

hold gains. Hence nation-building would be impossible even if we knew how, and even if Afghanistan were not the second-worst place to try."

Will further states, "Counterinsurgency theory concerning the time and the ratio of forces required to protect the population indicates that, nationwide, Afghanistan would need hundreds of thousands of coalition troops, perhaps for a decade or more. That is inconceivable."

Madam Speaker, on this same morning this op-ed was published, the retired Marine general Chuck Krulak, the 31st commandant of the Marine Corps, responded by writing an e-mail to Will.

Madam Speaker, I submit the full text of the e-mail for the RECORD.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2009.

Subject: Afghanistan

SIR, I would imagine that your article, "Time to Get Out of Afghanistan" will result in some "incoming" on your Command Post. First and foremost, let me say that I am in total agreement with your assessment. Simply put, no desired end state has ever been clearly articulated and no strategy formulated that would lead us to achieve even an ill defined end state.

A few points:

1. The strategy of "clear, hold and build" would lead one to believe that the US and its Allies are capable of coordinating the elements of national power needed to affect such a strategy. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just getting DOS and DOD on the same page is difficult enough . . . getting NGO's and nation building expertise into the fight is simply a non-starter in a country as dysfunctional as Afghanistan.

2. Your point about troop strength required to "protect" the population and carry out effective counterinsurgency operations is spot on. Instead of a surge of 21,000 troops, McChrystal would need a surge of hundreds of thousands. Not only would our Nation not support such a surge but, MOST distressing, the Military could not support such a surge. Not only are our troops being run ragged but, equally important and totally off most people's radar screens, our equipment is being run ragged. At some point in time, the bill for that equipment will come due and it will be a very large bill.

3. Typical of the 21st Century fight, we are fighting ideas as well as warriors. You cannot defeat ideas with bullets . . . you must defeat them with better ideas. For many reasons such as the dysfunction found in the Karzai government, the tribal nature of the country, the abject poverty of the average citizen, the inextricable link to Pakistan, we have been unable to come up with better ideas. We are systematically destroying the poppy fields . . . the country's major source of revenue. At the same time, we are trying to encourage other agricultural efforts. This is one of our "better ideas"??? Sad as it is to say, we would do better to buy the poppy crop ourselves . . . ridding the world of a source of drugs and maintaining the Afghan economy.

4. What in Afghanistan is deemed in our Nation's vital interest? Seriously? Who is the enemy? Seriously? Is the enemy of the United States the Taliban? Is the enemy al Qaeda? We need to determine the answer to those questions immediately. One would think we would have answered them already but none of our actions to date would indicate that we have.

Finally, your recommendation is sound. I would put "hunter-killer teams" along the

borders and in suspected al Qaeda strongholds. I would support them with intelligence, logistics thru the use of parasail's, responsive airpower (need to be close), armed and unarmed (fitted with cameras, infrared, etc) drones, "reach back" capability for cruise missiles, and other capability as needed. The H-K Teams should be given minimal rules of engagement . . . when they identify the bad guys, they need to be empowered to take them out.

Again, don't be dismayed by the people who disagree with you. There are many retired and active duty military who feel you hit the bull's eye.

Semper Fidelis,

CHUCK KRULAK,
General, USMC (Ret),

31st Commandant of the Marine Corps.

In the e-mail General Krulak expressed his "total agreement" with Will's assessment and concluded, "There are many retired and active-duty military who feel you hit the bull's eye."

The general also wrote, "Simply put, no desired end state has ever been as clearly articulated and no strategy formulated that would lead us to achieve even an ill-defined end state. Instead of a surge of 21,000 troops, McChrystal would need a surge of hundreds of thousands. The military could not support such a surge. You cannot defeat ideas with bullets. You must defeat them with better ideas."

Madam Speaker, President Obama is in the midst of reviewing a report by the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal. It is expected that this review will determine whether or not the President decides to alter the number of U.S. troops to Afghanistan.

The men and women of our military who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan have done a magnificent job. Many have been deployed four and five times. Their desire to serve is greater than ever, but the stress placed on our all-volunteer forces and their families cannot continue forever. That's why it is so important for the current administration to articulate an end point to its war strategy rather than simply ordering another surge of troops.

With that, Madam Speaker, I close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq.

And I close by asking God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America.

U.S. POLICY IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my strong concern over U.S. policy in Afghanistan. I worry that we are getting sucked deeper and deeper into a war with no end. Our mission continues to grow and grow, with no clear sense of where we are ultimately going. It has been 8 long years.

