one way or the other. It is either doctors pay or your kids pay because it is not deficit neutral.

He says:

It is beyond fantastic to promise that future Congresses, for 10 straight years, will allow planned cuts in reimbursements to hospitals, other providers, and Medicare Advantage—thereby reducing the benefits of 25 percent of seniors in Medicare.

His point is these are not only cuts in Medicare—$\$1\frac{1}{2}$ trillion worth of cuts—the cuts are being used to start a new government program. And here, as both Senator HARKIN and Senator COBURN reminded us, Medicare in 5 or 6 years is going bankrupt—belly up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 10 minutes.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Chair very much. I will conclude my remarks.

What we are proposing to do is cut Medicare—take money from grandma—and instead of spending it on grandma by making Medicare more solvent, we are going to take that money, while the program is about to go insolvent, and create a new program. So these are the kinds of questions the American people have a right to ask and have answered.

That is why we want to read the bill. Because we see, as we look at this bill, higher premiums, higher taxes, Medicare cuts for more government, and we don't believe that is health care reform.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the entire article from which I quoted.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Wall Street Journal, Oct. 13, 2009]

THE BAUCUS BILL IS A TAX BILL

(By Douglas Holtz-Eakin)

Remember when health-care reform was supposed to make life better for the middle class? That dream began to unravel this past summer when Congress proposed a bill that failed to include any competition-based reforms that would actually bend the curve of health-care costs. It fell apart completely when Democrats began papering over the gaping holes their plan would rip in the federal budget.

As it now stands, the plan proposed by Democrats and the Obama administration would not only fail to reduce the cost burden on middle-class families, it would make that burden significantly worse.

Consider the bill put forward by the Senate Finance Committee. From a budgetary perspective, it is straightforward. The bill creates a new health entitlement program that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates will grow over the longer term at a rate of 8% annually, which is much faster than the growth rate of the economy or tax revenues. This is the same growth rate as the House bill that Sen. Kent Conrad (D., N.D.) deep-sized by asking the CBO to tell the truth about its impact on health-care costs.

To avoid the fate of the House bill and achieve a veneer of fiscal sensibility, the Senate did three things: It omitted inconvenient truths, it promised that future Congresses will make tough choices to slow entitlement spending, and it dropped the hammer on the middle class.

One inconvenient truth is the fact that Congress will not allow doctors to suffer a 24% cut in their Medicare reimbursements. Senate Democrats chose to ignore this reality and rely on the promise of a cut to make their bill add up. Taking note of this fact pushes the total cost of the bill well over $1 trillion and destroys any pretense of budget balance.

It is beyond fantastic to promise that future Congresses, for 10 straight years, will allow planned cuts in reimbursements to hospitals, other providers, and Medicare Advantage (thereby reducing the benefits of 25% of seniors in Medicare). The 1997 Balanced Budget Act pursued this strategy and successive Congresses steadily unwound its provisions. The very fact that this Congress is pursuing an expensive new entitlement belies the notion that members would be willing to cut existing ones.

Most astounding of all is what this Congress is willing to do to struggling middle-class families. The bill would impose nearly $400 billion in new taxes and fees. Nearly 90% of that burden will be shouldered by those making $200,000 or less.

It might not appear that way at first, because the dollars are collected via a 40% tax on sales by insurers of ''Cadillac'' policies, fees on health insurers, drug companies and device manufacturers, and an assortment of odds and ends.

But the economics are clear. These costs will be passed on to consumers by either directly raising insurance premiums, or by fueling higher health-care costs that inevitably lead to higher premiums. Consumers will pay the excise tax on high-cost plans. The Joint Committee on Taxation indicates that 87% of the burden would fall on Americans making less than $200,000, and more than half on those earning under $100,000.

Industry fees are even worse because Democrats chose to make these fees nondeductible. This means that insurance companies will have to raise premiums significantly just to break even. American families will bear a burden even greater than the $130 billion in fees that the bill intends to collect. According to my analysis, premiums will rise by as much as $200 billion over the next 10 years—and 90% will again fall on the middle class.

Senate Democrats are also erecting new barriers to middle-class ascent. A family of four making $54,000 would pay $4,800 for health insurance, with the remainder coming from subsidies. If they work harder and raise their income to $66,000, their cost of insurance rises by $2,800. In other words, earning another $12,000 raises their bill by $2,800—marginal tax rate of 23%. Double-digit increases in effective tax rates will have detrimental effects on the incentives of millions of Americans.

Why does it make sense to double down on the kinds of entitlements already in crisis, instead of passing medical malpractice reform and allowing greater competition among insurers? Why should middle-class families pay more than $2,000 on average, by my estimate, in taxes in the process?

