thing is that, if Afghanistan is as important to us as we believe, there is the real question of why there is not a United States Special Envoy for Afghanistan—

Mr. ACKERMAN. You got my question.

General BARNO. And for Pakistan.

Mr. SCHNEIDER.—and for Pakistan.

Mr. JONES. Well, if I can just add, there is no one who owns the region. There is no single person who owns Afghanistan and Pakistan. Our Government is not set up to deal with—it is set up to deal with a nation state, not a regional insurgency. So I would say no one particularly has the organizational role of responding to a regional insurgency.

Mr. ACKERMAN. This is like dying without a will, and there cannot be a way without a will.

I see that as a major part of the problem. If there is too much ownership, there is no ownership. If there is nobody responsible to pull the pieces together, the pieces do not get pulled together whether it be within the administration or within NATO or with coordinating troops or with coordinating ideas or in coming up with a common strategy. If you have 26 people in the mix and you do not have a common strategy, you do not have a strategy. That would seem to me to be a major part. I mean, the administration seems to have dropped this ball or has never really had possession of it from the outset, and I think it is tragic. You know, “the drunker I sit, the longer I get,” seems to be the problem.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. If I could, Mr. Chairman, one of the new provisions in the mandate for the new UNSRSG is—for the first time, I believe, he is actually being given a mandate to do regional coordination and to actually be, in a sense, the U.N. diplomat for not just Afghanistan but for the region. The question is whether the United States is going to name an equivalent envoy to work with him on that, at the very least to take leadership in bringing together the key nations in supporting his regional efforts, including but not solely, Pakistan and Iran. That would be one way to immediately begin to link to Iran.

General BARNO. Mr. Chairman, I would add also that one of my observations in coming out of Afghanistan almost 3 years ago now is that the greatest vulnerability we face is the lack of confidence in American staying power in the region. We have created a perception over time, in part, after the Soviets were defeated there and partly through other actions that we are short-term players.

At the same time, though, I also saw that there was great confidence in what I call “brand USA.” Brand USA had a foreign pol-

icy. It had a President, and it had global reach and global power, and there was much less confidence in brand NATO and in brand United Nations. When people were looking for commitment and when they were looking for certainty, they looked to the United States as being the source of that. So I think we have to really be very, very active and have to lean very far forward in terms of our leadership of all of these multinational organizations because we are the brand that has the highest degree of recognition and the highest degree of respect in this region. When people want to build partnerships, they want to build it with the USA first and foremost, and I think we have to be careful that we do not lose sight of that.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Well, the panel has been terrific. I am going to afford you each the opportunity to take 2 minutes if you have not said anything. Maybe you will think of it on the train on the way home or maybe you will think of it now.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I have. I think, that the committee may want to look very closely at the preparations for the 2009/2010 elections. Right now, there are scheduled to be Presidential elections and provincial elections in 2009 and parliamentary elections in 2010. When they do them separately, that is \$150 million each time. If they were to do them together, it would reduce the cost substantially. There is discussion about whether you need a constitutional amendment to do that, but it is an issue. Making sure that those elections are carried out in a way that the people of Afghanistan want and that they are carried out in an effective way is probably the next key threshold in whether or not you are going to be successful in state-building efforts in Afghanistan.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. I would add one additional issue, which is, if you actually track United States forces operating in Afghanistan, I think, over the last several years, one thing you will notice is about the 82nd Airborne, which is just leaving. We have actually gotten better at understanding the type and the nature of the threat and at responding to it. I think U.S. forces actually have gotten better at doing the non-kinetic and the kinetic operations. We see that in the east of Afghanistan where violence levels in much of the east have actually gone down. I think there is an opportunity, if given the resources, where we can actually extend that to other parts of the country. The question then is, Will U.S. military forces be given the resources? Take some limited success, and expand that like an inkblot to other areas, especially to the south of the country. I am at least somewhat optimistic that the U.S. military understands how to win. Thank you.

General BARNO. I would echo Dr. Jones' point to the extent of saying I believe personally that the United States with its counterinsurgency capability ought to be the primary command and control of the southern half of Afghanistan, which I described as the counterinsurgency zone, so that we have a unified approach to this fight all across the Pashtun belt. Today, we only have that U.S. primacy in the east where things are going relatively well, where some of your members just visited, but we have not been able to extend that primacy and that knowledge and that skill to cover a unified strategy for counterinsurgency across the whole southern

half of the country. I think we need to look very seriously at that. I think we could look at NATO—and this could be under NATO's command in the south—but at an American primacy in the counterinsurgency zone, and we could look at the NATO's European effort's having primacy in the northern zone, in the stability zone, which I think is something that would be welcomed ultimately by many of the NATO countries out there.

The final point I would make is that I think, as we again look at this in an alliance framework with NATO and as we look at the multinational effort, we have to keep uppermost in our minds that, if we were to sit down all of the players involved and if we were to do an assessment of who has the strongest national interest at stake in Afghanistan and Pakistan today at the end of all of this—all of the European allies involved and all of the other coalition partners as to who has got the most important national interest at stake—I think it would be the United States. Based upon that, I think we have to be willing to take a very significant leadership role in not $\frac{1}{26}$ th of the vote but in a substantial part of the vote of where this goes over the next several years, and we have to commit the quality and the depth of leadership and the resources and strategy to do that.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Well, let me thank the panel. You have been very helpful to this committee as we continue our deliberations in this very critical region with all of the problems we have in the world right now, especially in this area. This is one of the real, real red light areas that we have to think a little better and spend some more time on, and your contribution to that process is absolutely immeasurable.

The chair will announce that there is unanimous consent to put your complete remarks in the record as well as the appendages and reports that you have submitted. The panel is dismissed with the thanks of the committee.

The committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:35 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

WRITTEN RESPONSE FROM LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID W. BARNO, USA (RET.), DIRECTOR, NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY, TO QUESTION SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE MIKE PENCE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA

Question:

“Opium is a key factor financing the Taliban and other anti-Coalition forces. Should our focus be on the farmer and the opium crop, or the drug kingpins and high level corrupt officials?”

Response:

“In my opinion, the U.S. focus should target opium “above the farm gate” in the chain, i.e., avoid taking actions which directly impact farmers but move instead against those who buy, process, transport, protect and market the crop. The Afghan farmer ultimately needs to have access to a robust agricultural development program to incentivize growing and marketing legitimate (vice illegal) crops. Afghanistan’s agricultural sector remains the cornerstone of its economy, and enjoyed much success in the 1960s and ’70s. That sector needs to be restored and brought up to date with modern transport, refrigerated storage, access to irrigation and high tech crop techniques and advice. Eradication should in many ways be the last resort because it ultimately hurts the population much more than the drug lords and profiteers.”

[NOTE: The report submitted for the record by the International Crisis Group entitled “Afghanistan: The Need for International Resolve,” dated February 6, 2008, is not reprinted here but is available in committee records.]