We have lost too many brave men and women, and we have spent billions and billions of dollars.

The Government of Afghanistan, led by President Hamid Karzai, is incompetent and corrupt. The Afghan president has formed alliances with warlords and drug-lords who have no interest in a better Afghanistan. His military is not reliable and his police are a mess. By all accounts, forces close to Mr. Karzai stuffed ballot boxes in the most recent elections.

Madam Speaker, if this fraud had occurred in virtually every other country in the world, the condemnations from Congress and the administration would be loud and forceful.

After all the sacrifices our troops have made, after all the financial and development assistance, after all the training and military aid, is this the best that we can expect? Don't we deserve better? Don't the Afghan people deserve better?

At a very minimum, we must insist that any aid be contingent on a responsible Afghan government. Without that, then all our investments and good intentions could achieve very little that is sustainable.

The United States has an incredible and magnificent team assembled in Afghanistan. I had the pleasure of meeting many of them during a brief visit to the country over the recess. Both the military and State Department personnel are impressive. I only wish they were in place 8 years ago.

But even a brilliant team can't make up for the inadequacies of the current Afghan government. Our troops are exceptional. I had the privilege of eating dinner with many of them from Massachusetts. I am in awe of their courage and commitment and their patriotism. We owe them a policy that is worthy of their sacrifice. Everyone, Madam Speaker, from the President on down, agrees that a political solution is the only path for a successful, stable Afghanistan.

During consideration of the Department of Defense authorization bill a few months ago, I, along with my colleague, Walter Jones, offered an amendment that would have simply required the Secretary of Defense to report to Congress by the end of the year what our exit strategy for Afghanistan was. We are not asking for a date certain, we are not advocating an immediate withdrawal, but we wanted an answer to this fundamental question: At what point has our military contribution to the political solution in Afghanistan come to an end so that we can bring our troops home?

I don't believe that the United States should enter into a war without a clearly defined mission, and that means a mission with a beginning, a middle, a transition period and an end. Without that definition and clarity, we will continue to drift from year to year, from administration to administration. Madam Speaker, we need an exit strategy for Afghanistan.

I believe that sending thousands more American troops into Afghanistan, as some in the administration appear to be urging, is a mistake. An escalation of U.S. military forces would further create the impression of an occupation and, in turn, provide a powerful rallying point for those we are trying to defeat.

In last Sunday's New York Times, Nicholas Kristoff cites a statement by many former U.S. intelligence officials warning that the more troops we put in, the greater the opposition.

Madam Speaker, I am not suggesting that we walk away from Afghanistan. We, along with the international community, should help with development aid, investments in education, school feeding, training of their police and military and help with strengthening their civilian institutions.

I also understand the threat from al Qaeda. I still strongly believe that we should hold those responsible for September 11, the attacks of September 11, accountable; and we should be committed to defeating them. I voted for the authorization to use military force after the terrorist attacks.

But, Madam Speaker, al Qaeda is more of a problem in Pakistan than in Afghanistan. And for those who justify our expanded military presence in Afghanistan as a way to prevent al Qaeda from ever coming back and establishing a safe haven, I would ask, are we going to send more troops to Somalia and Sudan and other countries that have provided safe havens for al Qaeda in the past?

Madam Speaker, there are no easy answers in Afghanistan. It is a complicated place, from its people to its geography. I don't pretend to have all the answers.

But I do feel deeply that an escalation of American military forces there would be a mistake and would not solve the many problems and challenges of that country. I fear it would only further complicate matters at a very high cost to our troops and our country.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 6, 2009]
THE AFGHANISTAN ABYSS
(By Nicholas D. Kristof)

President Obama has already dispatched an additional 21,000 American troops to Afghanistan and soon will decide whether to send thousands more. That would be a fateful decision for his presidency, and a group of former intelligence officials and other experts is now reluctantly going public to warn that more troops would be a historic mistake.

The group's concern—dead right, in my view—is that sending more American troops into ethnic Pashtun areas in the Afghan south may only galvanize local people to back the Taliban in repelling the infidels.

"Our policy makers do not understand that the very presence of our forces in the Pashtun areas is the problem," the group said in a statement to me. "The more troops we put in, the greater the opposition. We do not mitigate the opposition by increasing troop levels, but rather we increase the opposition and prove to the Pashtuns that the Taliban are correct.

"The basic ignorance by our leadership is going to cause the deaths of many fine American troops with no positive outcome," the statement said.