Middle-class families have it tough enough. There is little reason to believe that the pain of the current recession, housing downturn, and financial crisis will quickly fade away—especially with the administration planning to triple the national debt over the next decade.

The promise of real reform remains. But the reality of the Democrats' current effort is starkly less benign. It will create a dangerous new entitlement that will be paid for by the middle class and their children.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

AFGHANISTAN TROOP SURGE

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I was critical of the President's decisions when he canceled the so-called missile shield that would have been located in Poland and in the Czech Republic, among others things, because I was concerned about the message it sends to our allies in the region. After working with them to develop the political and public consensus for this missile shield, the United States essentially pulled the rug out from under these allies and left the consensus in Central and Eastern Europe that the United States, once again, proved to be an unreliable ally.

Throughout the Baltic States, Central Europe and other people in the world couldn't fail to notice the same. I am thinking of countries in the Persian Gulf that have relied upon the presence of the United States but have, I think, wondered from time to time whether we are the ally they want to stick with because of the fact that sometimes we have proven to be unreliable.

I am concerned about that same issue with respect to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Will our continued public debate over the recommendations that General McChrystal has made to the President result in both allies in the region as well as the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan concluding that they better make book with others in the area, including potentially the Taliban? Because after all, those people are going to continue to be in the area; the United States may not.

This is where I think the debate about General McChrystal's recommendations about troop levels and other resources in Afghanistan become so very important. I think we need to listen to the advice of the commander in the field, General McChrystal, who produced a very straightforward assessment of the situation in Afghanistan.

Obviously, the President is the Commander in Chief, and the decisions are his to make. It is appropriate for him to rely upon others for advice as well as on the commander in the field. But there is a point at which the President's own strategy, which he announced in March, needs to be adequately resourced and we need to move forward. Here is what the President said:

The American people must understand that this is a downpayment on our own future.

He was talking about the resources that would be needed in Afghanistan. So he selected General McChrystal to implement his strategy. We unanimously confirmed General McChrystal, and then the President asked him to give an assessment of what it was going to take. That assessment was provided in August. It has now been about 50 days since that assessment

has been made public—since the President received it. Yet we still don't have a decision.

My concern is that this continuing public debate is going to raise doubts around the world about the staying power of the United States; about our willingness to continue commitments we make. Remember, the President himself called this a war of necessity, both during the campaign and after his inauguration. He stressed the fact that we had to do what it took to win in Afghanistan. There are those around the world who are wondering whether we mean to resource this effort to the extent that General McChrystal has said is necessary.

What did General McChrystal's assessment say? First, he speaks of what ISAF—that is the international force, including NATO forces—will require.

ISAF requires an increase in the total coalition force capability and end strength.

In other words, more troops. He warned of the risk of not providing adequate resources, and here is what he said:

Failure to provide quality resources risks a longer conflict, greater casualties, higher overall costs, and ultimately, a critical loss of political support. Any of these risks, in turn, are likely to result in mission failure.

Is that what we want—mission failure? If we don't quickly make a decision, support the President—if he makes the decision to adequately resource our effort there, then we are not only going to be losing, we are not only going to have mission failure, but we will send a message to everybody around the world that, once again, the United States can't be trusted. Here is what the General said about why it matters:

Time matters; we must act now to reverse the negative trends and demonstrate progress. I believe the short-term fight will be decisive. Failure to gain the initiative and reverse insurgent momentum in the near-term—next 12 months—while Afghan security capacity matures—risks an outcome where defeating the insurgency is no longer possible.

Do we want to take the risk that we take so long in getting the additional troops there that success is no longer possible? I hope not. Finally, General McChrystal underscored the reason for his conclusions during a recent speech he gave in London, where he said:

I believe that the loss of stability in Afghanistan brings a huge risk that transnational terrorists such as al-Qaida will operate from within Afghanistan again.

Now we are having this big public debate. Some prominent Democrats have said we shouldn't resource this the way General McChrystal has announced, and this is why I think we are sending the wrong message. I understand there is some declining support for the war, but this is where Presidential and congressional leadership comes in.

I remember, during the debate over the Iraq war, we had a lot of armchair generals and even a lot of pundits who thought they knew better. Well, General Petraeus, it turned out, was right. Thankfully, President Bush at the time followed his recommendations. As a result, the surge in Iraq was successful. General McChrystal and General Petraeus are essentially saying the same thing again.

Remember, General McChrystal is an expert in both counterterrorism and counterinsurgency policy. He understands the difference and he understands it takes resources to fight a counterinsurgency campaign because you not only have to defeat an enemy but you have to continue to hold the area you have taken until the indigenous forces—in this case the Afghan police and army—are trained in sufficient numbers to hold the territory. You have to protect the populace. In a counterinsurgency strategy, the key is not killing the enemy, the key is protecting the populace. That is why it takes more troops.

Let me read a couple other things the general said:

My conclusions were informed through a rigorous multi-disciplinary assessment by a team of accomplished military personnel and civilians, and my personal experience and core beliefs. Central to my analysis is a belief that we must respect the complexities of the operational environment and design our strategic approach accordingly.

This is a carefully thought-out strategic assessment with a lot of support.

There is a recent article in the Weekly Standard magazine by Fred and Kim Kagan that does an excellent job of explaining why this advice is so wise. It focuses on the nature of the al-Qaida threat that emanates from Afghanistan and the network of support that is established there. Part of this is what has informed General McChrystal's assessment. The article says, and I quote:

We should fight [the Taliban and Haqqani groups]—

Another terrorist-led group—

because in practice they are integrally connected with al Qaeda. Allowing the Taliban and the Haqqani networks to expand their areas of control and influence would offer new opportunities to al Qaeda that its leaders appear determined to seize. It would relieve the pressure on al Qaeda, giving its operative more scope to protect themselves while working to project power and influence around the world.

In other words, against the United States. The Haqqani group he is referring to is another terrorist-led group.

Secretary of State Clinton said it quite succinctly when she stated:

If Afghanistan were taken over by the Taliban, I can't tell you how fast al-Qaida would be back in Afghanistan.

That is the point. That is why I think we need to get on with our decision.

I noted, with interest, a column by E.J. Dionne in the Washington Post entitled ''No Rush to Escalate.'' He quotes in his column historian Robert Dallek, who recently advised President Obama:

''In my judgment,'' he recalls saying, ''war kills off great reform movements.''

Then he goes on to talk about how World War I brought the Progressive Era to a close; that Franklin Roosevelt would have done better if not for World War II; that Vietnam hurt Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. He says:

It may just be that some of the President's senior advisers and supporters may be urging him not to devote the necessary resources to Afghanistan because they don't want him to become a war president.

That would be most unfortunate. President Obama is the Commander in Chief. He campaigned to become the war President. He said he wanted to end the war in Iraq, which he called a war of choice, and he wanted to win the war in Afghanistan—a war of necessity.

He won the election and he, now, as Commander in Chief, has to make these critical decisions. Whether he likes it or not, he is a war President and he will be judged by history not only by his domestic agenda but by how well he leaves the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. The key with Afghanistan is not to leave the country in the hands of dangerous Taliban or other terrorists who would work with al-Qaida and give them the kind of place they had before from which to train and plan attacks on the rest of the world.

Also at stake in this debate is the message we are sending to the rest of the world, to our allies in the Middle East, in the Persian Gulf, to Pakistan. Is it safe to throw in with the United States and to help us in our war against these terrorists or, because the United States may bug out when the going gets tough, do we decide to make book with the other side, as Pakistan had done in the past with various groups including the Taliban? That is part of what is at stake. It is not just Afghanistan but our reputation around the rest of the world as to how we deal with our allies and how we resolve conflicts we get involved in.

General McChrystal said it best when he said:

We must show resolve. Uncertainty disheartens our allies, emboldens our foes.

That is the key message today. I urge the President, in continuing this debate, to bring it to a close as quickly as he can to make the decision. I know Republicans will support a decision that follows the recommendations of General Petraeus and General McChrystal.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD two articles from the Weekly Standard magazine: One, ''How Not to Defeat al-Qaeda, To Win in Afghanistan Requires Troops on the Ground'' and ''Don't Go Wobbly on Afghanistan; President Obama Was Right in March,'' both by Fred and Kimberly Kagan.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Weekly Standard, Oct. 5, 2009]

HOW NOT TO DEFEAT AL QAEDA

(By Frederick W. Kagan and Kimberly Kagan)

President Obama has announced his intention to conduct a review of U.S. strategy in

Afghanistan from first principles before deciding whether or not to accept General Stanley McChrystal's proposed strategy and request for more forces. This review is delaying the decision. If the delay goes on much longer, it will force military leaders either to rush the deployment in a way that increases the strain on soldiers and their families or to lose the opportunity to affect the spring campaign. The president's determination to make sure of his policy before committing the additional 40,000 or so forces required by General McChrystal's campaign plan is, nevertheless, understandable. The conflict in Afghanistan is complex, and it is important that we understand what we are trying to do.

At the center of the complexity is a deceptively simple question: If the United States is fighting a terrorist organization—al Qaeda—why must we conduct a counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan against two other groups—the Quetta Shura Taliban and the Haqqani Network—that have neither the objective nor the capability to attack the United States outside Afghanistan? Shouldn't we fight a terrorist organization with a counterterrorist strategy, customarily defined as relying on long-range precision weapons and Special Forces raids to eliminate key terrorist leaders? Why must we become embroiled in the politics and social dysfunctionality of the fifth-poorest country in the world? Surely, some surrounding President Obama appear to be arguing, it makes more sense to confine our operations narrowly to the aim we care most about: defeating the terrorists and so preventing them from killing Americans.

This argument rests on two essential assumptions: that al Qaeda is primarily a terrorist group and that it is separable from the insurgent groups among whom it lives and through whom it operates. Let us examine these assumptions.

Al Qaeda is a highly ideological organization that openly states its aims and general methods. It seeks to replace existing governments in the Muslim world, which it regards as apostate, with a regime based on its own interpretation of the Koran and Muslim tradition. It relies on a reading of some of the earliest Muslim traditions to justify its right to declare Muslims apostates if they do not behave according to its own interpretation of Islam and to kill them if necessary. This reading is actually nearly identical to a belief that developed in the earliest years of Islam after Muhammad's death, which mainstream Muslims quickly rejected as a heresy (the Kharijite movement), and it remains heretical to the overwhelming majority of Muslims today. The question of the religious legality of killing Muslims causes tensions within al Qaeda and between al Qaeda and other Muslims, leading to debates over the wisdom of fighting the ''near enemy,'' i.e., the ''apostate'' Muslim governments in the region, or the ''far enemy,'' i.e., the West and especially the United States, which al Qaeda believes provides indispensable support to these ''apostate'' governments. The 9/11 attack resulted from the temporary triumph of the ''far enemy'' school.

Above all, al Qaeda does not see itself as a terrorist organization. It defines itself as the vanguard in the Leninist sense: a revolutionary movement whose aim is to take power throughout the Muslim world. It is an insurgent organization with global aims. Its use of terrorism (for which it has developed lengthy and abstruse religious justifications) is simply a reflection of its current situation. If al Qaeda had the ability to conduct guerrilla warfare with success, it would do so. If it could wage conventional war, it would probably prefer to do so. It has already made clear that it desires to wage chemical, biological, and nuclear war when possible.

In this respect, al Qaeda is very different from terrorist groups like the IRA, ETA, and even Hamas. Those groups used or use terrorism in pursuit of political objectives confined to a specific region—expelling the British from Northern Ireland, creating an independent or autonomous Basque land, expelling Israel from Palestine. The Ulstermen did not seek to destroy Britain or march on London; the Basques are not in mortal combat with Spaniards; and even Hamas seeks only to drive the Jews out of Israel, not to exterminate them throughout the world. Al Qaeda, by contrast, seeks to rule all the world's 1.5 billion Muslims and to reduce the non-Muslim peoples to subservience. For al Qaeda, terrorism is a start, not an end nor even the preferred means. It goes without saying that the United States and the West would face catastrophic consequences if al Qaeda ever managed to obtain the ability to wage war by different means. Defeating al Qaeda requires more than disrupting its leadership cells so that they cannot plan and conduct attacks in the United States. It also requires preventing al Qaeda from obtaining the capabilities it seeks to wage real war beyond terrorist strikes.

Al Qaeda does not exist in a vacuum like the SPECTRE of James Bond movies. It has always operated in close coordination with allies. The anti-Soviet jihad of the 1980s was the crucible in which al Qaeda leaders first bonded with the partners who would shelter them in Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden met Jalaluddin Haqqani, whose network is now fighting U.S. forces in eastern Afghanistan, as both were raising support in Saudi Arabia for the mujahedeen in the 1980s. They then fought the Soviets together. When the Soviet Army withdrew in 1989 (for which bin Laden subsequently took unearned credit), Haqqani seized the Afghan city of Khost and established his control of the surrounding provinces of Khost, Paktia, and Paktika. Haqqani also retained the base in Pakistan—near Miranshah in North Waziristan—from which he had fought the Soviets. He established a madrassa there that has become infamous for its indoctrination of young men in the tenets of militant Islamism.

Haqqani held onto Greater Paktia, as the three provinces are often called, and invited bin Laden to establish bases there in the 1990s in which to train his own cadres. When the Taliban took shape under Mullah Mohammad Omar in the mid-1990s (with a large amount of Pakistani assistance), Haqqani made common cause with that group, which shared his ideological and religious outlook and seemed likely to take control of Afghanistan. He became a minister in the Taliban government, which welcomed and facilitated the continued presence of bin Laden and his training camps.

Bin Laden and al Qaeda could not have functioned as they did in the 1990s without the active support of Mullah Omar and Haqqani. The Taliban and Haqqani fighters protected bin Laden, fed him and his troops, facilitated the movement of al Qaeda leaders and fighters, and generated recruits. They also provided a socio-religious human network that strengthened the personal resilience and organizational reach of bin Laden and his team. Islamist revolution has always been an activity of groups nested within communities, not an undertaking of isolated individuals. As American interrogators in Iraq discovered quickly, the fastest way to get a captured al Qaeda fighter talking was to isolate him from his peers. Bin Laden's Taliban allies provided the intellectual and social support network al Qaeda needed to keep fighting. In return, bin Laden shared his wealth with the Taliban and later sent his fighters into battle to defend the Taliban regime against the U.S.-aided Northern Alliance attack after 9/11.

The relationship that developed between bin Laden and Mullah Omar was deep and strong. It helps explain why Mullah Omar refused categorically to expel bin Laden after 9/11 even though he knew that failing to do so could lead to the destruction of the Taliban state—as it did. In return, bin Laden recognizes Mullah Omar as amir al-momineen—the ''Commander of the Faithful''—a religious title the Taliban uses to legitimize its activities and shadow state. The alliance between al Qaeda and the Haqqanis (now led by Sirajuddin, successor to his aging and ailing father, Jalaluddin) also remains strong. The Haqqani network still claims the terrain of Greater Paktia, can project attacks into Kabul, and seems to facilitate the kinds of spectacular attacks in Afghanistan that are the hallmark of al Qaeda training and technical expertise. There is no reason whatever to believe that Mullah Omar or the Haqqanis—whose religious and political views remain closely aligned with al Qaeda's—would fail to offer renewed hospitality to their friend and ally of 20 years, bin Laden.

Mullah Omar and the Haqqanis are not the ones hosting al Qaeda today, however, since the presence of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan has made that country too dangerous for bin Laden and his lieutenants. They now reside for the most part on the other side of the Durand Line, among the mélange of anti-government insurgent and terrorist groups that live in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan. These groups—they include the Tehrik-e Taliban-e Pakistan, led until his recent death-by-Predator by Baitullah Mehsud; the Tehrik-e Nafaz-e Shariat-e Mohammadi; and the Lashkar-e-Taiba, responsible for the Mumbai attack—now provide some of the same services to al Qaeda that the Taliban provided when they ruled Afghanistan. Mullah Omar continues to help, moreover, by intervening in disputes among the more fractious Pakistani groups to try to maintain cohesion within the movement. All of these groups coordinate their activities, moreover, and all have voices within the Peshawar Shura (council). They are not isolated groups, but rather a network-of-networks, both a social and a political grouping run, in the manner of Pashtuns, by a number of shuras, of which that in Peshawar is theoretically preeminent.

All of which is to say that the common image of al Qaeda leaders flitting like bats from cave to cave in the badlands of Pakistan is inaccurate. Al Qaeda leaders do flit (and no doubt sometimes sleep in caves)—but they flit like guests from friend to friend in areas controlled by their allies. Their allies provide them with shelter and food, with warning of impending attacks, with the means to move rapidly. Their allies provide communications services—runners and the use of their own more modern systems to help al Qaeda's senior leaders avoid creating electronic footprints that our forces could use to track and target them. Their allies provide means of moving money and other strategic resources around, as well as the means of imparting critical knowledge (like expertise in explosives) to cadres. Their allies provide media support, helping to get the al Qaeda message out and then serving as an echo chamber to magnify it via their own media resources.

Could al Qaeda perform all of these functions itself, without the help of local allies? It probably could. In Iraq, certainly, the al Qaeda organization established its own administrative, logistical, training, recruiting,

and support structures under the rubric of its own state—the Islamic State of Iraq. For a while, this system worked well for the terrorists; it supported a concerted terror campaign in and around Baghdad virtually unprecedented in its scale and viciousness. It also created serious vulnerabilities for Al Qaeda in Iraq, however. The establishment of this autonomous, foreign-run structure left a seam between Al Qaeda in Iraq and the local population and their leaders. As long as the population continued to be in open revolt against the United States and the Iraqi government, this seam was not terribly damaging to al Qaeda. But as local leaders began to abandon their insurgent operations, Al Qaeda in Iraq became dangerously exposed and, ultimately, came to be seen as an enemy by the very populations that had previously supported it.

There was no such seam in Afghanistan before 9/11. Al Qaeda did not attempt to control territory or administer populations there. It left all such activities in the hands of Mullah Omar and Jalaluddin Haqqani. It still does—relying on those groups as well as on the Islamist groups in Waziristan and the Northwest Frontier Province to do the governing and administering while it focuses on the global war. Afghans had very little interaction with al Qaeda, and so had no reason to turn against the group. The same is true in Pakistan today. The persistence of allies who aim at governing and administering, as well as simply controlling, territory frees al Qaeda from those onerous day-to-day responsibilities and helps shield the organization from the blowback it suffered in Iraq. It reduces the vulnerability of the organization and enormously complicates efforts to defeat or destroy it.

The theory proposed by some in the White House and the press that an out-of-country, high-tech counterterrorist campaign could destroy a terrorist network such as al Qaeda is fraught with erroneous assumptions. Killing skilled terrorists is very hard to do. The best—and most dangerous—of them avoid using cellphones, computers, and other devices that leave obvious electronic footprints. Tracking them requires either capitalizing on their mistakes in using such devices or generating human intelligence about their whereabouts from sources on the ground. When the terrorists operate among relatively friendly populations, gaining useful human intelligence can be extremely difficult if not impossible. The friendlier the population to the terrorists, the more safe houses in which they can hide, the fewer people who even desire to inform the United States or its proxies about the location of terrorist leaders, the more people likely to tell the terrorists about any such informants (and to punish those informants), the more people who can help to conceal the movement of the terrorist leaders and their runners, and so on.

Counterterrorist forces do best when the terrorists must operate among neutral or hostile populations while under severe military pressure, including from troops on the ground. Such pressure forces terrorist leaders to rely more on communications equipment for self-defense and for coordination of larger efforts. It greatly restricts the terrorists' ability to move around, making them easier targets, and to receive and distribute money, weapons, and recruits. This is the scenario that developed in Iraq during and after the surge, and it dramatically increased the vulnerability of terrorist groups to U.S. (and Iraqi) strikes.

Not only did the combination of isolation and pressure make senior leaders more vulnerable, but it exposed mid-level managers as well. Attacking such individuals is important for two reasons: It disrupts the ability of the organization to operate at all, and it eliminates some of the people most likely to replace senior leaders who are killed. Attacking middle management dramatically reduces the resilience of a terrorist organization, as well as its effectiveness. The intelligence requirement for such attacks is daunting, however. Identifying and locating the senior leadership of a group is one thing. Finding the people who collect taxes, distribute funds and weapons, recruit, run IEDcells, and so on, is something else entirely—unless the counterterrorist force actually has a meaningful presence on the ground among the people.

The most serious operational challenge of the pure counterterrorist approach, however, is to eliminate bad guys faster than they can be replaced. Isolated killings of senior leaders, spread out over months or years, rarely do serious systemic harm to their organizations. The best-known example is the death of Abu Musab al Zarqawi, founder and head of Al Qaeda in Iraq, in June 2006, following which the effectiveness and lethality of that group only grew. It remains to be seen what the effect of Baitullah Mehsud's death will be—although it is evident that the presence of the Pakistani military on the ground assisted the high-tech targeting that killed him. Such is the vigor of the groups he controlled that his death occasioned a power struggle among his deputies.

One essential question that advocates of a pure counterterrorism approach must answer, therefore, is: Can the United States significantly accelerate the rate at which our forces identify, target, and kill senior and mid-level leaders? Our efforts to do so have failed to date, despite the commitment of enormous resources to that problem over eight years at the expense of other challenges. Could we do better? The limiting factor on the rate of attrition we can impose on the enemy's senior leadership is our ability to generate the necessary intelligence, not our ability to put metal on target. Perhaps there is a way to increase the attrition rate. If so, advocates of this approach have an obligation to explain what it is. They must also explain why removing U.S. and NATO forces from the theater will not make collecting timely intelligence even harder—effectively slowing the attrition rate. Their argument is counterintuitive at best.

Pursuing a counterinsurgency strategy against the Taliban and Haqqani groups—that is, using American forces to protect the population from them while building the capability of the Afghan Army—appears at first an indirect approach to defeating al Qaeda. In principle, neither the Taliban nor the Haqqani network poses an immediate danger to the United States. Why then should we fight them?

We should fight them because in practice they are integrally connected with al Qaeda. Allowing the Taliban and the Haqqani network to expand their areas of control and influence would offer new opportunities to al Qaeda that its leaders appear determined to seize. It would relieve the pressure on al Qaeda, giving its operatives more scope to protect themselves while working to project power and influence around the world. It would reduce the amount of usable intelligence we could expect to receive, thus reducing the rate at which we could target key leaders. Allowing al Qaeda's allies to succeed would seriously undermine the counterterrorism mission and would make the success of that mission extremely unlikely.

[From the Weekly Standard, Oct. 12, 2009]

DON'T GO WOBBLY ON AFGHANISTAN

(By Frederick W. Kagan and Kimberly Kagan)

''To defeat an enemy that heeds no borders or laws of war, we must recognize the fundamental connection between the future of Afghanistan and Pakistan—which is why I've appointed Ambassador Richard Holbrooke . . . to serve as Special Representative for both countries.'' That ''fundamental connection'' between Afghanistan and Pakistan was one of the important principles President Obama laid out in his March 27, 2009, speech announcing his policy in South Asia. It reflected a common criticism of the Bush policy in Afghanistan, which was often castigated as insufficiently ''regional.'' It also reflected reality: The war against al Qaeda and its affiliates is a two-front conflict that must be fought on both sides of the Durand Line.

Now, however, some of the most vocal supporters of the regional approach are considering—or even advocating—a return to its antithesis, a purely counterterrorism (CT) strategy in Afghanistan. Such a reversion, based on the erroneous assumption that a collapsing Afghanistan would not derail efforts to dismantle terrorist groups in Pakistan, is bound to fail.

Recent discussions of the ''CT option'' have tended to be sterile, clinical, and removed from the complexity of the region—the opposite of the coherence with which the administration had previously sought to address the problem. In reality, any ''CT option'' will likely have to be executed against the backdrop of state collapse and civil war in Afghanistan, spiraling extremism and loss of will in Pakistan, and floods of refugees. These conditions would benefit al Qaeda greatly by creating an expanding area of chaos, an environment in which al Qaeda thrives. They would also make the collection of intelligence and the accurate targeting of terrorists extremely difficult.

If the United States should adopt a small-footprint counterterrorism strategy, Afghanistan would descend again into civil war. The Taliban group headed by Mullah Omar and operating in southern Afghanistan (including especially Helmand, Kandahar, and Oruzgan Provinces) is well positioned to take control of that area upon the withdrawal of American and allied combat forces. The remaining Afghan security forces would be unable to resist a Taliban offensive. They would be defeated and would disintegrate. The fear of renewed Taliban assaults would mobilize the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras in northern and central Afghanistan. The Taliban itself would certainly drive on Herat and Kabul, leading to war with northern militias. This conflict would collapse the Afghan state, mobilize the Afghan population, and cause many Afghans to flee into Pakistan and Iran.

Within Pakistan, the U.S. reversion to a counterterrorism strategy (from the counterinsurgency strategy for which Obama reaffirmed his support as recently as August) would disrupt the delicate balance that has made possible recent Pakistani progress against internal foes and al Qaeda.

Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari, army chief of staff General Ashfaq Kayani, and others who have supported Pakistani operations against the Taliban are facing an entrenched resistance within the military and among retired officers. This resistance stems from the decades-long relationships nurtured between the Taliban and Pakistan, which started during the war to expel the Soviet Army. Advocates within Pakistan of continuing to support the Taliban argue that the United States will abandon Afghanistan as it did in 1989, creating chaos that only the Taliban will be able to fill in a manner that suits Pakistan.

Zardari and Kayani have been able to overcome this internal resistance sufficiently to mount major operations against Pakistani Taliban groups, in part because the rhetoric

and actions of the Obama administration to date have seemed to prove the Taliban advocates wrong. The announcement of the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces would prove them right. Pakistani operations against their own insurgents—as well as against al Qaeda, which lives among those insurgents—would probably grind to a halt as Pakistan worked to reposition itself in support of a revived Taliban government in Afghanistan. And a renewed stream of Afghan refugees would likely overwhelm the Pakistani government and military, rendering coherent operations against insurgents and terrorists difficult or impossible.

The collapse of Pakistan, or even the revival of an aggressive and successful Islamist movement there, would be a calamity for the region and for the United States. It would significantly increase the risk that al Qaeda might obtain nuclear weapons from Pakistan's stockpile, as well as the risk that an Indo-Pakistani war might break out involving the use of nuclear weapons.

Not long ago, such a collapse seemed almost imminent. Islamist groups operating under the umbrella of the Tehrik-e Taliban-e Pakistan (TTP), led by Baitullah Mehsud until his recent death, had occupied areas in the Swat River Valley and elsewhere not far from Islamabad itself. Punjabi terrorists affiliated with the same group were launching attacks in the heart of metropolitan Pakistan.

Since then, Pakistani offensives in Swat, Waziristan, and elsewhere have rocked many of these groups back on their heels while rallying political support within Pakistan against the Taliban to an unprecedented degree. But these successes remain as fragile as the Pakistani state itself. The TTP and its allies are damaged but not defeated. Al Qaeda retains safe-havens along the Afghan border.

What if the United States did not withdraw the forces now in Afghanistan, but simply kept them at current levels while emphasizing both counterterrorism and the rapid expansion of the Afghan security forces? Within Afghanistan, the situation would continue to deteriorate. Neither the United States and NATO nor Afghan forces are now capable of defeating the Taliban in the south or east. At best, the recently arrived U.S. reinforcements in the south might be able to turn steady defeat into stalemate, but even that is unlikely.

The accelerated expansion of Afghan security forces, moreover, will be seriously hindered if we fail to deploy additional combat forces. As we discovered in Iraq, the fastest way to help indigenous forces grow in numbers and competence is to partner U.S. and allied units with them side by side in combat. Trainers and mentors are helpful—but their utility is multiplied many times when indigenous soldiers and officers have the opportunity to see what right looks like rather than simply being told about it. At the current troop levels, commanders have had to disperse Afghan and allied forces widely in an effort simply to cover important ground, without regard for partnering.

As a result, it is very likely that the insurgency will grow in size and strength in 2010 faster than Afghan security forces can be developed without the addition of significant numbers of American combat troops—which will likely lead to Afghan state failure and the consequences described above in Afghanistan and the region.

The Obama administration is not making this decision in a vacuum. Obama ran on a platform that made giving Afghanistan the resources it needed an overriding American priority. President Obama has repeated that commitment many times. He appointed a new commander to execute the policy he enunciated in his March 27 speech, in which he noted: ''To focus on the greatest threat to our people, America must no longer deny resources to Afghanistan because of the war in Iraq.'' If he now rejects the request of his new commander for forces, his decision will be seen as the abandonment of the president's own commitment to the conflict.

In that case, no amount of rhetorical flourish is likely to persuade Afghans, Pakistanis, or anyone else otherwise. A president who overrules the apparently unanimous recommendation of his senior generals and admirals that he make good the resource shortfalls he himself called unacceptable can hardly convince others he is determined to succeed in Afghanistan. And if the United States is not determined to succeed, then, in the language of the region, it is getting ready to cut and run, whatever the president and his advisers may think or say.

That is a policy that will indeed have regional effects—extremely dangerous ones.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 3183, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Conference report to accompany H.R. 3183, making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is 10 minutes of debate with the Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. COBURN, and 10 minutes of debate equally divided between the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. DORGAN, and the Senator from Utah, Mr. BENNETT. Who yields time?

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, is there an order in the unanimous consent request?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The only order is that the Senator from North Dakota is to control the final 5 minutes.

Mr. DORGAN. I believe the Senator from Oklahoma has been allotted 10 minutes. I saw him just walk through the Chamber a moment ago. The ranking member of the subcommittee, the Senator from Utah, is allotted 5 minutes. Let me reserve my time and perhaps ask the Senator from Utah to begin, and then we hope the Senator from Oklahoma would return and use his 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I am pleased to come to the floor and recommend passage of the energy and water conference report for the fiscal year 2010. Despite the President sending up his budget in May, nearly 4 months after the budget had been traditionally sent to Congress, this subcommittee worked hard to produce a conference report that is ready earlier than any that I can remember. I compliment my chairman, Senator DORGAN, for his hard work in developing a balanced bill in a legitimate time period.

The subcommittee produced a bill that is under the President's budget request by nearly $1 billion. That is quite extraordinary in this world where we are trying to shovel more money out the door, to come in with a number that is less than the request of the President.

The House and Senate bills differed significantly in their priorities, but I believe the conference report before us balances the funding interests of both bodies and those of the administration as well. The Corps of Engineers remains an area of great interest. The budget request for the corps is down $277 million from fiscal year 2009. The conference report has restored $320 million to meet the large number of member requests, and the conferees allocated $313 million to work off significant construction backlogs.

The Senate bill did not include new starts in the mark. Both the House and the administration proposed new starts, so we had to resolve that issue in the conference. The conference provides $100,000 per project in new starts in this bill.

Turning to the Bureau of Reclamation, the budget request was $55 million below fiscal year 2009 levels. The conferees provided an additional $67 million for the Bureau of Reclamation, which is 6.3 percent over the request and 1 percent over fiscal year 2009. Once again, as the Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation has a tremendous backlog of underfunded and meritorious projects, and we did our best to try to work into that backlog.

Finally, as to the Department of Energy, the conference report recommends $27.1 billion for the Department of Energy, which is $1.3 billion below the President's request and $318 million above the current year.

We cannot ignore the fact that $44 billion was provided in stimulus funding for the Department this year, including $16 billion provided for renewable energy accounts. That is why we have been able to make the changes we did.

In restoring balance to the energy programs, the committee recommends an additional $25 million for nuclear energy R&D, including an $85 million increase for the Nuclear Power 2010 Program.

With respect to the concerns raised by the Senator from Oklahoma, I point out the Senate adopted his amendments by unanimous consent. I was in support of those amendments and would be happy to support them again as they come in other appropriations bills. The reaction on the part of the House was that there were two amendments proposed by the Senator from Oklahoma: one they were willing to accept and one they were not. We had to make a decision as to which of the two we would support and, with Senator