The group includes Howard Hart, a former Central Intelligence Agency station chief in Pakistan; David Miller, a former ambassador and National Security Council official; William J. Olson, a counterinsurgency scholar at the National Defense University; and another C.I.A. veteran who does not want his name published but who spent 12 years in the region, was station chief in Kabul at the time the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, and later headed the C.I.A.'s Counterterrorism Center.

"We share a concern that the country is driving over a cliff," Mr. Miller said.

Mr. Hart, who helped organize the anti-Soviet insurgency in the 1980s, cautions that Americans just don't understand the toughness, determination and fighting skills of the Pashtun tribes. He adds that if the U.S. escalates the war, the result will be radicalization of Pashtuns in Pakistan and further instability there—possibly even the collapse of Pakistan.

These experts are not people who crave publicity; I had to persuade them to go public with their concerns. And their views are widely shared among others who also know Afghanistan well.

"We've bitten off more than we can chew; we're setting ourselves up for failure," said Rory Stewart, a former British diplomat who teaches at Harvard when he is not running a large aid program in Afghanistan. Mr. Stewart describes the American military strategy in Afghanistan as "nonsense."

I'm writing about these concerns because I share them. I'm also troubled because officials in Washington seem to make decisions based on a simplistic caricature of the Taliban that doesn't match what I've found in my reporting trips to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Among the Pashtuns, the population is not neatly divisible into "Taliban" or "non-Taliban." Rather, the Pashtuns are torn by complex aspirations and fears.

Many Pashtuns I've interviewed are appalled by the Taliban's periodic brutality and think they are too extreme; they think they're a little nuts. But these Pashtuns also admire the Taliban's personal honesty and religious piety, a contrast to the corruption of so many officials around President Hamid Karzai.

Some Taliban are hard-core ideologues, but many join the fight because friends or elders suggest it, because they are avenging the deaths of relatives in previous fighting, because it's a way to earn money, or because they want to expel the infidels from their land—particularly because the foreigners haven't brought the roads, bridges and irrigation projects that had been anticipated.

Frankly, if a bunch of foreign Muslim troops in turbans showed up in my hometown in rural Oregon, searching our homes without bringing any obvious benefit, then we might all take to the hills with our deer rifles as well.

In fairness, the American military has hugely improved its sensitivity, and some commanders in the field have been superb in building trust with Afghans. That works. But all commanders can't be superb, and over all, our increased presence makes Pashtuns more likely to see us as alien occupiers.

That may be why the troop increase this year hasn't calmed things. Instead, 2009 is already the bloodiest year for American troops in Afghanistan—with four months left to go.

The solution is neither to pull out of Afghanistan nor to double down. Rather, we need to continue our presence with a lighter

military footprint, limited to training the Afghan forces and helping them hold major cities, and ensuring that Al Qaeda does not regroup. We must also invest more in education and agriculture development, for that is a way over time to peel Pashtuns away from the Taliban.

This would be a muddled, imperfect strategy with frustratingly modest goals, but it would be sustainable politically and militarily. And it does not require heavy investments of American and Afghan blood.

VAN JONES' RADICAL PAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, one of the important functions of a President is to make sure that the people he puts into important positions have no real background problems that will cause the administration to founder. This administration, this President, has appointed a whole bunch of czars and special assistants to the President, and they really haven't been vetted. They haven't been checked out thoroughly.

One of those is a gentleman who was appointed a special environmental adviser to the President. And, Mr. Jones, who we have all heard about in the last few days, has been found to be an admitted radical communist and leader. Now, that does not reflect well on the administration, and it does not reflect well on the entire Government of the United States because we are not supportive of the communist philosophy.

Now, Mr. Jones said that he was slandered when he resigned, and that was the reason he resigned. So tonight I would like to put some things in the RECORD that show exactly why he should not have been appointed in the first place. And I think it's important that my colleagues understand that these czars and these people that are being appointed really need to be properly vetted. And we certainly don't want people that have a radical agenda being put in positions of leadership.

Jones was a founder and leader of the communist revolutionary organization called Standing Together to Organize a Revolutionary Movement, or STORM. That organization had its roots in a grouping of black people organizing to protest the first Gulf War. STORM was formally founded in 1994, becoming one of the most influential and active radical groups in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The leftist blog Machete 48 identifies STORM's influences as "third-world Marxism (an often vulgar Maoism)."

Speaking to the East Bay Express, Jones said he first became radicalized in the wake of the 1992 Rodney King riots, during which time he was arrested. He said, "I was a rowdy nationalist on April 28, and then the verdicts came down on April 29. By August, I was a communist.

"I met all of these young radical people of color—I mean really radical: